



BEYOND CARBON FIXATION

PATHWAYS TO REGENERATIVE FUTURES
NARRATIVE ANALYSIS - FULL REPORT



Beyond the Carbon Fixation: Pathways to Regenerative Futures

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Background

Culture Hack Labs (CHL, a decentralized network of narrative practitioners) and *Ma Earth* (an organization whose mission is to create the enabling infrastructure to allow the flow of resources to regenerative land projects), came together to **understand the narrative landscape and map the ecosystem of actors converging around land regeneration and the redistribution of resources in service of Life.**

This inquiry emerges from and builds on two narrative research initiatives that CHL conducted this past year. The first body of work was to understand the narrative space and memetic frameworks around land ownership. What emerged was an intervention calling for *land back to right relations*: the return of land from the enclosures of colonialism and capitalism to new patterns of deep relationality. The second body of work explores *wealth as a transition pathway*: means by which to transition from our current meta-crisis to postcapitalist realities that serve Life. Ma Earth sits at the intersection of these two inquiries, with the mission of creating enabling infrastructure for resources to flow toward the regeneration of lands, waters, ecosystems, and communities.

Through this exploration we aim to map the ecosystem and find where we can weave the connective tissue to highlight points of collective action to serve as a navigational tool for systems change. **The intention of this research is to find pathways to liberate lands, waters, ecosystems, and communities from the enclosures of capitalism and colonialism.**

Context

Global crises in recent years—ranging from record-breaking climate change events¹ to rising inequality (Hickel, 2018)²—are part of a complex system of interacting, intersecting, and compounding social, political, and economic crises variously known as the polycrisis or metacrisis (Jayasuriya, 2023)³. This metacrisis disproportionately affects the Global South, while largely being caused by the Global North⁴. **At the root of the metacrisis is the current anthropocentric capitalist system, which prioritizes growth, profit, extraction, separation from the natural world, enclosure and private ownership⁵** at the expense of the well-being, or Buen Vivir⁶, of both the human and more-than-human world, as well as the planetary ecosystem on which we depend (Yusoff, 2018; Malm, 2016)⁷.

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

2 Hickel, Jason. *The divide: global inequality from conquest to free markets*. WW Norton & Company, 2018

3 Jayasuriya, K.. *Polycrisis or crises of capitalist social reproduction*. *Global Social Challenges Journal*, 1–9. (2023)

4 <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-one-culture-and-the-anthropocene/who-is-responsible-for-climate-break-down/>; <https://inthesetimes.com/article/climate-change-wealthy-western-nations-global-north-south-fires-west>

5 Bhandar, Brenna. *Colonial lives of property: Law, land, and racial regimes of ownership*. Duke University Press, 2018

6 *Buen Vivir is a concept from the Quechua people of the Andes in South America (Abya Yala), in which “the subject of wellbeing is not the individual, but the individual in the social context of their community and in a unique environmental situation”* (Gudynas, 2013). See Gudynas, E. (2011). *Buen Vivir: today’s tomorrow*. *development*, 54(4), 441-447; *The Guardian*, (2013) *Buen vivir: the social philosophy inspiring movements in South America*.

7 Yusoff, K. (2018). *A billion black Anthropocenes or none*. U of Minnesota Press; Moore, J. W. (Ed.). (2016). *Anthropocene or capitalocene?: Nature, history, and the crisis of capitalism*. Pm Press; Malm, A. (2016). *Fossil capital: The rise of steam power and the roots of global warming*. Verso Books; Moore, Jason W. *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and*

Central to this system is the concept of land ownership, a key driver of capitalism and colonialism⁸, and a lens through which the causes, effects, and solutions to the polycrisis can be examined.

Climate philanthropy, deeply entwined with this system, also reflects the same extraction-based values. **Dominant approaches within climate aid and philanthropy emphasize technological solutions and market-driven strategies that prioritize economic growth and measurable outcomes.** While these approaches aim to reduce carbon emissions, they often overlook the root causes of climate change—global inequality, resource extraction, and overconsumption—while reinforcing Northern-centric interests. Critiques of this technocratic, top-down model highlight the need for a shift toward more inclusive, community-driven solutions that center justice, equity, and sustainability.

In response, many initiatives and movements are emerging that aim to address the polycrisis by reimagining our relationship to land. They include regenerative and decentralized financial systems initiatives, Indigenous land defenders and allies, climate activists, regenerative farmers, agroecologists, community land trusts challenging conventional notions of ownership, and legal rights- and sovereignty-based frameworks aimed at restoring “land back to right relations.” **Movements focusing on environmental stewardship and restoring just relations with the land tend to be underfunded due to philanthropy’s focus on carbon-oriented interventions (“The Carbon Fixation”⁹).** As conversations about land and climate finance unfold, this research seeks to make sense of what is emerging from the collective, advocating for a reimagined system that prioritizes environmental and social justice in the face of the climate crisis.

the Accumulation of Capital. Verso Books, 2015

⁸ <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/territories-of-transition-land-back-to-right-relations-briefing/context-exposing-the-problem-of-land-ownership/>



Culture Hack Labs' Methodology

At Culture Hack Labs, we believe that **power rests on the ability to harness and control language; and that humans make sense of their world through stories.** They reveal how our struggles—from land to labor, biodiversity and even our very own bodies—are part of the same global system, one that prioritizes the production of capital, or growth, over Life. We must transition the global operating system so it is rooted in post-anthropocentric, post-capitalist, post-extractive values. **Culture is at the root of shifting values and belief systems.** Developing new social and cultural narratives is a critical lever in this transition towards post-capitalist systems.

Cultural narratives abound, but which ones are critical to understand in order to drive meaningful change? Culture Hack Labs has developed a methodology to help cut through the noise, identify who's saying what, why it matters, and how to reframe and change the narrative.

The *Culture Hack Labs methodology* comprises five components: **Ask, Listen, Understand, Recode** and **Intervene**. Through this method we define an inquiry, collect and analyze data in order to propose reframes that can then be tested as part of an intervention. This process is often conducted in collaboration with social movements and/or groups of activists who will shape strategies and organize around the set of reframes. **For this particular research, we are completing the first four stages of the CHL methodology: Ask, Listen, Understand, and Recode.**

1. ASK

The Point of View sets the foundation; the goal and intention of the narrative intervention and informs and contextualizes the data collection and analysis stages of the methodology.

Point of View

As a group of narrative practitioners and actors supporting land regenerative projects,

We see that while land is a critical lever in the transition away from anthropocentric capitalist systems there is a lack of shared frameworks of understanding and coherence of underlying logics that are needed to build the momentum to enable this transition. Movements, organizations and funders at the forefront of shifting how we relate to land are siloed and are not cross-pollinating.

Therefore we want to support the ecosystem of actors working on land-based issues and drive systems-level change by coalescing their tools, strategies, and organizing capacities and developing shared narratives around the intention of liberating land from the enclosures of capitalism and colonialism. By doing so, we can foster a cultural context rooted in radical relationality, making it possible to rematriate and regenerate land and ecosystems on a large scale.

To achieve this, we must:

- Identify and consult key actors to understand the narrative space, identify points of collective action and articulate a transition pathway¹⁰ for the movement.
- Create an ecosystem map to organize the different actors and their relationships identifying points of collective action to serve as a navigational tool.

¹⁰ Transition Pathways are descriptive and prescriptive tools to diagnose our current predicament and chart out where we go.

2. LISTEN

To effectively intervene in the narrative, we must first understand the narrative landscape. Culture Hack Labs uses a listening model to describe its data collection process. **“Big listening” data reveals the overarching patterns in the narratives, whereas “small listening” allows us to identify texture and nuances in the narratives.** The listening model sets the parameters for our research into the narrative space: What do we listen to? Where? How? For How long? The parameters of our research are informed by the objectives and questions outlined in the Point of View and the theoretical framework. **This research focused on small listening through interviews conducted with 28 participants.**¹¹

Participants were identified based on Culture Hack Labs’ and Ma Earth’s experience and engagement with these people as key actors in the space. We identified six thematic areas related to key areas of land-based work transforming the current system, based on our previous research, to help choose actors and ensure an even spread across each. These areas were:

1. Climate Justice
2. Systems change practitioners and policymakers
3. Tech in service of life
4. Living alternatives (including Indigenous land defenders, guardians and allies)
5. Radical funders and post-capitalist philanthropy
6. Emergent autonomous democracies

Our interviews examined three key areas: the areas of expertise and practices of the participants, their ontological views (their worldviews and theories of change) and to highlight the points of convergence and opportunities for collective action.

¹¹ The interviews were an hour long and semi-structured with a set of open-ended questions, which allowed space for the flow of discussion to take place. The research interview addendum that was sent to the participants can be found in [Appendix 1.](#)

3. UNDERSTAND

The Understand phase consists of analyzing data collected during the listening phase. Narrative Communities are at the core of Culture Hack Labs' methodology. We analyze the Attention, Power and Network of each narrative community. We also conduct a linguistic analysis of the most recurrent language found in each community to understand the deeper logics embedded in their frames. The output of this stage is a map of the different narrative communities, the frames they propagate as well as an assessment of their potential for evolution.

General Insights

Before organizing the data into the shape of narrative communities, we list several general insights from the interviews.

Interviewees highlighted the importance of prefigurative politics and possibility models to inspire the transition. Prefigurative politics refers to models of living that reflect the alternative futures - in other words, creating post-capitalist experiments in the present. "Networks of prefigurative experiments" (Anonymous Interviewee) are important to offer "possibility models" (Sohrob Nabatian, Kalleopia Foundation) for what post-capitalism can look like, and build confidence among the public that another world is possible.

"Prefigurative experiments can be catalysts for change in times of chaos[...] we are looking to support movements, networks, organizations that are operating on a trans local basis, and doing effective prefigurative work in modeling and arguing for kind of post capitalist ways of being." (Anonymous Interviewee)

"There has to be possibility models where you can see someone doing it, or some community doing it, and then be inspired and be like, Oh, this is possible, it actually is possible for us to live in a different way." (Sohrob Nabatian, Kalleopia Foundation)

"If you want to change things, don't fight it, build the new [...] the new grows in the body of the old." (Martin Kirk, Novo Foundation)

"We need to shift the window of what's possible, because humans are lacking in imagination of how to get out of the current labyrinth that we're in with. You know, domination of human supremacy and and global capitalism is is basically creating a crisis of imagination, of seeing another possibility. So I think part of the sacred headwater has been trying to paint the picture what is possible, because that has value, that can move people, inspire people to action." (Atossa Soltani, Sacred Headwaters)

"We're basically trying to pilot different systems that can provide alternatives for, or just some sort of discontinuity from the systems that we're critiquing in the real world." (Madelyn Capozzi, Dark Matter Labs)

When thinking about post-capitalist alternatives, it is also important to cultivate space for alternatives that remain unknown and emergent. This idea is becoming more popular in the current metacrisis and is influenced by Indigenous voices framing decolonization as an ongoing process, rather than an endpoint. These ideas challenge Western epistemologies (e.g., scientific and rational thinking) perpetuating certainty and progress.

“I feel like our job right now, in terms of what we hope to achieve, in quotes, is to be open to what is coming at us, to try to listen very carefully, try to smell around the edges and the cracks under the door, like, what is that? What is wanting to emerge? How do we help to lay the table for that meal to be held? How do we help to, you know, take the ingredients coming into the kitchen and make a soup or a souffle or whatever it wants to be that will be nourishing to the folks really in the field doing this work.”
(Andrea Panaritis, Christopher Reynolds)

Industrial growth based capitalism and colonialism are key root causes of the metacrisis and the public is increasingly waking up to this.

“When we started 12 years ago, the idea of understanding colonialism was, let’s say, on a scale from zero to 10. Zero being none, nothing, 0% and 10 being like, you know, advanced, the public was at zero, [...] And now, I would say, 12 years later, the we are at, like an eight and a half out of 10 of understanding that colonialism is pretty much the root cause of climate injustice, of human rights violations, of wars, imperialism.”
(Celine Semaan Cernon, Slow Factory)

We need to be wary of the current forms of capitalism and colonialism, such as greenwashed capitalism. These include military, mining, pension funds, investment; big tech; sovereign wealth funds; pension funds; and new investing countries like China and the Gulf States for food security.

“The same systems [responsible for the metacrisis] are seducing us with solutions: from carbon trading, to geoengineering, to techno fixes, to sustain their power/profits.”
(Ashish Kothari, Tapestry of Alternatives)

“Carbon offsets and the carbon market [...] present false solutions and a way that corporations are taking advantage of the climate and environmental issues to do what they always do and to try to gain more profit. [...] We see it as a false solution, as a form of greenwashing, and also a really, really brutal and growing form of land grabbing and displacing people from their territory, and then from local and traditional ways of farming and caring for the environment.” (Alexandra Toledo, Grain)

Root causes are also ideological. The ideologies that prompted the separation of humans from nature, for instance. This separation is stemming from the Ancient European mythologies and Judeo-Christian ideologies which places emphasis on human superiority (anthropocentrist), reified in the Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment and Neo-classical eras when a particular rationalist strand of western thought prevailed.

“To me, all of that, [colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, patriarchy] then relates back to whether or not we have a kind of deep basic assumption of inter-being, interdependence, connection, or not.” (Anonymous Interviewee)

“The root feels like it’s the enclosure and commodification of land as private property, but also the enclosure of ourselves as separate from the animate, living world of which we are, soil, water, air, fire, all of the above.” (Sarah Bradley, Land Justice Futures)

“A story of separation, certainly that we are all living in, where people feel separate from their neighbors, separate from people living on the other side of the world, separate from the earth, separate from the impacts of their consumption on the planet[...] separate from the kind of mystical, magical nature of life on this planet, they feel separate from our evolution and the past, and separate from our descendants and the seven generations that are going to come after us.” (Samantha Power, BioFi Project)

“Christianity, that’s the root cause.” (Sikowis Nobiss, Great Plains Action Society)

Therefore the crisis is not only economic and ecological but at its core is spiritual (or cultural) which means we need “strategies around consciousness” (Sohrob Nabatian, Kalleopia Foundation) that involves transforming culture. This includes storytelling, art-based practices, plant medicine work, and narrative change work.

