ECOLOGICAL REGIONALISM: A SYNTHESIS OF ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AND ORGANICIST REGIONALISM

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ECOLOGICAL REGIONALISM: A SYNTHESIS OF ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS AND ORGANICIST REGIONALISM

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ABSTRACT

To realize visions of regional ecological and economic sustainability—extant the ecological economics literature—a unified understanding and philosophy of the region is needed. Additionally, this philosophy needs to be institutionally informed; i.e. aware of the social structures that contribute to ecological and economic degradation. Without such a foundation, policies related to ecological and economic sustainability will continue to face problematic adoption and in general inhibit our chance for a sustainable future.

A review of the ecological economics literature shows that numerous ecological economists address regional issues, use the region as a unit of analysis, and/or advocate the construction of ecologically-based regions. However, a coherent view of the region and why regional sustainability policies should be utilized is lacking. Furthermore, while ecological economists such as Herman Daly and John Cobb have argued for a more institutionally and humanist-based ecological economic science, this has not been connected to regional affairs.

As a contribution to ecological economics, this dissertation synthesizes Lewis Mumford’s conceptualization of organicist-based regionalism serving as the framework and
philosophical foundation for a sustainable society. Mumford’s regionalism offers a superior philosophical foundation and course of action toward ecological, economic, and social sustainability that has great potential. This is because of the interdisciplinary and institutionalist basis on which the theory is grounded.

This dissertation utilizes a visionary methodology found within ecological economics and provides:

1. a comprehensive analysis of how the region within the discourse and if at all regionalism is represented in the ecological economics discourse;

2. a synthesis and construction of Mumford’s organicist-based regionalism, including (a) an investigation of the current economic system for which regionalism serves as a response; (b) the delineation of organicist thought; and (c) a presentation of political, cultural, and economic regionalism; and

3. the synthesis and connection of organicist-based regionalism with applications found in the ecological economics literature.
The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “Ecological Regionalism: A Synthesis of Ecological Economics and Organicist Regionalism,” presented by Richard Thomas Wagner, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to ecological regionalism, a literature review of how the region is represented within the ecological economics literature, and the methods of this research project. Chapter 2 presents Mumford’s analysis of the current state of economic and social affairs; this develops a context for how the philosophy and practice of regionalism could serve as a mechanism to promote sustainable existence. Following this discussion, in Chapter 3, the philosophy of organicist humanism is presented, providing the basis and underlying ideology of regionalism and a regionalist society. With this philosophy established, a response to the issue of “buy-in” and “adoption” associated with the practice of regionalism and sustainability is addressed. With the establishment of this philosophy, a vision of organicist culture is presented. Preceding the development of the philosophy and culture of organicism, in Chapter 4, economic organicist regionalism is discussed. In general, these core chapters provide the vision of ecological regionalism and create a foundation for the discussion of actual methods and practices that would contribute to an ecologically and socially sustainable society. Lastly, in Chapter 5, an analysis and synthesis of regionalism within ecological economics is given. This chapter shows how existing topics and policy mechanisms in the ecological economics literature can be strengthened and unified given an organicist-based regionalism.
An Introduction to Organicist-based Regionalism

The use of a regional designation is typically indistinct and variable. Regions have been defined, for example, by differing laws and regulations, tax and code structures, political boundaries, or simply economic activity. This subjectivity poses a problem for policy makers and activists who seek to implement and promote ecologically sustainable development beyond the confines of any one locality. Furthermore, regions defined along these lines are still bound by capitalistically-defined property, profits, and the natural world. Even with regions serving as a unit where sustainability policies can be implemented, given this institutional basis, these goals will ultimately not succeed.

To resolve this issue, regions need to be re-envisioned so that interested parties have a common ground to discuss social, economic, and ecological issues. This will also require an understanding of the current institutional environment and a shift in our core axiomatic value system. With such an ideological shift, regional identification as well as policy and economic development could be framed in principles of ecology and humanism, where the connections of human and natural activities are recognized as interdependent. Furthermore, such a change in human and ecological association has the potential to instill a culture of eco-stewardship as well as civic activism. Implementing and exploring an ecologically regionalist social provisioning process has great potential to address many shortcomings of a monetary production economy.

Ecological economists are familiar with discussions of regional affairs, although they still face the problematic nature of unified regional identification and successful policy
implementation. With the discipline, there still does not exist a concretely defined notion of the region or why regional affairs matter. Typically, the region is defined by research purpose rather than by commonly understood boundaries. While some ecological economists recognize the importance of a more concretely defined regional definition and regional affairs—for example, with regard to resource planning—there still exists a problematic philosophical base that will dramatically limit the effectiveness of regional sustainability goals. While it is the case that there are many ecological economists who recognize “regions” as including social and ecological conditions, there is an inadequate intellectual and institutional basis to understand the limits that our current system imposes on regional policy as well as the need and importance of regional sustainability.

At the same time, ecological economics has provided a considerable contribution of envisioning sustainable regional economies. This is because ecological economists have defined the discipline as a trans-disciplinary and visionary science. This implies using knowledge from a wide range of disciplines—as well as creativity—to identify, examine, and propose solutions to existing and newly arising social, economic, and environmental issues. As Costanza et al. (1996) describe,

One of the major differences between ecological economics and conventional academic disciplines is that it does not try to differentiate itself from other disciplines in terms of its content or tools. It is an explicit attempt at pluralistic integration rather than territorial differentiation. (Costanza et al. 1996, 3)

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1 See: (Akgün, van Leeuwen, and Nijkamp 2012)
From this viewpoint, ecological economists are familiar with an envisioning process and see it as a fundamental component of economic, social, and policy development. Yet, as has been suggested, there is still a missing component of a vision of regional sustainability.

While it is being presented that an ecologically-based regionalism is a more recent development, there is a historical depth of theory, discussion, and application of what is called regionalism supported by those who identified themselves as regionalists. Some of the earliest of the American regionalist movements had links with artists, writers, philosophers, planners, economists, social theorists, and cultural critics. These interdisciplinary thinkers were engrossed in the possibility of a new United States defined by its regional dispersion—i.e., by ecological setting, cultural designations, folk ways and heritage, and economic base—that would provide the basis for an enriching of the “American experience.” As regionalist historian Robert Dorman explains, there existed a wide array of regionalist thinking, although in general it concerned the path of American society toward a regionally defined, non-invidious economy, with a culturally rich local life experience. He states,

> The region, it was hoped, would provide the physical framework for the creation of new kinds of cities, small-scale, planned, delimited, and existing in balance with wilderness and a restored and rejuvenated rural economy...[with] a democratic civic religion, utopian ideology, and radical politics. (Dorman 2003, xii–xiii)

These thinkers believed that the region not only provided a way to reinvigorate economic and social activity but as well the existing ecological conditions. Furthermore, regionalism, defined as such, was hoped to form the basis of an institutional adjustment toward

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2See: (Dorman 2003)
ecological conservation, similar to what is being referred today as sustainability. Yet, ecological conservation and preservation were only a piece of what the regionalist movement hoped for.

Important among these regionalists is American thinker, writer, and social visionary, Lewis Mumford. Mumford, beginning his more formal writing in the 1920s, was enamored by the potential for a cultural renewal in the United States stemming from regional life. Mumford developed his intellectual career in a time of economic, social, and ecological crisis. He experienced two World Wars and with such events saw that the human population was becoming increasingly culturally unified and nationalistic. Yet at the same time, Mumford was optimistic for a rebirth of a diverse cultural and economic life; this may have been because of his readings of authors such as Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. As Mark Luccarelli states, Mumford “defined himself in relation to both progressive politics and cultural radicalism” (Luccarelli 1995, 9). He believed that the seeds of social, cultural, and economic vigor were present, particularly in American culture, and could be developed through the establishment of ecologically and socially defined regions.

In these regions inhabitants could find common ground—literally and figuratively—to create and continuously pursue balanced economic, social, cultural, and ecological living. Throughout his life, Mumford continued to believe in this possibility even in the face of an ever increasing atomizing, consumerist, and individualist culture. Even today—while most do not know it—these types of ideas are becoming more prominent and relevant for today’s “transitioners”—ecological conservationists, bio-regionalists, and sustainability-minded urban planners and economists. Given these trends, there is value in understanding
Mumford’s thinking, the ideas and thinkers that influenced him, as well as the work done by his associates who held similar beliefs and hopes.\textsuperscript{34}

It is an argument of this dissertation that Mumford’s understanding of regionalism, which is based in a renewed understanding of the human and ecological world, is still viable, relevant, and could allow the potential for a more ecologically sustainable, culturally rich, and economically diverse society.

Understanding the Regionalist Perspective

The vision of regionalism as developed by Mumford can be understood as both a philosophy and practice. On the philosophical side it represents not only an ideology, but also a visionary plan for the future of human cultural and spiritual development. On the practical side, regionalism includes a plan for ecologically minded material production and distribution as well as a way to foster participatory democratic activism. It is these features that distinguish Mumford’s regionalism from purely economic understandings of the region as well as the plethora of regional theorists throughout history.\textsuperscript{5} To this point, in an early (1931) article written for \textit{The New Republic} entitled \textit{Toward a New Regionalism}, Mumford writes,

\begin{quote}
Regionalism as a modern social reality does not mean the resurrection of a dead way of life or the mummification of local customs and institutions; nor is it dependent
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{3}See: (Joel 2013)

\textsuperscript{4} Particularly, the Regional Planning Association of America

\textsuperscript{5} For example, there is a period of regionalism in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century which is focused on the transcendentalist philosophy of Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. These regionalists were captivated with a romantic-back-to-the-land philosophy, literature, and artistic expression.
upon excessive interest in the primitive, the naïve, the illiterate. It is, essentially, the effort to provide for the continuous cultivation and development of all the resources of the earth and of man; an effort which recognizes the existence of real groups and social configurations and geographic relationships that are ignored by the abstract culture of the metropolis, and which opposes the aimless nomadism of modern commercial enterprise, the conception of a stable and settled and balanced and cultivated life. (Mumford 1931, 157)

With this statement, Mumford is distinguishing that the regionalism that he advocates is not in any way an antiquarian conception, based in nostalgic visions of times past, pushed for by other self-identified regionalists of his day. Mumford’s regionalism regards movements forward in human development, utilizing the techniques and advancements that humans have invented and practiced, although in ways that follow current knowledge as to their cultural and environmental impacts. As well, his regionalism is fundamentally in opposition to the type of development which has the tendency to ignore and undervalue smaller human communities as well as favor large scale and centralized production that many times has very little positive impact upon a locality other than in economic terms.⁶

With a sense of urgency, Mumford understood that something must be done before the country—and eventually the world—would be environmentally devastated from a type of economic system that generally favors profit over human vitality. He believed that regionalism could foster the type of social environment that would allow for a change from such a system. With a high degree of urgency and similar to our current awareness of ecological devastation, Mumford distinguishes in a Sociological Review article entitled Regionalism and Irregionalism,

Up to a certain point, economic and social life can be conducted without regard to the regional actualities. Where there is a vast surplus of natural resources and an

⁶ See: (Mumford 1948)
excess of population through rapid multiplication…both the land and the people may be wasted and the means of a sound livelihood may be frittered away without the community’s becoming immediately aware of its losses and inefficiencies. (Mumford 1927, 279)

In this quote Mumford is suggesting that, up to a certain point, humans can extract, pollute, and destroy the ecological environment to engage in economic and social activities; but these activities do not come without cost and cannot occur indefinitely. Furthering this point, Mumford says with vigor,

In America during the last century we mined soils, gutted our forests, misplaced industries, wasted vast sums in needless transportation, congested population, and lowered the physical vitality of the community without immediately feeling the consequences of our actions…The blind heaping up of population in metropolitan areas, the equally blind impoverishment, through bad marketing and an inadequate distribution of the population, of rural areas, cannot continue indefinitely….all these relations are unstable; and in the long run they cannot be maintained. (Mumford 1927, 279)

Sounding like an ecological economist of today, Mumford understands the ecologically unsustainable reality of his—and still today our—economic system. With emphasis on the blind nature of these activities, Mumford is making the point that something planned—and ecologically and humanly sensitive—must precede the current processes of development and social interaction. There is an utter urgency to promote and practice a style of development that supports and conserves the land as well as promote the people and organisms that it supports. Mumford suggests,

For a century it has suited us to ignore the basic realities of the land: its contours and landscapes, its vegetation areas, its power, its mineral resources, its industry, its types of community; or rather, even when we used these resources, we used them in a blind and heedless way, achieving merely the gaudy abstract symbols of power and wealth. We gauged prosperity by dollars and greatness by the census statistics, although, as in the burning of coal to run steam engines, more than three-fourths of the money was literally sent up the flue. (Mumford 1927, 279)
These basic concerns for ecological conservation and preservation form much of the organicist-based regional perspective. This perspective allows and pushes for a holistic view of both the social and economic conditions which form our lives but in context with the underlying environmental realities. With adoption of such a philosophical basis, Mumford believed it would become increasingly difficult to undertake development projects which clearly harmed the human and ecological world. In a longer but absolutely inspiring passage, Mumford states,

When we acquire the regional outlook, we reverse this process: instead of considering separate products or resources, we think of the region as a whole, and we realize that in each geographic area a certain balance of natural resources and human institutions is possible, for the finest development of the land and the people. We cannot look upon coal as one thing and coal communities as another; we cannot look upon financial concentration as one thing, and numerous urban slums as quite another, we see, rather, that the crude exploitation of coal has always produced an unhygienic environment and a disorderly community, and instead of believing that this may be compensated simply by increases in money wages, we see that the need is for a different kind of community-planning…. [I]ndustry, education, housing, culture, recreation, are not separable activities; they exist with a regional complex; and this complex changes, as the land itself changes from coastal plain to upland, from valley bottom to mountain top…. Different conditions create different problems; different problems require different methods; different methods produce different results. In this recognition of natural diversities lies the vital and unifying element in the regionalist movement. (Mumford 1927, 280)

With this interconnected framework in place, the following sections will introduce how the region is defined, economic regionalism, and cultural/political regionalism.

Defining Regions: The Regional Survey

Unlike the economic-based understanding of the region that is typical of urban and regional economics, Mumford’s regionalist perspective establishes that economic transactions are only one characteristic of any particular region. The region can be understood as a set of dynamic interconnected relations of human beings and their
ecological and environmental surroundings. As the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA)—Mumford’s main outlet for the diffusion of the regionalist perspective—defines, “the region is a combined and overall cultural and geographic unity with the variety of resources to ensure a measure of self-sufficiency” (Sussman 1976, 33). While this sounds overtly romantic, Mumford makes the point that,

the region is anything but ideal or abstract. Its existence resides in the facts of geography: climate, soil, and terrain, [and it is these facts which] constitute the fundamental basis of existence. The region sets the basic material conditions that underlie economic, technical, and social development. (Luccarelli 1995, 28)

The region is understood as both naturally and socially defined; this implies that there is an underlying ecological and natural basis of human patterns of settlement. The natural conditions are found in the climate, variety of plants and animals, geology, water sources, and terrain. These conditions in turn have direct influence on social patterns such as heritage, laws, customs, and historical events. Patterns of human settlement are in direct relation to ecological conditions.

It is these basic facts that result from a particular ecological area that reveal a particular region as well as regional differences. Regional definitions are described by a set of common categories but vary in the specific attributes—for example, plant, animal, soil, and climatic conditions. These specifics form the “web of life” of the region; i.e. a region’s “identity.” While it seems difficult to specify one region from the next, Mumford and the regionalist perspective reveal that it is these types of characteristics, along with human presence, that constitute regional definitions.\(^7\)

\(^7\)To be clear, at no point is it assumed that these definitions are absolute. The regionalist perspective understands that boundaries are social institutions, although “natural regions,
To facilitate regional definitions, the regionalist perspective draws on the many branches of both social and natural sciences. As has been suggested, it is believed that the region needs to be identified by geographic, ecological, historical, economic, and social conditions. Accordingly, geographers, sociologists, economists, historians, and planners would need to work together to discover what could be considered a particular region. For example, Mumford suggests,

the geographer points out that mankind have not spread out in a formless undifferentiated mass, if only for the reason that the surface of the globe prevents this kind of diffusion. The major land masses divide naturally into smaller units, revealing special characteristics in the underlying geological structure, in the climate, and consequently in the soils and vegetation and animal life and available mineral deposits. (Sussman 1976, 200)

To clarify, the geographer seeks to examine and reveal the natural breaks and transitions that are inherent to the particular landscapes. Again, this is not done in isolation from the patterns of human settlement. Regional identification is based on the idea that regions are shaped by both ecological and human forces. As Mumford distinguishes, “the region then, as is disclosed by the modern geographer, is a natural basis, and is a social fact” (Sussman 1976, 203).

It is with human association that the ecological region takes on a social, economic, and cultural understanding. With variations in the types of production, structures, and

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unlike political areas, have not, except in the case of islands and isolated mountain areas, any hard and fast boundaries….This means that all boundary lines in black and white are arbitrary….The lines laid down by nature are not perhaps as clear as those laid down by man; but they have the advantage of enduring longer” (Mumford 1927, 284). It follows then that although it is the human perception of where lines exist, at least with ecological and natural conditions, variations do not radically or rapidly change by a human standard of time.
heritage, for example, regional differences and identification become institutional realities.

With respect to this regional identity, Mumford suggests,

the region provides a common background: the air we breathe, the water we drink, food we eat, the landscape we see, the accumulation of experience in custom peculiar to the setting, [these things] tend to unify the inhabitants and to differentiate them from the members of other regions. (Sussman 1976, 201)

To elaborate and make clear regional specificities, for example, the economist studies the economic patterns and resource use, the ecologist studies the underlying natural environment, the sociologist studies the cultural and social aspects, the historian studies the paths of human relations, and together with regional planners, combine these facts to promote informed, ecologically and socially sensitive plans of development and living. It is with an expanded breadth and depth of regional specification that the regionalist hopes for progressive human and ecological associated living.

Regionalist Culture and Politics: A Philosophy of Organicism

Realistically, to facilitate a regional society it is understood among regionalists that a series of institutional adjustments must occur.⁸ This is necessary given that the institutional environment of, as Mumford calls it, a money economy, inhibits the type of environment that would result in ecological and social sustainability. Specifically, as Mumford suggests, what is needed is a regional culture that is based in a philosophy of organicism—or connection to both the ecological and social environment in which humans live. Mumford believes that with an organicist-based culture, social processes such as participatory

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⁸ Institutional adjustment is defined here from an original institutional perspective, for example, that of Marc Tool. See: (Tool 2000)
democracy and ecological conservation would hopefully develop. Generally, regionalists believed that with the development of these types of institutions a transformation towards a life economy could take place.  

As Mark Luccarelli notes,

> What is essential in regionalism is its vision of an organic order that enlivens culture. As such it is a response to the predominant modern Western worldview that has turned nature into empty space and promoted technological “solutions” that engulf the complexities of both the urban and natural worlds. (Luccarelli 1995, 2)

Mumford makes the point that a fundamental component of regional life will be a commitment to what he called organicism. This is a vision that includes a connection to nature that enriches and promotes the human and ecological life process while at the same time providing a basis for a vibrant culture. Mumford believed that with an almost pious connection to nature and the life process, inhabitants of regional cities and towns would understand and endorse the importance of conservation and ecological preservation, while also using the local natural world as a source of cultural identity. Furthermore, with an organicist-based culture it could be that individuals could understand the role of evolution and change; not just in the natural environment but also in social relationships. Mumford believed that in the process of learning to appreciate, value,

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9 A life economy will be discussed in detail in the coming chapters, but in the basic sense puts human and cultural development as priorities before monetary wealth accumulation.

