

Transitioning communities: community, participation and the Transition Town movement

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Abstract The Transition Town (TT) movement has grown to become a global phenomenon aimed at assisting towns and communities to envision sustainable and self-reliant futures post peak oil. Arguably, this movement offers an exciting alternative to traditional notions of growth and development. This paper explores the rise of the TT movement focusing particularly on the processes involved in establishing a 'TT' raising questions pertaining to governance and to notions of participatory democracy within the movement.

Introduction

Issues of climate change, environmental degradation and peak oil have spawned a myriad of social movements aimed at ameliorating, adapting to or promoting the necessity of a low-energy, minimally polluting future. At a macro level, those advocating the 'Green New Deal' (New Economics Foundation, 2008) argue for economic stimulus packages to help build a green economy that facilitates transition to renewable energy sources, green collar jobs and social enterprises. Governments too are pushing for coordinated global responses in the form of carbon pollution reduction schemes or other forms of carbon trading or sequestration, although the difficulty in achieving such macro-level responses was evidenced at the Climate Change Talks in Copenhagen where any meaningful move towards global consensus on reducing emissions foundered on the rocky shores of national interest. At the micro level, responses range from survivalists, who argue that

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it will be everyone for themselves when the time comes, to advocates for various technological fixes and single-issue groups advocating more recycling, more efficient water use or bicycle paths as means of achieving a more sustainable future. A common motivating factor is the fear that unsustainable lifestyles are leading to an uninhabitable future. While fear may be a powerful motivator, it is not necessarily empowering. It should come as little surprise then that those movements arguing the case for a *more* enriching, rewarding life in a sustainable low-energy future are gaining widespread support; no surprise also the increasing popularity of one such movement that grants us all the promise of a key role in adapting the place where we live to that future. In this scenario, we do not need to rely on politicians alone; it is possible to take collective action towards change through the processes outlined in the Transition Town (TT) movement.

This paper examines the rise of the TT movement, locating it within the discourses of new environmentalism (Hershkowitz, 2002; Speth, 2008) and community development, before exploring aspects of the TT manifesto that raise questions for the authors. Community development principles of participation and governance are used to tease out some perceived strengths and limitations of the movement with a view to promoting discussion on what is potentially a powerful movement for change.

New environmentalism

As will be shown, the TT movement appears to have strong links with the new environmentalism movement that focuses on the collaboration of individuals, communities, government and business in taking issues-based action. Traditionally, the environmentalism movement has regarded capitalism and the 'free market' as adversaries in the struggle for sustainable development. Proponents of capitalism and its inherent drive for ceaseless economic growth have viewed ecological and environmental issues as secondary to economic stability and growth as measured by crude and arguably limited indicators such as gross domestic product. Environmentalists have worked hard through the decades to lobby governments to regulate the excesses of the market and to limit pollution, but the success of this approach has been questioned (Speth, 2008). Some insiders in the environmental movement have started to question the reliance on government control and regulation as the sole means of curbing the sacrifice of the environment to economic development, arguing that such controls are necessary but not sufficient to achieve the changes required to achieve sustainability (Speth, 2008). This shift in understanding of many in the mainstream environmental movement has coincided with increasing recognition that there may be openings to a more coordinated approach that brings together individuals, communities,

civil society, business and government to work together to achieve a better outcome environmentally, socially and economically. This process has become known as new environmentalism.

New environmentalism covers a range of movements and activities, but at its core is the understanding that one of the key drivers of potential change is the strengthening of the local, as it is at the local level where most individuals feel empowered to act. New environmentalism encourages environmental specialists, communities, individuals, business and government to work together to identify measures that address environmental problems. As a consequence, the issues-oriented action that follows is largely underpinned by individual values (Javna, Javna, Javna, 2008). The new environmentalist focus on cooperation between the various groups may well provide a more effective platform for reform and change. However, a critique of this approach is that it may focus too much on the local and lose sight of the global response needed for issues such as climate change. Arguably by locating the solutions within capitalism, the perspective does not provide the necessary fundamental challenge to an exploitative economic system that may itself be the core of the problem. A further critique of new environmentalism is that it is largely driven by middle class values that may be more exclusive than inclusive, this has been a long-standing critique of the environmental movement in general (Speth, 2008). Perhaps the most generalized criticism of the practical politics of the new environmentalism is that, by over reliance on compromise, little meaningful change can be obtained.