Social movements are key drivers of change - as they are key to redistributing power (which cannot be neglected in narrative work). However, social movements are fragmented and face challenges when collaborating. There are especially tensions between ecological movements and workers movements.

“There is traditionally lots of distrust between workers & environment movements: workers feel they are stopping factories. The Just Transition movement is trying to address this issue but needs more work and dialogue spaces.” (Ashish Kothari, Tapestry of Alternatives)

The future is plural (pluriverse); place-based; bio-diversity based; regenerative, community controlled.

“Culture needs to be place-based, through bioregions.” (Samantha Power, BioFi Project)

“Things are very much like contextually relevant and developing in a way that makes sense for that place, rather than being like too much informed or controlled by like the larger, abstract one that birthed it, or like a more, like a bigger version, or something like that.” (Madelyn Capozzi, Dark Matter Labs)

“So fundamental to this whole discussion is the understanding of the need for more people on the land, on the sea, in the forest, to support genuinely diversified systems, and they are localized system, and the food system is the most important, because the global food economy is the biggest contributor to every possible problem we’re facing.” (Helena Hodge, Local Futures)

Current legal/economic institutions do not have room for Life / ecocentric/ non-dualist worldviews.

“Like I tried so many different levers, and I again and again, saw how those institutions were so were structured in such a way that it became really difficult for them to embody ecocentric action or egocentric worldviews, or, you know, not, to mention a non dual worldview, right, where, you know, Gaia is one organism, where we’re a part of her. And so that’s kind of how I came to bioregionalism.” (Samatha Power, BioFi Project);

“There is a massive kind of cultural gap in the sense that, the way that the economic system that currently dominates works, has grown up from a mindset that is usually dualistic and that basically leaves us very much separated from the world that sustains us, and of which we’re a part.” (Jojo Mehta, Stop Ecocide International)

The bioregionalism movement is growing again. Bioregionalism can be considered the original way people lived (e.g Indigenous communities). It became a western means to connect communities to their land in the USA in the 1970/80/90s (especially in North America) but lost momentum. Since the polycrisis, it is growing in popularity again.

“Bioregionalism is at the forefront of conversations and requires you to think systemically.” (Martin Kirk, Novo Foundation)

On the other hand, the far right ideological machine that increasingly upholds separation/ domination are disciplined in their messages, well financed and are setting the agenda.

“The right is being funded, supported, where financial structures are put in place by the billions to fund their ideology of destruction.” (Céline Semaan Vernon, Slow Factory)

“As is often the case, the forces of power on the right, at least on the surface, are far more disciplined and collaborative with each other, partly because of their values around authority and hierarchy. Whereas the kind of common cause circumplex values, the progressive voices are far more likely to value diversity and independence and autonomy.” (Anonymous Interviewee)

The flow of capital must be channeled towards funding biocentric, post-capitalist experiments - especially those run by BIPOC communities. In addition, as land reunion projects are capital intensive, funders with aligned values should collaborate.

“I think the main tension that I see is is just really capital intensive. And, you know, this is kind of like what I wrote in there, that we are connected now with, I don’t know, maybe half dozen funders like us who kind of share enough of the same values and approach that we feel sort of like, okay, we really resonate with one another, but I don’t think any of us have the grants budgets to just buy big parcels of land. So I think there’s a structural limit in how philanthropy is set up, and the capital intensity of a land purchase, and then the market pressures and how those all interact that make it really hard.” (Sohrob Nabatian, Kalleopia Foundation)



Summary of Narrative Communities

Narrative communities: Actors that are engaged in a similar conversation using similar narratives over a sustained period of time.

We strive to zoom in on narrative communities where we see high potential for evolution. In this research, where possible, we also distinguished narrative communities or subgroups of them that were led by Indigenous and/or Black communities from those that were not so that the differences due to lived experiences, voices, frames, and/or logics could be examined. We identified **12 narrative communities** that are engaged in these discussions, and **placed them into 3 clusters**.

Cluster 1:

- **Greenwashing: Development & Growth¹²**
- **Greenwashing: Techno-Solutionists**
- **Liberatory Technology**

Cluster 2:

- **Rights of Nature**
- **Liberation & Justice**
- **Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized**

Cluster 3:

- **Crisis of Relationality**
- **Community Land Trusts**
- **Bioregional Governance**
- **Regenerative Foodways**
- **Possibility models**
- **Indigenous Lifeways**

¹² Communities 11 and 12 have been identified from previous research conducted by CHL on the [polycrisis](#) and [climate crisis](#), though our interviewees referenced these communities as the influential, mainstream and hegemonic narratives they are fighting against.

Table 1. Narrative communities and their attention, network and power¹³ lists and describes narrative communities based on how actors describe their work and the conversational, influential, and/or emerging spaces they are operating in.

Interviews did not discuss hegemonic narrative communities in detail (Greenwashing: Development & Growth; and Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists), although there is evidence for them in [Appendix 4. Road Map](#). The absence of these hegemonic narratives in our conversations is expected because of the nature of the interviewee group—they were recruited in this research as key actors who are converging around the intersection of land regeneration and the redistribution of resources with a shared intention of liberating land from the enclosures of capitalism and colonialism. In this sense, **our findings reflect a granular assessment of a narrative space that focuses on shift towards systems-transforming and ontologies of relationality¹⁴**

We identified 12 narrative communities and analyzed their Attention, Network and Power.

Attention, Network, Power Analysis: This analysis allows us to uncover frequency, strength and proliferation of specific narratives including which communities are most active and who are the most influential voices, by asking the following for each community.

- 1. Attention:** Where/when is the discussion happening?
- 2. Network:** What/who are the most influential nodes in the network—voices, actors, domains, platforms?
- 3. Power:** What are the power relations in the Narrative Community—who is dominant and where is the potential for narrative evolution?

¹³ This table was completed using an inductive, grounded theory approach: rather than using predefined theories on and categories for narrative communities. Data in this table were based on interview notes and general impressions from the interviews, rather than analyzing raw transcripts in detail.

¹⁴ Comparatively, in other research projects, we sought to draw a broader narrative space of all actors working on land issues, or climate issues (or the intersection of both), which therefore includes hegemonic narrative communities. See [Post Capitalist Philanthropy: Wealth as a Transition Pathway & Land Back to Right Relations Narrative Briefing](#)

Table 1. Narrative communities and their Attention, Network, and Power

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
<p>Greenwashing: Development & Growth¹⁵</p>	<p>This narrative community believes that climate change can be mitigated, while continuing development and growth agendas. More explicitly, the focus is on decoupling greenhouse gas emissions from economic growth. The conversation focus is on, for example, carbon credits or ways to incentivize reductions in carbon emissions as separate from economic growth. They are implicitly or explicitly, knowingly or unknowingly convinced that capitalism can work for the greater good. Land is viewed primarily as a commodity or asset to be managed or offset in service of economic growth. In the context of land justice, this community endorses market-based solutions, such as carbon sequestration projects or land conservation initiatives that allow continued development elsewhere.</p>		
	<p>This narrative community has existed since climate change became a global concern in the 1980's and since advocates of neoliberalism responded with anti-regulation efforts. Since public concern about the climate crisis has become mainstream, corporations and institutions are increasingly jumping on this trend and falsely conveying a more environmentally aware position while continuing to make a profit and not enacting real solutions/change. Central to conversations is carbon reductions (e.g., via carbon credits) as a solution, which is a new facade for profit-seeking and land grabbing corporate capitalism.</p>	<p>Actors and events that make up this community include the more explicit profit-seekers, such as the World Economic Forum, and Davos; to the more environmentally concerned institutions that nonetheless don't question the logic of capitalism such as the UN and COP28. Topics include green capitalism and impact investments. New actors in land grabbing: military, mining, pension funds, investment; big tech; sovereign wealth funds; pension funds; New investing countries like China; Gulf States for food security.</p>	<p>This community is a hegemonic one and is the largest in the broader narrative space at large—e.g., the global narrative space that our emerging narrative communities are situated within.</p>

¹⁵ Vogel and Hickels' (2023) recent work demonstrates that high-income countries would need to decouple CO2 and GDP ten-fold to meet their obligations under the Paris Agreement and current rates of decoupling are inadequate and not legitimately green: <https://a16z.com/the-techno-optimist-manifesto/> [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanph/article/PIIS2542-5196\(23\)00174-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanph/article/PIIS2542-5196(23)00174-2/fulltext)

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
<p>Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists¹⁶</p>	<p>This narrative community articulates that climate issues can be solved through innovation. Technology could, for example, provide alternatives to and tackle the carbon “problem”. In fact, Silicon Valley and tech will save us. There is little political analysis. Tech is embedded in profit-seeking, development-oriented social structures. The community tends to be tech-deterministic and apolitical.</p> <p>When it comes to land, land is viewed as a space for technological intervention, where innovations such as AI-driven agriculture, precision farming, or carbon capture projects can be deployed to optimize land use for environmental benefit. Land is a technical issue solvable through data, efficiency, and scaling of solutions, while sidestepping the political, historical, and social dimensions of land ownership, Indigenous rights, and the exploitation of marginalized communities.</p>		
	<p>The tendency of tech companies and startups to promote their products or services as environmentally friendly, often without substantial evidence, became particularly prominent in the 2000s and 2010s as the tech industry, centered in Silicon Valley, began to position itself as a leader in tackling climate change and environmental issues through innovative technological solutions.</p> <p>This community is predominantly made up of actors in the global North: policy-makers and governmental officials, corporations such as Microsoft, Society Groom, Google, ChatGPT, etc</p> <p>This community is another large hegemonic one in the global narrative space at-large, with strong influences on public ideas of solutions to the metacrisis.</p>	<p>This community is predominantly made up of actors in the global North: policy-makers and governmental officials, corporations such as Microsoft, Society Groom, Google, ChatGPT, etc</p>	<p>This community is another large hegemonic one in the global narrative space at-large, with strong influences on public ideas of solutions to the metacrisis.</p>

¹⁶ Andreessen Horowitz’ *The Techno-Optimist Manifesto* as an example: <https://a16z.com/the-techno-optimist-manifesto/>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Liberatory Technology	<p>This narrative community is concerned about how new technologies (especially decentralized technologies such as blockchain, and web3) can be at the center of redistributing and redesigning systems. Unlike the narrative community “Greenwashing: techno-solutionists”, this community strives to harness tech in a more decentralized manner for regenerative and liberatory ends. However, the community is not always imagining systems beyond traditional capitalist frameworks., nor rooted in a justice lens, and not significantly changing fundamental ontologies as it remains attached to “conservation” discourses and carbon oriented-solutions.¹⁷</p>		
	<p>This community blossomed during the development and popularization of decentralized technologies such as web3, blockchain, cryptocurrencies, and the regenerative and decentralized finance movements in the 2020’s. Actors in this community seek to shift the application of these technologies from capitalist pursuits to ecologically-minded decentralization and hacking new systems.</p>	<p>Web3, blockchain and decentralized finance activists; Data commoning movements; Land based DAOs (Decentralised Autonomous Organisations); Green cryptocurrencies</p>	<p>This narrative community is very small among the current space. In the broader narrative space at-large, this community risks collapsing into Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists due to its limited structural analysis of late-stage capitalism. Alternatively, it has a catalytic capacity to be the enabling infrastructure for systems transformation.</p>

¹⁷ <https://www.cryptoaltruism.org/blog/20-web3-projects-with-an-environmental-and-sustainability-focus>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Rights of Nature	<p>This narrative community focuses on leveraging the law to recognise the intrinsic value of nature. It includes conversations around Rights of Nature as well as Ecocide. It views “nature” and the environment as inherently and intrinsically of value independent of human assignment (ecocentrism).</p>		
	<p>The conversation around the legal rights of the natural world started in the 1980s and was popularized in 2008 when Ecuador recognized rights of nature in its Constitution. Ecocide has become more prominent in recent years. Narratives focus on the rights of nature and ecocide as unconventional but Western-based legal tools to protect land and/or hold accountability for environmental destruction. The conversations include legal personhood and criminal law to instill new value perspectives and taboos into public consciousness.</p>	<p>Organizations & social movements, (e.g. Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature; Pachamama Alliance; Earth Law Centre; Ecocidio Stop Ecocide International; EarthJustice; End Ecocide on Earth; Fridays for Future; XR), governments (e.g. Ecuador, Bolivia, New Zealand, India, Mexico [rights of nature]); Belgium, France, Bangladesh, Brazil [Ecocide])</p>	<p>Narratives are led by legal rather than public contexts; they are also more progressive in legal versus public contexts. This community is relatively small in this collective space.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Liberation and Justice	<p>This narrative community focuses on capitalism and colonialism as root causes of the metacrisis and countering hegemonic narratives, oppressive forces, and calling out harms and corporate responsibility.</p>		
	<p>Liberation movements (e.g., feminist, racial justice movements, Indigenous movements); and decolonization movements have existed for a long time, with a surge in the '60s and '70s and more recent surge over the pandemic (e.g., Black Lives Matters and recovery of unmarked grave sites). These movements have long viewed modern crises as interconnected. Narratives touch on building solidarity through information sharing, disclosure, and education to mobilize systems interventions. Gestures are made towards the pressing concerns of eroding biodiversity and the need to decentralize and reallocate power from where resources (e.g., philanthropy) is currently focused.</p>	<p>Several organizations in this research group were part of this narrative community. Organizations such as Intersectional Environmentalist, Earthrise, and Slow Factory are examples of this community.</p>	<p>This community is the largest in terms of the most prevalent response to identifying capitalism and colonialism as root causes of our meta crisis; the typical response is to dismantle them.</p>



Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized (A)	This narrative community overlaps with Liberation and Justice but, rather than focusing on dismantling, resisting, or uprooting explicit causes of our current systems, it endeavors to uplift Indigenous, Black, marginalized (e.g., BIPOC) and/or grassroots voices as embodied examples of pre existing systems or systems change.		
	Actors in this community understand the metacrisis requires them to become allies to marginalized communities. The attention focuses on highlighting the work that is being done but remains outside of mainstream conversations—work that has been led or practiced by marginalized communities. Narratives also include visions for governance systems that are led by marginalized communities or place them at the center.	The actors here are largely made up of activists, academics, and decolonization thought leaders. Those centering feminist and care practices as well as decentralization also fit here (e.g. within the collective include Slow Factory, Earthrise and Land Justice Futures).	Most of the participants referenced their ongoing efforts to uplift and/or support marginalized communities and voices. This community is pervasive in this research group, although influence is nuanced, depending on context and audience.