10 Luccarelli is a knowledgeable scholar with regard to the regionalist movement.

11 This could easily be interpreted as a social Darwinist position, for example, as related to Herbert Spencer, but Mumford expressly speaks against this position. He states, “In emphasizing the importance of this new orientation [(organicism)] toward the living and the organic, I expressly rule out the false biological analogies between societies and organisms: Herbert Spencer and others pushed these to the point of absurdity” (Mumford 1938)
and maintain the natural environment, individuals would come to understand their role in it as well as develop a picture of the life process as a whole. This might then also contribute to a progressive political life. He states, with reference to nature, the point is that our knowledge directs attention to parallel processes, parallel conditions and reactions; and it gives rise to related pictures of the natural and the cultural environments, considered as wholes, within which man finds his life and being and drama. (Mumford 1938, 303)

With a more holistic sense of the human being and nature—essentially ending the classical liberals’ radical individual—Mumford believes that humans will have the chance to become more socialized with both fellow humans and their ecological surroundings. To this point, Mumford describes what he thinks will occur when we embrace the organic world:

With the organism uppermost we begin to think qualitatively in terms of growth, norms, shapes, inter-relationships, implications, associations, and societies. We realize that the aim of the social process is not to make men more powerful, but to make them more completely developed, more human, more capable of carrying on the specifically human attributes of culture—neither snarling carnivores nor insensate robots. Once established, the vital and social order must subsume the mechanical one, and dominate it: in practice as well as in thought. In social terms, this means a re-orientation not only from mechanism to organism, but from despotism to symbiotic association, from capitalism and fascism to co-operation and basic communism. (Mumford 1938, 303)

With this powerful vision, Mumford reveals a key regionalist position: that a culture based in organicism will have the type of institutional setting in place that will lead to a progressive transformation of political, economic, and cultural institutions, ultimately developing a sustainable society.

With respect to this shift, Luccarelli suggests, “Mumford presented regionalism as a social theory that builds on the Enlightenment principles of democracy and self-government but goes beyond parliamentary liberalism to the restoration of civic democracy” (Luccarelli
With the creation of decentralized regional units, the seeds to a participatory democratic society have the potential to be sown and developed. It would be within regional cities and towns—where a hopefully prosperous culture and economy had developed—where individuals could become not simply an inhabitant but as well a participant in the ecological and social communities. As Mumford suggests,

It is in the local community and the immediate region, small enough to be grasped from a tower, a hilltop, or an airplane, to be explored in every part before youth has arrived at the period of political responsibility, that a beginning can be made toward the detailed resorption of government...These people will know in detail where they live and how they live: they will be united by a common feeling for their landscape, their literature and language, their local ways, and out of their own self-respect they will have a sympathetic understanding with other regions and different local peculiarities. They will be actively interested in the form and culture of their locality, which means their community and their own personalities. Such people will contribute to our land-planning, our industry planning, and our community planning the authority of their own understanding, and the pressure of their own desires. (Mumford 1938, 386, 386)

As organicism is embraced, and with the development of regional towns and cities, where individuals are able to develop a greater sense of identity with their ecological and social surroundings, it would seem inevitable that a desire to participate and become an integral part of one’s community would ensue. Furthermore, with such participation the importance of regional planning becomes apparent. Regional development represents the culmination of organicist culture, economy, and philosophy.

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12This view is one which Mumford may have obtained from his association with John Dewey and the Young Americans (also known as the Young Intellectuals), who wholeheartedly supported participatory democracy. The similarity between the two’s thought makes a strong case for where Mumford gained such a perspective, but it must also be noted that this style of progressivism was common during this era (post WWI). As Luccarelli notes, Mumford advocated “a synthesis of a politics of cultural transformation and a new science of regional geography” (Luccarelli 1995, 9)
The Regional Economy: A Life Economics

The regionalist economy is one in which the social provisioning process—understood as the economy embedded in a social system—is constructed to aid and advance the human and ecological life process rather than exploit and destroy it. Mumford spent much of his career seeking to elaborate the current social provisioning process that he believed tended to ignore and undervalue existing mutual aid institutions as well as human associations with nature. This organicist vision of the economy has much to do with the “technics” perspective of his long-time association with Professor Patrick Geddes.13

Geddes distinguishes that the types of technics—or methods of material production—have changed considerably throughout human history. Contemporary to his life was a largely coal-driven industrial world that seemed to have little concern for the ecological conditions and too much concern for monetary rewards. He called this period paleotechnics. In a vivid passage, Geddes describes this paleotechnic world,

As paleotects we make it our prime endeavor to dig up coals, to run machinery, to produce cheap cotton, to clothe cheap people, to get up more coals, to run more machinery, and so on; and all this essentially towards “extending markets.” The whole has been essentially organized upon a basis of “primary poverty and of secondary poverty,” relieved by a stratum of moderate well-being, and enlivened by a few prizes, and comparatively rare fortunes—the latter chiefly estimated in gold, and after death. (Geddes 1972, 148)

Geddes sees the paleotechnic economic order as one that has essentially a myopic and self-defeating purpose: the creation and exuberance of wealth yet at the cost and depreciation of the world in which it will be used. With seemingly contemporary examples, Geddes

13 Patrick Geddes was a sociologist and geographer who sought advanced regionalism as a method towards environmental conservation and protection as well as civic participation and responsibility. See: (Geddes 1972)
identifies the inherent instability of the paleotechnic world. Begging for a transition towards a much more reasonable and stable social order, he states,

The life and labour of each race and generation of men are but the expression and working of their ideals. Never was this more fully done than in this paleotechnic phase, with its wasteful industry and its predatory finance—and its consequences, (a) in dissipation of energies, (b) in deterioration of life… Such twofold dissipation may most simply be observed upon two of its main lines; that of crude luxuries and sports, and the dissipations these so readily involve in the moral sense; and secondly through war….This, again, is the natural accumulation, the inevitable psychological expression of certain very real evils and angers, though not those most commonly expressed. First, of the inefficiency and wastefulness of paleotechnic industry, with corresponding instability and irregularity of employment, which are increasingly felt by all concerned; second, the corresponding instability of the financial system, with its pecuniary and credit illusions, which are also becoming realized; and third, the growing physical slackness or deterioration—unfitness anyhow—which we all more or less feel in our paleotechnic town life, which therefore must more and more make us crouch behind barriers and cry for defenders. (Geddes 1972, 149)

Geddes sees the tendencies inherent in the paleotechnic order that ultimately has little concern for advancement in human associated living. Furthermore, as a result of such negligence, although production may be planned at individual instances, the macro paleotechnic economy cannot support a rationally planned economy. He believed that these deficiencies would lead to both moral and social decay, as such a degree of instability does not allow for consistent human flourishing. Although Geddes understood that the paleotechnic world provided much advancement to human material existence, he sees—similar to many social theorists of his day—that humans have the capacity to a much greater purpose and wellbeing.

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14 Whereby resources are utilized at levels and for goods which do not deteriorate the ecological environment and as well all people are able to enjoy economic stability.
It would be through a regional and organicist-based social provisioning process that such realization could occur. Adding to this position, Mumford conceptualizes the regional economy as a fundamentally different social order than that associated with capitalism. A regional economy would be one that is distinguished by decentralized production that focuses on the advancement of non-invidious sources of employment; promotes human development; and seeks protection of the ecological environment. With this vision of the economy, Mumford proclaims, “we must alter our present life-denying goals and lay down the foundations for a new civilization—not a money economy but a life economy” (Mumford 1948, 533).

The life economy would fundamentally rest upon the establishment and promotion of the region as an economic unit. Within the region—recognized as the interconnection of economic, social, and ecological environments—cities and towns could be planned in order to promote sustainable economic and ecological conditions and cultural relevance. With this type of economic development, smaller cities and rural towns would have potential opportunities and livelihoods similar to those experienced by the major cities across the nation. Speaking to the future of economic regionalism, Mumford suggests, “the geographic region has become potentially the unit that the metropolis was under the past economic regime: it needs to be linked up, interlaced, and settled with a view to the new opportunities and the new conditions of life” (Mumford 1938, 345).

As these regional economies develop, the hope would be that economies and production could become decentralized. This is to say, cities and towns within the region would seek to provide most of the necessities of life from within, eliminating the need for
costly and wasteful transportation of goods. It would be hoped that with such
decentralization, local life would flourish. Mumford adds, “under a regime of economic
regionalism, industries would be varied and balanced locally in order to secure a varied and
balanced life: likewise the multiform, many-threaded cultural heritage that goes with such a
life” (Mumford 1938, 345).

This is not to say that regions and the units within regions could reach a sort of
equilibrium of production and consumption. Regionalism understands the variation in
resources across a geographic spectrum and there is still a role to be played by inter-regional
trade. The main point is that if there is a possibility for production of life necessities close to
home, this should be a priority in the decision to make or buy. Mumford clarifies by
suggesting,

Economic regionalism, I emphasize, cannot aim at either economic or cultural self-
sufficiency: no region is rich enough or varied enough to supply all the ingredients
of our present civilization: the dream of autarchy is merely a military dodge for
putting a population in a state of mind appropriate to war. What regionalism does
aim at is a more even development of local resources: a development that does not
gauge success purely by the limited financial profits obtained through a one-sided
specialization. (Mumford 1938, 345)

Mumford makes the point that there is value in local production of goods and services
beyond that of pecuniary reward. Furthermore, Mumford is making a point that regional
decentralization of production is not simply “bare industrial decentralization” (Mumford
1938, 345). Rather, as Mumford was writing in a time where most production and
distribution occurred in centralized metropolitan areas, his hope for decentralization is
understood as the varied production of goods and services among the regions, towns, and
Decentralization aims at bringing life to all human settlements, not simply the major metropolitan cities.

From this process, regional economies are thought to be capable of promoting employment that fulfills deeper needs of the human being; that is, beyond monetary reward. Individuals would gain a greater identity with their community, town or city, and home. Individuals having a greater identity with their home would come to understand and respect their ecological surroundings. A sense of conservation and protection of the environment is hoped for in an organicist-based regional life-economy. Mumford illustrates a grand vision of such economic conditions:

a life economy seeks continuity, variety, orderly and purposeful growth. Such an economy is cut to the human scale: so that every organism, every community, every human being, shall have the variety of goods and experiences necessary for the fulfillment of his own individual life-course, from birth to death. The mark of the life economy is its observance of organic limits: it seeks not the greatest possible quantity of a particular good, but the right quantity, of the right quality, at the right place and the right time for the right purpose. Too much of any one thing is as fatal to living organisms as too little. (Mumford 1968, 221)

The essence of the regional economy is to promote a style of human development and life that promotes social and ecological association. To paraphrase Benton MacKaye (1962), a longtime friend and fellow advocate of Mumford, we have spent most of our existence working to develop and produce the means to live, yet, when will we start to work on the actual process of living? The regional economy is an answer to this question: a social

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15 This vision of a regional economy, although seemingly utopian, has existed time and time again in human history; the medieval village, the settlement of the eastern United States, and to some degree rural towns that established independently of a metropolitan area.

16 See: (MacKaye 1962)
provisioning process that re-examines and re-orientates the classic economic questions of “what” and “how” to produce as well as “how to distribute.”

Transitioning

With a basic introduction to an organicist-based regionalist thought, it will now be shown that the discipline of ecological economics could greatly benefit from an elaborated definition and practice of such a regionalism. At the most general level, ecological economics has a well-developed commitment to creating visions of sustainability, examining data, and creating indicators that reveal the effectiveness of practices and policies of sustainability, as well as considering how to better human chances of reaching a sustainable world. Within this discussion, the region emerges as an important unit and concept that has the potential to push the goal of sustainability forward. Yet, as will be shown, within the literature there is a broad use of the region with very little synthesis compared to that regionalism based in an organicist philosophy. An underlying philosophy of the region is needed that seeks to understand the basis of why unsustainable practices occur; why regional sustainability policy can resolve this; and provide a way to address the foundational human associations that could utilize the region as a mechanism for sustainability forward. Before this is discussed, first it will be shown how the region is represented in the ecological economics literature to establish the idea that there is a missing coherent regional vision.
Literature Review

Literature Review Introduction

Within the ecological economics literature, there are many uses of the idea of a region. At the most general level, the region is used as a unit of analysis. This unit varies in definition and after review it becomes clear that no unified concept of the region or regionalism exists. At the same time, the region is consistently applied as a unit of analysis that is described as more applicable for the implementation of sustainability policy. Furthermore, within the literature there appears to be a demand for a more holistically defined understanding of the region and one that has a philosophical basis. This section will delineate the uses of the region within the ecological economics literature providing support for the thesis of this research: that there is a need for a generally accepted view of the region; that a regionalism not only needs to be one that is conceptually envisioned and institutionally grounded, but also viewed from a humanist-based value position. Lastly, this section helps to develop an organicist-based region and regionalism, which after being constructed, can strengthen the implementation of sustainability policy.

Overview and Basic Findings

Generally, the region in ecological economics can be categorized into two broad classifications that can then be broken down to include sub-components. These include the region as a unit of analysis and the need for the region to be defined and utilized as a unit of analysis to support regional affairs. Both of these classifications are discussed in the context of the implementation of sustainability policy. Furthermore, it is generally argued that the
region represents a unit of analysis that is more suitable to deal with issues of resource management and sustainability policy.

Within the stated broad categorizations, the region as a unit of analysis is defined along several more specific lines: the region as a generic indication for a geographic, social, or economic unit; the region as defined by ecological conditions or resources; the region as the expression of an urban area and is larger than a city but smaller than a state; the region as a particular ecological separation—that has ecological features distinct from the larger natural environment; and lastly, the most common expression within the literature, the region as a politically defined unit, typically for purposes of government administration. The uses of the region, as has been described, is only sometimes explicitly discussed—because of this while the authors understand the variation in the use of the region they must define their use of the concept. Confirming this finding of the use of the region in the ecological economics literature, Doll, Mueller, and Morley suggest,

There are essentially two methods available to subdivide a national territory into regions. Normative regions are units that are the result of political decisions. They are derived according to the functions that area sustains and the population required to carry out those functions. They are largely determined according to political, historical and cultural factors. Alternatively, there are analytical regions, which are determined by the homogeneity of some human or physical geographical factor. Hence regions may be determined by factors such as altitude, land cover type or homogeneous economic types. (Doll, Muller, and Morley 2006, 78)

At the same time, the region is also discussed on more methodological terms, in which the idea of the region as an important unit of analysis is considered. From this discussion, a general argument emerges: the region is a unit of analysis that can describe the complexities of a human and ecological community and importantly is a scale which, when studied or policy is implemented, is a more understandable and meaningful designation. Additionally,
the region is a scale that can be grasped without becoming lost in the seemingly infinite interconnections and complexities that might exist in a larger geo-social-ecological designation. This scale is described to allow for a more informed research or process of public policy.

To summarize these findings, Figure 1 displays a concept map that shows the delineation of the region within the literature as well as the implications of such a use. Following this map is a more explicit discussion of each of these uses; examples from the literature are given to show how the region is represented within ecological economics. From this discussion, again, support will be provided for the argument and contribution of this research: that within ecological economics a more developed understanding of the region is needed as well as a regionalism—an underlying philosophy and practice—to strengthen the capacity of regional-based research as well as produce and implement sustainability policy.

The Region as a Unit of Analysis

Generic Use

The use of the region as a unit of analysis without designation of bounds or explicit definition exists within the literature as a means to describe an area that is larger than a town or city but smaller than a state or nation. The region in this context is utilized as a means to describe a sub-component of a larger geographic, social, ecological, or economic area. This generic use becomes problematic to the overall discussion of the region.
within the discipline, given that such subjectivity contributes to an arbitrary nature of regional identification. The use of the concept of a region in these cases provides no further support for the argument of their research. Arguably, not using the concept of a region in these articles would strengthen the arguments being made as it becomes unclear as to what a region is or means and does not allow ecological economists the ability to compare regional ideas and public policy.
For example, in *Regional Pollution and Multinational Firms* (Beladi and Frasca 1996), the term region is used only once, and this is in the title of the paper. While it can be inferred that the region represents a country, a deeper understanding of the region is lost and does not provide any rationale as to why the region is being studied or discussed.\(^\text{17}\)

Similarly, in *Regional Development or Resource Preservation? A Perspective from Japanese Appliance Exports* (Fuse et al. 2011) the term region is utilized in multiple contexts and loses strength as a meaningful unit of analysis. For example, in this case, the region is used in reference to the continent of Europe. Fuse et al. reveal their use of the region in the following quote although they make no other explicit definition of the term. They state in description of their research that,

> A relatively unexplored area of import/export flows is used products that cross national boundaries for reuse elsewhere. The materials contained therein are not available for reuse by domestic industry, which must therefore import a new supply of materials to continue new product manufacture. This loss of materials may be particularly important for a country such as Japan, which has few natural resources of any kind, or for a region such as Europe which has few to no domestic resources of the scarce metals so vital to modern technology. (Fuse et al. 2011, 788)

From this quote the region is synonymous with a continent. Yet the use of the term region does not benefit the argument of the paper in any influential way.

One important idea does emerge from the region as used in this context; the region is generally understood to represent a smaller component of a larger whole. For example, the region in this sense is used: in the designation of sub-economic entities; in the “developing regions” of a larger economic region (Taylor); as an ecological-economic-based designation

\(^{17}\) Yet, this paper does provide an interesting account of how sustainability policy has the ability to impact the flow of international capital and trade.
such as a coffee growing region (Ninan and Sathyapalan 2005); as a collection of administrative entities in a national state (Chakraborty 2001; England 2007); and lastly, as a smaller component of a socially designated area—for example, the mid-Atlantic seaboard (Bostian and Herlihy 2014). From these uses, it can generally be understood that within the ecological economics literature, the region is a sub-entity of a larger geographic construct.

There is an additional contribution from the use of region in these examples, this being the fact that places are not homogeneous. As a seemingly obvious realization, it is the implications that stem from this idea which are important for this research. With the recognition of the complexity of particular areas of study, a broader and more informed context of discussion for public policy becomes possible. Certainly the idea that landscapes, culture, economic conditions, and resources are not universally the same for all areas seems simplistic, but it is with this recognition that research and policy implementation can be better suited given an understanding of the local aspects of the location in question (Waltert and Schläpfer 2010). A further implication of this idea of local and regional complexity, is that a “one size fits all” public policy is problematic.

*The Region as a Socially Defined Ecological Unit*

Another reference to the region within the literature is a socially defined ecological unit. The use of the region in this respect typically is in a context of implementation of sustainability and resource-based policies among areas with many stakeholders. These types of “regions” seem to be important for distinguishing and creating a shared understanding of ecological conditions that exist within socially constructed boundaries such as state or county lines. Although slightly more specific than the generic use of the region, as described
above, this use of “region” still remains non-standardized and subjective; in these cases, the region is defined for purpose of study or of a particular policy goal.

For example, in *Valuing Ecosystem and Economic Services across Land-use Scenarios in the Prairie Pothole Region of the Dakotas, USA* (Gascoigne et al. 2011), the region is a construct of a particular ecological environment—the Prairies of the central United States—but for the purpose of research and policy is defined as a sub-unit of the area and bounded by state lines. The authors describe the region:

The PPR [Prairie Pothole Region] is found within the Northern Great Plains, and covers approximately 900,000 km². The region extends all the way from the north-central United States, incorporating parts of Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Montana, to the south-central part of Canada, encompassing sections of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba (Reference Fig. 1). For this study, we focus specifically on the PPR of North and South Dakota that is roughly defined by the area and state boundaries north and east of the Missouri River, covering approximately 224,000 km². (Gascoigne et al. 2011, 1716)

Using the region in this context does lend itself to a further elaboration of the importance of understanding the complexities of particular sub-areas of the total environment. The authors use their region to understand how the natural “eco services” that this “region” provides are interconnected to human economic use. This “regional” identification, while still defined for particular research goals, does provide a basis for an argument that differing natural environments require different policy objectives in order to foster a sustainability of the area.

Similarly in connection to the idea of an ecological “region” existing in human context, a paper entitled *Urban and Rural Attitudes toward Municipal Water Controls: A Study of a Semi-arid Region with Limited Water Supplies* (Pumphrey, Edwards, and Becker 2008) provides further evidence of the use of the “region” as a human-defined ecological
unit of analysis. In this case, the ecological designation is the High Plains but these authors discuss only the part of the region that falls in Northern Texas. Certainly, this ecological Plains environment does not simply stop once the legal boundary of Texas is passed and in this sense the true ecological region is lost.