Community development and social movements

The authors contend that community development is primarily a political act because it is concerned with changing the status quo through action based on a commitment to human rights and social justice. Any challenge to an existing system is inherently political if it advocates a shift in the discourses of power within communities and society and between individuals. While the practice of community development has a chequered history in achieving this ideal, and has often been accused of resulting in colonization and amelioration rather than change (Mowbray, 2005), there is little dispute that the premise is based on achieving lasting change. A key ingredient of community development practice is participation through active citizenship (Kenny, 2006). Social movements are also generally political in nature and issues focused, with organizations such as Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd being typical of the political and action-orientated environmental social movements. More recent examples such as Avaaz and Get UP are also political in their actions, raising awareness and coordinating

action through savvy use of the Internet to create extended networks. Such actions are often referred to as contentious politics (Tilly and Tarrow, 2007) and take the form of actors making claims on the interests of others, initiated by understandings of social, environmental and economic justice. These claims can be made on governments, corporations or institutions and the actions are generally issues-based. It will be argued that the TT movement incorporates aspects of both community development and social movements, but that one area where it differs from both is in the expressed apolitical nature of the movement. As Berger says, 'the promise of a movement is in its future victory whereas the promise of the incidental moments are instantaneous' (Berger, 2007, p. 2). It is the authors' contention that the TT movement, perhaps unwittingly, may be corralling a mass of individual, incidental moments behind the banner of a movement that, because of its inbuilt contradictions and hopeful naiveté of politics and power, is bound to disappoint its adherents.

The TT movement

The TT concept started life as a student project in Kinsale, Ireland, in 2005, where the co-founder Rob Hopkins was employed as a Permaculture teacher at the Kinsale Further Education College. A project undertaken by some of the students at this time was the development of an energy descent plan for the village of Kinsale (Brangwin and Hopkins, 2008). The energy descent plan was designed to detail 'a graceful descent from Kinsale's current peak of oil consumption' (Carlson, 2008). The village Council in Kinsale adopted the idea and this formed the prototype for Transition Town Totnes (TTT), UK, when Hopkins moved to the area after leaving Ireland. Perhaps in tribute to its Internet-savvy communications network, the movement itself describes its spread as akin to a virus (Hopkins, 2008a, b), and declares that it 'has rapidly become one of the fastest-growing community-scale initiatives in the world' (Hopkins, 2008a, b, p. 133). Totnes was declared the first 'official' TT in 2006, and by May 2009, there were 159, including thirteen in Australia, seven in New Zealand, twenty-four in the United States, and one each in Canada, Chile, Germany, Italy, Japan and the Netherlands (TT Wiki [<http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionNetwork>]). By any measure, this is a rapid expansion.

The TT process

Six principles

There are six principles that inform the TT model and they align closely with principles of community development. The principles are: visioning;

inclusion; awareness raising; resilience; psychological insights; and credible and appropriate solutions (Hopkins, 2008a, b, pp. 141–142). Imagining where a community wants to be and working towards achieving it through the building of broad and diverse coalitions and networks are all key understandings of community development process. Making sure communities are aware of issues and problems in order to be able to work towards solutions and recognizing and building on existing strengths to achieve resilient communities are also important aspects of effective community development. Similarly, being aware that the immensity of the issues can be overwhelming and developing collective responses that are meaningful, achievable and context driven ensures that participants feel that they are achieving something. These understandings have long been recognized as basic understandings that inform community development theory and practice (Ledwith, 2005; Ife and Tesoriero, 2006; Kenny, 2006).

Twelve steps

The twelve steps of transition provide a blueprint for groups interested in setting up a transition initiative. The prescribed aim of the process is to develop an energy descent action plan (EDAP) for the community. The importance of the twelve steps is indicated by the need to follow the steps in order to be recognized as an ‘official’ TT or initiative. To the authors, the prescriptive nature of the ‘twelve steps’ indicates a point of departure from the principles outlined above. The twelve steps are:

- (i) set up a steering group and design its demise from the outset;
- (ii) raise awareness;
- (iii) lay the foundations;
- (iv) organize a great unleashing;
- (v) form groups;
- (vi) use open space;
- (vii) develop visible practical manifestations of the project;
- (viii) facilitate the great reskilling;
- (ix) build a bridge to local government;
- (x) honour the elders;
- (xi) let it go where it wants to go;
- (xii) create an EDAP (Hopkins, 2008a, b, pp. 148–175).