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
<p>Centring and Uplifting the Marginalized (B)¹⁸</p>	<p>This is a distinct subgroup of the Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized community led by Indigenous and other marginalized communities. Their leadership is actively working to decolonize systems.</p> <p>In this community, Indigenous communities are advocating for Indigenous sovereignty, and the need to recognize ongoing colonial systems and violences. They see issues faced by Indigenous people as inseparable from systemic and institutionalized issues that are affecting access to land and environmental sustainability. There are also conversations about lateral violence (e.g., internalizing the very power dynamics that need to be changed). Marginalized communities are also continuing to name the subtle co-opting that continues to occur in spaces seeking systems change (e.g., climate action replicating colonial powers and white supremacy).¹⁹</p>	<p>Indigenous organizations and movements (e.g., Land Back, Futuros Indigenas, food sovereignty movements, the Red Deal); Decolonizing Education for Peace in Africa (DEPA), La Via Campesina, Cancel the South Debt, workers strikes, etc. exemplify the subgroup.</p>	<p>Conversations led by Indigenous and Black voices also seek to dismantle colonial and capitalistic systems as necessary for their survival. The issues raised by them tend to inspire, lead, and create new pathways for movements within the larger Liberation and Justice space.</p>

¹⁸ Indigenous-led Liberation & Justice movements

¹⁹ “For instance, when we were fighting at Standing Rock, a lot of white folks showed up trying to help us, but it’s not that we needed the help there, like they could have gone to the Dakota Access Pipeline headquarters and fought there. They could have gone to the governments that exist that are allowing this to happen, and do that fight. That’s why I really appreciated the Wall Street protests, because I feel like that’s where white people were really getting it, like they were getting to the heart of the matter and that’s what needs to be done in terms of making that kind of change.” (Sikowis Nobiss, Great Plains Action Society)

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
<p>Crisis of Relationality</p>	<p>This community focuses on human-centrism (resulting in greed, selfishness, domination, and control) and separation from nature as root causes of the issues we see today. The focus is on restoring spiritual health through raising consciousness to seed care- and life-centric forms of relationality and interbeing. Narratives also include the need to view and hold issues with a trauma lens.</p>		
	<p>This conversation has become more coherent and popular as the public seeks reasons for the metacrisis that underlie fragilities in the current economic, political, and social system.</p>	<p>Indigenous activists and organizations (e.g Land Back, NDN Collective, Great Plains Action Society, Papawahkaritorito Trust), funders (e.g. Kalleopia Foundation, Christopher Reynolds), organizations and researchers focusing on radical relationality (e.g., Global Tapestry of Alternatives, Institute for Global Peacework), food sovereignty movements (A Growing Culture, Planting Justice, Navdanya International), regenerative movements, bioregional movements; creative publications (e.g., Atmos, Emergence Magazine)</p>	<p>This community is pervasive and large in the current space. References to human separation are most common in contemplating the root causes of the issues we see today.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Community Land Trusts	<p>A smaller community focused on pursuing different models of land ownership, where land is purchased so that it might be managed in an alternative way, moving from enclosure of land to being entrusted with the care of land.</p>		
	<p>The land trust still exists within a Western framework (e.g., to purchase land) but in an alternative, collective ownership enclosure. This model explores collective forms of decision-making versus individually based, hierarchical, or market-driven models that perpetuate exclusion.</p>	<p>Local communities and governments, including a growing youth-led movement; community land trust networks and projects such as Soul Fire Farm, Wild Seed Project, The North East Farmers of Color Land Trust (NEFOC), Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust, Bomazeen Land Trust, People’s Housing, and The Sogorea Te’ Land Trust.</p>	<p>This community is quite popular and holds potential as a transition pathway for alternative systems to be explored. This narrative community is pervasive among the research group.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Bioregional Governance	<p>A larger emerging community in comparison is bioregionalism. It is an example of prefigurative experiments and possibility models which has garnered so much attention that it now is becoming a stand-alone narrative community. This community distinguishes itself as both a philosophical movement and an empirical and experimental alternative. In this community, land management by ecological and geographical rather than political features is promoted.</p>		
	<p>The conversation around bioregionalism developed in the 1970s in the USA but has reemerged in the last few years with the metacrisis and people seeking another way of living. This emerging and regionally-focused narrative community proposes an alternative to conventional environmental views of preserving the environment via national parks and reserves. In lieu of human-made nation-state borders, land is defined according to ecological features (e.g., mountains and waterways). Communities are grouped according to their location within those features (rather than nationality or ethnicity). The core idea is that territory defines us (living species) and we are that territory and, hence, new forms of collective care can emerge.</p>	<p>NGOs, policymakers, activists and Indigenous peoples, bioregionalism researchers (e.g. Earth Regenerators, Planet Drum Foundation, Earth Equity Network, Cascadia, the Great Lakes Commons and BioFi Project)</p>	<p>This community is small but becoming more popular in seeking alternatives to community and governance structures that place land at the center.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Regenerative Foodways	<p>This narrative community is focused on redesigning food systems toward systems that are regenerative. These new systems can also emerge or be imagined as an outcome of restoring Indigenous lifeways. Various strains include regenerative agriculture, agroecology, and food sovereignty, which all recognize the fundamental right to control, decide and manage the means of producing the food we consume.</p>		
	<p>This conversation has always existed among rural worker movements, yet it has become more popular during the metacrisis. La Via Campesina, the international farmers' movement has made the concepts of food sovereignty and agroecology more widely known and popular. Food sovereignty is tied to land sovereignty: when we own our land, we can own the way we produce food, and we stop relying on external market forces. The core idea is Sovereignty. Sovereignty of Land and Food systems is how we protect/defend life.</p>	<p>Ecovillages such as OASA, Global Ecovillage Network, regenerative agriculture, Indigenous organizations and movements, food sovereignty movements such as La Via Campesina, NGOs, food systems activists, e.g. (A Growing Culture, AFSA [Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa], Navdanya International, Planting Justice)</p>	<p>This community is medium-sized and presents as living and/or imaginative alternative systems for governance, relationality, and thriving communities centered on food.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
<p>Possibility Models</p>	<p>This narrative community underscores the importance of possibility models—diverse ways of living that embody alternative, post-capitalist futures in real time. Rooted in prefigurative politics, it champions experiments that “prefigure” the values and systems we aim to create, serving as living examples of the future we envision. Rather than a single community, Possibility Models represents a framework that encompasses communities like Bioregional Governance, Community Land Trusts, and Regenerative Foodways, each of which illustrates how regenerative, just, and life-affirming systems can take shape today.</p>		
	<p>This is an emergent community. This community emphasizes experimentation and prototypes, which are empirical and realize alternative potentialities. Networks of prefigurative experiments are emphasized as important to offer possibility models and build confidence and imaginative capacities among the public toward another world that is possible. This community also holds space for plural possibilities.</p>	<p>This network comprises radical funders who want to divert funds into experiments in post-capitalism and regeneration; as well as organizations and activists designing and prototyping curricula, enabling infrastructure, and/or frameworks for social change - such as advocates in bioregionalism, community land trusts, regenerative food experiments etc.</p>	<p>“Prefigurative experiments” and “possibility models” are terms explicitly used by a few actors in this research group, although several others articulate ideas that are suggestive of this space. This area holds high potential as a syntropic direction or transition pathway towards systems transformation and plural ontologies. This community has become more prominent as people are trying to find alternatives to the current meta crisis and economic system that fuels it.</p>

Narrative Community	Attention	Network	Power
Indigenous Lifeways	<p>A smaller community but overlaps with Crisis of Relationality led by Indigenous communities focusing on restoring their lifeways through repatriation, land reunion, and a “coming home” to right relations. This community also overlaps with Liberation and Justice and Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized, recognizing that survival and persistence of Indigenous practices are inseparable colonial histories. The narratives also focus on restoring and/or protecting living and embodied practices.</p>		
	<p>This conversation has always existed among Indigenous and frontline communities and social movements, yet has edged further into the mainstream especially since research demonstrating that Indigenous people protect 80% of the world’s biodiversity has circulated in UN and global media spheres. Emphases in this community are on sustaining and reviving Indigenous knowledge and practices (e.g., foodways and medicines) through traditions made possible through land access and stewardship.</p>	<p>Indigenous people, including movements mentioned in Crisis of Relationality; movements derived from Indigenous lifeways such as La Via Campesina, Buen Vivir; Indigenous movements such as Futuros Indigenas, Land Back, Articulation of Indigenous Peoples in Brazil (APIB), Demarcação Ja (Demarcation Now!), and NDN Collective.</p>	<p>In this collective, references to Indigenous practices are common however Indigenous knowledge and knowledge holders comprise a small proportion of the space. The influence potential is high because of the existing work and interest in uplifting this community among other (e.g., non-Indigenous) thinkers.</p>



Linguistic Analysis

To better account for how narratives are crafted, we apply a representational framework for analysis drawing on Frame Semantics and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)²⁰.

We pulled exemplary excerpts from the interviews for each narrative community and analyzed these excerpts for semantic frames and conceptual metaphors. For this analysis, we selected the semantic frames and conceptual metaphors that were most evident and, among them, the most common two or three.²¹ For the detailed version of the linguistic analysis including an explanation of all the frames and metaphors used, see [Appendix 3](#).

A semantic frame is an underlying cognitive structure that organizes our thoughts and experiences into general (or specific) information categories activated by words that evoke a common conceptual domain. For example, when we talk about controversial public debates, the language used (*take sides, battleground, destroy one's arguments, etc.*) evokes the frame of War where the core elements of warfare such as 'winners and losers', 'territory', 'weapons', 'strategies' are mapped to our understanding of adversarial stances. In this sense, a frame can be thought of as a central organizing idea or storyline that provides meaning, that suggests "the essence" of an issue²². Frames set a specific train of thought in motion, communicating why an issue might be a problem, who or what might be responsible for it, and what should be done about it²³.

Similar to semantic frames, conceptual metaphors are cognitive mappings that enable us to understand more abstract ideas from our primary physical experiences in the world.

Through linguistic analysis, we can understand patterns of language use we found across the 12 narrative communities as well as the inner logic underlying different language choices.

²⁰ The semantic frames presented in this analysis are drawn from two repositories: [FrameNet](#) and [MetaNet Metaphor Wiki](#), both from ICSI at University of Berkeley, California. Other sources for the conceptual metaphors presented here are Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2008). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, and Kövecses, Z. (2010) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford University Press, USA; 2 Edition.

²¹ Note the original repository for conceptual metaphors was not available at the time of this research; we included conceptual metaphors from previous research that were relevant here (hyperlinked), and included additional ones (not hyperlinked) from a secondary repository. Metaphors that are not hyperlinked were drawn from this repository because the originating server for hyperlinked metaphors was unavailable: <https://web.archive.org/web/20060614003742/http://cogsci.berkeley.edu:80/lakoff/metaphors/>

²² Gamson, W. A., & Modigliani, A. (1987). The changing culture of affirmative action. *Research in political sociology*, 3(2), 137-177.

²³ Nisbet, M. C. (2009). Communicating climate change: why frames matter for public engagement. *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development*, 51(2), 12- 23.

Table 2. Common semantic frames and conceptual metaphors in each narrative community.