Yet, what is provided in these works is the designation of various human attitudes toward resource use in a particularly defined eco-social unit and that these designations are neither static nor consistent. Of importance is the idea that it is not simply the ecological environment that is complex—interdependent and dynamic—but as well the human social characteristics that are found within it. While the “region” is again, a narrowed and focused construct—which thus implies the region as simply a sub-component of some larger whole—there is a valuable insight as to how regions might be defined that includes both ecological and social dimensions. This then plays into the larger discussion of how to set regional sustainability policy given various cultural differences.\textsuperscript{18}

\textit{The Region as a Metropolitan or Urban Area}

Curiously, the metropolitan area as a region is a minor discussion within the ecological economics literature. Typical of how regions are discussed in traditional urban and regional economics, ecological economists do not discuss the region as such or on a widespread basis. However, this is an important finding, as most economic developers and city officials view the region solely as an economic unit rather than in connection with its ecological foundations. Moving forward with a further elaboration of the region within

\textsuperscript{18} This discussion is also found in \textit{Valuing the Non-timber Forest Products in the Mediterranean Region} (Croitoru 2007).
ecological economics, this will be a needed discussion; urban areas exist in ecological environments, greatly impact this environment, and the interconnections between these environments must be understood and defined if sustainability policy is to be effective.

While not a large component of the literature, there is one case in which an urban area is discussed as a region. In *Class/racial Conflict, Intolerance, and Distortions in Urban Form: Lessons for Sustainability from the Detroit Region* (Vojnovic and Darden 2013), the region is represented as the culmination of urban forms around the City of Detroit. This article discusses the need for a rethinking of the region to fit the needs of the future development of Detroit. It is being argued that the understanding of the region as it stands is counterproductive towards economic vitality and ecological sustainability. The authors suggest:

With regard to regional form, Detroit needs to redevelop from a dispersed to a polycentric spatial structure, which will necessitate suburbs changing zoning ordinances in order to become mixed activity nodes. Such built environments are not only rare in the region, but local zoning ordinances make them illegal. Over the past six decades, Metro Detroit has been built emphasizing travel by automobile, as defensible space—keeping out “the unwanted”—was a central feature of local development. New design standards, in contrast, should emphasize grid street systems, mixed land-uses (commercial and residential), and higher-densities. (Vojnovic and Darden 2013, 96)

Given the “regional” designation, wealth is attracted to certain locations and not many resources are being put in the poorest and most ethnically concentrated areas. It is also argued that this concentration contributes to ecological destruction given the intensiveness of development in certain areas and in line with an automobile-based economy.

It is of particular relevance that this article provides an important contribution regarding the need for a more developed and widely understood concept of a “region.”
While there are other ecological economists who also understand this importance, this article offers the significant realization that urban forms will make up the most human intensive component of any livable region, and needs to be incorporated into “regional” designations.

Furthermore, these authors suggest that a sense of “regionalism” is needed to create a movement toward more appropriate regional definitions. They suggest,

If the Detroit area is to encourage compactness, policymakers and city and suburban populations must engage in less conflict and more cooperation. Policymakers and residents need to embrace pluralistic ideals, and accept racial/ethnic and class integration as a principal strategy in pursuing urban sustainability. Promoting intragenerational equity—including social justice, racial equality, and equal opportunity—is the only option in the region if it is to end its excessive decentralization and environmentally and economically inefficient development patterns. (Vojnovic and Darden 2013, 96)

This paper provides further support that a regionalism must be a cooperative-based process between human communities, where the individuals in such communities recognize their existence in the larger ecological and social environments.

*The Region as an Ecological Environment—With Human Habitation*

The region as an ecological environment is one of the more common uses of the term within the literature. The use of the region in this form describes a natural environment with specific flora, fauna, climate, and geological and geographic features. While a standard does not exist as to how the region is defined or the extent of the boundaries of the region, there does exist a common theme related to the region used in this way: that human communities exist within these “regions” and influence the stability of the ecological environment. Furthermore, when in this context, the region is not limited by social
boundaries; the ecological region is an interdependent and dynamic social-ecological environment.

The general research purpose of this use of the region is related to the implementation of public policy that seeks to stabilize, conserve, and preserve the conditions existing within the region. This policy discussion then seeks out a goal of ecological sustainability to promote social and economic vibrancy. In particular, creating a social environment that has the ability to maintain the needs not only of human communities but also the ecological conditions that support such habitation.

Within this use of the region defined by ecological conditions there exists a body of literature that discusses the common resources within these regions that human communities then share. To this degree, these resources need to be managed in order to promote their viability through time, and correspondingly, human habitation through time. This use of the region provides an account of particular components of these ecological regions and suggests the cooperative construction and implementation of resource management of such components. This use more typically occurs in the discussion of water in arid regions.

As an example, in An Economic Model of Waterlogging and Salinization in Arid Regions (Wichelns 1999), the region is one that faces water scarcity given climatic and geological structures. Intrinsic to these conditions is a need for the consideration of regional water management systems to protect and conserve water as a resource in the region. The region used in this sense helps to identify the interconnections between ecological conditions and human communities. In this article, it is shown that the human use of water
“upstream” from things like farming and industrial activities, is argued as a regional affair and needs to be regulated with a “regional” scope. The author suggests,

Waterlogging and salinization arise in arid areas largely because two essential resources, irrigation water and the assimilative capacity of unconfined aquifers, are not priced or allocated correctly to reflect scarcity values and opportunity costs. Public programs to reduce the extent of problem areas include construction of regional drainage systems (Amer, 1996), operation of public tubewells (Chaudhry and Young, 1990; Afzal, 1996), and farm-level incentives to reduce deep percolation by improving irrigation methods (Wichelns, 1991; Wichelns et al., 1996). (Wichelns 1999, 478, 475)

Clearly then, given the varied use of water in this region, a regional understanding of water needs to be utilized in the construction of public policies that promote water sustainability.

Similarly, in Assessing the Economic Viability of Alternative Water Resources in Water-scarce regions: Combining Economic Valuation, Cost-benefit Analysis and Discounting (Birol, Koundouri, and Kountouris 2010), the authors find that given a common regional resource pool—again related to a water—a common regional water use policy needs to be implemented to protect the interests of the region as well as the ecological environment as a whole. Discussing the importance of such a policy with respect to their case study, the authors state,

the Akrotiri aquifer, which is a common-pool resource and the third largest aquifer in Cyprus…is extremely important for the local economy and ecological stability. Extending over 42 km2, the Akrotiri aquifer not only provides local farmers with irrigation water, it also supports the largest inland aquatic system in the country and plays host to unique ecological habitats and biodiversity riches. (Birol, Koundouri, and Kountouris 2010, 840)

What is recognized by defining the region in terms of ecological conditions is a movement toward furthering our understanding of the connections between ecological environments that support the human communities which reside in it. Given this recognition, a sense of
regional-based policy and mechanisms that support regional affairs can be established promoting the region—ecological and social—as a dynamic unit. This view also recognizes the impact that humans have on their regional environment and allows for a conversation as to how to deal with the possible outcomes of such use.

With respect to this awareness—the impact of human communities to ecological conditions—in *Economic Growth, Industrial Pollution and Human Development in the Mediterranean Region* ( Gürlük 2009), the importance of understanding the ecological region becomes paramount to the continued economic and social use of a particular location. Furthermore, understanding the social nature as related to the availability of various resources in the region becomes a way for policy makers to consider regional policy that promotes overall sustainability. As eco-resources are not uniform within a particular ecological region, the economic conditions of the region will face varying “richness” (Sayadi, Gonzalez Roa, and Calatrava Requena 2005). For the continued prosperity of the ecological region as a whole, total environmental policy needs to be constructed. The author suggests—in the context of the Mediterranean Region—that the Mediterranean Region is a common habitat for many countries. In addition it has Mediterranean Sea and unique environmental services, biological diversity, and natural beauty. Many environmental problems such as water pollution could be resolved in the Mediterranean Region if related countries come together with common environmental policies. [Hence]…. The main strategy for all Mediterranean countries should be work with coordination and joint progress in the fields of human and economic development and environmental protection. (Gürlük 2009, 2330, 2329)

Defining the region in terms of ecological conditions creates a platform to work on economic and social conditions for the region as a whole. The ecological conditions create a sense of interdependence and connection for the humans that reside in it. It also has the
potential to create an “air” of cooperation given a “common ground.” With a sense of commonality, policy makers and inhabitants of the region can come together, given such a meaningful and practical shared interest. For the sake of this research project, the importance of these authors’ use of the region is paramount.

The Region as a Unit of Political Administration

The most common expression of the region in the literature is from the standpoint of the region defined as a political or legal administrative zone. The origins of these zones may stem from historical migration, political rule, economic function, and ecological conditions. In contemporary terms, “political administration regions” represent a sort of

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19 For example in, Identification of Development Indicators in Tropical Mountainous Regions and Some Implications for Natural Resource Policy Designs: An Integrated Community Case Study (Kammerbauer et al. 2001), it is recognized that regional economic and social inequality is correlated with the diversity of the region. This inequality has impacts on the ecological and social health of the region as a whole. To promote “sustainability” in the broadest sense, and in the author’s case study of tropical and subtropical regions, “Better monitoring of status and changes of natural resources, as well as economic and social performance of national policies will be needed at a local level. Development projects need to improve capabilities in local administration and promote instruments for local land use planning and natural resource monitoring. This means that tools have to be provided which allow one to determine sustainability goals, as well as a minimal set of indicators and simple land use maps which should be used at community or municipality level and actualized on a regular basis” (Kammerbauer et al. 2001, 58).

20 For example, in Beyond Fuelwood Savings: Valuing the Economic Benefits of Introducing Improved Biomass Cookstoves in the Purépecha Region of Mexico (García-Frapolli et al. 2010), the Purépecha region is a unit which has historical and cultural designation. It was an area of territory that established a separate language and now has a cultural heritage that is distinct from other “regions” in the Mexican state of Michoacan. It has a group of people that have a particular method of living (particularly using wood for fuel for cooking) that presents an issue for pollution for the state and globe as a whole.
state—albeit with varying degrees of power. Typically, these “regions” are governed by regional councils which then have regional representation at the larger country level.\textsuperscript{21}

Regional political entities are common in Europe as well as Asia, and in the literature, these two global locations are discussed frequently. This is in part because of easily accessible data from governmental agencies. Additionally, these regions seem to exert a vivid sense of ecological awareness and promote public policy that fosters sustainability rather than primarily focusing on the economic aspects of the location. They are a topic of frequent discussion among ecological economists.

For example, while it is made explicit that regions are used as a unit of analysis because of the data available, the studies are in the context of how regions differ in terms of consumption, production, trade flows, and ecological footprints. Furthermore, there is a growing sense that this data needs to be enriched as the “regional” scale seems to promote a more effective public policy sphere. As Floridi et al. suggest, “a dataset of relevant variables, allowing for cross-countries and time-series comparisons, can help policy-makers to address efforts towards critical issues and possibly find inspiration for better approaches and strategies” (Floridi et al. 2011, 1444). At the regional level—again from the regional administrative level—the use of such data would be paramount to promote “regionalism” in terms of political cooperation regarding regional affairs.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} For example, Zhang and Anadon state, “In this study we use the terms “regions” and “provinces” interchangeably as they both mean administrative areas at the province level” (Chao Zhang and Anadon 2014, 2372). Region in this case simply means a sub-governmental political administration.
Frequently, Asian regions are studied for their cultural and economic variation. These variations are then studied in relationship to consumption and production activities and in the context of ecological health—particularly in relationship to pollution (Zhou and Imura 2011; Zhang et al. 2011; Zhang and Anadon 2014). These studies report that cultural differences between regions within China have varying degrees of ecological impact. Furthermore, given recent trends toward rapid economic growth, levels of ecological destruction have become a focus of concern. These papers then suggest that regional policies that are locally based need to be constructed and implemented in order to promote the most effective implementation of eco-sustainability policy.\textsuperscript{23}

Connected to this idea of local policy is that regional political entities need to be creating a system of accounting that includes economic, social, as well as ecological data. Multiple authors discussing this type of regional affair believe that with the use of such regional accounting, a clearer picture of the interdependencies of the collection of regions becomes possible. In the case where regions are sub-political units of the larger state government, this type of accounting can then inform public policy on grounds such as

\textsuperscript{22} Yet it is not always the case that ecological economists believe that regional policy, where the region is defined by political boundaries, is the most practical for sustainability policy implementation. For example, in *Ecological Footprints and Interdependencies of New Zealand Regions*, McDonald and Patterson (2004) suggest that some theorists believe that the bio-region should be the unit where policy is conducted as this is a more meaningful expression of the actual ecological conditions. They state, “Van den Bergh and Verbruggen (1999) dispute the use of such boundaries on the grounds that they have no environmental meaning, favouring instead hydrological, climate zone, or larger connected ecosystem boundaries” (McDonald and Patterson 2004).

\textsuperscript{23} This is also found in the context of African political regions. See: (De Pinto, Robertson, and Obiri 2013).
economic development and ecological health (Gren and Isacs 2009; Mazzanti and Montini 2010).

This type of accounting is reflective of a more common study of regional entities, particularly those that exist as a political state and in terms of input output (IO) modeling. Yet, in the context of the ecological economics literature, this regional IO modeling is done with consideration to the ecological environment. This is an important distinction as this more “complete” modeling is characteristic of the ecological economics discipline and approach to public policy. Furthermore, with an interconnected approach, it is also understood that policy cannot be conducted in an isolated fashion. The intricacies of the ecological environment do not—as has been previously noted—understand social and legal boundaries.  

In most basic sense, while the political expression of the region seems at first take to be simply of a governmental administrative quality—and may then not represent anything more than a decision making unit—there is a sense that these regional entities are a unit that can take into account the social, economic, and ecological complexities of a given area. This is a strong finding for the push toward the discussion of regional affairs as well as the pursuit of “regionalism.”

24 (Eder and Narodoslawsky 1999).

25 (Feng, Hubacek, and Guan 2009; Turner et al. 2012)
The Importance of the Region and Regional Analysis to Achieve Sustainability

In the ecological economics literature, with respect to region, it is also recognized that the region is an important scale of activity that fosters the implementation of sustainability policy—both economic and ecological. As Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson (2008) suggest, “Regions are emerging as an essential focus for sustainability researchers, natural resource managers and strategic planners working to develop and implement sustainability goals” (Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson 2008, 362). The region is described as a scale that allows researchers, public policy makers, and regional inhabitants a graspable level of social and ecological complexity to actually be engaged in regional affairs. In a later paper by Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson (2010) they suggest,

regions are small enough that sustained and reflexive face-to-face relations and communication among strategic actors are possible. People and groups across the region can learn of and express their concern about concrete issues affecting them. Local community representatives have more direct access to decision-making groups than they have with state and national actors. Thus, direct participation by public groups and individuals is more likely at this level than in issues dominated by state actors. Yet the regional scale is large enough that the area is representative of complex interactions between ecological, socio-political and economic phenomena. (Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson 2010, 459)

Accordingly, the region is a scale where an individual can actually start to identify all the complexities and interconnections that exist within the region as well as develop their own sense of identity within the region. This is paramount for the implementation of public policy—in particular policy related to sustainability. As Doll, Muller, and Morey suggest, as related to this point, “The importance of scale as a concept is central to developing an understanding of human-environment interactions” (Doll, Muller, and Morley 2006, 76). Furthermore, as Graymore, Sipe and Rickson suggest, with respect to regional scale,
The regional scale is important for progressing sustainability since regions incorporate the complex interactions of ecological, social and economic phenomena (Conacher and Conacher, 2000). It is also the scale which “links multiple spatial and temporal scales of biodiversity with human uses and socio-economic imperatives” (Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson 2010, 459).

The region can be defined in a way in which each can be differentiated from another enough that with the implementation of particular policies, results may actually occur as intended. This is because regional policy would be applied specifically to the characteristics that are unique to the region but also are constructed to address the interconnections existing within ecological and human systems.

Since effects and consequences spill easily across community and ecological boundaries, regional management is potentially more capable than local community management efforts. Ecological, social and economic interdependencies usually occur outside or overlap ordinary community boundaries. Thus a regional focus brings the interaction of ecological, economic and social factors into sharper relief than at local community scales. (Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson 2010, 500)

It is recognized that while regions may be identifiable and have distinct characteristics which define their “boundaries,” there does not exist a naïve belief that these boundaries are absolute. This will be a key proposition for the implementation and construction of a vision of “regionalism” as is being developed in this research project.

At the same time, it is also recognized that a region does have a certain ecological carrying capacity and that capacity must always be in the context of economic development. As a final point, Graymore, Sipe and Rickson suggest, “a sustainable region is one where human activity does not cause net negative impacts on the ecological, social or economic supporting systems ensuring the resilience, state and function of these interlinked systems can continue to support the population” (Graymore, Sipe, and Rickson 2010, 500).

Graymore and colleagues’ research provides the clearest account of what the region should
be to ecological economics as well as what “regionalism” might look like. In this sense, the research presented in this dissertation provides a continuation of this development.

At a less philosophical level, although no less important, regional scale is seen to be important as a way to understand the cultural and economic complexities that exist within geo-social areas yet as related to human-ecological interaction. With such identification, researchers and policy makers can better understand the human complexities of differing areas when considering issues such as resource movement, trade, and the ecological impact that these activities have. In this sense, there is an understanding that regional-based data is an extremely important component of developing more effective sustainability policy as it can represent a multitude of stakeholders—including the broader ecological environment.

As Akgun, van Leeuwen, and Nijkamp suggest, “The increasing scarcity of natural resources prompts the need to develop effective strategies for sustainable development at regional levels with a view to balancing the interests of different groups of actors or stakeholders” (Akgün, van Leeuwen, and Nijkamp 2012, 18). Consequently, sustainability as a multi-stakeholder concept needs a unit that can reveal the various “actors” across ecosystems so that policy can be constructed that is sensitive to these idiosyncrasies.

Regional scale and data are useful to look at a multitude of “actors” and their direct and indirect interactions. Given this realization, a number of ecological economists are working at the regional scale—and discussing its importance—to compare flows and interactions between regional economic activity and ecological impact. In doing so, they are also developing metrics to reveal regional health.
For example, Vringer et al. are working on a model of multi-regional interaction to estimate more accurate consumption patterns in order to better inform policy makers as they construct sustainability actions.\textsuperscript{26} They state,

The use of multiregional input–output data is important to establish the total environmental load from consumption. Using multiregional data or process data, both result in substantial changes in the estimated environmental load of consumption products on a more detailed level. (Vringer et al. 2010)

Arguably then, the region serves as a scale that can take into account a larger scope of information and is more meaningful in the case of impacts of resource extraction and use. This is in comparison to scales such as government-defined units that are largely based on economic and transportation flows.

This type of multi-regional analysis is suggested to create a common framework of analysis that can be used to address both local and global social and ecological issues. As Wiedmann points out, regional data, when taken to levels as has been described above, has the potential to truly address the issues related to sustainability—both social and environmental. Wiedmann et al. state in the context of multi-region analysis,

To understand the full environmental, social and economic effects of consumption and to successfully promote sustainable consumption and production (SCP) policies, there is a need to capture the whole life-cycle impacts of products and services across international supply chains. Key research or policy questions around transnational impacts of traded goods and services include topics such as resource exploitation, ecosystem health, environmental footprint, risk and vulnerability, social cohesion, inequality, poverty, child labour, shared responsibility, global financial crisis, etc. (Wiedmann et al. 2011, 1938)

\textsuperscript{26} See also Thomas Wiedmann in his 2009 \textit{A Review of Recent Multi-region Input–output Models Used for Consumption-based Emission and Resource Accounting} (Wiedmann 2009)
From this quote it can be inferred that there is a need for a regional scale, which then implies that regions must continue to be a topic of discussion and ultimately gain speed as a more meaningful unit of human organization. This will be the scale at which humans can once again—as in contrast to the results of a globalized economy—connect with their eco-environment and understand their relation to it. Yet, what is missing in these types of analyses is an underlying philosophy which could help to promote this regional development.