Many of these steps would be applicable in any successful community development process, but the prescriptive nature of the twelve steps is evident when it come to Step 11 where allowing the process to go where it wants to go seems to be in direct contradiction to the preceding directives. Similarly, Step 12 is equally prescriptive and does not allow for a community to ‘go where it wants to go’.

Transition Town Totnes

For one of the authors, returning to Totnes, a town in the county of Devon, South West England, in 2008 and coming across the TT movement, it was exciting to see an integrated approach to working with communities based on ecological sustainability. A previous visit to Totnes in 1995 revealed that there was already a strong local ecological understanding in the town. A local employment and trading scheme had the support of many in the community including local businesses; there was a thriving organic produce market and strong participatory engagement with ecological, governance and social issues. Overall a good proportion of the population seemed to be very aware of the need to tread lightly on the earth. Given this background, it is not surprising that the TT movement has more recently been so well embraced in Totnes. By 2008, the movement in Totnes had been building momentum for a couple of years and hence its status as the 'first official TT' (Hopkins, 2008a, b).

At the time of the most recent visit, TTT was firmly in the 'awareness raising' (Hopkins, 2008a, b) stage. Key sectors of transition outlined by Hopkins (2008a, b) are food and farming, medicine and health, education, economy, transport and energy. In Totnes, sub-groups around these areas were very busy indeed. The Health and Medicine group had organized community meetings to discuss the implication of energy descent on local health services, looking specifically into the implications of reduced access to plastics and other petroleum-based products associated with energy use in the medical system. Other groups were focused on housing policies and associated issues, working with the local planning authority and discussing localized control over planning and construction and the development and use of local materials. There was also activity around a proposal to turn Totnes into the 'Nut Capital of England' (Hopkins, 2008a, b) which involved tree planting and a focus on issues of sustainability through job creation and building a resilient local economy within the overall TT process. These examples of the discussions, planning and activities that were constantly evolving were driven by the energy and enthusiasm for the TT movement of at least a proportion of the local population. The excitement was a result of people finding a focal point for their energies that matched their increasing concerns around climate change and issues such as Peak Oil (Brown, 2008). This was an issue that was especially pertinent at the time, just at the beginning stages of the current global financial crisis, when oil prices were high and there was generalized concern among the population as to the viability of the current system. The Transition Handbook (Hopkins, 2008a, b) had just been released, and there was an energy and commitment that reflected how

this movement had captured the imagination of so many people with what are in effect relatively straightforward principles for building 'resilient' (Hopkins, 2008a, b) communities; those better able to cope with the potential fallout from a reduced energy future at the same time as having a positive impact on climate change (Pittock, 2005; Hopkins, 2008a, b). As a community development practitioner and educator interested in sustainability, this author on returning to Australia (with the added burden of guilt associated with fossil fuel use and carbon foot prints associated with long haul flying) was keen to follow up on the TT movement and explore the opportunities it presented.

Raising questions

The mood in Totnes had not been entirely positive. Alongside the energy surrounding TTT, there was also an undercurrent of discontent with some aspects of the process. This was highlighted by a comment from one of the TTT participants who pointed out that while they strongly supported the concept of TT, they and a number of others who had been involved in progressive social and ecological movements in and around Totnes for a number of years felt some resentment that much of their work had been subsumed into the TT movement. According to this informant, prior to TT commencing, there was an existing broad network of groups actively engaged in different aspects of making Totnes a more sustainable and community-oriented place and there was a perception that TTT had effectively taken over or co-opted existing networks with apparently little regard for local history, or adequate consultation with all players in existing programmes. To the author, this was intriguing as, if true, it ran counter to the basic principles of community development as outlined by authors such as Ife and Tesoriero (2006), Kenny (2006), and Ledwith (2005). Also it seemed to contradict the expressed process of engaging with local groups espoused by the authors of the TT movement itself (TT Wiki <http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionNetwork>; Hopkins, 2008a, b).