Narrative Community	Semantic Frames	Conceptual Metaphors
Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists: technology as solutions to metacrisis	Commercial_transaction	<i>MORALITY IS STRENGTH</i> <i>PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES</i>
Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists: technology as solutions to metacrisis	Judgment_communication Cause_to_make_progress Resolve_problem	<i>ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE</i> ²⁴ <i>MACHINES ARE PEOPLE</i> <i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i>
Liberatory Technology: technology provides enabling infrastructure for systems redesign	Cause_impact Resolve_problem Transition_to_a_state	<i>CREATING IS GIVING AN OBJECT</i> <i>CREATING IS MAKING</i> <i>ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE</i> <i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i>
Rights of Nature: nature/environment has intrinsic value independent of humans	Killing Legality Progression	<i>NATURE IS AN AGENT</i> <i>SOCIETY IS A PERSON</i>
Liberation and Justice: countering and calling out hegemonic narratives	Being_necessary Cause_change Confronting_problem	<i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS / CHILDREN</i> <i>IMPROVING A STATE IS MOTION TO A PREFERRED LOCATION</i>
Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized: uplifting community initiatives	Cause_change Supporting Social_connection	<i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i> <i>RIGHTS ARE TERRITORIES</i> <i>SOCIETY IS A BODY</i>
Crisis of Relationality: human-centrism and separation from nature as casual to societal issues	Becoming_separated Fragmentation_scenario Social_connection	<i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i> <i>RELATIONSHIP IS KINSHIP</i> <i>SOCIETY IS A PERSON</i>
Community Land Trusts: establishing community land trusts for alternative experiments	Becoming_aware Access_scenario Transition_to_a_state Giving_scenario	<i>ALTERNATIVES ARE DIFFERENT AVAILABLE PATHS</i> <i>NATURE IS AN AGENT</i> <i>ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE</i>
Bioregional Governance: philosophy for management based on ecological versus political features	Becoming_aware Transition_to_a_state	<i>BELIEFS ARE LOCATIONS</i> <i>ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE</i> <i>WELL-BEING IS WEALTH</i>

²⁴ These conceptual metaphors come from [MetaNet Metaphor Wiki](#)

Narrative Community	Semantic Frames	Conceptual Metaphors
Regenerative Foodways: new and emergent regenerative food systems	Becoming_aware Resolve_problem Transition_to_a_state	<i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i> <i>ORGANIZATION IS PHYSICAL STRUCTURE</i>
Possibility Models: experiments in post-capitalist, regenerative living	Cause_change Experimentation Freeing_from_confinement	<i>ADDRESSING SOCIAL PROBLEMS IS TREATING A PHYSICAL AFFLICTION</i> <i>ALTERNATIVES ARE DIFFERENT AVAILABLE PATHS</i> <i>IDEAS ARE OBJECTS</i>
Indigenous Lifeways: restoring Indigenous ways, rematriation, land reunion, and right relations	Indigenous_origin Recovery Responsibility Social_connection	<i>NATURE IS AN AGENT</i> <i>NATURE IS A WEB</i> <i>PERCEPTION IS RECEPTION</i> <i>RESPONSIBILITIES ARE POSSESSIONS</i>

Summary of Linguistic Analysis

Most of the frames of the narrative communities (beyond the hegemonic ones) tended to be proactive frames in which communities were focusing on future resolutions and alternative systems in response to the crisis (e.g. the frame *Transition_to_a_state*; *Cause_change*) - with only one large community, **Liberation and Justice**, using reactive frames focusing on the fight against phenomena causing the compounding crises (e.g. *Confronting_Problem*). **This implies the conversation around land regeneration is oriented towards constructing the future rather than deconstructing the present. We can infer that land is a fertile lever for reimagining just and regenerative systems and not merely getting stuck in critiquing the past.**

IDEAS ARE OBJECTS is a metaphor that was present across all the narrative communities. The metaphor, *ORGANIZATION IS A PHYSICAL STRUCTURE* was also prevalent, appearing in several of the narrative communities. These metaphors largely suggest that actors are conceptualizing the new systems and ideas using concrete, physical representations of creation and construction, and that they might view these new systems as tangible pathways.

Whereas common and pervasive semantic frames and conceptual metaphors among the narrative communities characterizes common ways of conceptualizing narratives, unique frames and metaphors highlight unique ways of thinking about root causes. Thus, **becoming_aware** and **Social_connection** is common among the narrative communities **outside the hegemonic ones**. This implies that expanding one's consciousness/way of seeing and improved relationality are stressed as necessary for change (See road map in [Appendix 4](#)). **We can infer that cultural and ontological interventions are important when it comes to shifting public and political discourse around land ownership models.**

In some communities, the semantic frames that are unique to them might be expected, for example: Killing, Legality, and Possession in **Rights of Nature**; Becoming_separated and Fragmentation_scenario in **Crisis of Relationality**; and Access_scenario or Giving_scenario in Community Land Trusts. Notably, Recovery and Responsibility are unique to **Indigenous Lifeways**, where Indigenous actors express their ongoing work to preserve and transmit knowledge and practices as land stewards and/or guardians.

In addition, **the use of metaphor RELATIONSHIP IS KINSHIP reimagines relationality as deeper, more intimate, and familial forms, while NATURE IS A WEB encourages a vision of nature as complex interconnections that we are inherently part of.** The metaphor SOCIETY IS A BODY also reinforces a vision of concerted action and collective oneness (that perhaps can move, is living, and requires healing). **Interestingly, WELL-BEING IS WEALTH suggests a new way of envisioning and defining wealth as an alternative to money.**

Finally, specific to the hegemonic communities: **Greenwashing: Development & Growth** and **Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists**, the pervasive use of the frame of **Commercial_transaction** indicates that the economy is still being used despite supposed decoupling of greenhouse gas reductions and economic activity; in other words, statements about greenhouse gas reductions and carbon credits are made while thinking about economic activity. **Cause_to_make_progress** and **Resolve_problem** frames are also used to demonstrate technology can advance society, or resolve its problems. The metaphor MORALITY IS STRENGTH enhances perceptions of (ego) power in demonstrating morality in the public eye. Metaphor PEOPLE ARE COMMODITIES further reinforces economic-based logics, while metaphor MACHINES ARE PEOPLE reinforces the idea that technology can operate with human capabilities or replace roles played by humans in society.



Narrative Mapping

A mapping is a representation of the narrative space where we use axes to present the key patterns of the narrative space at the time of the research. Through the mapping, we assess narrative communities' potential for evolution. The potential for evolution of a narrative community refers to its capacity to bring the narrative space, and therefore culture as a whole, towards the desired social, economic and ecological transition that is needed to end exploitation, extraction and destruction of all forms of Life.

Justice plus Ontological shift: At CHL we believe that in order to transition out of the metacrisis, we need to marry demands of justice with a concurrent shift in ontologies—the very ways we view, understand, sense, relate and engage with the world.²⁵ As Philosopher Bayo Akomolafe has argued: “Demands for social justice may get us a seat at the table, but they will never let us leave the house of modernity”. To leave the house of modernity, we need new ontologies. We call this strategy “justice plus onto-shift”.²⁶

Justice: we map narrative communities along a “justice” spectrum, moving from injustice (non-acknowledgement of the breakdown/metacrisis and a reinforcement of the existing system) towards justice (exposing problems and addressing injustices, often by looking into the past and deconstructing or criticizing the current system. The most evolved end of the justice spectrum, in addition to healing past injustices, emphasizes transforming the system.

Ontology (ways of being, sensing, and/or relating): we map communities along a spectrum of separation (one way of knowing or understanding, which produces monocultures) towards relationality (a realization that current ontologies are not sufficient to address the current metacrisis). The most evolved end of the spectrum emphasizes a plurality of ontologies that are based on radical relationality: polycultures of knowing and being.

We combine **Justice-Ontology** axes to help us visualize each community's evolution along the justice and ontology spectrums. This helps us strategise for our narrative intervention: how narratives can not only transform the system through justice demands, but also entail an ontological shift in order to truly and sustainably transform the system from its roots.

We mapped narrative communities and summarized our rationale in **Table 4**. While their size reflects their gravity (e.g., potential to influence and hence draw other narratives into their space), their location reflects our assessment of their positioning along Justice-Ontology axes and potential for a Justice-plus-Onto-shift. FIGURE 1 shows a map of the narrative communities we defined in this work, along with the two hegemonic ones, in the narrative landscape as it pertains to land.

²⁵ <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/territories-of-transition-land-back-to-right-relations-briefing/embodying-indigeneity/>

²⁶ <https://www.postcapitalistphilanthropy.org/knowledge>

Figure 1. Map of narrative communities along Justice-Ontology axes

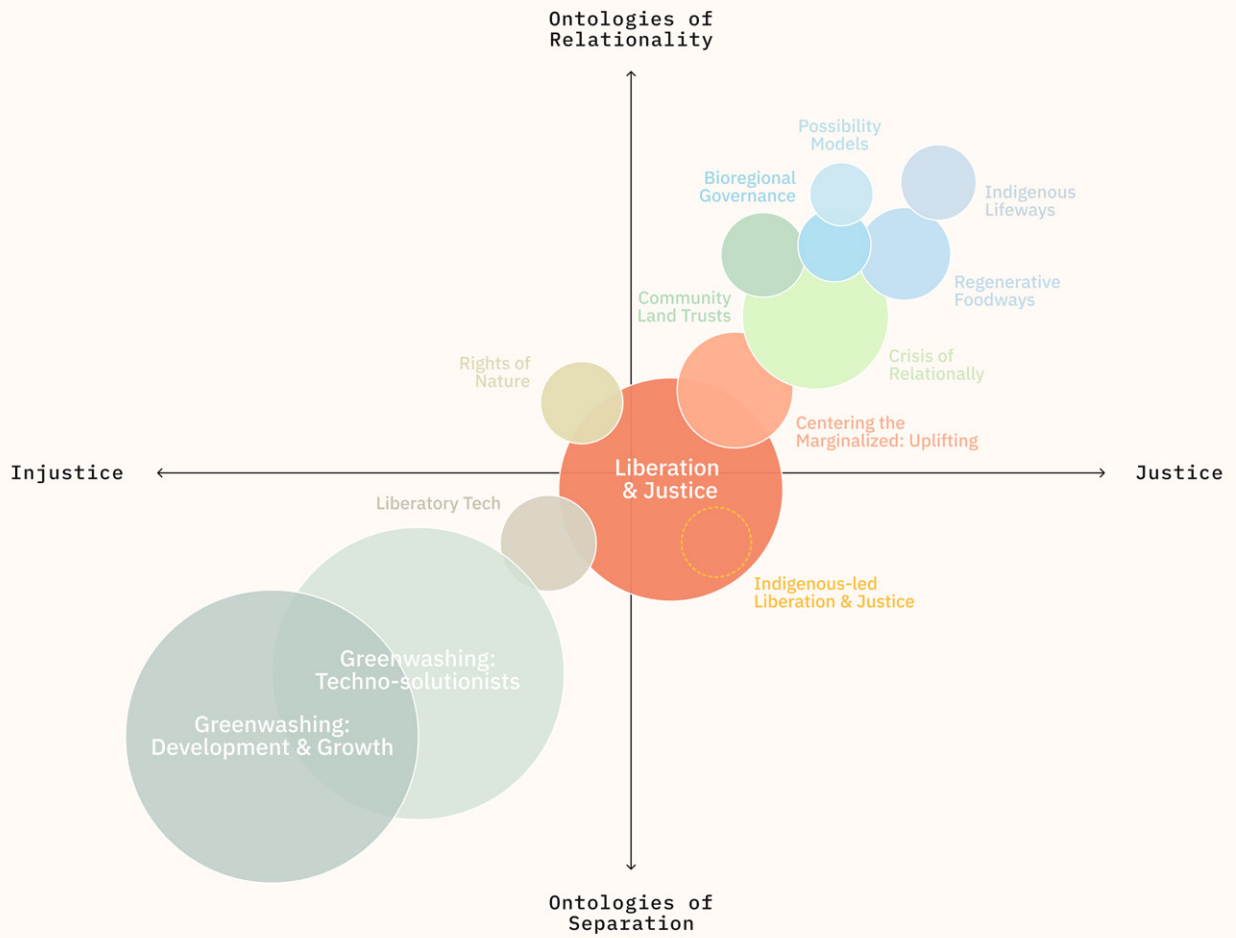


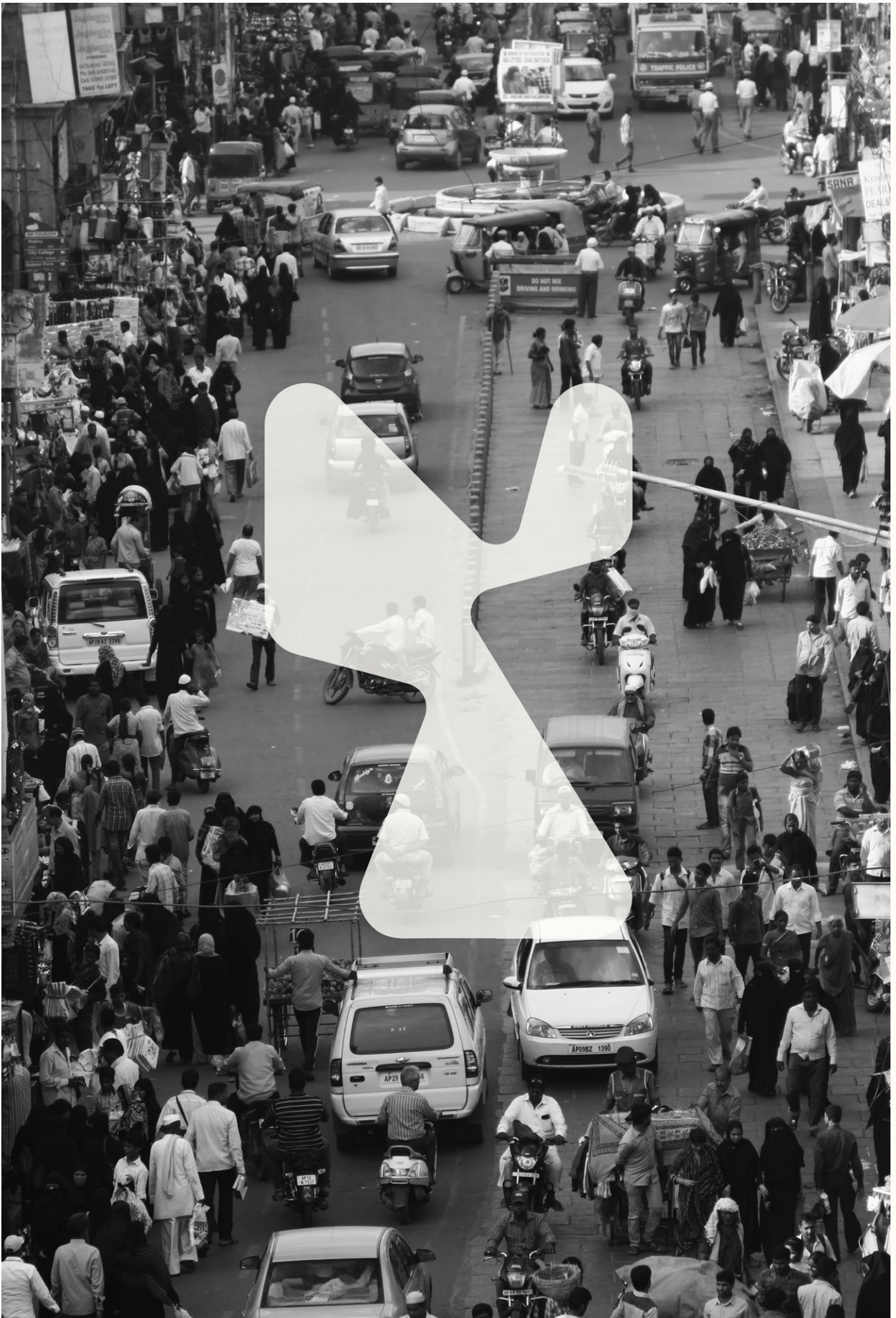
Table 4. Mapping - justice & ontology axis