Literature Review Concluding Remarks

By reviewing the use of the region in the last twenty years of the Ecological Economics literature, two main conclusions can be drawn. The region is a unit of analysis that is recognizably important for the implementation of sustainability policy because it provides a more specifically defined—providing greater complexity—account of human and ecological interaction. Secondly, that with further delineation and implementation of regions—as ecological and social based political units—a sense of regionalism is needed to foster inter- and intra-regional affairs. To support this transformation, a philosophy and ideology of regionalism is needed to develop and progress the region as a meaningful unit in order to contribute to the successful implementation of sustainability and economic development policy. As Kammerbauer et al. suggest, “As a powerful but often ambiguous concept within the broader ecological economic paradigm, sustainability has been criticized for only being useful at a conceptual level, not at an operational level (e.g. Redclift, 1987; Munro, 1995)” (Kammerbauer et al. 2001, 46). Regionalism and the development of regions as ecologically and human-based political units has the potential to put sustainability in
practice; this is a clear conclusion and reveals that this research project is a contribution to the discipline.

**Methods**

This research project follows methods that are largely accepted by ecological economists. This approach has been described by ecological economists as a transdisciplinary and visionary methodology. This implies using knowledge from a wide range of disciplines as well as creativity to identify, examine, and propose solutions to existing and newly arising social, economic, and environmental issues. As Costanza et al. (1996) describe, “One of the major differences between ecological economics and conventional academic disciplines is that it does not try to differentiate itself from other disciplines in terms of its content or tools. It is an explicit attempt at pluralistic integration rather than territorial differentiation” (Costanza et al. 1996, 3). This section describes this process and reveals how this research project was undertaken. First, an overarching description of how the visionary approach is utilized within a sustainability context is advanced. Following this section is a summary of methods providing a clear sense of the visionary process. This includes: 1) the role of envisioning as a primary step in the research process; 2) methods of analysis to clarify said visions; 3) and the final step of implementation.
Ecologically Sustainable Living: A Visionary Approach

Among the number of topics discussed in ecological economics, the discourse on visions of sustainability proves to be an important component for the overarching goal of the discipline—sustainability. As a methodological commitment, authors who discuss vision believe that we must have an idea of where we would like to be before we start the process of getting there. Although seemingly basic, visions framed in the discussion of ecological sustainability become increasingly substantial as details and differing scenarios are realized in the literature. At base, a vision of sustainability entails the commitment to a future world where humans perceive their community beyond human membership and seek to improve overall life conditions. It is widely accepted that this view is shared by all ecological economists.

Sustainability as a Vision

As Forstater points out in his Visions and Scenarios, “ecological economists are virtually unanimous in their view that work must begin with vision” (Forstater 2004b, 413). This is an implication that we must first discuss “where we want to go” before we can even attempt to lay out the details. Among ecological economists, sustainability is a guiding factor for these visions.

It is with this shared commitment that the discipline differentiates itself from disciplines such as environmental and resource economics. While there is a conventional wisdom to practicing sustainability on a daily basis—for example, something to do with environmental protection, conservation, or even a static/steady state—ecological economists use the term in a specific way. Costanza, Daly, and Bartholomew suggest,
Sustainability is a relationship between dynamic human economic systems and larger dynamic, but normally slower-changing ecological systems, in which 1) human life can continue indefinitely, 2) human individuals can flourish, and 3) human cultures can develop; but in which the effects of human activities remain within bounds, so as not to destroy the diversity, complexity, and function of the ecological life support system. (Costanza, Daly, and Bartholomew 1991, 8)

This definition provides a framework for ecological economists to study a broad subject base. Furthermore, these guiding principles allow the use of vision as an approach to facilitate the exploration and application of a sustainable world. The terms of this definition will evolve—such as what is meant by flourishing and culture. Because it is a working and changing definition, there is a possibility to influence human institutions.

This methodological consideration is of utmost importance in a highly disciplined world and where disciplinary models are used to inform public policy. To explain, Forstater points out that the use of disciplinary modeling “leaves just about no room for the remaining step of policy formation, which should be first—the establishment of clear, feasible, socially shared goals”(Forstater 2004b, 412). Respectively, models should be in the context of both current realities as well as contain an expression of a desired and obtainable future.

In the context of ecological economics—which foundationally has a commitment to a sustainable world—a more or less unified theme is that “[v]ision is where everything starts”(Forstater 2004b, 412). Costanza et al. delineate this process in three steps:

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27 This is not to suggest the ecological economists are in favor of expediency or the conventional understanding of pragmatism; in fact the opposite is true. Theorists can use the existing world to inform and create policy which can guide human behavior and institutions toward sustainability. Moreover, this process is not absolutist but evolutionary and subject to constant revision and change.
(1) [creating] a practical, shared vision of both the way the world works and of the sustainable society wish to achieve; (2) [delineating] methods of analysis and modeling to the new questions and problems this vision embodies; and (3) [seeking to discover] new institutions and instruments that can effectively use the analyses to adequately implement the vision. (Costanza et al. 1996, 1)

Furthermore, as one expression of this explanation, Proops and Faber (1996) discuss in their paper Achieving a Sustainable World the goals of ecological economics.

(1) The overall goal of Sustainability; this is the vision that sustainability should be achieved. This is necessary to allow the building of an ethical consensus. (2) The Operational goal of Sustainability; this expresses a particular target-sustainable state for the rather distant future (3) The goal Towards the Intermediate Target; this is the state on a chosen path towards the Operational Goal of Sustainability, but within a short time, and is used for detailed policy formulation….Therefore, policy formulation for sustainability requires the use of imagination to formulate a state of the world in the (quite distant) future, which we can take as a goal or telos. (Proops and Faber 1996, 134)

These goals help to define what it is ecological economists hope to achieve as well as to provide some insight as to the processes which might be undertaken. What these latter authors have sought to discuss is the vision of the discipline as well as a vision of a desirable world to exist in.

A Sustainability Visionary Approach: Concluding Remarks

The use of vision in ecological economics is an attempt to work on problems where immediate answers do not exist; for example, ecological sustainability. In a world that seems to be increasingly complex and which faces an almost unlimited number of known social, economic, and environmental problems, this method provides relief. It allows for constructive hope; not simply the construction of an ideological dream world. Although visions are seemingly infinite, the use of a communal envisioning process creates
boundaries that maintain legitimacy to the method. In this way, daunting problems may find approachable routes.

The Method of Envisioning

*Envisioning*

As has been briefly described, sustainability in the ecological economics literature is revealed through a number of visions and scenarios. These scenarios represent possible approaches to achieve the vision of ecological sustainability in human life. This process of first envisioning followed by the construction of possible routes to meet such a vision is a method that helps to resolve the problem of solving issues that have yet to be coherently understood; for example, ecological sustainability. As Costanza et al. (1996) point out, “We must recognize that action and change without an appropriate vision of the goal and analyses of the best methods to achieve it can be worse than counterproductive. In this sense a compelling and appropriate vision can be the most practical of all applications” (Costanza et al. 1996, 3). To this degree, ecological economics commits to the continual discussion of an overarching vision of ecological sustainability.

Envisioning is a process whereby the exploration of a desired place, solution, or possible existence is undertaken. This has been described by a number of ecological economists as a pre-analytical process; where the boundaries of the vision have not yet been delineated. It is essentially a process in which a problem or issue is opened up for discussion. For example, one could entertain a vision of a car-less city; it is not completely ridiculous to think that human beings could once again operate without such a form of transportation. How we get there is the next task at hand. It is in this sense that a vision is
where we start, but more importantly, where we would like to be. This process has become more of a problem for our current human existence as we realize greater complexities of existence, both social and physical. Our current problem-solving methods are usually focused on implementation and modeling that creates expediency, but as stated above, might be counterproductive to the original purpose. As D. Meadows points out,

If most of policy discussion focuses on implementation, virtually all the rest focuses on modeling and information. That leaves just about no room for the establishment of clear, feasible, socially shared goals. What is our vision of the world we are trying to create for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren? (cited in Costanza et al. 1996, 119)

It is in these questions from Costanza et al., that the current project presents a vision and proposal of an ecologically sustainable society. This is a vision which embodies a different approach to the human life process including different goals, values, and priorities and particularly, regional organization. It is a recognition that that the current reality of economic and social life which could be characterized by rapid and ecologically destructive urbanization as well as a near complete dependence on fossil fuels has dire consequences. Although much progress has been made in terms of housing and material accumulation, the detriments of this style of human growth and advancement are rapidly increasing. If only from an ecological standpoint, the earth as we know it simply cannot sustain such use.

This research endeavor purports a vision of a regional society, whereby humans seek to live, develop, and grow with respect and cognition for the natural world and their own humanity. This vision is not a recent idea. There are countless visionaries who proposed such an argument; this project focuses on that of Lewis Mumford. He wrote in a time in which he saw the industrialized world at a crossroads; it is also a time in which mass
urbanization was underway. He foresaw the possibility for a sustainable path, yet at the same time a dreary vision characterized by social, environmental, and economic dismay. We are again in such a situation, and because of this, we need to once again to begin thinking about “where we want to go.”

Analysis

After an initial vision has been constructed, the process of analysis can begin. Analysis in this sense can be thought of as adding structure to a vision. With a structured vision an idea becomes more than simply a thought; it has shape and context. Paraphrasing Forstater (2004a), structuralized visions can be thought of as scenarios. This is an implication that the vision is not only possible, but also has the potential to occur on its own. In this sense, scenarios must be based in fact; consequently, a scenario could not suggest a violation of accepted scientific laws. For example, a scenario with an underlying vision of sustainability would not suggest a violation of biophysical constraints. In practice, scenarios can take the form of models or policy prescriptions; the general concept being that analytic scenarios are “possible route[s] leading to the vision” (Forstater 2004a, 413).

Analysis or the creation of scenarios allows for the communication of visions. Communication of these scenarios allows for a process of critique and revision. This communicative process reveals that a vision and a related scenario are not able to be realized in any individualistic sense; visions and scenarios are implicitly constructed of social relationships. Moreover, through communication, the visionary is able to be mindful of their own emotional and experienced past, which may in turn prevent the vision from reaching its full potential. For example, one might envision a world without petroleum; this might
conjure up fears and anxiety related to self-preservation, in which case the visionary might shut out the possibility for such a future state, ending the vision and analysis process.

Analysis also includes a process of identification of the current institutional structure. As mentioned above, a scenario could not violate recognized facts; the same can be said of the social and cultural fabric. The creation of scenarios is directly related to the critique and identification of current processes which lead to the initial problem in the first place. This is a necessary task, because the visionary needs to be able to target and recognize patterns in order to implement a scenario that will lead to a successful adjustment toward the purported vision. This identification is a critical process and also allows the visionary to communicate the problem at hand, revise routes of action, and gain support for possible change.

In terms of this research endeavor, organicist-based regionalism is the scenario that could lead to a realized vision of an ecologically sustainable existence. Particularly, Mumford’s concept of regionalism based in a philosophy of organicism, is the structured scenario or route to achieve the vision of a sustainable social and ecological life. This study seeks to elaborate and define Mumford’s regionalism—as defined by bio-technics, organicism, and community—as a scenario towards the vision of ecological sustainability.

Implementation

The final component of this approach is implementation—the execution of advanced scenarios. This is the component of the visionary process whereby steps are taken that will lead to institutional adjustment. Implementation also involves a revisionary process, possibly for both the vision itself as well as related scenarios; analysis is an ongoing
iterative process. This approach is fundamentally evolutionary; there can be no absolute vision or related scenario.

The implementation process in turn allows for the collection of data, experience, and recognition of known barriers. Furthermore, the implementation process will expose unknown values and institutions which may enable or constrain the continuation of implementation. Analysis must be ongoing as implementation occurs; the creation and use of indicators gains significance in the implementation process. Indicators will also allow for greater communication and act as a tool in the exposition of the proposed vision. This can have the effect of creating a larger community involved in the visionary process, adding depth and breadth to the theoretical and applied actions.

With respect to the vision of ecological regionalism, this research project illustrates how regionalism can be synthesized with routes of implementation found in Ecological Economics. It is hoped that by examining how ecological sustainability could be accomplished through the vision and practice of organicist regionalism, ecological economists may find common ground for the development of a unified concept of the region and a greater ability to implement and achieve sustainability. Figure 2 is a concept map which summarizes the envisioning methodology as described above.
Figure 2. Visionary analysis concept map.
CHAPTER 2
AN ANALYSIS OF A MONETARY PRODUCTION ECONOMY:
ATTRIBUTES AND SHORTCOMINGS

Introduction

Before an organicist-based regionalism can be presented, a discussion of current economic society is necessary. This is an important step in the process of visionary analysis. Within the visionary methodology it is understood that before suggesting a vision, the details of the contemporary situation must be worked out. This allows the vision to be in context and provides an avenue for the next component of the visionary process—finding routes of action to employ the vision. Just as theorists in Ecological Economics suggest pre-analytical thought, Mumford also understands the importance of such thinking. He suggests that we must first “understand the point of origin and the line of descent…to have a fresh insight into the fate and destiny of modern man…and the purposes that have so long been automatically—that is unconsciously—at work” (Mumford 1973, 259–260). Put simply, we must understand where we stand before we can know where and how we would like to get to another state of living.

To advance the vision of an organicist regionalism, first what must be addressed is current economic and social life, including its benefits and shortfalls; thereby providing a platform as to why this vision would offer a superior form of human association. To this point, Mumford provides a robust account of the current mode of production, its
contributions, and more importantly, its limitations. Notably, Mumford understood that our current system has a long history of great increases in material, hygienic, and technical advancements which have far outpaced any period in human history. Yet, Mumford also realized that this system had reached its ecological and cultural limits, and its future would be on a path to decreasing returns in both of these areas. Before advancing the core of an organicist regionalism, a synthesis of Mumford’s work regarding a monetary production economy is presented so the vision of its succession—organicist-based regionalism—will be in context.

This section is organized as follows: first is a discussion of what Mumford believed to be the overarching form of the current mode of production; that of a megamachine. The megamachine in short is the mass organization of humans and technics to advance the goals of those with a vested interest in a monetary production economy. Next is a discussion of the psychological and ideological institutional structure associated with this type of economy. Mumford identifies and calls this a power complex—the social-institutional structure that facilitates and maintains the megamachine. From this, the form of technics—or institutional and technical abilities that facilitate the megamachine—is presented; Mumford calls such mechanisms “megatechnics,” which refers to energy intensive large-scale production methods. Lastly, there is a discussion of the type of economy in which this current megamachine is realized; this can be summed up as a capitalist-based monetary production system that Mumford terms a power economy. With these concepts established, the following section discusses the shortcomings of this system, seeking to reveal the institutional and technical structures that Mumford believes to have created a stagnated
individual and cultural life. With this discussion in place, the next chapter presents
organicism as a philosophy of life that is associated with an ecologically and culturally
sustainable society.

The Megamachine with Megatechnics
Operating in a Power Economy

The megamachine is Mumford’s way of describing a collection of human
institutions which facilitate mass organization of resources to achieve a minority interest. In
contemporary society, this is expressed through “capitalist”-based economic relationships,
in which a majority of wealth, ownership, and decision-making power resides with a
minority population in order to facilitate the generation of economic and social power. At
base, a megamachine is not new to human civilization but is finding its most current form
through these capitalist-based political economic relations. Furthermore, it is what Mumford
calls the power complex that largely differentiates the current megamachine from previous
iterations, i.e., the desire for capital accumulation, the goal of profit growth, and as a whole,
a monetary producing economy. This section describes the megamachine; a power complex
which forms the ideological platform to continue it; megatechnics, which characterizes its
mode of production; and lastly the power economy which facilitates the social, political, and
distributed components of the system.

In the most general sense, a megamachine is a reference to the abilities and output
that a human community has the potential to produce when institutionally organized. More
specifically, it is the organization of human power both in physical labor as well as their
technological capacity to construct or produce monumental output.¹ This organization rests in an institutional environment whereby human culture is constructed to support myths, values, and beliefs which largely benefit a minority population. At the same time, “[t]he megamachine…is not a mere administrative organization: it is a machine in the orthodox technical sense, as a combination of resistant bodies so organized as to perform standardized motions and repetitive work” (Mumford 1970, 240).

Mumford makes it clear that the organization of a megamachine has not necessarily always been a part of human life. Rather, it is a distinct change in human living that as Mumford argues, “wherever it was successfully put together the new machine commanded power and performed labor on a scale that was never even conceivable before” (Mumford 1973, 259). Forms of the megamachine have varied in human history. For example, the use of royalty, militarism, religion, and capitalist ideology and production, all have been connected to continue the power relations that are sought out by elite members to advance the megamachine purpose. As Mumford suggests,

Hence, war is the ideal condition for promoting the assemblage of the megamachine, and to keep the threat of war constantly in existence is the surest way of holding the otherwise autonomous or quasi-autonomous components together as a functioning working unit. Once a megamachine has been brought into existence, any criticism of its program, any departure from its principles, any detachment from its routines, any modifications of its structure through demands from below constitute a threat to the whole system. (Mumford 1970, 241)

Implicitly then, institutional mechanisms which emotionally tie the components of the megamachine to human existence become effective tools for the continuity of the machine and vested interests.

¹ Mumford argues that the first megamachine would have been during the Pyramid age.
Mumford illustrates that the modern megamachine is similar to those past, a “mass organization capable of performing tasks that lie outside the range of small work-collectives and loose tribal or territorial groups” (Mumford 1970, 258). Given that we don’t live in “tight knit” self-sustaining communities, our modern existence can be described by a much larger system of production and distribution, wherein most decisions as to production and distribution are controlled by distant—that is, to their end point in the production chain—organizations. “Unlike machines that perform partial operations for specialized purposes, the megamachine by its very nature can be used only in collective, large scale operations, which are themselves components of a larger power system” (Mumford 1970, 240).

Furthermore, whereas past megamachines—for example, those that produced the great pyramids or Great Wall of China—utilized mostly human labor to facilitate these constructions, the current megamachine is one that relies on the use of megatechnics: high intensity energy production and consumption, mass and rapid communication and transportation, and increasing automation.

The current megamachine “commands whole regiments of diversified mechanical units, with superhuman power and superhuman mechanical reliability, and not least with lightning speed” (Mumford 1970, 258). While seemingly very different from other forms of human civilization, it must not be thought that previous megamachines are not present in the current model; to think so would ignore the power of human institutions. Mumford suggested the ideologies of ancient mechanisms are present:

The ideology that underlies and unites the ancient and the modern megamachine is one that ignores the needs and purposes of life in order to fortify the power complex and extend its dominion. Both megamachines are oriented toward death; and the more they approach unified planetary control, the more inescapable does that result
promise to become...All these ancient features were restored during the nineteenth century: above all, the collective dedication to death. During the last half century [approximately 1900-1950] alone, between fifty and a hundred million people...have met premature death through violence and starvation, on the battlefield, in concentration camps, in bombed cities and agricultural areas that have been turned into mass extermination camps. (Mumford 1970, 260)

Although writing in a time where nuclear war seemed imminent and where two world wars had been previously fought, the sentiment is no less powerful and timely. With constant warfare and the contemporary creation of powerful and more semi-autonomous weapons, the continuation of world hunger, apartheid, environmental destruction and depletion, it would seem as if this form of megamachine has continued.²

With respect to the goals that facilitate our modern megamachine, Mumford suggests that they are defined in terms of power. He states, our current megamachine is one that “is designed for the continuous and compulsive expansion of a limited number of goods—those especially adapted to quantity production and remote control” (Mumford 1968, 221). Guided by the myths that “bigger and more is better” and that mechanical efficiency is an end in itself, the production process becomes one of mass-mechanization—in terms of both human labor and machine use. Mumford suggests a slogan which describes the system:

there is only one efficient speed, faster; only one attractive destination, farther away; only one desirable size, bigger; only one rational quantitative goal, more. On these assumptions the object of human life, and therefore of the entire productive mechanism, is to remove limits, to hasten the pace of change, to smooth out seasonal rhythms and reduce regional continuity” (Mumford 1970, 173).

² Again, the point of recognizing and identifying such institutional structures is to understand that these mechanisms are not predetermined, destined, or absolute; it is only with awareness that guided adjustment may begin to occur. To further comprehend the system, it is necessary to look at the economic system in which it operates.
These “goals” become the essence of progress even while destroying the foundations which it rested upon.