This situation raised some questions in relation to aspects of the TT movement and its impact on communities. Certainly, it was clear that TTT had mobilized the energy of its proponents, and participants firmly believed that they were building a framework that was engaging, achievable, visionary and accommodating. It was also providing a positive outlook on issues that are often perceived to be overwhelming in their complexity and beyond the means of many individuals and communities to deal with. At the same time, it was interesting to observe the process as a community development practitioner and see high levels of participation, engagement and capacity building that in some instances were being carried out with an

almost fervent passion. For the authors, this context raised questions such as Is TT really a social movement for change? Further, does the TT movement build its reputation by colonizing existing networks? These questions are important, because all available evidence indicates that the TT movement is spreading (TT Wiki [<http://transitiontowns.org/TransitionNetwork/TransitionNetwork>]).

Participation and governance

One way of teasing out the questions raised is to consider the intertwined issues of participation and governance. The TT movement claims participation as a core tenet, essential to any successful outcome of the transition process (Hopkins, 2008a, b; Chamberlin, 2009). It speaks for inclusion and against division. Unlike many other environmental movements, it cautions against taking a strong political stand on specific issues, leaving it (partly) up to individual TTs to decide what is applicable in their context. The strength of this approach is the way it opens up the possibility of building diverse coalitions across political, cultural, economic, social and other points of difference by accommodating a range of points of view. Hopkins (2008a, b) is unapologetic in arguing that the aim of the TT movement is to be as inclusive as possible and that in order to build broad-based support, it is imperative that as many people as possible see benefit or at least can share the vision or potential of TTs. The TT movement is likened to being a prism through which anyone can look and see a rainbow of possibilities (Mooallem, 2009). Business people perceive the opportunity that buying local can make to their balance sheets. Conservative political pundits can see the benefit of communities becoming more self-reliant and reducing the need for centralized government 'interference' in local affairs. Green movements can see the benefits of reduced carbon emissions through increased production of organically grown local produce and other sustainability measures such as reduction in green house gas emissions and less reliance on fossil fuels. Local government authorities see benefits in a more active and participatory citizenry, among others. This propensity to be all things to all people has also been one of key points of critique of the movement (Chatterton and Cutler, 2008).

From within the UK, much of the critique of the TT movement has targeted this insistence on inclusiveness and positive responses and consequent refusal to take positions in direct opposition to institutions or projects (as distinct from policies). The focus must be on what different people have in common. The danger in this approach is that it risks either confining the movement to irrelevance or having it co-opted by the state (Chatterton and Cutler, 2008). From a community development

perspective, consider the very real issues that can divide most localized rural communities, potentially ideal TTs. In Australia, for instance, there are communities virtually split down the middle by the forestry industry, by wind-farming, by genetically modified agriculture, by mining projects, carbon-trading proposals, sustainable fishing, disputes over Aboriginal sovereignty, heritage issues and bypass roads. All these issues impact on the resilience of any community and all involve winners and losers at the local level. They also involve the efforts of powerful corporate interests to defend or expand their profitability and market share, and of State and Federal government to appease or mediate between those corporate interests. All of which raises the fundamental question that if a social movement avoids 'taking sides' on such material local disputes, how does it stay relevant?

The Transition Network stresses the importance of TTs creating and maintaining links to local government (Hopkins, 2008a, b). Leaving aside for a moment the issue of the local government structures referred to being those of the UK, this makes perfect sense. Arguably local initiatives should ideally have the support of local government; however, local governments are not bottom-up institutions; they operate within legislative frameworks and receive much of their funding as fixed grants from central governments. They can be easily marginalized or removed if they fail to meet the explicit expectations outlined in the governing legislation. In Australia, staying close to local government involves not getting too far off side of any level of government. The rewards of such close ties are not inconsiderable – funded projects, paid staff and easy access to state-sponsored consultations and planning authorities. The risks, however, are equally great – not being allowed (or not allowing oneself) to 'rock the boat', being incorporated into the state and used as (usually underfunded and underpaid) providers of services in areas of what arguably should be state responsibility (Pitchford and Henderson, 2008). These dilemmas are not unique to TTs, all progressive social movements have had to grapple with them; they cannot be wished away or forestalled to some indeterminate future by a simple declaration of inclusiveness. In the words of the Trapeze Collective,

The idea of TT is to create a model that everyone could agree to. But if everyone can agree with an idea then what exactly is going to change, and how is it different to what went before? (Chatterton and Cutler, 2008, p. 24)

When responding to the Trapeze Collective, Hopkins states

I make no apologies for the Transition approach being designed to appeal as much to the Rotary Club and the Women's Institute as to the authors of this report (Hopkins, 2008a, b, <http://transitionculture.org/>).