Narrative Community	Potential for evolution
<p>Greenwashing: Development & Growth: continuing economy while reducing greenhouse gas emissions</p>	<p>This is the largest community in the narrative landscape and also characterizes the Window of Discourse (see below). This community is situated on the lowest end of the Justice and Ontology spectrum as it exemplifies what is dominant in the current system (reinforces injustices) and comprises logics and belief systems that reinforce ontologies of separation and monoculture (as outlined in our Linguistic Analysis).</p>
<p>Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists: technology as solutions to metacrisis</p>	<p>This community is also large and dominates the narrative landscape. It is slightly evolved compared to Greenwashing: Development & Growth as it identifies a change in the system could be made possible through technology, although why change is needed is not necessarily attributed to justice nor ontology. It also overlaps with Development Growth and Greenwashing for its greenwashing quality and lack of addressing development or growth as a key contributor to issues in the system.</p>
<p>Liberatory Technology: technology provides enabling conditions for systems transformation</p>	<p>Liberatory Tech is a medium-sized community within discussions on land regeneration and capital redistribution, distinct from Greenwashing Techno-Solutionists in its commitment to addressing social, political, and economic injustices. This community sees technology as a pathway to liberation—freedom from oppressive and exploitative systems—and works through open-source platforms, peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, and decentralized governance to democratize resources and empower individuals.</p> <p>While Liberatory Tech holds potential catalytic power in the narrative space, this remains unrealized until it fully grasps the interconnectedness of all forms of oppression. Recognizing and addressing these root causes is essential for unlocking true transition and liberation. By adopting a justice lens and imagining beyond the traditional capitalist framework challenging the foundational structures of separation and domination, this community can activate its transformative potential, positioning technology as the enabling infrastructure to serve collective well-being and systemic change.</p>

Narrative Community	Potential for evolution
<p>Rights of Nature: nature/environment has intrinsic value independent of humans</p>	<p>This community remains small because its narratives are largely confined to legal contexts rather than broader public discourse. Positioned in the middle of the injustice-justice axis, this community actively recognizes and counters injustices within the current system but relies on Western legal logics to influence change, placing it in the center of the ontology axis.</p> <p>Western legal systems, by their nature, struggle to accommodate relational and interconnected worldviews due to their inherently anthropocentric and transactional frameworks. For instance, granting “personhood” to rivers or forests within this system, while significant, still frames these entities within a human-centric, rights-based model. Achieving true ontological change would require not only using existing legal structures but fundamentally rethinking the assumptions and values that underlie them, moving toward frameworks that honor ecological and relational perspectives beyond the limitations of rights-based language.</p> <p>Indigenous Kaupapa Māori interviewee, Jessica Hutchings, articulates this limit: <i>“It’s about land back to right relationships, you know, and so not having to lean into the house of the colonizer to get legal permissions to enact those right relationships, but just taking that step forward and enacting it right now.”</i></p>
<p>Liberation and Justice: countering and calling out hegemonic narratives</p>	<p>This community is the largest among the actors we interviewed, focusing on recognizing injustices within the current system and the pressing need for transformation by challenging and calling out dominant narratives. Positioned near the center of the justice axis, this community’s narrative gravity leans toward responsive and reparative approaches—primarily focused on countering and addressing the flaws of the existing system rather than advancing narratives that outline pathways for deep, systemic transformation.</p> <p>Within this broader community, Indigenous-led movements form a distinct subgroup, leading efforts toward transformation and transition. These actors actively work to decolonize systems and question ontologies of separation, pushing the community toward a foundational reimagining of relationships, governance, and structures that honors relationality and interconnectedness.</p>
<p>Centering & Uplifting the Marginalized: uplifting community initiatives</p>	<p>This community shares common ground with Liberation and Justice in its recognition of systemic injustices and its commitment to dismantling oppressive structures. However, it is further along the Justice-Ontology spectrum due to its focus on uplifting marginalized narratives as a pathway for transformation. This emphasis on upliftment brings greater ontological plurality, recognizing diverse ways of sense-making beyond dominant paradigms. Yet, the potential for deep systemic transformation remains somewhat limited, as the practice of uplifting is not always rooted in embodied or lived alternatives that can directly challenge and reshape existing systems.</p>

Narrative Community	Potential for evolution
<p>Crisis of Relationality: human-centrism and separation from nature as casual to societal issues</p>	<p>This community is widely represented among actors, either explicitly or implicitly through their language and framing. Recognizing injustices through a relational lens, this community emphasizes the importance of repairing relationships with both human and more-than-human beings as a pathway to systems transformation. As such, it is positioned toward the spectrum of justice and relationality, advocating for change that honors interconnectedness and mutual care as foundational principles.</p>
<p>Community Land Trusts: establishing community land trusts for alternative experiments</p>	<p>This community is relatively small among actors in this research, who referenced initiatives using community land trusts as a way to enclose land within a communal framework, creating a space where new possibilities for land stewardship can be explored. This approach shifts its position along the ontology spectrum, as it reimagines ownership through a collective lens. It is also positioned slightly further along the justice axis, as it often embodies material change inspired by justice-oriented narratives (e.g., land back efforts sometimes utilize community land trusts to reclaim land). However, despite its justice orientation, this community still operates within the framework of land purchase and ownership, which limits its transformative potential in reimagining deeper systems of land stewardship.</p> <p>Nevertheless, community land trusts intersect meaningfully with Indigenous Lifeways, Regenerative Foodways, and Bioregional Governance, as these narrative communities explore models of care, regeneration, and place-based governance within the trust structure. By incorporating these diverse perspectives, community land trusts open a pathway for blending material change with relational and regenerative practices, creating a foundation upon which more profound systems transformation might be cultivated.</p>
<p>Bioregional Governance: philosophy for management based on ecological versus political features</p>	<p>This community is prevalent among actors in this research who adopt bioregional approaches to governance, presenting a pathway that addresses key challenges identified by the Crisis of Relationality and Liberation and Justice communities. While Crisis of Relationality emphasizes the need to restore connections among human and more-than-human entities, and Liberation and Justice seeks to dismantle structures of oppression, this bioregional approach offers a grounded response through governance aligned with ecological realities.</p> <p>By prioritizing land management based on ecological boundaries—such as watersheds, ecosystems, and habitats—over arbitrary political lines, this community embodies a relational philosophy that respects the natural interdependence of all beings. This approach not only supports justice for marginalized ecological communities but also creates frameworks for living in harmony with the land, moving from critique to constructive transformation. By embedding plural ontologies that honor the diverse ecological features of each region, bioregional governance serves as a living example of systems transformation, translating relational and justice-oriented principles into actionable, place-based practices.</p>

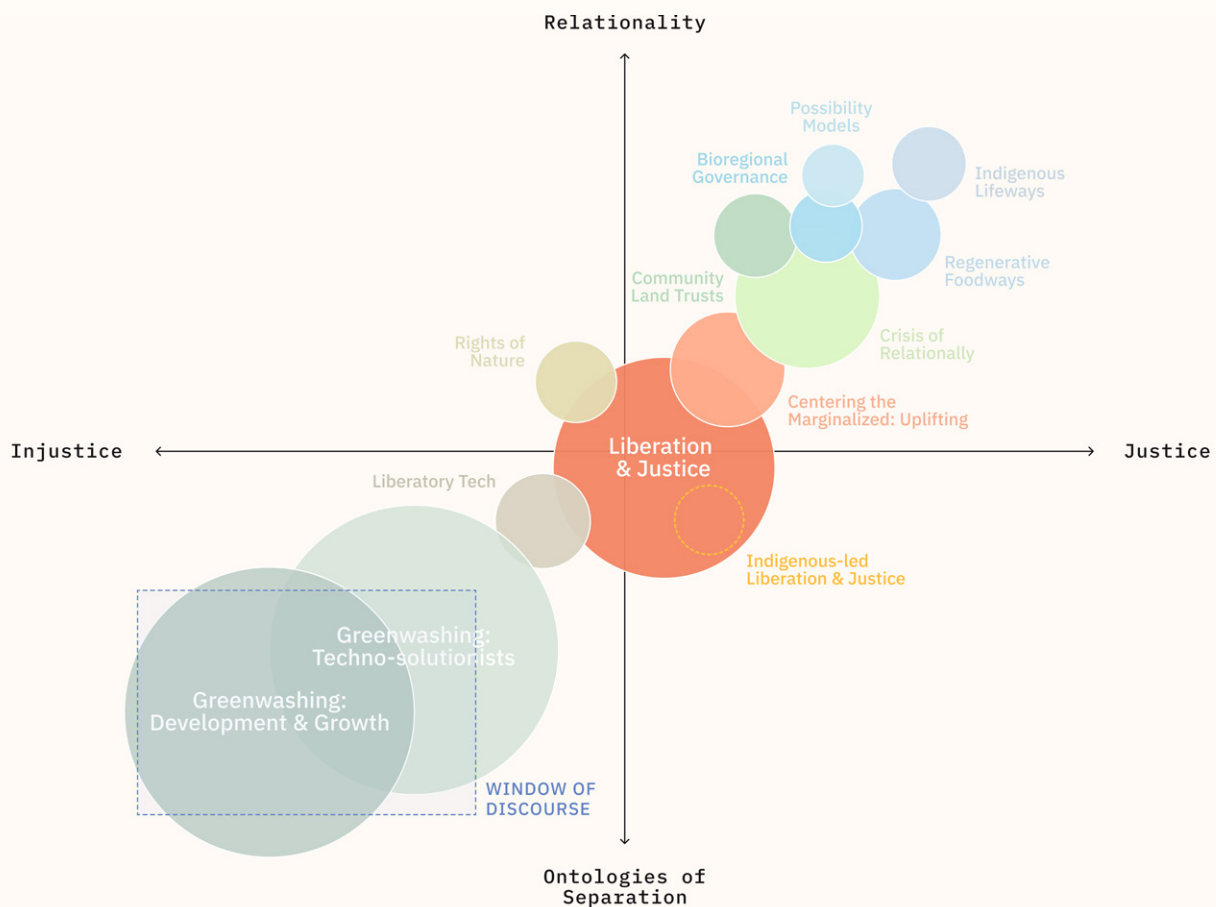
Narrative Community	Potential for evolution
<p>Regenerative Foodways: new and emergent regenerative food systems</p>	<p>This community is medium-sized and closely connected to Indigenous Lifeways, as many narratives around Indigenous practices include Indigenous foodways, which may be seen as “new” foodways within Western frameworks. Additionally, food sovereignty and agroecology movements within this community often originate from peasant and Indigenous communities, which places this community relatively high on both the justice and ontology axes. However, not all “new” foodways are Indigenous-sourced; for example, regenerative agriculture is often rooted in Western contexts and lacks the systems-transforming, plural-cultural aspects found in Indigenous foodways. As a result, this community is positioned lower on the justice and ontology axes compared to those with stronger Indigenous foundations.</p>
<p>Possibility models: experiments in post-capitalist, regenerative living</p>	<p>The Possibility Models community, though small, occupies a highly evolved space within the narrative landscape. This community functions more as an adaptable framework than as a fixed entity, requiring content and examples—such as bioregional approaches, community land trusts, and other regenerative experiments—to bring it to life. At its core, Possibility Models represent an ideal vision of transformative, post-capitalist alternatives grounded in relational ontologies. These models emphasize interconnected, justice-oriented systems that challenge dominant paradigms by offering real-world pathways to systemic change.</p> <p>The Possibility Models framework extends across sectors—philanthropy, technology, Indigenous sovereignty, and social justice—offering a unifying and practical lens through which to approach breakdowns within current systems. By framing these breakdowns as opportunities to explore and test regenerative alternatives, Possibility Models provides a powerful trope for describing practical approaches that address both immediate challenges and the systemic transformations needed to achieve long-term resilience.</p> <p>While still nascent, this community holds significant potential to catalyze deep transformation by embodying frameworks that prioritize mutual care, ecological balance, and community sovereignty. As Possibility Models continue to integrate diverse experiments, it becomes a living blueprint for reimagining social, economic, and ecological systems—a guiding reference point for those seeking to move beyond critique toward creating regenerative futures.</p>
<p>Indigenous Lifeways: restoring Indigenous ways, repatriation, land reunion, and right relations</p>	<p>Narratives are actively systems-transforming (e.g., gesture towards justice for Indigenous people), emphasize relationality with all beings, and are plural in terms of ontologies (e.g., Indigenous ontologies thriving and coexisting within the context of Western and/or other dominant ones). Alternatives are practiced through embodied experience and transmission. This community is small and led by Indigenous actors.</p>



Window of Discourse

The idea of the “**window of discourse**” is a descriptive model for understanding how ideas in society change over time and influence politics - and helps us visualize the mapping and evolution of the narrative space towards the desired point of evolution.