Furthermore, these goals of the megamachine are indicative to what Mumford calls the “power complex.” The power complex can be summed up as a belief that “that there are no limits to the expansion of extra-organic energies” (Mumford 1970, 180-181, illustration 3). With this belief the power complex takes form; for if there are no limits to energy expansion, there are likewise no limits to productive potential, and given the business enterprise, the belief of everlasting profit opportunities.

Mumford indicates that the power complex seeks to quantify all aspects of life; particularly in pecuniary terms. With such a worldview, progress becomes one that is characterized by value accumulation, and such a motive becomes an end in itself. Mumford suggests regarding such a goal “In terms of the power system, progress means simply more power, more profit, more productivity, more paper property, more publicity—all convertible to quantitative units” (Mumford 1970, 167). These units of progress are what Mumford calls, the “Pentagon of Power,” and are all fueled by the economic megamachine. Mumford identifies the power complex as an attribute of the current economic system and one that has developed relatively recently in human history. Of interest is the idea that the power complex guides the economic system but at the same acts as a source of conservatism for cultural progression.

To gain a sense of how the power complex might have come about, a brief discussion of Thorstein Veblen’s theory of an instinct of workmanship in a capitalist
economy is presented. This discussion will enable a broader discussion of Mumford’s understanding of current economic life, particularly with respect to what Mumford calls the megamachine and megatechnics; generally, how our economic system favors monetary reward over the serviceability of goods as well as human development.

The Power Complex: A Brief Institutional-Evolutionary Analysis

As has been briefly discussed, the power complex is revealed through profit-seeking behavior that is fulfilled by the actions of a business enterprise. Thorstein Veblen, who sought to understand this evolution of human behavior, suggests that with a cultural evolution favoring a growing habit of thought associated with invidious distinctions, profit accumulation becomes a supporting human action. As these behaviors become institutionalized, they are understood as not only status quo behavior, but also valued implicitly as a legitimate motivation for economic decisions.

To understand the development of this habit of thought and the current state of affairs in which a separation exists between the ultimate serviceability of goods and their profitability, it must be understood that Veblen believed that humans have an instinct of

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3 Mumford took much from Veblen’s analysis throughout his life time. This is because Mumford was a colleague of Veblen during their time at The Dial. Furthermore, as is noted in Karl Sussman’s work on the RPAA (Regional Planning Association of America), “In his introduction to Stein’s book on new towns, Mumford listed the civic ideas of Geddes and Howard, the economic analyses of Thorstein Veblen, the sociology of Charles Horton Cooley, and the educational philosophy of John Dewey, to say nothing of the new ideas of conservation, ecology, and geotechnics as forming the intellectual foundation of the organization’s doctrines.” (Sussman 1976, 22)
workmanship—a bent towards serviceability and efficiency in human behavior. To this instinct, humans seek out activities which fulfill this goal. As Veblen suggests,

They like to see others spend their life to some purpose, and they like to reflect that their own life is on some use. All men have this quasi-aesthetic sense of economic or industrial merit, and to this sense of economic merit futility and inefficiency are distasteful. In its positive expression it is an impulse or instinct of workmanship; negatively it expresses itself in a deprecation of waste. (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 81)

Yet Veblen understands that with the growing use of tools and a larger socio-institutional basis, a larger display of human force is needed to fulfill this instinctual desire. With this, a trend towards evaluation of acceptable work becomes bent towards actions other than the immediate output or produce created. With this evolution, acceptable work—honorific work—becomes associated with power rather than industriousness. Veblen clarifies,

the ground of esteem in this way shifts from a direct appreciation of the expediency of conduct to a comparison of the abilities of different agents. Instead of a valuation of serviceability, there is a gauging of capability on the ground of visible success. (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 90)

Displays of force, competitiveness, cunningness, and strength become standards of success and honor, rather than attributes of craft; specifically, attention to detail, improvement, function, and serviceability. It is with quantitative “bigness” that success is shown.5

4 As Mark Luccarelli, points out in his study of Mumford life, Mumford and Veblen shared understandings of contemporary economic and social conditions. He states, “like Veblen and Goodman, Mumford believed that productive engagement is crucial to self-realization. For livelihood is a way of being in the world, linking the individual to his materials and additives—overcoming alienation” (Luccarelli 1995, 37).

5 As Mumford suggested, “In the Instinct of Workmanship Veblen has indeed wondered whether the typewriter, the telephone, and the automobile, though creditable technological achievements ‘have not wasted more effort and substance than they have saved,’ whether they are not to be credited with an appreciable economic loss, because they have increased
Veblen thus argues that with an initial individual bent towards workmanship, serviceability, and a reduction of waste, it is with the increasing social interaction of humans that “the imputation of efficiency necessarily proceeds on evidence of efficiency” (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 90). With this social interaction, the desire for social acceptance becomes a more dominant attribute of human behavior than the actual performance of the activity.

The visible achievement of one man is, therefore, compared with that of another, and the award of esteem comes habitually to rest on an invidious comparison of persons instead of on the immediate bearing of the given line of conduct upon the approved end of action. The ground of esteem in this way shifts from a direct appreciation of the expediency of conduct to a comparison of the abilities of different agents. Instead of a valuation of serviceability, there is a gauging of capability on the ground of visible success. (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 90).

Veblen argues that with the continued development of this social behavior—which is eventually expressed in monetary terms—a sense of human worth and valuation develops which is realized through the potential to generate a socially accepted understanding of value; even if only putative.

Veblen believes that this change is a result of the institutional nature of human association. In this case, what initially began as an instinct of workmanship—realized through actual serviceability of production—becomes intertwined with invidious and predacious human association. Veblen suggests, that “What is apprehended with facility and is consistent with the process of life and knowledge is thereby apprehended as right and good” (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 88). Accordingly, what is consistent with the life the pace and the volume of correspondence and communication and travel out of all proportion to the real need.” (Mumford 1934, 272)
process of the community and is in conjunction with the established joint stock of knowledge is seen as socially acceptable. These judgments are then enforced by the group, and dissenters become outcast and socially unaccepted. After a period of continued application of the behavior in question and elimination of most voices of dismay, an institutionalization of the action occurs.

When this takes place, the acquired proclivity passes from the status of habit to that of aptitude or propensity. It becomes a transmissible trait, and action under its guidance becomes right and good, and the longer and more consistent the selective adaptation through which the aptitude arises, the more firmly is the resulting aptitude settled upon the race, and the more unquestioned becomes the sanction of the resulting canon of conduct. (Veblen and Ardzrooni 1964, 88)

This action is permissible to be passed down, asserted as correct or true, and will most likely be adopted by future generations. With this analysis—albeit an extreme summarization—Veblen gives insight as to how a power complex—as identified by Mumford—might come to fruition as well as be instilled in a population. To facilitate the power complex, Mumford indicates that megatechnics are utilized.

Megatechnics

To understand megatechnics, its foundation must be addressed; technics itself. At base, technics is a reference to the tools humans create and use to facilitate their life process. As humans seek continuity and stability in their lives, they utilize technics to allow for such results. To clarify consider that, “Like scientific knowledge…the repeatable, the standardized, the uniform—which is to say, again, the typical—that is the essential field of technics” (Mumford 1964, 79). Accordingly, technics implies the creation of ways and
means of living within an organic and social environment that are believed to aid and further the life process.\textsuperscript{6}

It must be noted that Mumford went to great lengths to indicate that technics must be understood in a larger context, beyond simply material means.\textsuperscript{7} Technics, as well, includes human associations and institutions that provide context and meaning—in essence, purpose—to the use of such materials. For example, Mumford suggests that, technics in a primeval context were not absolutely about total environmental control and the ever increasing desire for new tools. Mumford states with a slight jest

\begin{quote}

Emerson said that life was not worth having just for doing tricks in; and technics is not just a way of running to and fro and seeking out many inventions: it is a means of creating a human personality more capable of meeting the forces of nature on even terms and more capable of directing rationally its own life. (Mumford 1964, 55)
\end{quote}

For example, technics for much of early human history can be understood in a much more holistic sense, as the product of their immediate environment and as only one part of the human life process. In this era of civilization, humans viewed themselves in the context of the entire natural world, understood their individual self as a partnership of nature, or simply put, a part of the “whole.” This is in contrast to our current system of technics, which transcends place and local experience, the immediate natural world, and local production and distribution, and where individuals are the sole center of attention.

\textsuperscript{6} It should be noted, that Mumford was not naive in considering the reality that technics also can be used in ways which destroy human life at the expense of supposedly preserving others.

\textsuperscript{7} See: \textit{Technics and Human Development} (1966); \textit{The Myth of the Machine} (1970)
Implicitly then, “megatechnics” is a reference to the current ways and means of technical life—again both materially and institutionally—that make use of high power, energy, and technology. Mumford suggests that with megatechnics,

the dominant minority will create a uniform, all enveloping, super-planetary structure, designed for automatic operation. Instead of functioning actively as an autonomous personality, man will become a passive, purposeless, machine-conditioned animal whose proper functions…, will either be fed into the machine or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit of de-personalized, collective organizations. (Mumford 1934, 3)

At the same time, megatechnics will act as a reference to a perceived human ability to command nature and exploit its greatest potential. From this ability, it will be supposed that human progress can occur at its greatest potential.

Furthermore, megatechnics is a system that is characterized by mass production, mass distribution, at mega-speed, with products that have mass turnover. Obviously then, the mega in megatechnics is a reference to “power.” From a social standpoint, megatechnics is connected to the social display and recognition of control; specifically, greater and more expansive methods of social organization and production for the purpose of value accumulation and believed power.

With this purpose identified—to produce the greatest amount of value possible—a key aspect of megatechnics can be identified: there was never a concern or built-in aspect of this system that regulates or has the ability to slow down such a force of energy. Megatechnics, which are embedded in the current megamachine, has only one suggested speed—that one associated with a power complex: fast. As will be described, this speed is necessary to satisfy and fuel the power complex. With a bit of jest, Mumford makes the point:
It is as if we had invented an automobile that had neither a brake nor a steering wheel, but only an accelerator, so that our sole form of control consisted in making the machine go faster. For a little while, on a straight road, we might feel safe, and even, as we increased our speed, gloriously free; but as soon as we wanted to reduce our speed or to change our direction or to back up, we should find that no provision had been made for this degree of human control—the only possibility was Faster, faster! (Mumford 1964, 104)

Ultimately, uninhibited economic behavior is a result of the institutional environment of megatechnics embedded in the societal power complex; and as Veblen suggested—and Mumford implicitly agrees—an ultimate perversion of the instinct of workmanship. Mumford distinguishes megatechnics from other forms of technics as one that puts production and economic growth at the forefront of human behavior. This is to suggest that all realms of life become, in essence, subservient to the economic processes existing in society as well as mirror that of the economic process itself. Subsequently, standardization and mechanization creep into much of human behaviors and relationships.

To help clarify this discussion, recall that technics includes both the tools and the context of tool use; these two elements facilitate and create cohesion to the life process. If, as Mumford suggests, the epitome of technics is complete automation, consider megatechnics as the system that makes this end possible.\(^8\) It is the knowledge humans have gained in the last centuries, regarding not only the command of nature, but also its manipulation and synthetic creation that makes such a result fathomable. A megatechnic system produces rapid technological and scientific progress—both helpful and harmful to humans—to which no end seems possible. To megatechnics’ credit, the ability to solve

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\(^8\) This is a key aspect of regional thought, to re-humanize our technics for the sake of quality of life, both social and ecological, for current and future generations.
material scarcity has no doubt been invented. Yet, material abundance aside, the point
Mumford wants to make regarding megatechnics is that its intent is not to further human
development—in terms of personal, cultural, and ecological enrichment—but rather to serve
as the technical and institutional structure that furthers the power elite as a going concern.
As has been alluded to, megatechnics provide the production system of the larger
megamachine, which is guided to fulfill the power complex.

The Power Economy

To create cohesion among these latter mentioned concepts, Mumford describes
current economic life as one existing in a power economy. The power economy at its most
fundamental level is “symbolized by and concentrated on money” (Mumford 1970, 165).
With such an emphasis, the whole of the economy is seemingly designed to mass produce
pecuniary value; progress then, as previously mentioned, is denoted in such value. Through
the use of megatechnics,

the power economy is designed for the continuous and compulsive expansion of a
limited number of goods—those specially adapted to quantity production and remote
control. Apart from enlarging the province of mechanization and automation itself,
the chief goal of this system is to produce the greatest amount of power, prestige, or
profit for the distant controllers of the megamachine. (Mumford 1968, 221)

As suggested in this quotation, Mumford argues that the system—although producing mass
wealth—is hardly democratically distributed. Mumford recognizes that this system is
facilitated and largely benefits the “distant controllers,” which is implicitly a reference to the
“power elite.”

Mumford suggests that the force and movement of this economy, as he thinks we all
know, is massive. The pecuniary value that is created on a yearly basis, through the use of
both production and financial markets, is, except for “anomalous conditions,” growing steadily. Furthermore, the power economy has not receded or shown any sign of planned reduction. The opposite seems true as the system grows to include so-called developing countries who have also adopted the megamachine power mentality. Here, the mass organization of labor, drawn out from rural lifestyles, is organized, worked, and promised greater benefits to both themselves and their nation. Although Mumford discussed these concepts nearly 50 years ago, the concepts described in the latter section remain extremely relevant for the analysis of current human life and the prospects regarding “true” human advancement.

In summary, the recognition of the megamachine, utilizing megatechnics to fulfill the power complex, is of utmost importance for identifying the economic and social institutions that make up current life and if alternative systems are to be envisioned and proposed. To this point, important conclusions can be drawn from the discussion. Specifically, the megamachine is an identification of two important characteristics: the potential that results from the invention of a mass organization of human labor and technology, as well as the realization within human history that such organization has been controlled and utilized for purposes and goals that reflect minority interests. Megatechnics is a recognition as well of two key aspects: that the current means and ways of production have the ability and potential to mass produce and fulfill material scarcity, although has no internal mechanism—other than, for instance, economic depression—that regulates its pace and types of output. Additionally, the megatechnic goal is complete automation, both of the production process as well as daily life. Lastly, the power complex provides purpose to the
use of megatechnics and the megamachine, seeking not merely personal control and cohesion in the world, but also control and power over the economic and social process entirely. In essence the megamachines goal is the ability to consistently and rapidly accumulate more of the units that are socially identified and accepted as the means to economic power and social control.

With this basic introduction to key concepts associated with Mumford’s understanding of current economic life, a further analysis of related topics will be considered. It is necessary to understand these points regarding the current economic system in order to provide context to an alternative, such as the organicist-based regional economy, which will be introduced in a forthcoming section. As has been suggested, key themes of current megatechnic economic life are: mass production, mass automation, the standardization of consumption, and pecuniary gain. The reality that these characteristics are features of the business enterprise also needs to be made clear. Upon establishing these features, shortcomings and possible detriments to human life will be addressed; this will lead to the introduction and elaboration of an organicist philosophy and regional economy.

To begin, the organizer of the megamachine, the business enterprise is examined.

The Megatechnic Business Enterprise

As has been mentioned, Mumford who worked with and notably admired Thorstein Veblen takes a very similar approach to understanding the economy as well as describing its institutions. Yet, while Mumford seeks to describe larger economic attributes of the system, Veblen, for much of his work, sought to understand specific components of economic life; for example, property, consumption, and especially the business enterprise. It is thus
relevant to include a short analysis of Veblen’s conception of the business enterprise, as it is largely consistent with Mumford’s understanding of a capitalist-based economy and society. This section examines key aspects of the business enterprise and seeks to elaborate that such an organization is the organizer of the power economy and megamachine.

Thorstein Veblen makes abundantly clear in his *Theory of the Business Enterprise* (1904) that the economic system in which he lived—and that is seemingly not much different today—is that of a monetary production system rather than primarily a goods producing system. This is an implication that the business enterprise, the state, and all related support to production are largely assembled for the purpose of producing money—a proxy for power—rather than goods and services alone. Stated another way, the goal of the business enterprise is not the livelihood of its consumer but rather the livelihood of itself. This is not to suggest that goods will not be made, for this is a foundation of the business enterprise, but rather the motives behind such activity are not necessarily for the satisfaction of the economic community.

The business enterprise, situated in an economic system which utilizes the institution of money, becomes an end in itself, and those who manage such an enterprise seek with all efforts to continue such a purpose. Veblen states with regard to this latter point, “The motive of business is pecuniary gain, the method is essentially purchase and sale. The aim and usual outcome is an accumulation of wealth” (Veblen 1965, 20). Although this is obvious to most, Veblen makes this point to differentiate that the business enterprise, at base, seeks not to provide benefit to the larger human community but rather to itself—the owners and organizers of the entity.
This reality, that business and its managers are concerned with the organization as a going concern, leads to a society where goods are produced not for the ultimate sake of their users, but rather for what the users give up to obtain such goods; their income. This relationship is of fundamental importance for understanding what a monetary production economy—a power economy megamachine—is, as well as revealing much about the types of social behaviors and institutions that embody it. From this one characteristic of the economic system, so many other attributes become identifiable: the quantity of goods over the quality is favored; needs will be artificially constructed to aid in sales; product standardization is vital; overproduction is inevitable unless business management manipulation takes place; and lastly—although this list is not exhaustive—if some other way to earn profits and income could be created, the production of goods and employment will most likely be abandoned.

The type of economic and social environment that is produced when the business enterprise takes this form is one in which, as Veblen suggested, “Industry is carried on for the sake of business, and not conversely; and the progress and activity of industry are conditioned by the outlook of the market, which means the presumptive change of business profits” (Veblen 1965, 27). As a result, the livelihood of the majority of participants in this economic system rely upon the expectations of those who control the production process. This is to say, there is no guarantee of stability in such an economic system; there is no guarantee of employment and income for workers; and there is no guarantee that the goods and services needed for everyday living will be satisfied. The business enterprise as
managed—that is different from the industrial process which is engineered—has a goal of vendibility and accumulation not serviceability.

Veblen makes clear that this type of human activity is largely a result of the evolution of the institution of private property. Under the modern form of business enterprise, the production process is separated from ownership. This break indicates a separation of the goals of the business enterprise from that of the industrial process, and therefore the goals of the production or service workers. Whereas the workers of the business enterprise would seek stability in terms of employment and income—in general, their daily lives—the management of the business enterprise is concerned with the appearance and capital accumulation of the business. Further, the owners of the enterprise—stockholders—are concerned only with the value perception of the enterprise, as this dictates share prices. These “separations” result in an economy—again—that is not focused on the serviceability of its production and the maintenance and livelihood of its population. Veblen suggested that in the most advanced form—what could be referred to as a credit economy—even the business enterprise does not need to be maintained in any physical sense. Owners of the enterprise are only concerned with the organization’s putative earning capacity; i.e. the appearance of the firm and its possible earning potential.

As a result of this form of business enterprise towards the greater economic conditions, depression is simply an expected happening. Veblen suggests,

"the true, or what may be called the normal, crises, depressions, and exaltations in the business world are not the results of accidents, such as the failure of a crop. They come in the regular course of business. The depression and the exaltation are in a measure bound together." (Veblen 1965, 183).
As the owners of the business enterprise bid up the financial community’s perception of the firm’s earning power, leveraging their position, they create the conditions favorable for a financial collapse. As the firm’s value is largely based on expectations, any sign that the perceived earning capacity is faulty can cause a call on loans and trigger the crash. As Veblen as well as any number of other political economists have pointed out (Marx, Keynes, Galbraith, Minsky), this form of capitalist power economy produces asset bubbles—formulated by the exaltations of owners—and their eventual burst.

These human behaviors are well documented, and each crisis is strikingly similar in the broader picture; only the type of bubble changes with history. The consequences of such economic behavior is also well documented, One needs only consider the 1930s Great Depression as well as the 2000s Great Recession. The losers in this activity are most typically the people who were never even part of the game; although their acquiescence and similar euphoric beliefs in times of boom seem to only fuel the fire. The fallout after such a crash is where the most damage will be seen, as the greater population faces the results of depressed profit expectations and decreased employment and income. Veblen, Mumford, and any number of social thinkers see such behavior as not only destructive and wasteful, but counter-productive to a system that is bolstered to increase general quality of life and cultural experience.