But does this address the critique? Arguably this can be considered at best to be a naive assumption of consensus in an increasingly fragmented and disordered context that demands the question – How will the TT movement respond to the fissures that occur *within* organizations such as the local Rotary Club and the Women’s Institute?

Inclusive social movements such as TT can certainly provide the context for the implementation of localized decision-making based on participatory democratic principles, but such strengths are tempered by potential limitations. Should a movement that wants to aim for broad participation be open to those who do not necessarily agree with everything associated with it? How might different thoughts be accommodated in such a movement? Are social movements like TT necessarily contained by their stated aims and is any aspiration to be broad-based going to be limited by those aims? Is it a self-selecting process and if so what are the implications of this for the broad-based outcomes anticipated and deemed necessary? These are governance issues. TT, like many social movements, holds out the possibility of more inclusive politics and governance structures through actively pursuing subsidiarity (Hirst, 1994; Hirst and Bader, 2001) and deliberative democracy (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004; Button and Ryfe, 2005). When combined, these devolve power to the lowest possible level while maintaining effective governance processes that encourage people to share their experiences and understandings and from these devise locally appropriate strategies on particular issues. However, for a movement founded on principles of inclusion and participation, it appears that TT has, in practice, a quite rigid, top-down and it must be said, an inherently undemocratic management structure (as a movement with an anointed ‘founder’ and arguably a prescriptive manifesto). The Transition Initiatives Primer (Version 26), while claiming over and over again that it is *not* prescriptive, equally makes clear what TTs should and should not do and what they must or must not do in order to be recognized as ‘official’ (Brangwin and Hopkins, 2008). The twelve steps to transition outlined by Hopkins (2008a, b) are laid out quite rigidly, although according to Mooallem (2009), they are now referred to as the ‘twelve ingredients’ to remove some of the prescriptive nature of the process. The mandate for issuing such directives is claimed to be ‘experience’, and who has the experience? – The ‘founder’ and those closest to him and, by direct suggestion, those with training or prior involvement with the Permaculture movement (Hopkins, 2008a, b).

We shall discuss Permaculture shortly, but first a point about the use of the term ‘official’ by so many of those involved with the TT movement. What does it mean to be recognized as an official TT? Brangwin and Hopkins state that ‘Our trustees and funders want to make sure that

while we actively nurture embryonic projects, we only promote to official status those communities we feel are ready to move into the awareness raising stage' (Brangwin and Hopkins, 2008, p.13). Within the UK, there are clearly potential financial benefits for both the master organization and individual TTs with funding linked directly to the continued growth of the movement, but what are we to make of the celebratory announcement by the Sunshine Coast Energy Action Centre that 'We're Australia's First (official) Transition Town!' (www.seac.net.au). Why would an Australian project devoted to 'relocalisation' (Hopkins, 2008a, b) be so keen to meet the domestic quasi-legal requirements of a UK-based organization? The TT movement appears to have tapped into a potentially powerful meshing of the local/global debate here. Yes, we want to act local, indeed it is arguably the only way forward, but we need to know that we have the support of other groups, just like us – despite our differences, all around the world. We celebrate place and diversity at the same time as we erase it.

From Permaculture to TTs

Permaculture is where the TT movement has its roots and where we might perhaps find clues to its future evolution. Arguably, Permaculture is a brilliant concept, developed and promulgated by two highly intelligent white males, one of them at least, abundantly endowed with charisma. Either holistic or totalizing (according to taste), Permaculture expanded a set of agricultural techniques and principles of social organization conducive to small-scale sustainability into a complete philosophy of life. The key principles of Permaculture are care of people, care of the earth and distribution of surplus (Mollison, 1988; Holmgren, 2002). Notable ideals certainly and nothing wrong with that. There are some people who have devoted their lives to studying, practising and promoting Permaculture, there are millions of others who incorporate some Permaculture principles and practices in planning their gardens or properties, but are ignorant of or uncaring of the other aspects of the Permaculture manifesto. Arguably, however, there has been a trend towards focusing on individual aspects of Permaculture, such as the design and agricultural principles, with less attention being paid to the collective aspects such as building local economies and strengthening social networks. To adherents, the practices work and have achieved the status of common sense, but there is no doubt that Permaculture means different things to different people. To the authors, the similarity between the development and rise of Permaculture and of the TT movement is remarkable, given the thirty-year commencement gap between them. The TT movement has in a sense picked up where Permaculture left off.