Figure 2. Map of Window of Discourse



The “window of discourse” describes the range of ideas the public is willing to accept: what sits in the window is what is considered common sense. In other words, the window is where the narrative gravity is concentrated in the narrative space. When assessing the broader narrative space around land regeneration and the redistribution of capital, we can see **the window of discourse is located in the bottom left quadrant**. This is where the two hegemonic communities sit (Greenwashing: Development & Growth and Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists) **whose narratives of achieving economic growth alongside limited climate interventions (such as reducing carbon emissions) are setting the boundaries of political and public acceptability.**²⁷

²⁷ <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-06-the-carbon-fixation-how-philanthropy-and-aid-miss-the-real-crisis/>

The common sense narrative around land specifically, is that land is viewed primarily as a commodity or asset to be managed or offset in service of economic growth. This narrative endorses market-based solutions, such as carbon sequestration projects or land conservation initiatives. However, market-based solutions to land transitions, or climate interventions more broadly are not transformative, cannot adequately address the complex, systemic nature of climate change, and maintain the dangerous illusion that the economy can grow without fundamentally altering its consumption-driven, fossil fuel-dependent structure. In addition, these “solutions” sidestep the political, historical, and social dimensions of land ownership, Indigenous rights, and the exploitation of marginalized communities.²⁸ For example, carbon offset projects constitute a new form of land grabbing and dispossession.²⁹

Shifting the Window of Discourse: from the “carbon fixation” to “possibility models”

As well as a descriptive tool, the “window of discourse” is also a strategic tool to help us see where we want to evolve the narrative space and shift public norms and culture. We want to shift the window by strategically pushing the far edge of what is considered acceptable - towards the top right quadrant where interventions are post-capitalist (transformative, just, regenerative, anti-growth) and post-anthropocentric (grounded upon ontologies of relationality and interdependence with the natural world). In other words:

- 1. We want to disrupt the public, political, and philanthropic fixation on carbon³⁰ as a transition pathway out of the climate crisis.** Indeed, carbon fixes - while important - when not tethered to post-capitalist ambitions, are inherently non-transformative, non-systemic, and perpetuate the issues they apparently try to resolve. Carbon solutions remain forms of greenwashing unless they attempt to address the root cause of the crises.
- 2. We want to make common sense a pursuit of climate solutions that *do* address root causes of the crises: post-capitalist, post-extractive alternatives** that prioritize justice, equity, and regeneration and biodiversity restoration. Narrative communities around land-based initiatives attempting to move beyond the carbon fixation sit in the top right quadrant. We want to shift the window of discourse there.

²⁸ As we can see through the language used by the hegemonic narrative communities, their underlying assumption is that the world could be perceived as a continuing economy of, for example, commercial transactions (*Commercial transaction*) with people as machines (*MACHINES ARE PEOPLE*). The logic is that the economy can continue (to grow) separately from a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. This is exemplified by the discourse focusing on carbon credits and investment in carbon credits, as well as various technologies that could be used to track them.

²⁹ Fairhead, James, Melissa Leach, and Ian Scoones. “Green grabbing: a new appropriation of nature?” *Journal of peasant studies* 39, no. 2 (2012): 237-261 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03066150.2012.671770>; Stein, S. et al. (2024) ‘Education beyond green growth’, *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJ-CIE)*, 8(2). doi:10.7577/njcie.5618.; Stein, S. et al. (2020) ‘From “Education for sustainable development” to “Education for the end of the world as we know it”’, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(3), pp. 274–287. doi:10.1080/00131857.2020.1835646.

³⁰ <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-06-the-carbon-fixation-how-philanthropy-and-aid-miss-the-real-crisis/>

These post-capitalist climate solutions are representative in narrative communities such as Bioregional Governance; Community Land Trusts; Regenerative Foodways; Indigenous Lifeways. They represent “possibility models” or prefigurative experiments for land-based transition pathways out of the meta-crisis. As outlined in the Insights section, prefigurative politics refers to models of living in the present that reflect (or “prefigure”) the alternative futures we wish to usher in³¹. They offer “possibility models” for what post-capitalism can look like, inspire the transition, and build confidence among the public that another world is possible. **This is where the public, political, and philanthropic common sense should evolve towards.**

The Importance of Unknown Possibility Models

As described in the Insights section, when thinking about post-capitalist alternatives, it is also vital to cultivate space for alternatives that remain unknown and emergent, rather than imposing or predefining prescriptive solutions for the future.³² There is an explicit hesitation to predefine solutions and a caution around, perhaps unintentionally, perpetuating the same systemic harms that are pervasive today; as another example, marginalized communities are so presently defined as ever needing to focus on survival in an oppressive system that it is difficult to conceptualize an alternative role where that was not necessary.

The Narrative Mapping section allowed us to assess the narrative communities’ relation to justice and ontology, which revealed how evolved in the narrative space they are towards post-capitalism and post-anthropocentrism. The window of discourse and where it should be shifted towards was outlined. The last phase of the CHL methodology is the Reframe or Recode phase, which suggests narrative reframes that aim to evolve narrative communities towards the top right quadrant in a step by step manner (and therefore shift the window of discourse). Before the Reframe section, we share the narrative vectors identified and the evolutionary capacity of the communities.

³¹ <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/prefigurative-politics>

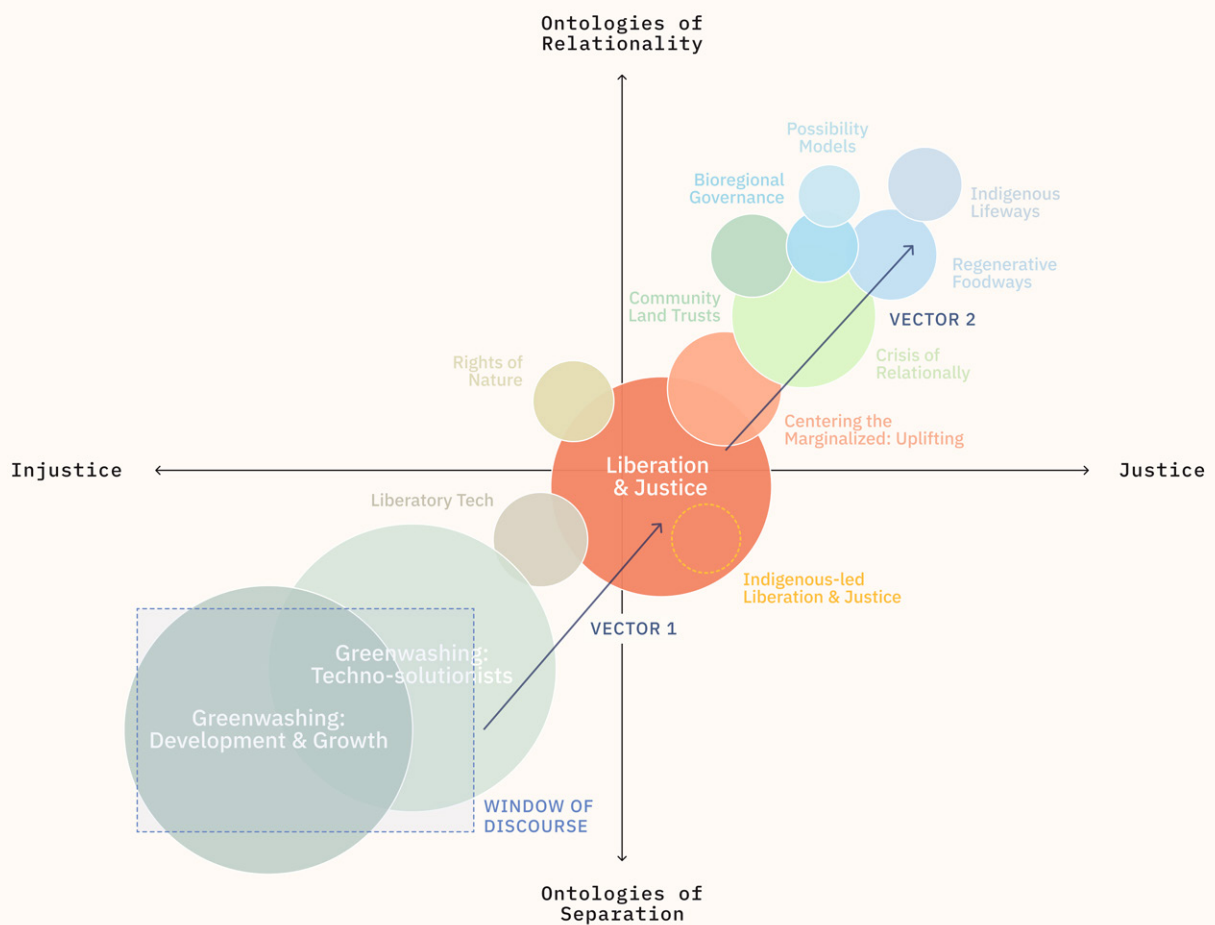
³² Literature on Western versus Indigenous knowledge and decolonizing methodologies frequently highlight humility and acknowledging ontological limits as necessary for community engagement and collaborative relationships. Vanessa Andreotti’s *Hopsicing Modernity* book is becoming more popular and was referenced by participants. Bayo Akomolafe’s work on emergence also articulates these ideas. Other examples include Alnoor Ladha and Lynn Murphy’s *Postcapitalist Philanthropy* book.

Narrative Vectors

Plotting the narrative communities on the map enabled us to see patterns of the narrative space and compare the evolutionary capacity of each narrative community. **The graph in Figure 3 plots the current pathways of evolution of the narrative communities we are seeing in the narrative space. We call these pathways narrative vectors** (the blue arrows on the graph below).

Narrative vectors: A descriptive tool that enables us to further map the current narrative space, by identifying specific pathways between narrative communities or clusters of narrative communities. These vectors enable us to see what is happening and if communities have a potential to evolve or not.

Figure 3. Narrative community map showing vectors 1 and 2



Vector 1: From Greenwashing to Liberation and Justice

In the bottom-left quadrant of the narrative landscape, we find communities like Greenwashing: Development & Growth and Greenwashing: Techno-solutionists. These communities dominate much of the attention and power in the narrative space, shaping resource flows and determining the trajectory of outcomes. Their focus is typically on carbon reduction and sustainable development within the growth paradigm, but often without addressing the deeper systemic structures—namely, private ownership, capitalist growth, extraction, and dispossession. While these narratives claim to address the ecological crisis, they frequently reinforce the very systems that perpetuate inequality and environmental degradation by relying on surface-level reforms rather than fostering systemic transformation.

A shift toward a holistic, justice-centered understanding of systemic change is essential. The Liberatory Technology community holds significant potential to advance Liberation and Justice, but this potential will only be realized if they anchor their vision of decentralized futures in a political framework that is imagining systems beyond traditional capitalist frameworks and grounded in liberation and solidarity. Our challenges are not technological but deeply cultural, rooted in entrenched systems of separation and oppression. Only by confronting these foundational beliefs can technology contribute meaningfully to a future of interconnected, liberated systems.

The vector in this space points toward a shift from reformist, carbon-focused interventions to more comprehensive, justice-centered approaches. This transition requires moving beyond a carbon-centric view and recognizing that addressing the ecological crisis demands an integrated approach that tackles the intertwined issues of social justice, economic inequality, and colonial legacies. **These communities must evolve to understand that justice and ecological regeneration are inseparable and that true systemic change cannot occur without addressing both simultaneously.**

Vector 2: From Liberation and Justice to Possibility Models

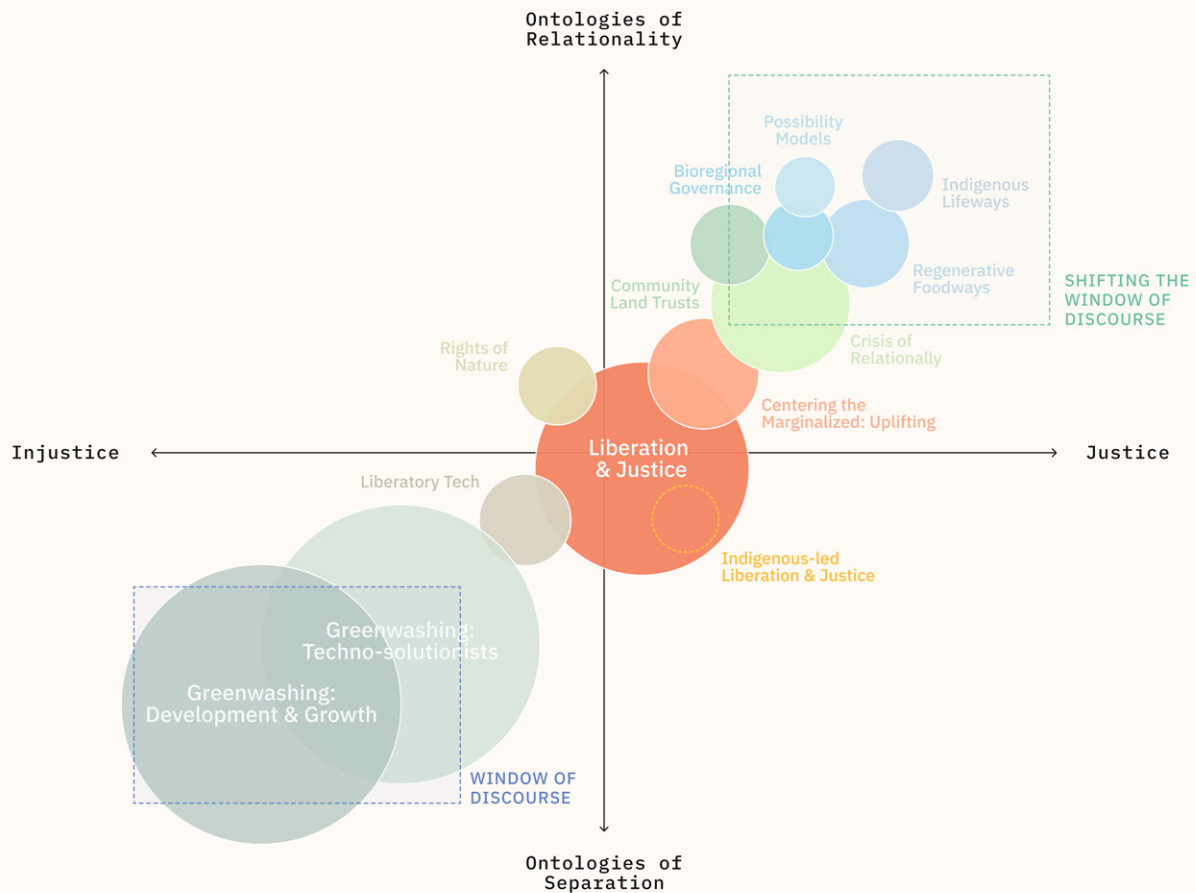
The Liberation and Justice and Centering and Uplifting the Marginalized narrative communities play a crucial role in the transition landscape by addressing historical and ongoing injustices. Their work to challenge entrenched systems of power and amplify marginalized voices is not only necessary but forms an essential capacity for systemic transformation. By foregrounding justice, these communities lay the groundwork for authentic change, ensuring that any new systems built are rooted in equity and repair.