Aside from the behavior of owner and managers of the business enterprise, the actual production process is one that leads to an ultimate deterioration in the organic qualities of life. To be clear, a monetary production economy in times of even moderate expectations is more than capable of the production of mass quantities of goods. This is, as both Veblen and
Mumford pointed out, a result of the advancement of scientific and technological advancements which have increased in relatively rapid proportion in the last few centuries.

The machine process, as discussed by Veblen, is one that is characterized by the ever increasing gains in productivity. In the most general sense, this is a movement away from craft production. Veblen points out that the machine process as distinct from the business enterprise moves towards conformity and standardization. Yet there is a movement towards progress to what is better and more useful and has an easier application to more purposes and situations. In the most general sense, the machine process is described by a movement away from craftsmanship, rules of thumb, and myth, towards calculability. Too give credit, this economic system has induced a more advanced material life. Yet another result,

As regards the mass of civilized mankind, the idiosyncrasies of the individual consumers are required to conform to the uniform gradations imposed upon consumable goods by the comprehensive mechanical processes of industry. Local color, it is said, is falling into abeyance in modern life, and where it is still found it tends to assert itself in units of the standard gauge. (Veblen 1965, 11)

Through the process of standardizing the mechanical aspects of production, in order to conform to the business enterprise needs, society at large, relying on this process for their livelihood must also standardize their wants and needs.9

In summary, Veblen’s analysis of a monetary production power economy, which arguably still exists today, is one where private property and pecuniary gain dictates the form of business enterprise and economic life. From this understanding, the business

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9 This is a largely a much different economic conclusion than, for example, that of neoclassical economics, which suggests that the wants of goods are determined in a complete market context. Yet, as Veblen understands, this would run contrary to the needs and characteristics of the firm, which seeks standardized production processes. Much discussion has continued on this topic, the construction of wants and needs.
enterprise can be seen in a light that reveals both its purpose as well as its influence on the livelihood of the larger economy. In the most general sense, the business enterprise in its most advanced form—the corporation—is where the production of goods becomes removed two degrees from the ultimate purpose of financial activities. This is to suggest that even the technicalities of the production of goods remains subservient to the firm’s ultimate goal of creating good will and perceived earning capacity, all with hopes of boosting share prices as well as access to capital markets. This goal leads to a turbulent economic environment where, in essence, the expectations of the financial community determine the stability of the economy at large in terms of employment and income generation. It also needs to be noted that this form of economic activity is not limited to industrial firms. Similar analysis would identify that enterprises such as home construction, agriculture, and entertainment also behaves in such a fashion and to varying degrees.

With the discussion of the business enterprise, it becomes clear how Mumford’s power complex and megatechnics is related to Veblen’s analysis. Furthermore, with the business enterprise now in context with the entire economic environment, the concept of the megamachine, the power complex, and the power economy become unified. With this established, topics related to the deficiencies of the power economy and the business enterprise will be presented providing a platform for the introduction of an organicist-based regional economic system. Furthermore, consider the concept map (Figure 3) to recap the previous sections.
Figure 3. Overview of Mumford’s conceptualization of the current economic system

Mega Deficiencies: Mass Production and Mass Satisfaction

Both Mumford and Veblen discuss the role of mass production in their examination of the power economy. Whereas Veblen seeks to make the point that mass production is a necessary step for the purpose of mass capital accumulation, Mumford makes the point of mass production as a result and symptom of a megatechnic megamachine. As Mumford suggests, the megatechnic economy relies on the mass production of goods for the purpose of expanding revenue and, in turn, profits. In this economy these ends are the symbol of progress and if more is made both materially and monetarily, human development is
assumed. Similar to Veblen, Mumford recognizes that the driver of this system is pecuniary gain rather than satisfying the larger human condition. He states,

The aim of industry is not primarily to satisfy essential human needs with a minimal productive effort, but to multiply the number of needs, factitious or fictitious, and accommodate them to the maximum mechanical capacity to produce profits. These are the sacred principles of the power complex. (Mumford 1970, 328)

This ability is seen by most as an amazing attribute of the current system, for much excitement and satisfaction is found in “the new and improved.” The dual nature of this system, the creation of needs and the enjoyment of new-found needs, as Mumford suggests, stems from the megatechnic mentality of “continuous improvement.”

Of importance in the process of creating needs is the recognition that in the absence of satisfying essential human needs, a megatechnic power economy manufactures needs in order to promote its continuity. It is assumed then that industry would fail if it produced goods that were meant to last and provide continued satisfaction. A megatechnic power economy, driven by the “need” for increasing pecuniary returns, requires for survival the continued consumption of its produce. This requires a commitment by the consumer, without knowing it. Mumford suggests,

In order to keep the megatechnic economy running smoothly with a steady expansion of all its facilities and the greatest possible Gross National Product…every member of the community must, in duty bound, acquire, use, devour, waste, and finally destroy a sufficient quantity of goods to keep its increasingly productive mechanism in operation. (Mumford 1970, 329)

Arguably then, the system is dependent upon the continued consumption of its produce, whether it actually fulfills true human needs or not.

The megatechnic economy relies not only on mass production for the continued growth of pecuniary pursuits, but also the manufacturing of needs and wants. From the
discussion regarding megatechnics as well as Veblen’s understanding of the business enterprise, it is clear that these characteristics stem from the fact that the megamachine knows only one speed, even if this speed is at odds with the interests of both society and the actual business enterprise. Therefore, “[as] our mass-production system is now set up, a slowing down of consumption, in any department, produces a crisis if not a catastrophe” (Mumford 1964, 105). This system relies on a consumer spirit (either voluntary or conditioned) that accepts the tradeoff of increasing amounts of goods with large amounts of waste and less than optimal quality to the evasion of possible depression from lowered expectations of earning power.

With the gain in access to mass amount of goods, Mumford—similar to Veblen—sees the loss of choice as a result of mechanization and standardization as a commonplace reality within a system characterized by mass production. In this system, one cannot readily ask or demand to have something created with their individual tastes and preferences. Although traditional economics suggests that in an ideal world, for every demand there will be a market, in reality, the mass producing megatechnic world is not capable of such individual orders. Thus Mumford suggests,

The willing member of megatechnic society can have everything the system produces—provided he and his group have no private wishes of their own, and will make no attempt personally to alter its quality or reduce its quantity or question the competence of its “decision-makers.” (Mumford 1970, 332)

In this sense, Mumford is describing the mechanization of consumption as a requirement for mass producing megatechnic society. Goods produced—in terms of what is produced, how they are packed and their relative “shelf life,” and how they are distributed—are determined by the business enterprise mainly within their own interest; these actions are representative
of so-called “profit-maximizing” firms. Although this sounds intuitive, the insight lies in
that these latter decisions are not made with respect to the whole life process, but rather to
serve the goal of the business enterprise in terms of their own conception of efficiency and
their acceptable rates of profitability.

Mega Deficiencies: Mass Automation
and the Myth of Progress

As has been suggested, a megatechnic economy promotes the continuous and rapid
expansion of technological advancement. To human credit, this behavior represents our
“natural and undying curiosity” and as Veblen would suggest, our “instinct to
workmanship.” Certainly—regardless of the true intention or motive—humans have with
incredible diligence sought to master the methods of production that have the potential to
eliminate material scarcity. As a result, either in terms of machinery or human labor, the
production process has become one characterized by mass productivity as well as pecuniary
efficiency. Whereas some production houses utilize near autonomous systems, others
utilize technics which enable human labor to perform machine-like quality to achieve such
results. In the most general sense, it seems then, that the system tends toward greater
degrees of automation.

This process, which might seemingly culminate in total automation, has with no
doubt been greatly celebrated. The movement away from the so-called “grind,” towards
employments of higher intelligence clearly is a high value among contemporary society, for
these are the jobs that command higher salaries. Mumford purports that the megatechnic
system instills and relies on a myth that an automated and increasingly technological society
is not only the highest human order, but one in which the benefits produced will be righteously distributed.

Mumford suggests that the automation of the megatechnic structure as well applies to the economic behavior of humans even outside their employment life. This is to suggest that the economic system has much influence over the existing institutional environment. The myth of the machine—that is superior and provides absolute human advancement—spreads to even the simplest human behaviors. To this point, Mumford suggests—with respect to the overwhelming influence of mechanization on human behavior:

The majority of the population must forego all modes of activity except those that call for the unremitting use of the machine or its products. Under the first head goes the abandonment of manual work and craft skill, even on the simplest domestic and personal scale. To indulge in any form of bodily exertion, wielding an axe or a saw, digging and hoeing a garden by hand, walking, rowing, or sailing, when a motor car or motor boat is available, even opening a single can or sharpening a pencil or cutting a slice of bread without benefit of a mechanical—preferably motorized—agent, is simply not playing the game. (Mumford 1970, 329)

Although it sounds ridiculous, one need only reflect on their daily activities to realize the influence and accuracy of such a statement. Being weary of the loss of individual autonomy and sense of individual existence, Mumford sees the megamachine exerting an influence over every aspect of human life. With this influence, Mumford feared a closing effect upon human beings’ ability to recognize and evaluate the actual economic system in which they live. To this concern, Mumford asserted,

...to many credulous people, this whole prospect [complete automation] seems entrancing: indeed irresistible. Like those who have become helplessly addicted to cigarettes, they are now so committed to technological progress, that they ignore the actual threat to their health, their mental development, or their freedom. Already a life that calls for assuming personal responsibility and exerting personal effort seems to them a utopian unreality. (Mumford 1970, 331)
While it is true, again, that, as a result of mass production, the amount of goods and material quality of life are immensely greater than in all of human history, it may not be necessarily true that the benefits of machine automation and technological improvements have decreased labor energy and time. Mumford makes the point that to consume the increased output generated by the megatechnic economy, more income will be needed by consumers and more time will have to be spent working; in fact, this is a requirement of the business enterprise. He states,

Thus the shorter working day promised by this system is already turning into a cheat. In order to achieve the higher level of consumption required, the members of the family must take on extra jobs…The effect, ironically, is to turn the newly won six- or seven-hour day to twelve or fourteen hours; so in effect, the worker is back where he started, with more material goods than ever before, but with less time to enjoy them or the promised leisure. (Mumford 1970, 329)

As the business enterprise requires a continued profitability as well as the expectation that it will be profitable in the future, consumers must continue to purchase the ever-increasing amounts of goods and services generated.10

In short, the point that Mumford seeks to illustrate regarding the automation of life is less about the individual products but rather the system that produces them, the tendencies and habits of the business sector, and the habits of thought of the consumer who purchases them. Furthermore, Mumford wants to address the idea that, although much can be produced in a megatechnic society, the question that thinkers should be asking is what the system is not capable of producing and satisfying. To this Mumford states,

10 This seemingly applies to a global economy as well. For example, simply because less industry exists at home, the financial system made up of companies who utilize international production still must show profitability through an ever-expanding purchase of goods made.
Plainly, then, it is not the mechanical or electronic products as such that intelligent minds question, but the system that produces them without constant reference to human needs and without sensitive rectification when these needs are not satisfied….Every machine must be judged individually, on its own merits, in relation to a specific human need. It is not the physical machinery but the basic premises of automation that demand scrutiny. (Mumford 1970, 334, 172)

Mumford sees that our megatechnic power economy does not have built in a mechanism of analysis or scrutiny; to have such mechanisms would be contrary to its purpose, thereby undermining the power complex.

Mega-Deficiencies: A Summary

The megatechnic system has clearly revealed its positive purposes and abilities. This economic system can produce mass quantities of material, increasingly expand technological know-how, generate enormous monetary value, and seemingly provide an automation of just about every human activity. These abilities are exceptional and should not be downplayed; the time, human energy, and life spent creating such outcomes is unfathomable. The produce of this system has created a material output, hygienic ability, and quality of life unprecedented in human history. Generally, material scarcity has been technologically solved. Without a doubt, the possibilities and implications towards human activity, in terms of the ways and means of life, are considerable; the potential to increase our deeper needs, such as socialization and culture, does exist. Mumford identifies such benefits but cautions and suggests that they must first be put in human context before they are truly realized. He states,

The separate benefits, if detached from the long term human purposes and a meaningful pattern of life, are indisputable. None of the megatechnics’ efficient modes of organization, none of its labor-saving devices, should be arbitrarily disparaged or neglected, still less rejected out of hand. Only one proviso must be made, which the apologists for the power complex studiously have failed to
recognize. All these goods remain valuable only if more important human concerns are not overlooked or eradicated. (Mumford 1970, 333)

Mumford believes that these “human concerns” have been overlooked, and as a result, the gains that the megatechnic mode of production produces are diminished by the consequences of such a system; this being the loss of human choice, the automation of life, and the existence of overabundance yet without equitable distribution. Mumford clarifies by arguing,

All that I seek…to bring out is the fact that these promises [(increased material existence and technologically advanced living)] are not unconditional. On the contrary, their one-sided fulfillment, in terms that satisfy only the demands of megatechnics, endlessly stimulating the purposeless human “pleasure center” of profit, without respect to other human functions and projects, carry heavy penalties that must be recognized and deliberately lifted. The mischiefs that have issued from megatechnics are not due to its failures and breakdowns but to its unqualified successes in over-quantification. (Mumford 1970, 333)

It is not necessarily the method of production that does not allow our society to realize the gains from increased productivity and technology, but rather the mode of production; the institutional structure which in our current life is described by a megatechnic power economy. It is the purpose and intention of production—currently, the search for ever-greater rates of return—where the problem ensues. Mumford remarks,

Though these modern power systems produce a maximum output of highly specialized products—motorcars, refrigerators, washing machines, rockets, nuclear bombs—they cannot, on their own terms, do justice to the far more complex and varied needs of human life, for these needs cannot be mechanized and automated, still less controlled and suppressed. (Mumford 1968, 221)

Mass quantity of material goods and technological mechanization only goes so far to fulfill human needs. As these processes are guided by pecuniary gain rather than by the actual interests of the community, the produce of the system tends to undermine higher
order needs as well as progression of the economic system towards fulfilling such needs.

Again, Mumford is not seeking an abolishment of the ways and means of technological life but rather a way to find balance in a system that seemingly will produce man’s own destruction both culturally and ecologically. He suggests,

too much is as bad as too little. Though excess quantity, held in reserve, does in fact play an essential part in maintaining the organism’s balance and makes possible freedom and exuberance, it is not by constantly using unlimited quantities that man flourishes. (Mumford 1970, 337).

The source of deficiencies in the current economic system that is guided by the power complex and utilizes megatechnics stems from the insistent emulation of pecuniary wealth. This institutionalized human behavior determines what is produced, how it is produced, and ultimately for who. Reminiscent of Veblen, Mumford suggests,

Under capitalism profit reigned as the main economic objective; and profit became the decisive factor in all industrial enterprise. Inventions that promised profits, industries that produced profits, were fostered. The reward of capital, if not the first claim upon productive enterprise, was at all events the dominating one: the service of the consumer and the support of the worker were entirely secondary. (Mumford 1934, 373).

This motivation became such a paramount force, that even modern economics displays it as a positive guidance for human progress, suggesting that only productive enterprises with seeming profitability should be pursued.

As it turns out, profit within the capitalist system is in itself deficient of complete meaning. Only taking into account pecuniary revenue and costs (either actual or expected), capitalist profit ignores all other possible benefits or costs that accrue to the productive and consumptive process. Recognized by mainstream economics as externalities, these costs and
benefits rarely receive upfront attention.\textsuperscript{11} It is in these externalities that much of what should actually matter to society lies. To this Mumford states,

When one examines economic activities from this standpoint of the employment of energy and the service of human life, this whole financial structure of production and consumption turns out to have mainly a superstitious basis...what are called gains in capitalist economics often turn out, from the standpoint of social energetics, to be losses; while the real gains, the gains upon which all the activities of life, civilization, and culture ultimately depend were either counted as losses, or were ignored, because they remained outside the commercial scheme of accountancy. (Mumford 1934, 374-375)

In Mumford’s discussion of the role of the machine as a labor saving device, the latter idea of how pecuniary gains are, in fact, perversions of human effort becomes clear. Mumford thoroughly traces the role of the machine in human civilization and at base suggests that the machine is a production of social interaction. The machine implicitly serves a social function—to release energy spent performing the drudgeries of maintaining livelihood allowing for the pursuit of higher human needs, while at the same time, in its creation, serving as a form of expression of human creativity, ingenuity, and socialization. Yet a system based primarily on profit does not celebrate these outcomes:

From unrestricted power through expanding pecuniary profit to insatiable pleasure, the most striking thing about this power complex is its studious indifference to other human needs, norms, and goals: it operates best in what is, historically speaking, an ecological, cultural, and personal lunar desert swept only by solar winds. (Mumford 1970, 168)

The machine as a social creation is lost in its translation as a source of production efficiency and profitability.

\textsuperscript{11} As defined by economics, externalities are costs and benefits perceived after a transaction
The reason for these mega deficiencies may lie deeper than simply human greed and the pursuit of power and status. Mumford suggests that—and differing from megamachines past—the capitalist system contains no implicit and explicit ideology of self-evaluation beyond that of pecuniary or material gain. A main deficiency of the current capitalist power economy is the lack of a means to pursue value identification. In consequence, there is no evalulative mechanism to ensure at minimum a subsistence of human need and the minimization of waste, and at maximum, a way to promote total human development without prejudice. Mumford contends that this inability to develop a method of critical reflection—as well as a method to promote revision in cases of social and economic malfunction—stems from the underlying philosophy of the power complex mentality. In the most basis sense, it was not seen that such social processes were the responsibility of the leaders of the system. Mumford suggests,

The leaders and enterprisers of the [classical] period believed that they had avoided the necessity for introducing new values, except those which were automatically recorded in profits and prices. They believed that the problem of justly distributing goods could be sidetracked by creating an abundance of them: that the problem of applying one’s energies wisely could be cancelled out simply by multiplying them: in short, that most of the difficulties that had hitherto vexed mankind had a mathematical or mechanical—that is quantitative—solution. (Mumford 1970, 283)

Those who were concerned with values were seen in the light of opposition to progress for “the belief that values could be dispensed with, constituted the new system of values” (Mumford 1934, 283). It is with this attitude that Mumford argues that a process of dehumanization is taking place. Our ability to understand, evaluate, organize, and continually develop our social and economic system has become increasingly absent in contemporary life. Furthermore, given this cultural trait, our own personal development and
recognized connection to our social and ecological existence has stagnated and has become unimportant. Mumford believes that these traits will lead to an existence that is overtly dismal. Consider the concept map (see Figure 4) for an overview of these deficiencies.

In contrast, the organicist regional social system is a vision of a world where these deficiencies are understood and actions are taken to rectify the relations that result from them. By utilizing the gains in technology, information, and organization derived from our economic and social past, yet with attention and focus being given to understanding the actual needs of the individual and community, we might begin a process of institutional adjustment towards more “humane” living. Although to begin this process, in Mumford’s words,

we shall have to overthrow the myth of the machine and replace it with a new myth of life, a myth based upon a richer understanding of all organic process, a sharper insight into man’s positive role in changing the face of the earth, and a passionate religious faith in man’s own capacity to transform and perfect his own self and his own institutions in cooperative relation with all the forces of nature, and, above all, with his fellow men. (Mumford 1968, 22)
Figure 4. Overview of the “mega-deficiencies.”

To begin this process and create new foundations of our social and ecological existence, Mumford suggests a philosophy of organicism. This is the subject of the following chapter. Upon establishing the workings of this philosophy, organicist-based human development and economic and political organization will be in context.
CHAPTER 3

DELINEATING AND PRACTICING ORGANICISM: THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION OF A REGIONAL SOCIETY

Defining Regionalism from Organicist Philosophy: Introduction

As was discussed in Chapter 1, the region, from Mumford’s perspective, is something more than man-made political boundaries. Using the idea that a region is made up of these arbitrary designations may in fact deter a more inclusive understanding of the region; as a heterogeneous and non-absolute ecological and social entity. As has been suggested, this understanding will be of utmost importance for the successful implementation of regionalist policies, including those related to ecological sustainability.