Implications for the TT movement

We think it can be argued that both the phenomenal enthusiasm for Permaculture among a limited audience and the failure of that audience to expand beyond a certain point can be linked to the cultish, top-down culture that developed around what could have been a democratic, bottom-up movement. It is possible that Rob Hopkins shares these concerns to an extent when he says: 'While the case can be made that removal from the larger society represents action that is transformative of society, I believe that there is an imbalance within the cultural manifestation of Permaculture that has favoured isolation over interaction' (<http://transitionculture.org>). This begs the question of whether there is a chance of the same imbalance occurring within the TT movement, not as a matter of intent but as a consequence of the structures being adopted. Why, for example, is it necessary for the TT movement to have a 'founder'? Why is it that only people with Permaculture training are specifically mentioned and encouraged to take the lead in the movement? Why are there *six* principles underpinning the movement, *seven* 'buts' outlining some of the reasons communities may use to not engage and *twelve* steps of transition? Is there a chance that the movement may fizzle not in spite of, but because of, the determination of those at the top to structure its development? Reading through the TT Wiki and the websites of various TTs, it is striking to observe the contrast between the passionate adherents who espouse every detail of the TT package as if it were a revealed truth, and those who mix and match, selecting ideas they find useful and offering critiques of others. This must make for interesting discussion when they are all in a room together. Essentially, the apolitical nature of the TT movement is its allure as well as its problem, both strength and limitation.

Does this matter? Surely, a movement can run itself in any way it sees fit, but the TT movement has as its rationale the need to be *inclusive*. The development and implementation of an EDAP involves both the initiation and *coordination* of local reliance building initiatives (Hopkins, 2008a, b). A TT project that is but one of a number of independently operating – perhaps competing, or barely talking to each other – local initiatives is by definition a failure. As with any unsuccessful initiative, a failed TT may set back the chances of any future local, coordinated efforts towards environmental sustainability. If we accept that any effective community-based coordinating body requires its legitimacy to be granted from below rather than above (Ledwith, 2005; Ife and Tesoriero, 2006; Kenny, 2006), from its members rather than its masters, then the TT movement must tread a delicate path, even more so in countries other than the UK.

Building relationships with existing groups is a key principle of any community-based engagement process. For the TT movement, it is

suggested that in relation to existing groups, activists should recognize and value the work that has already been done and to encourage those groups to continue to play a vital role (Brangwin and Hopkins, 2008). Members of a Landcare group in rural Western Australia might be touched to be honoured in this way, but it does not necessarily follow that they will be willing to subordinate some of their activities to a structure established and mandated by a group emanating from Totnes. What will it take for them to see the point in their locality becoming an 'official' TT? And what will it take for a community in Thailand or Bangladesh or France? It seems there is a cultural blindness to the TT movement that does not matter to its most ardent adherents (as a key attraction for them is the belief that TT has moved beyond the politics of difference), but has the potential to render the movement irrelevant to the mass support required for it to be truly inclusive. Indeed, it could be argued that there is an opportunity for those who *already* live with reduced access to energy to help strengthen the capacity of potential TT communities, but this possibility does not appear to be acknowledged by the TT movement.

Conclusion

The TT movement has potential and there is no doubt that it is able to harness and focus a great deal of energy and enthusiasm among its adherents. The principles on which it is founded have deep roots in tried and tested ways of building stronger and more self-reliant communities that arguably would be able to better manage the uncertain futures that are envisaged from the perspectives of climate change and peak oil. Participation and governance are always critical issues in communities and TTs face the same dilemmas and challenges as other social movements that aim to achieve radical social and economic change. The authors have endeavoured to outline some of the strengths, limitations and dilemmas that they see characterizing the movement. The questions raised come from a genuine curiosity about and interest in the TT movement's potential. They are some of the questions that, if not worked through carefully by activists and communities embracing the twelve steps of transition, could lead to fragmentation and disillusionment. This would be a tragedy not only for the environment, but for all those individuals involved who, many for the first time in their lives, have taken a stand on behalf of the future.

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