This justice-oriented focus is inherently responsive, addressing immediate injustices while holding space for broader transformation. Yet, to fully realize systemic change, there is a needed shift toward proactive, preparative approaches that envision and build new structures. Here, the vector moves from a critical justice stance toward Possibility Models, which exemplify future-focused engagement through communities like Bioregional Governance, Community Land Trusts, Regenerative Foodways, and Indigenous Lifeways. These communities provide concrete pathways for transition by demonstrating responsive and preparative approaches in governance, food production, and land stewardship.

Together, these justice-oriented and possibility-driven approaches form a cohesive transition capacity. By addressing past and present injustices while constructing regenerative systems, they create a grounded response to the metacrisis, integrating justice and renewal into every step of the process.

The Liberation and Justice and Centering and Uplifting the Marginalized communities contribute a valuable systems approach to addressing injustices; however, their efforts toward transformative change would be strengthened by a deepened ontological reimagination. The emerging Crisis of Relationality narrative community has the potential to catalyze this shift, encouraging a movement toward new ways of seeing and being. **By fostering essential “ontological shifts,” Crisis of Relationality can support the Liberation and Justice efforts in evolving from critique to the active creation of new systems, rooted in interdependence and relationality.** This integrative approach ensures that justice-oriented work is not only reparative but also generative, paving the way for systemic transformation that is holistic, interconnected, and life-affirming.

Figure 4. *Shifting the window of discourse*



Narrative Objective: Defining an Orienting Framework

Our narrative objective is to build a semantic framework that serves as both a high-level guide and a practical tool for navigating systemic change. This framework helps narrative communities position themselves within the broader landscape of transition, clarifying where the window of discourse needs to shift to foster deeper cultural and systemic transformations. By challenging the “carbon fixation” and greenwashing narratives that dominate public discourse, we aim to push the boundaries of what is considered acceptable towards just, post-capitalist, and regenerative alternatives.

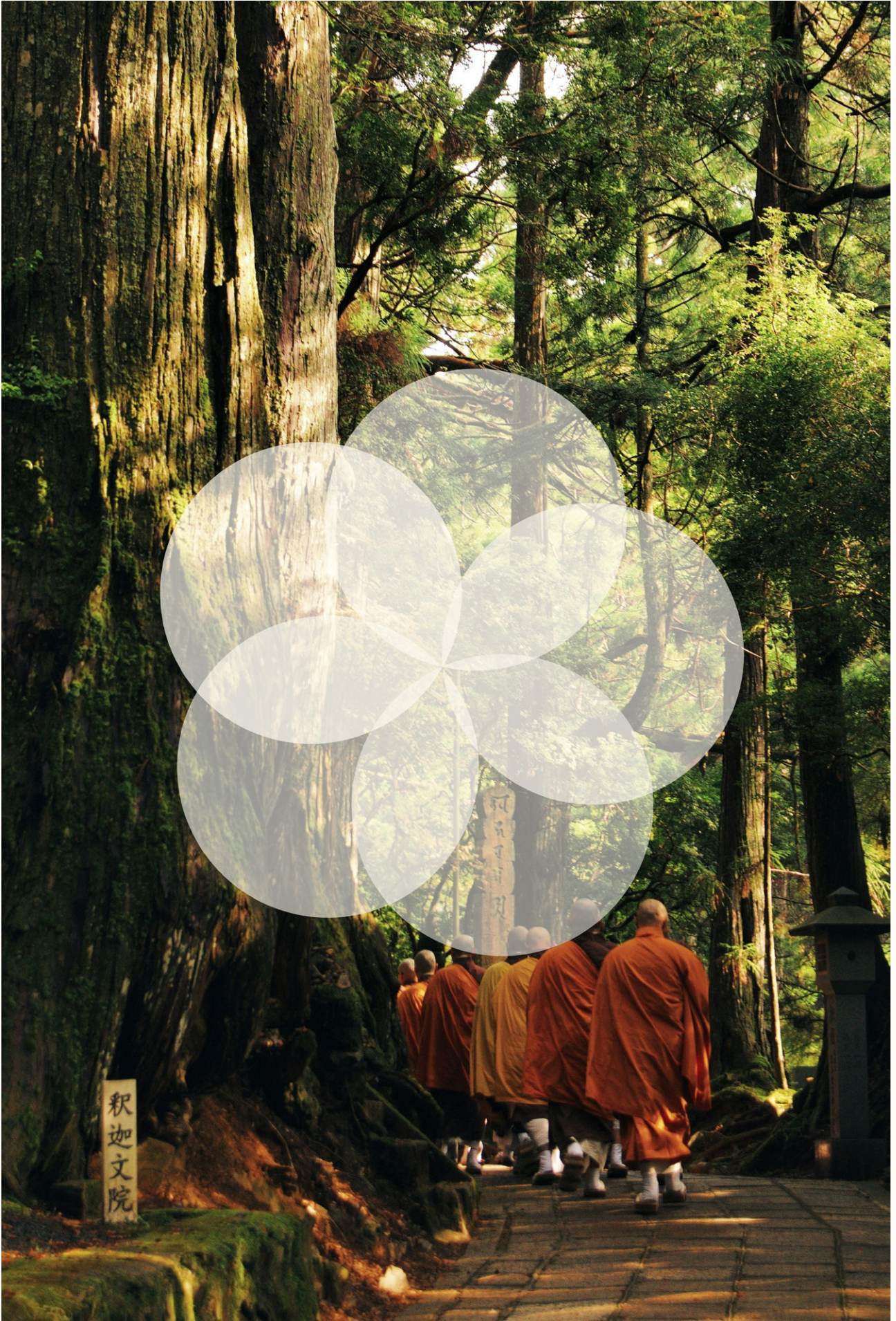
This framework supports narrative communities in evolving from partial, reformist solutions to justice-driven, holistic approaches. It does this by encouraging a shift from oppositional critique to the proactive creation of systems that embody new ways of knowing and being—aligned with ontologies of relationality and interdependence. By bridging integrative guiding narratives with actionable pathways, we equip communities to constructively engage with transformation, moving beyond critique to actively cultivate “possibility models” that prefigure post-capitalist futures.

Ultimately, this framework is designed to function as both a roadmap and a mirror: it helps communities see their current positioning, align their narratives with transformative values, and identify concrete steps toward advancing a shared vision for a just and regenerative future.

The overarching goal is to tie these vectors together through a coherent semantic system that allows communities to understand where they are and what they need to do in their transition journey. The desired narrative outcome is to move communities toward deep systemic transformation, grounded in justice, solidarity, and ecological regeneration, and underpinned by a fundamental ontological and epistemological shift in how we understand and relate to the world.

This framework aims to move communities through three key semantic nodes that align with the two vectors described:

1. *Identifying Root Causes:* Communities must begin by diagnosing the true drivers of the metacrisis—namely, private ownership, capitalism, colonialism, and systemic exploitation—and recognize that carbon-focused reforms alone are insufficient and often exacerbate the crisis.
2. *Linking Justice and Ecological Regeneration:* The next step is recognizing that justice and ecological crises must be tackled together. Addressing one without the other will result in partial solutions that fail to dismantle the underlying structures of exploitation.
3. *Transitioning to Ontological Reimagination:* Finally, the orienting framework should guide communities toward new ways of knowing and being. This is especially crucial for communities already focused on justice, helping them shift from a counter-narrative stance to one that actively builds and implements new systems.



4. REFRAME

“**Transforming Breakdowns into Possibility**” reframes the metacrisis and the limitations of our current systems, highlighting the urgent need for new pathways that can guide us through the complex transition ahead. This reframe centers on **Possibility Models**, emphasizing that to address today’s crises, we must go beyond reform and engage in bold, lived experiments that reimagine our ways of being, relating, and governing.

Possibility Models - Transforming Breakdowns into Possibility	
Frame	Possibility Models are real-world experiments in new ways of being, knowing, and governing that challenge existing systems. They embody the future we seek by creating actionable, lived alternatives in the present, showing us how systemic change can emerge through practice, not just theory.
Logic	We can no longer depend on growth-oriented paradigms to address the complex crises of our time. Instead, we must actively cultivate new possibilities—a radical reimagining of ways of knowing, being, and doing that can guide us forward . This approach calls for a transformative, experiential epistemology, one that embraces uncertainty not as an obstacle but as a necessary element of transition. Only by stepping into the unknown can we begin to create systems that truly respond to the interconnected challenges we face.
Grounding	<p>This frame incorporates the following key aspects:</p> <p>Possibility Models are grounded in prefigurative politics³³, emphasizing that meaningful transformation begins now. Through actionable, lived practices, these models embody the values and systems we aspire to create, insisting that future ideals must be reflected in present actions.</p> <p>These communities recognize that true systemic change requires addressing the root drivers of crises, including capitalism, colonialism, and systemic exploitation. By moving beyond surface solutions and carbon-centric reforms, they challenge communities to confront these foundational issues directly.</p> <p>Therefore transformation cannot be achieved without linking social justice with ecological regeneration. They advocate for solutions that address social and ecological crises together, understanding that tackling one without the other perpetuates the structures of harm.</p> <p>This semantic frame encourages a shift away from anthropocentric and hierarchical worldviews, advancing relational and ecological consciousness that values interconnectedness. This reimagined ontology fosters care and reciprocity across human and non-human communities, expanding possibilities for regenerative futures.³⁴</p>

³³ Monticelli, L. (Ed.). (2022). *The future is Now: An introduction to prefigurative politics: The future is Now*. Policy Press

³⁴ <https://www.culturehack.io/curriculum/curriculum/module-1-the-culture-of-the-anthropocene/module-1-notes-culture-and-the-anthropocene/>

Possibility Models - Transforming Breakdowns into Possibility	
Metaphors	<p>Connecting Islands of Coherence: These models act as stable, life-affirming “islands” within a turbulent sea of breakdowns, offering prototypes of resilience and regeneration that can gradually coalesce into broader systemic change.</p> <p>Making the Path as We Walk It: This metaphor underscores the experimental, iterative nature of Possibility Models, highlighting that the path forward emerges only through committed practice and ongoing adaptation in real-time contexts.</p>

Reframe Description

In essence, Possibility Models offer an approach that leverages present-day action as a catalyst for long-term transformation, using real-time experimentation to demonstrate and build regenerative systems. These models seek not only to respond to crises but to actively construct and live new, interdependent ways of being that can eventually scale into broader systemic change.

The logic driving this reframe is clear: *we cannot rely on the old paradigms to navigate the complex crises we face today*. Possibility Models recognises the limits of the current public, political and philanthropic fixation on carbon to address the metacrisis.

The reframe is supported by the concepts of *prefigurative ontologies and experiential epistemologies*, inspired by the tradition of prefigurative politics. These ontologies focus on embodying, or “prefiguring”, the future we seek within our present actions and practices. Rather than waiting for external solutions, communities are already experimenting with radical ways of being and relating to the world, which reshape how we build our social, economic, and ecological systems (*prefigurative ontologies*). These experimental practices are crucial for building new knowledge bases about transitions, as they allow for iterative learning and adaptation in the face of systemic breakdowns, showing what’s possible beyond the current paradigm (experiential epistemologies).

A potential metaphor that brings this reframe to life is *islands of coherence*—spaces where new systems are emerging, growing and thriving within the body of the old. Ilya Prigogine proposed, “when a complex system is far from equilibrium, small islands of coherence in a sea of chaos have the capacity to shift the entire system to a higher order.” In the context of this report, these Islands can be seen as seeds of transformation—spaces where the future post-capitalist world is being prefigured or prototyped within the capitalist system itself. Rather than waiting for the “right conditions” or a complete systemic overthrow, regenerative, biodiversity-based and community-driven solutions are emerging, even when surrounded by broader unsustainable or destructive forces of the complex adaptive system of capitalism.