To facilitate a regionalist vision which promotes an institutional system that advances humans away from the power complex and economy, Mumford suggests a philosophy of organicism. This chapter synthesizes this notion and presents it as a unified philosophy. Organicism will work as the foundation that is needed to build social and ecological stewardship and will promote cooperation in regional affairs as well as a mentality that fosters ecological sustainability. The following sections delineate Mumford’s philosophy of organicism, which will provide a context for a vision of a regionalist-based culture, political life, and economy.
Organicism, A Regionalist Methodological Commitment: Components

Underlying the regionalist perspective is a philosophy of organicism, which is a critical component to the overall workings of Mumford’s regionalist approach. Organicism in a very general sense constitutes a worldview and value system in which human beings understand themselves as a component to an ecological whole. Additionally, in this view humans seek to integrate mechanistic thinking—that associated with science and technology—with the arts, humanism, spiritualism, and the natural world. The organicist position sees this unification as necessary as it is thought that such a divergence between these two broad areas of life contributes to an inability to promote fuller, more developed human lives—beyond that of material and animal existence. This is because with such a dichotomy of thought, we lose the ability to understand and fulfill true human needs.

As will be discussed, regionalism in the view of this philosophy becomes an expression of organicist thought. The application of organicist thought extends beyond its seemingly theoretical and ideological understanding. Because organicism is also in reference to the individual, social, and institutional environment, there are relevant applications found for personal development, public policy, economic development,

1 As Mumford suggests, “we need a doctrine which, because it aims at the transformation and development of the person, will be capable of guiding and redirecting the energies of men in groups and associations: an ethical discipline and an education capable of giving human institutions and organizations the potentials for freedom we so far find – and still only sporadically here—in individual persons.” (Mumford 1951, 22)

2 Mumford believes that this has in general already occurred: “Western culture no longer represents man: it is mainly outside him, in no small measure hostile to his whole self: he cannot take it in. He is like a patient condemned in the interest of x-ray photography to live upon a diet of barium sulphate.” (Mumford 1951, 12)
structural planning, and the conservation and management of the ecological environment. To show the connection among all of these applications, this section will delineate and define the propositions of organicism, revealing it as not only a worldview but more importantly, a system of valuation. This will provide context to the following sections of regional culture and economy and the general basis of operation of ecological regionalism.

Implicit to the introduction to regionalism found in Chapter 1, regionalism is a vision of a post-capitalist economic system. Furthermore, this system takes advantage of technological development, but seeks to reinvigorate a sense of life, humanism, and functional purpose stemming from such human advancements. Regionalism guided by organicist thought is a response to the mechanistic and monetary production economy, which Mumford believes does not implicitly value or respect the life process. While it may appear that industrial capitalist modes of production fulfill the life process—as it seemingly provides material and social provisioning—the system is more typically, extractive, exploitive, irreverent to nature, myopic, and careless to the wellbeing of the human and ecological population. This was one conclusion reached in the section entitled mega-deficiencies, where Mumford attributes this dis-concern for life to the power complex.

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3 As Mumford describes the power complex that he associates with monetary production economies, he states, “From unrestricted power through expanding pecuniary profit to insatiable pleasure, the most striking thing about this power complex is its studious indifference to other human needs, norms, and goals: it operates best in what is, historically speaking, an ecological, cultural, and personal lunar desert swept only by solar winds.” (Mumford 1967, 168).
Organicism is a philosophical response and reorientation to such a destructive institutional environment and can be thought of as alternative worldview. As Luccarelli discusses,

for Mumford, organicism was both content and method, an expression of the affirmation of nature that reflected his dual concern with the regional ecosystem and philosophical principle of vitalism. It was also a way to hold oppositions, such as nature and culture, in relation to one another. (Luccarelli 1995, 57)

At the most basic methodological level, as was mentioned, organicism stems from an evolutionary yet mechanistic perspective; that although the world—ecologically, individually, and socially—is in constant flux, it can still be measured and identified.

As organisms interact with their environment, they change both the surrounding conditions as well as themselves, and this can be understood and recorded. As a practice, organicism promotes a worldview that can link individual human actions to the ecological and social worlds, seeking to develop a system that represents actual needs of both of these areas. Mumford suggests,

slowly, man has found out that, wonderful though his mind is, he must curb the egoistic elations and delusions it promotes; for his highest capacities are dependent upon the co-operation of a multitude of other forces and organisms, whose life-courses and life-needs must be respected. (Mumford 1973, 429)

Implicitly then, with the connection of humans to their ecological and social environments, Mumford recognizes the idea of a web of life; the idea that all organisms are connected and impact each other.

Furthermore, the web of life is coupled with a principle of synergy, or that the “whole” is something greater than the sum of the parts. Organicism links the individual to the whole. Mumford states, “every living creature is part of the general web of life: only as
life exists in all its processes and realities, from the action of the bacteria upward, can any particular unit of it continue to exist” (Mumford 1938, 302). This organicist understanding informs us that human action will necessarily have an impact on both human and ecological conditions, and these interactions should not go unnoticed or discounted; for they shape history. Humans have the ability—given this understanding of institutions, history, and an evolutionary perspective—to promote a desired state of existence.

Organicism is not in any way naive to the role of human social institutions, and particularly the role that history plays in shaping human association. From the organicist perspective, history is fundamentally a component of the understanding of organic human processes. Furthermore, history matters greatly for humans, but also has a deep and lasting impact on ecological systems. Mumford states,

Human beings and groups are the outcomes of an historic complex, their inheritance, and they move toward a conditioned but uncertain destination, their future. The assimilation of the past and the making of the future are the two ever-present poles of existence in a human community. (Mumford 1938, 301)

Just as ecological conditions are shaped in an evolutionary way—where the present is the culmination of a constantly changing environment—so too are human social institutions and forms of associated living.4 Organicism makes us aware that humans are not somehow

4 Of importance is Mumford’s rejection of the type of analysis and conclusion reached by social Darwinists, particularly that of Herbert Spencer but also his student, William Graham Sumner. Mumford declares, “In emphasizing the importance of this new orientation toward the living and the organic, I expressly rule out the false biological analogies between societies and organisms: Herbert Spencer and others pushed these to the point of absurdity. Such analogies sometimes provide useful suggestions, suggestions no less practical than those derived—with equally little realism—from the machine. But the point is that our knowledge directs attention to parallel processes, parallel conditions and reactions; and it gives rise to related pictures of the natural and the cultural environments, considered as wholes, within which man finds his life and being and drama.” (Mumford 1938, 303). It can
isolated from this world principle; it suggests that to think so we would be ignoring and creating false perceptions of existence and influence.

From this evolutionary perspective also comes the organic reality of spontaneity. While there is a general form to life, individuals—in all forms of life-existence—functioning at the most primary levels are able to act in a spontaneous fashion. This reveals, particularly in the case of humans, the ability to live in, although also change, the institutional fabric in which they associate. Spontaneity is a fundamental component of social evolution. From an organicist viewpoint, spontaneity is celebrated as a behavior of life that adds to diversity as well as promotes change. While it is not recognized, again, that spontaneity is always of some positive bent, it no less serves as at least the precursor for the potentiality of variation and expanded existence. As will be discussed, this spontaneity serves a purpose in human development and self-identification, not the least in social and cultural development. Spontaneity in the context of such human development serves as a means to the opening of greater opportunities and avenues for growth.

Non-Absolutism

A key aspect of the methodological consideration of organicism includes a commitment to non-absolutism—that there is no one reality, truth, way of living, or final destination. It must be understood that this is not the belief in total subjectivity or relativism; be asserted that Mumford rejects Spencer’s evolutionary progress, where humans achieve higher and more advanced states as they evolve through time. Mumford, on the other hand, sees no such harmony, arguing that that there is no such state of harmony as “the various elements in a civilization are never in complete equilibrium: there is always a tug and pull of forces, and in particular, there are changes in the pressures exerted by the life-destroying functions and the life-conserving ones” (Mumford 1934, 64).
rather, that facts are true as far as we know given current conditions, yet are fallible and subject to change or revision. Furthermore, as there may seemingly exist pure facts or absolute values or morals, these concepts must be taken as conditioned. Mumford suggests that seemingly absolute moral ground is actually environmentally conditioned: “our ideals, however imperative in absolute, must nevertheless reckon with the fact that we live in the realm of the historically conditioned, subject to pressures and environmental limitations” (Mumford 1951, 166). While this quote is reference to moral ideals, it is no less a discussion of the non-absolute nature of human life.

This proposition is vital for the conversation regarding human communities as well as individual self-awareness in the sense that—for both community development as well as individual development—to grow and progress, we must be aware of the conditions that are established within a “going community” or within a person’s established thought process. Again, with respect to ideals, “goods,” and virtues, but no less applicable to other realms of human thought, Mumford suggests “there is no abstract formula for virtue that yields an unconditioned result…. There is no virtue that may not, in any moment, be turned into its opposite” (Mumford 1951, 167). Human communities are made up of the individuals that inhabit them and contain moral systems regarding what is appropriate for the community at large. These may be ascertained as facts; however, it must be recognized that these moral institutions are conditioned and—while seemingly absolute—are capable of reform and re-designation (for better or worse). The important point is that, with recognition of such realities, humans, individually and as a group, do have the ability to change their environment, communities, institutions, and social and economic realities; and furthermore,
that these human realities, just as desert can be turned into fertile land, can be influenced and altered.

**Holism**

With a reorientation toward organicism and the implication of non-absolutism and fallibilism, the connection between inner self and outer environment, human community to plant and non-human animal, individual to community, becomes less distinct; and can be seen as interconnected and socially defined. Mumford suggests,

> With man there is no outer environment available except through the medium of society—that medium which supplies nourishment to the growing baby, equips it with the signs of language and the symbols of association, prepares it by cultural habituation to eat this food and reject that poison, to believe this truth and turn aside from that error. In order for the outer environment to function effectively, man must face it, seize it, assimilate it: and when that is done, it is no longer an outer environment. (Mumford 1938, 303)

This is to say that the “outer world” is in general a personally and socially constructed reality for the human being and is the interpretation of experience. As this reality is embraced, it becomes recognizable that the two are not mutually exclusive.

This holism is an important distinction for the push toward a more integrated system of science and values, but as well between economic development and cultural development; the world of ideas, feelings, values, beliefs—the institutional environment—should not be considered separate from the scientific and applied. For the advancement toward a person and society of the whole—a value and ideal of organicist thought—these connections must be made intelligible. The connection of the natural world and the social world must be established as interdependent and integrated, and for a greater understanding
of this world, we must start where interpretation begins—with the socialized person.

Mumford calls attention to this, as he suggests, with respect to organicist philosophy,

The new philosophy will treat every part of human existence, and the enduring structure of the physical world to the previous incarnation of divinity, as an aspect of an interrelated and progressively integrating whole. It will restore the normal hierarchy of the organic functions, placing the part of the service of the whole, and the lower function at the command of the higher: thus will establish once more the primacy of the person, and the function of man himself is the interpreter and director—not the passive mere and ultimate victim—of the forces that have brought him into existence. (Mumford 1951, 226)

Holism provides an argument for the integration of humans and nature while bringing to center stage, the interpreter and provider of meaning—the human—as a means for understanding the world in which we have come to create and live. While it may be contested that this is an egoistic philosophy, this concept is simply making the point that the human and natural world are not separated, and that the world as we know it is tautologically a humanly created meaning.5

To engage in holistic thinking, as has been described, is to seek to understand the person in a context of the whole; as an animal and as a human—as an autonomic functioning organism living in an extra-organic world of culture. With this thinking

5 This is not to say that nature does not exist outside the realm of human consciousness, but rather, to seek to understand the whole of existence, we must somehow place ourselves, the interpreter of this existence outside of the process of discovery. In doing so we create a false dichotomy which then leads to a misinterpretation of ourselves within this world. Mumford suggests, “what science calls nature or the external world is partly a projection of the human personality, modified by its capacities and needs and its cultural forms. Instead of beginning with nature and eliminating, as far as possible, the operations of the personality, we must begin with the human personality, in the most inclusive and complete of all observable phenomena, since every other kind of force and event can be mirrored in and interpreted by” (Mumford 1951, 229).
established, the development of the human self and community might lead to the recognition of our existence in the web of life and influence our interpretations of nature. With this connection made, we might seek the continuous realignment of our understandings of nature and self with that of the actual natural world, seeking a more balanced and integrated life between human and ecological existence. Once these ideas are embraced, regionalism with an organicist worldview becomes possible—this is to say, the cooperative planning and creation of human communities where actual and desired human needs as well as ecological considerations can be made priority rather than left to the stagnant—unconscious—myths and institutions of our past.

The Social-Individual and Mutual Aid

With organicism, Mumford is also able to reject both radical individualism and collectivism. As the individual is seen in deep relation to the whole community and society, there is much room for individual thought, action, and experience. Furthermore, Mumford’s organicism allows for a deeper connection not only to the individual but also to the social and—increasingly needed—ecological environment. It is in these connections that organicism can be described as a value system, whereby human decisions are in relation and can be judged as to their social and ecological impact. Actions are evaluated not solely on a pecuniary basis but also to their individual, social, and ecological influence. This system of value is inherently cooperative and social in nature but also requires individual and voluntary participation. The concept of mutual aid further delineates the “social individual” and the relationship to a system of organicist valuation.
The concept of mutual aid is a cornerstone of the organicist philosophy. Mutual aid can be understood as both a conscious practice as well as a fact of the entire organic world. Furthermore, mutual aid can be understood as the relationships between organisms that contribute to the processes of life. Obviously, this is a far-reaching implication, particularly in the case of human beings, who organize and institutionalize behaviors that support the continuance of the life process yet also take part in the extremely destructive behaviors. The idea of “mutual” is not absolute or found in all aspects of life. Rather, mutual aid is seen—as Peter Kropotkin identifies—as one of many factors of evolution. This concept of mutual aid is paramount for Mumford’s organicist philosophy and takes much of what Kropotkin (1995) found in his *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, as a guiding principle to understand organic life and to build a theory of human development.

To help reveal the importance of the concept of mutual aid it is relevant to consider the work of Peter Kropotkin and his influence on Mumford’s intellectual development. In one of his most famous works, Kropotkin sets out to show that mutual aid, along with other forces of evolution, sustain the life process; in consequence the belief in a purely competitive world, commonly described as “survival of the fittest,” is for the most part mythical. The “fittest” might rather be shown as those who utilize cooperation and are able

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6 Kropotkin was writing such a work at a time where the political rhetoric of laissez faire social Darwinism was rampant among intellectuals and public figures. He sought to combat radical individualism as a guiding force of evolution where fighting and competitive behaviors are the only progressive aspects of organic life. He suggests in the introduction to his text *Mutual Aid*, “We have heard so much lately of the “harsh, pitiless struggle for life,” which was said to be carried on by every animal against all other animals, every “savage” against all other “savages,” and every civilized man against all his co-citizens—and these assertions have so much become an article of faith—that it was necessary, first of all, to oppose to them a wise series of facts showing animal and human life under a quite different
to establish behaviors that support the group rather than act in some radically individual way; i.e., the certainty of an isolated superior being. Yet, this is not necessarily a trait that is always or overtly conscious. As was mentioned, mutual aid is a behavior that Kropotkin identities as an instinct and is characteristic of all organisms. He states,

> It is not love to my neighbor—whom I often do not know at all—which induces me to seize a pail of water and to rush towards his house when I see it on fire; it is a far wider, even though more vague feeling or instinct of human solidarity and socialability which moves me. So it is with animals. It is not love, and not even sympathy (understood in the proper sense) which induces a herd of ruminants or of horses to form a ring in order to resist an attack of wolves; not love which induces wolves to form a pack for hunting…It is a feeling infinitely wider than love or personal sympathy—an instinct that has been slowly developed among animals and men in the course of an extremely long evolution. (Kropotkin, Huxley, and Paul Avrich Collection 1955, xii)

From this perspective, mutual aid can be understood as the practices which organisms undertake—individually and yet also as a group—to foster the like group, community, and population; whereby organisms of differing kind support each other in a form of symbiosis. Examples of this can be seen from the bacterial life in soil which promotes plant life to humans protecting a wildlife preserve. The important part of this concept to the organicist philosophy is that life is furthered, in a large part, by the conscious and unconscious forms aspect. It was necessary to indicate the overwhelming importance which sociable habits play in Nature and in the progressive evolution of both the animal species and human beings: to prove that they secure to animals a better protection from their enemies, very often facilities for getting food (winter provisions, migrations, etc.), longevity, and therefore a greater facility for the development of intellectual faculties; and that they have given to men, in addition to the same advantages, the possibility of working out those institutions which have enabled mankind to survive in its hard struggle against Nature, and to progress, notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of its history. It is a book on the law of Mutual aid, viewed at as one of the chief factors of evolution—not on all factors of evolution and their respective values.” (Kropotkin, Huxley, and Paul Avrich Collection 1955, xvi).
of cooperation and support, rejecting the social Darwinist ideas of laissez faire and radical individualism as the progressive conditions of evolution.

While the organicist philosophy recognizes the empirical fact of mutual aid existing in organic life, at the same time, it also advances a progressive or normative aspect of mutual aid; to build and encourage the practice of mutual aid institutions among human beings as well as their interaction with the natural world. Mumford states,

life has flourished only by extending the area of mutual aid, reciprocal interplay, or symbiosis: every creature, voluntarily or blindly, is in an active give-and-take relationship, not merely with its bare physical environment, with a multitude of other organisms. Living organisms, by the most complex and far-reaching operations, form food chains and work chains that extend from the bacteria in the soil and the air to the domesticated animals, indeed they constantly cooperate to remake the whole environment for the benefit of life…. Just as purpose in the human sense exists at a much lower unconscious stage as “function” and “mechanism” so does love, in the human sense, exist at a lower level as mutual aid and ecological partnership. (Mumford 1951, 32)

Within the organicist philosophy, a progressive mutual aid—the active pursuit and structure of mutual aid institutions—is celebrated and sought after and is held as a component of a developed human life and a condition of a realized organicist society. Mumford states in regards to the realization of such a mutual aid driven world,

This new civilization is committed, not to expansion but to stabilization, not to a ruthless struggle for existence but to a wider and richer cooperation, not to providing a field of action for the predatory human types but to building an environment in which the nurture of life, by parent and education and physician, by psychologists and philosopher and artist, will spread the benefits of our scientific and humanistic culture to all members of the community. (Mumford 1943, 187)

Mumford envisions the intensification of mutual aid institutions as a key outcome of organicist-based existence. With the conscious (both individually and socially) actions toward the growth of mutual aid practices, Mumford sees that we are able to move away
from the institutional structures associated with the power complex and economy. With a change from an ideology of self-interest towards that of self and social development, we are able to pursue a transformation toward an organicist-based life. Furthermore, as this type of behavior is institutionalized, it provides the basis for a system of valuation that discerns individual-based perceptions of progress and wealth from one that is defined by the larger human community. Yet, it must be realized that Mumford believes that the growth of these types of human actions are possible given his understanding of human nature. This understanding connects the latter sections which described the components of organicist thought.

The Organicist Conception of Human Nature and Existence

Organicism as a system of value that includes an understanding of human nature as well as human development. These characteristics become the backbone of the vision of regionalism as a progressive social system. This section delineates the organicist perspective of human nature.

The organicist philosophy views mankind as a member of the organic world and a member of the animal community. Yet, according to this view, humans can be differentiated as an organism which is capable of higher order thinking; this being primarily shown through the ability to create and communicate symbols, interpret and teach the past, as well as envision the future. These developed traits set apart humans from the rest of the ecological kingdom, providing a life experience that is qualitatively different from any other organism.
Humans from this standpoint differ most fundamentally from other animals given their extra organic capabilities; i.e. their social and institutional life. With the ability to transmit ideas, knowledge, and myth—experience—humans set themselves apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. This process of interpretation is fundamental to the human complex, and reveals something about the evolutionary social process: individuals who are only capable of interpreting so much in their individual lives are able to understand and be part of multiple generations of knowledge and experiences.