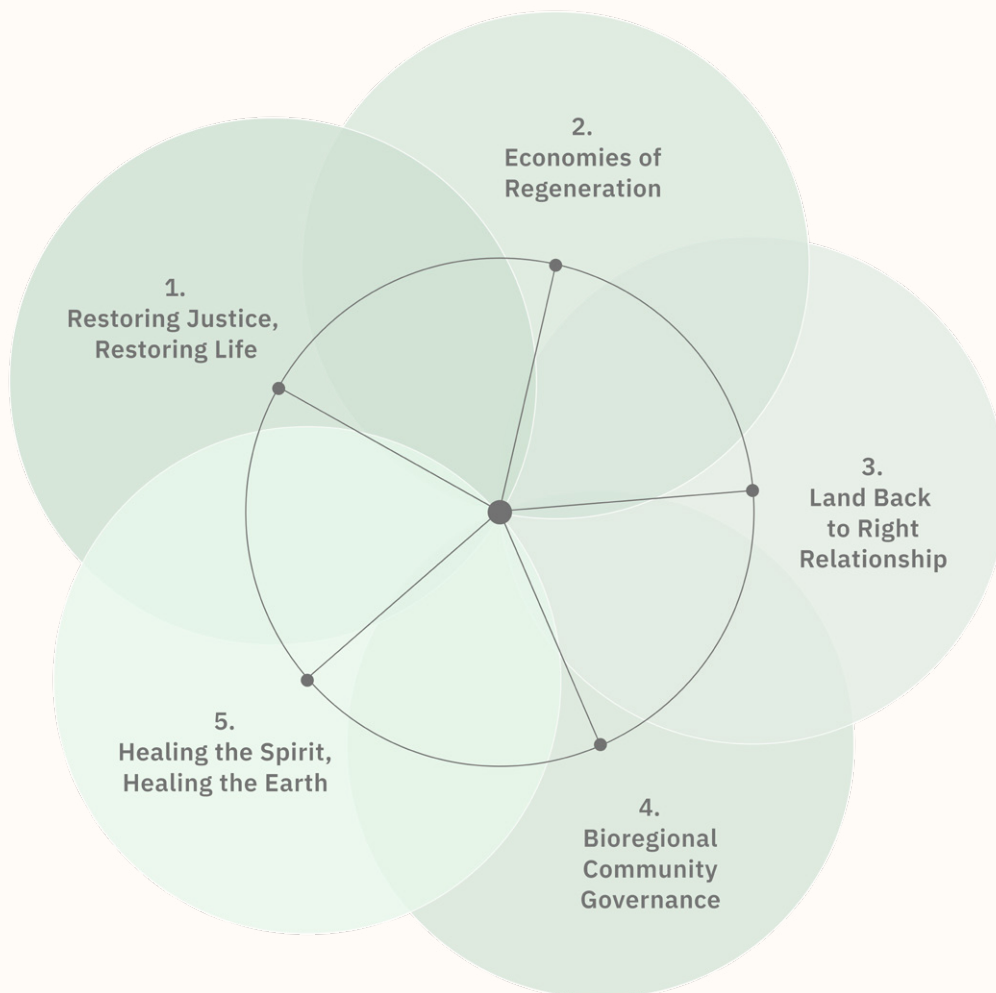
The evolutionary capacity of these islands of coherence is that they are already embodying the change in the system. They are akin to imaginal cells - the specialized cells found in caterpillars that play a crucial role in their transformation into butterflies. When we look at that evolutionary process in nature, it is when the cells start to connect with each other and shift from acting as discrete individual cells to a multi-cell organism, that the process of metamorphosis occurs. These islands, through connection and expansion, have the potential to shift the entire system at scale.

These islands of coherence, or pre-figurative experiments, become the building blocks for a future that is still in formation but actively unfolding in real-time, and so we can also see that we must make the path as we walk it - the second proposed metaphor.

In sum, the reframe of *Transforming Breakdowns into Possibility* ties together the vectors and narrative objective by outlining how communities can move from surface-level, reformist interventions toward deep, systemic change. At the core of this transition are Possibility Models, real-world, grounded experiments that embody new ways of knowing and being, breaking away from the failing paradigms that perpetuate crises. **Possibility models aren't abstract; they're being built right now, through grounded, lived experiments in transition.**

The Pathways to Regeneration Are Interwoven

In this narrative direction, and through our interviews and analysis, we've detailed how this shift occurs in practice. The *System Capability Matrix*³⁵ offers a blueprint for how this change is already happening; and thereby offering a set of heuristics for these possibility models. This framework highlights five interrelated pathways that define the journey from crisis to possibility. Together, these capacities chart the process of building **Possibility Models** and prefigurative experiments that not only challenge the old systems but actively create the future we want to see—one where justice, ecological health, and new ontologies of interdependence flourish.



³⁵ This was based on the Roadmap of Transition Pathways. In addition to narrative communities, we also identified potential transition pathways that were identified by interviewees. See [full Roadmap of Transition Pathways in Annex Four](#).

Deep Dive: Possibility Models and Prefigurative Politics - Embodying the Change

This section goes in depth to explore the guiding semantic frame: an overarching umbrella needed to harmonize and guide actors in their work, in order to collectively propel the desired logics forward. Meanwhile bespoke frames are needed for each narrative community to enable them to “start where they are” and guide them through a step by step journey of evolution towards the overarching reframe.

A semantic frame is a cognitive structure that organizes our understanding of a concept or situation by capturing the various elements and their relationships within that context, guiding how we perceive, interpret, and communicate about it.

By approaching the metacrisis through the frame of possibility models, we have laid the groundwork for a shift in how we approach systemic change. Possibility Models are real-world inspirational experiments in new ways of living that challenge existing systems.

Possibility Models can be situated in “prefigurative politics” which is *‘the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal’*³⁶. This was described by an interviewee as “building the new in the body of the old” - Martin Kirk. This framing of activism and change was developed in New Social Movement discourse and practice from the 1960’s onwards.³⁷ It refers to a politics of creation and transformation, not mere deconstruction and critique. It is about building alternative, imaginative ways of living/being/knowing in the present that reflect (or “prefigure”) the alternative futures we wish to usher in. Activists are not postponing such transformation until after a revolution, they are living transformation now.

In the context of land regeneration and planetary health, prefigurative experiments are post-capitalist (transformative, just, regenerative, anti-growth) and post-anthropocentric (grounded upon ontologies of relationality and interdependence with the natural world).

³⁶ Boggs, Carl. 1977. “Marxism, prefigurative communism and the problem of workers’ control.” *Radical America* 6: 99–122. Pp.100 in <https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/prefigurative-politics>

³⁷ Prefiguration has a long history in Anarchist practice, and many social movements and activists have been practicing it without the name, e.g. Gandhi proposed a “constructive programme” alongside civil disobedience. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/1600910X.2020.1856161#d1e150>

Logic: *We cannot rely on the old paradigms to navigate the complex crises we face today.*

The logic of a narrative is the foundational coherence that connects all parts of the narrative, such as how it diagnoses a situation, identifies causes, and proposes solutions. This underlying logic can give rise to multiple frames, metaphors, and narratives that share the same core reasoning, even if they differ in expression and form.

We cannot rely on the old paradigms to navigate the complex crises we face today. Instead, we must actively cultivate new possibilities—new ways of knowing, being, and doing that can shape a path forward. The “carbon fixation” logic refers to the cosmetic, reformist fixes to the system such as electric vehicles, heat pumps, and CO2 reduction.³⁸ Many of these interventions are useful, yet tend to focus on pieces/fragments of the system, not the whole system.³⁹ Whether intentionally or unintentionally, they remain wedded to economic growth, and thus are incompatible with systemic, holistic, transformative approaches to addressing the climate crisis, and instead, reify values of profit, extraction and separation from nature. The ideological underpinning of these logics is late-stage capitalism, or neoliberalism - notorious for its’ presentation as apolitical, neutral, and the “natural order of things”.⁴⁰ It is also notorious for crushing the imagination of post-capitalist possibilities⁴¹. As one of our interviewees has voiced:

“We need to shift the window of what’s possible, because humans are lacking in imagination of how to get out of the current labyrinth that we’re in with. You know, domination of human supremacy and and global capitalism is is basically creating a crisis of imagination, of seeing another possibility.” (Atossa Soltani, Sacred Headwaters)

The logic of prefiguration (Possibility Models & Prefigurative Experiments) is the work of cultivating the post-capitalist imagination. It is necessarily informed by a deeper understanding of the ontologies, worldviews and assumptions that have birthed and sustained the anthropocentric, growth-based operating system we live in. Example models of possibility, such as “Regenerative food systems” to “Indigenous Lifeways” to “Bioregionalism” (see narrative communities above), are all informed by an awareness of the breakdown and injustices of the current system. **Models that do not have a deep critique of colonial-capitalist injustices, by knowingly or unknowingly ignoring root cause analysis, will be limited as they might end up replicating the growth fixation logic explained above.**

³⁸ <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-06-the-carbon-fixation-how-philanthropy-and-aid-miss-the-real-crisis/>

³⁹ Carne Ross “A new direction”, CHL 2024: <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/issue-07-beyond-the-carbon-fixation-pathways-to-regenerative-futures/a-new-paradigm-for-climate-philanthropy-and-climate-finance-proposals-for-a-total-concept/>

⁴⁰ Read about Mark Fisher’s concept of Capitalism Realism: https://files.libcom.org/files/Capitalist%20Realism_%20Is%20There%20No%20Alternat%20-%20Mark%20Fisher.pdf

⁴¹ Though note - many social and literary movements, like Afro-futurism etc have tried to sow seeds of alternative futures and imaginaries - see more <https://globalsocialtheory.org/topics/decolonial-speculative-fiction-and-fantasy/>

We propose two concepts that inform the logic of the reframe and contribute to the broader Prefigurative Politics discourse:

1. **“Prefigurative Ontologies”**. If ontology is the study of being (the very ways we relate to the world and how we constitute reality), then this term captures the need to embody or enact the values that one wants to see realized in the future: ontologies of radical relationality and interdependence.
2. **“Experimental epistemologies”**. If epistemology is the study of knowledge (how we know things, what counts as knowledge, and the justification of beliefs), then this term captures the need to experiment, test and iterate models of regenerative futures through empirical or experiential means in the present, rather than purely through theoretical reflections, and gather knowledge as we go along to learn new things about the transition. As Ross outlines in his Issue contribution (Carne Ross, CHL, 2024), this must entail “a humility of knowledge”: an acknowledgment of the complexity of the system, of its moving parts in constant interaction, that change is unpredictable, not linear, which suggests multiple interventions are necessary. He uses the metaphor “we need to launch a thousand ships not knowing which will get across”.

In other words, we need to launch a thousand ships (or, possibility models and prefigurative experiments) that enact ancient/future ways of being (prefigurative ontologies); not knowing which ship will get across, but learning from all of their journeys as they sail (experimental epistemology).

Conceptual Metaphor: “Islands of Coherence”

A **conceptual metaphor** enriches the narrative. It is a cognitive tool that allows us to understand one idea or conceptual domain in terms of another, facilitating a deeper understanding of the first idea by drawing parallels with the more familiar second one. We employ conceptual metaphors to build the basic semantic foundation of the reframe.

The metaphor of “Islands of Coherence” serves as an example or direction that can be employed in communicating and understanding the above reframe and logic. The term, stemming from Complexity Science⁴² provides a powerful framework for understanding how pockets of order, innovation, syntropy, stability and harmony emerge within chaotic, unstable systems like the present situation.

Ilya Prigogine proposed, “When a complex system is far from equilibrium, small islands of coherence in a sea of chaos have the capacity to shift the entire system to a higher

⁴² Complexity science is the study of how interconnected and dynamic systems—composed of many interacting parts—give rise to emergent behaviors, patterns, and properties that cannot be predicted by analyzing the individual components alone.

order.” In the context of this report, these Islands can be seen as seeds of transformation—spaces where the future post-capitalist world is being prefigured or prototyped within the capitalist system itself. Rather than waiting for the “right conditions” or a complete systemic overthrow, regenerative, biodiversity based and community-driven solutions are nurtured and thrive, even when surrounded by broader unsustainable or destructive forces of the complex adaptive system of capitalism. Breaking this down:

- 1. What do we mean by Islands?** Experiments in alternative ways of living, knowing, being and governing. E.g, autonomous zones like Rojava and the Zapatistas, bioregions⁴³ such as Amazon Sacred Headwaters Alliance,⁴⁴ community land trusts, or regenerative agriculture, food sovereignty practices, Indigenous communities, eco-villages. Browse a list of “beautiful alternatives” here.⁴⁵
- 2. What do we mean by Coherence?** Coherence comes from values of relationality, interdependence and care for life in all of its forms. Coherence implies systems “syntropy”⁴⁶ - which describes the quality of a system that is characterized by energy, concentration, order, organization and life as opposed to an entropic future (characterized by a lack of order, gradual decline and chaos). Coherence can be engendered through the five principles outlined in the System Change Capability Matrix document which offers a blueprint for how this change towards coherence is already happening.

How do post-capitalist, post-anthropocentric islands of coherence that prefigure more relational ontologies, contribute to transforming the current system? These islands are creating alternative micro-systems that challenge the larger, chaotic capitalist logic. They can serve as attractors within a larger chaotic system. According to complexity theory, when systems reach tipping points, small local changes can have outsized effects. These coherent islands can act as hubs of transformation, spreading their influence over time and reshaping the broader system around them. Complexity science also suggests that small, local changes can have large systemic effects when amplified through feedback loops and network effects - especially when the system is in a state of ‘criticality’ i.e. when it is primed for change. Imagine if these islands of coherence begin to connect—via shared resources, knowledge exchange, or cooperative networks—they could create broader systems of coherence that can influence larger socio-economic structures.

43 <https://earthregenerators.org/>; <https://maearth.com/episodes/biofi-bioregional-financing-facilities-samantha-pow-er-bfi>

44 <https://earthregenerators.org/>; <https://maearth.com/episodes/biofi-bioregional-financing-facilities-samantha-pow-er-bfi>

45 <https://www.culturehack.io/issues/territories-of-transition-land-back-to-right-relations-briefing/beautiful-alternatives-catalogue/>

46 *Syntropy defines a system state that actively fosters life, coherence, and renewal by concentrating energy, creating order, and facilitating organization. In the context of narrative-led systems change, it embodies an approach where narratives don't just guide transitions but help cultivate conditions that sustain vitality and interconnectedness. Through this lens, syntropic systems use narratives to amplify regenerative patterns that bring communities toward thriving, interdependent futures.*

To conclude, this report has completed the first four stages of the CHL methodology: Ask, Listen, Understand, and Reframe. It aims to enable narrative-led systems change by mapping the ecosystem of actors around a shared intention of liberating land from the enclosures of capitalism and colonialism, find where we can weave the connective tissue and highlight points of collective action to serve as a navigational tool for practical outcomes.

Appendix

APPENDIX 1. *Research Addendum (Interview guide)*

APPENDIX 2. *Definitions of common categories of responses to interview questions*

APPENDIX 3. *Full linguistic Analysis*

APPENDIX 4. *Road Map of Transition Pathways Appendix*