The organicist perspective sees the human being as organic in construction. Mumford delineates,

Reduced to his lowest terms, he is a lump of carbon and a puddle of water, mixed with a handful of equally common metals, minerals, and gases. But man is likewise a unit of organic life; he is a member of the animal world, and of a special order of the animal world, the vertebrates, with capacity for free movements, for selective intercourse with the environment, for specially canalized responses through a highly developed nervous system. Still further, man belongs to the family of warm-blooded animals, the mammals, whose females give milk to their young and so form a close and tender partnership, often fiercely protective, for the nurture of their offspring; and through his own internal development, his whole life is suffused with emotions and erotic responses which have persisted, like so many other traits of domestication…in exaggerated form. (Mumford 1951, 27)

The organicist understanding of human nature looks first to humans as an animal. This way it can be understood homo sapiens “starting as an animal among the animals…[have] stretched and intensified certain special organic capacities in order to develop more fully what is specifically human” (Mumford 1951, 27). Humans live in a reality which has become more than that of animal existence alone; where our actions are only in part controlled by biologically driven needs. “In a fashion that has no rivals in other species he thinks: he plays: he loves: he dreams” (Mumford 1951, 27). While it is the case that homo
sapiens began as and continues to be an animal, they also have fostered specific capabilities to realize and develop what constitutes “human” nature.

The existence of institutional life provides the most clarity to this proposition. The social world—the institutional world of customs, norms, values, understandings of existence and purpose—provide the majority of context to human life. Each individual’s life begins in an established world of meanings, values, and understandings. “Man’s basic data are not in the least simple or elemental: what is basic is the highly complex structure of meanings and values produced and transmitted in history” (Mumford 1951, 25). The organicist perspective asserts that to understand the nature of human life, we must begin with the basic fact that humans begin in a social environment and are not initially radically individual. Mumford suggests,

> to understand the nature of man—accordingly—we must first of all understand this prologue; that is, we must take man as we now find him, and all his historic complexity…We find man a creature born into a going society, which provides him with clothes, protection from dangers, shelters and against the elements, offers him food, supplies him with speech, surrounds him with some degree of love, endows him with a score of gifts before he has even left the cradle. (Mumford 1951, 26)

Thus, the organicist perspective views humankind as a member of the animal kingdom, differentiated from all other creatures given the human tendency toward living, creating, and passing on history. “Man lives in history; he lives through history; and a certain sense, he lives for history, since no small part of his activities goes toward preparation for an undisclosed future” (Mumford 1951, 28). The organicist philosophy thus contends that while mankind is similar to all other living creatures with a forward direction of life—defined as the energy that compels organisms to continue living—a major feature that distinguishes humans is that such a forward direction exists in a world of culture.
It is in this sense that organicism recognizes emergence; or that culture and the human personality emerges from the innate as well as the historically conditioned social human experience. Furthermore, this emergence is something greater than the sum of its parts; namely, synergistic. Particularly, in the process of “becoming,” either in terms of culture or the human individual, the outcome is something different than the basis it was founded upon. This reveals the evolutionary nature of the human being; individually and culturally. The very act of becoming adds and changes the existing conditions. Mumford suggests, “every purpose is transformed by the medium and the mechanism through which it is expressed: wherefore every distant end undergoes a change during the time taken to reach the last stage” (Mumford 1951, 135). As mentioned, this emergence takes no immediate or absolute form and has no precondition of a positive bent. The important part is that given the emergent character of human life, there is no final end or resting place. Our world and individual lives are perpetually in a state of change; yet with this recognition we might seek to guide or inform the emerging conditions.

This latter concept, again, reveals the importance of the individual, but puts this person from the moment of birth in a social context. This ability to transmit information extra-organically allows humans to understand errors made and interpret and resolve bad information; namely, grow and develop. From this proposition, organicism purports that meaning from a human experience comes from a two-fold process of the individual’s organic perceptions—emotions, chemical response, autonomic nervous functions—but receives context and understanding from the extra-organic world, namely the human social world consisting of symbols, institutional idiosyncrasies, facts, and myths. In this act of
becoming, the human changes the existing conditions. Personality and culture are emergent in character. This reality has become a paramount source of continued human flourishing—yet also too much degree a detriment—as the information from life experience is able to be transmitted. Put otherwise, as the source of information, as the individual or social group passes away, their experience can be shared with living humans; given this they are able to continue living—grow or decline, develop or destroy—in historic time.

Human animal nature is at base similar to the needs and experiences of all other warm blooded mammals in the ecological community. What differentiates and defines our human nature is a social environment which conditions our animalistic basis towards that of the historically based human institutional structures. For example, as both Kropotkin and Mumford realize, mutual aid is present among the warm blooded mammalian family. Yet, given humans’ ability to understand, teach, and socialize each other, mutual aid practices have become a realizable behavior and one which can be sought after, rather than a result only of the forward motion of life—a concept which will be described in the next section.

In this sense, “human” nature, from an organicist position, is a social construct. From this standpoint, there is no belief in an inherently evil or good initial human condition. In fact, what matters for our understanding of the human is the historical institutional structures of mankind, as these largely determine our decision basis, valuation, growth, and continued existence. The defining trait of human nature from the organicist standpoint is our sociability. Consider Figure 5, which summarizes main components of organicist thought.
The Forward Motion of Life and the Organicist View of Human Development

From the understanding that humans live in historic time but are also always moving and proceeding in life, there is a sense that human life, as well as all forms of life, has a forward motion of existence. The organicist position holds that humans as well as the entire organic (living) world have what can be best described as a forward moving tendency; an energy that continues the ecological life process. Organicism contends that life is purposive; “the same vital impetus that flows through all nature flows through man and carries him onward” (Mumford 1951, 30). Furthermore, “forward moving” is a recognition which connects humans to the rest of the organic world, creating a sense of membership rather than isolation from nature.
This sense of purpose in its simplest understanding is that life, and in particular human life, has a purpose beyond that of reproduction and random occurrence. Furthermore, it must be recognized that this sense of purpose is taken on faith, as many of the details of this teleological system are substantiated by observation, the purpose of the whole, the grand design, cannot be established either by experiment or by observation—and neither, for that matter, can be refuted or discredited by such means as long as living organisms survive. (Mumford 1951, 137)

The organicist position holds this sense of purpose as a human value that has the ability to transcend culture and time. While it may seem absolute, the organicist position holds that while the value stands, the details of the way life purpose is played out are not in any sense final or presupposed. “Purpose” serves as a mechanism for social and ecological integration and stewardship.

Furthermore, recognizing the non-absolute nature of this forward moving tendency reveals a relationship of dynamic equilibrium. Organicism, which is inherently committed to an evolutionary perspective—for both the ecological and social world—sees human and animal existence as existing in a constant flux; in a dynamic equilibrium rather than any absolute or static equilibrium. This relationship reveals that the individual exists, providing another characteristic that links human organisms to the rest of the organic world. To elaborate this point, consider that as the individual organism “makes choices,” they in turn impact the world around them. Furthermore, this view suggests that organisms are in some sense, through biological need—and also for humans, institutionally conditioned needs—seeking some sort of balance in their moment-to-moment existence. This constant interaction leaves the organism in a world of flux as they seek—either consciously or unconsciously—stability.
It should be noted that this view does break from any sense that a forward moving tendency is somehow always positive or progressive in meaning.\textsuperscript{7} There is no sense of predetermination or destiny being argued. Although life is purposive, this purposiveness in no way has a pre-ordained meaning; the meaning itself is evolutionary. Mumford suggests, for man’s life to have meaning and purpose, one not need conceive that any part of it existed predetermined, foreordained, from the beginning of time: still less the time itself as beginning or an ending. Every step in the process of cosmic evolution, no matter how plausible the connections, how closely related the stages when one looks back upon them, maybe a magnificent series of improvisations, in which each emergent element, in its very novelty, may suggest a still further step not even dimly defined at the earlier stages of the process. As the action proceeds, it becomes increasingly significant, gathering meaning and value as a snowball gathers bulk and momentum when it rolls downhill. (Mumford 1951, 69)

The organicist viewpoint suggests that the drive of life seems to follow a path of forward moving although dynamically equilibrated existence, where the meaning of this existence is a product of history. As Mumford suggests, “[humans are] the only creature who does not without effort know what he is. His being is always involved in a becoming” (Mumford 1973, 419). This sense of becoming is a truly human characteristic; said otherwise, becoming is our ability to understand previous meanings and forms of living as well as project and envision the new.

From this viewpoint, a construct organicist human cosmic purpose and development ensues. This being, the continued search for worldly meaning, personal and social growth (the development of the whole person), the connection of humans to the natural world, and the construction of environments that foster these transformations. Mumford states,\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{7} This perspective is not coming from a Spencarian evolutionary perspective, where the advance of life is seen as evolutionarily progressive where each phase of human life reaches higher and more advanced qualities.
On this interpretation, then, man became man by formalizing, ritualizing, symbolizing, dramatizing every natural act he performed; and in time this faculty permitted him to transform his entire environment, bring it closer to his self by giving it the same attributes. (Mumford 1973, 419)

It follows that, humans become human—self-recognized—as they shape and interpret the world around them, creating and documenting meanings, experiences, and know-how; in essence, the never-ending process of cultural construction.

Development, from the organicist view point, is a process that cultivates life and its meaning in a way that allows the human to grow internally—spiritually and culturally.

Mumford clarifies development as,

to foster life, to select higher forms of life, and to project further goals for life’s development—this is the grand human imperative….As a species, man has a moral obligation to be intelligent, as well as an intellectual obligation to further his own moral and esthetic development, (Mumford 1951, 125)

Development then, is a progressive term used to describe the transformative process of an individual’s life towards greater meaning and at the same time seeking understanding of this meaning.

Development as the Process of Finding the “Good”: An Organicist View of Freedom

This organicist view of development is thus a proposition where development is a process of human mental and cultural growth beyond the innate animalistic behaviors upon which human life is founded; beyond the fulfillment of the basic functions of life: food, shelter, and some form of social interaction. Furthermore, human development occurs when these basic needs are understood but in relationship to their capability to serve the growth of higher order human needs; where these needs for example, might be a sense of life purpose, relationship to the whole of existence, and inclusion and participation in the cultural,
economic, and built environment in which humans exist. These higher order needs are fostered in the institutional system that humans have created and passed on. It is the creative process of enriching the institutional structure toward the exploration and development of the internal and external worlds that defines an organicist development; and this is held as the greatest feat humankind could accomplish. Mumford suggests, “The technical feat of escaping from the field of gravitation is trivial compared to man’s escape from the brute unconsciousness of matter and the closed cycle of organic life” (Mumford 1973, 430).

It is with this approach to development—the opening up of thoughts, activities, and experiences that promote a progressive human existence—where an organicist perspective of freedom is realized and where humans are able to direct their lower order functions toward higher order purposes. As Mumford suggests,

the subordinate organs are in harmony with the higher processes...[so that as] the first supplies energy and vitality, feeling and emotion, to all that the mind undertakes, thus enlisting the active aid of the organism...the second makes use of the special capacity for abstraction, symbolization, ordination, vigilant anticipation to bring organism to fuller relation with other men, with the environment, and ultimately with more universal processes. (Mumford 1951, 140)

Here then, freedom is the human ability to recognize ourselves beyond our primal animalistic functions yet be able to integrate these functions toward a higher plane of existence and potentialities. Basically, the organicist freedom is the ability to be part of and engage in human development as has been described. The organicist view of freedom realizes that humans are not born free; they are dependent and unaware, and because of this, our young are taught, trained, and directed from the moment of birth. It is thus the role of humans to facilitate a process of liberation from this animal state towards civility and self-
awareness so that individually humans might reach such potential freedom; clearly, this is no easy task.

With organicist freedom and development, there is an implicit idea of what constitutes “the good” and human morality. Yet it should be recognized again that these ends of development are not absolute or conditioned in any sense. This would be contrary to the axioms of organicism which include fallibilism, dynamic equilibrium, and emergence. The process of human development does not lie on any sense of prefabricated paths or conditions or have some absolute end. While there may be starting points for the path of development and valuation, these are just that, a beginning platform to rest upon; this in no way is the end point. Mumford suggests with respect to “classical” constructs of moral and human development,

even when human conduct is based on sound tradition and guided further by reason, sound choices are not automatic or infallible; nor is there any assurance that good intentions produce good results….The habitual, the traditional, the conservatively moral, are necessary starting points for the proper conduct of life; but they do not in themselves guarantee man’s development. (Mumford 1951, 123)

This is an important recognition for the organicist process of human development, and it also forms the basis for evaluating human activity. It must be recognized that humans need a place to begin the process of evaluation—and given our existence and understanding of life in historical time, we have just that. Yet, for actual development we must be engaged in a process that recognizes social institutions; what is understood today as socially acceptable may not necessarily encourage personal and social development.

In summary, this section has delineated an organicist development and human purpose. Development occurs as humans seek a more integrated whole of existence,
recognizing their role in the universe as well as seeking meaning and understanding of this existence. Humans have a purpose to act as both human and ecological stewards, practicing mutual aid, fostering the natural world and its potentials as well as guiding human lives toward the ability to be self-recognizing, discriminating, and capable of change. These processes are not static or absolute yet can act as more or less universal principles of life, where these principles stem from the belief that life is purposeful and has a forward tendency. It can be asserted that “the obligation to recognize the good to pursue good is absolute. The goods themselves are relative: each has its time, its place, its function, in the economy of the whole” (Mumford 1951, 145). With this process, it is supposed that homo sapiens can truly become human as well as free. With these concepts defined, the next section will delineate the organicist process of development. With this process established, the following chapter regarding the regional economy will be in context.

**The Process of Organicist Human Development**

Organicist development stems from the progressive proposition that humans have a duty to use their intelligence in a way that promotes life—human and non-human. This is based on the idea that as humans have become the dominate source of influence to the animal and natural world—and are well aware of their own consciousness—they have a moral obligation to protect and foster this environment. Clearly, this status of life preserving has not reached the mainstream or is in any sense institutionalized. Yet, this being recognized does not deter an suggestion that it is a needed and an essential role in the life process; allowing humans to reach a higher and more advanced form of associated living as well as continue their own existence.
The organicist process of human development is recognized as one in which self, social, and ecological identification mirrors the process of the typical educative process. In the most general sense, it is an evolutionary process of identification, reflection, destruction, and construction of new behaviors and meanings; it is a process of institutional adjustment. Within this process, there is a role for the individual, but as the individual is always in a social context, there is also a major role for the community and society at large. Furthermore, there is a fundamental role of education in the process—this is because, as previously mentioned, the human is not born free but must learn the ways to be free during their lifetime. The process of organicist human development is one that is based in mutual aid; a concept previously mentioned but for sake of clarity will be further connected in this section.

The organicist philosophy seeks to advance the “whole person”. To advance towards this potentiality, as has been described, individuals must seek self-discovery; they must begin a journey of understanding who they are and how they might have come to be. This process is seen as a way to begin a transformation in society towards a more organic and holistically developed life. Mumford’s organicism purports,

> Without an adequate self-knowledge, without searching exposure, without a consequent positive effort toward self-transformation in person and group, the forces that now threaten to barbarize or exterminate mankind can hardly be overcome. Such knowledge alone can save us from the paralysis of complacent routine, and provide sufficient stimulus to unearth the hidden or unrealized potentials of life—for each one of us is but an embryo self that may one day be brought to birth….All our ceaseless daily efforts to carry forward civilization will fail, unless we re-instate this human goal: for it is toward the making of persons that all these preliminary activities tend. (Mumford 1951, 251)
This initial step in the development process is one which undoubtedly comes at painstaking measures; as during this process, one is reflecting on their own—as well as all of humanity’s—origins, actions, and behaviors. One is considering all the things that are typically taken for granted and seen as simply common occurrences—such as the institutional life that creates synthesis in daily activities—and reflecting upon them. As has been described, humans have made this journey possible through the art of communication and use of symbols—the practice of documenting experience and meanings throughout history. It is recognized that humans live in historical time, and because of this, the process of human development can commence. With the ability to recognize and understand where humans have come from—their changing sense of knowing, doing, and valuing—the individual may begin to withdraw, reflect, and begin to construct meaning in their own life.

As Mumford suggests regarding the hope of this process,

> The effect of self inquisition should enable one to understand oneself and to do justice to oneself: that is, to correct one’s blind drives, to overcome one’s partiality and unconscious distortions, to establish a dynamic equilibrium, to release the latent potentialities which either outside pressures or failures inside kept in check. Self-knowledge is essential to the cultivation of the kind of humility of which affected cooperation and mutual aid are borne: is the antidote to self-righteousness, to excessive self-esteem, to arrogant self-assertion. All this is true for both the individual and the collective self. (Mumford 1951, 251)

Subsequently, after the goal of self-inquisition and self-awareness has been established, the process of revealing one’s personal as well as social institutional life allows for the awareness needed to begin a process of reflection and transformation toward a higher sense of being and living.\(^8\) This initial process, basically, is a withdrawal from established routine;

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\(^8\) Mumford notes that this process is not necessarily a novel one. All classical religions and philosophy have admitted that the way toward human growth is related to some form or
specifically learning the process of constant self-reflection, evaluation, and realignment.

Mumford suggests,

The prime purpose of withdrawal is to define yourself, to establish a fresh starting point. You must answer the questions: What am I and where am I? Why am I doing what I do, and why, despite my many deliberate convictions, do I omit to do so much that I should do? Without the active detachment one must remain only an appendage of the household, office, a school, factory, party, the Guild, the nation. (Mumford 1951, 253)

This process then begins to uncover the multitude of connections that build “the self” and create a sense of being in our established lives. Organicism purports that this is a practice toward the recognition and transformation of human life; again where the human is something more than our animal origins. Mumford states, “plainly, man must come to terms with himself in some fashion, before he can understand the world or transform his own nature, in conformity to ever higher ranges of purpose, ever higher standards value” (Mumford 1951, 67). In short, to become and truly act “human,” we must first seek to identify who and what we are, our individual self, and our place in the whole.

Only those who achieve self-knowledge and are constantly seeking both to enlarge it and apply it in their daily living, are capable of overcoming their automatic reactions and reaching their own ideal limits. Hence the achievement of this wider knowledge is an essential basis for ethical development. (Mumford 1951, 250).

Put simply, to be self and socially aware is, for the organicist philosophy, the mark of a true human being.

another of understanding one’s place by seeking clarity as to one’s self: he suggests, “Thus the Socratic injunction, know yourself, the Aristotelian injunction, realize yourself, the Christian injunction, repent and renew yourself, the Buddhist injunction, renounce yourself, and the Humanist injunction, perfect yourself are each and all partial placental recognitions of the fact that the final goal of human effort is man’s self transformation” (Mumford 1951, 251).
Human Development as a Social Process: A Culture of Growth

Although the organicist process of human development is initially an individual one, the practice is never wholly isolated. As has been suggested in the above axioms, from the organicist position, any idea of radical individualism is seen as strictly mythical. While the individual proceeds with the process of detachment, reflection, transformation, and growth, they will always be in a social context. It is with the group of people that are involved in the process that something of a higher form emerges; the humanly developed group. As this occurs, the organicist philosophy suggests that institutions of mutual aid and education which foster this process will have the ability to be formed. This section will discuss the role of mutual aid and educative institutions and their role in the process of human development. With this section established it will allow for a discussion of participatory democracy in the human community. Lastly an introduction to the concept of a world-wide culture of human development is presented.

Socialization during the organicist human development is a necessary component as it provides the interchange of experience and ideas needed for personal reflection and transformation. The process cannot be one that is taken solely by the individual, as by assumption, they both exist in a social context; it is with this recognition of the human group and community that greatly contributes in this developmental process. Mumford suggests, the human community, as Aristotle observed, is an association of people who need each other. And they need each other for two reasons: spiritually in order to find themselves in the full dimension of the group: practically to take advantage of their differences. (Mumford 1951, 36)

Organicist human development, as has been described, is a personal and social process; whereby, the ability to recognize, disassociate, and transform personal perception as well as
cultural institutions is at the same time an individual and social action. It is with the reality that humans live in historical time and in a diversified social context that we are able to recognize and influence change in our lives.

It is with the socialization that occurs during this developmental process that personal and cultural changes are able to be supported and institutionalized by the group and community. This is of utmost importance for effective individual and social institutional adjustment. To this point Mumford suggests,

in short, if the rebirth begins as an inner private change, it must be confirmed by an outer public one, before the new self can achieve a universal nature, superimposed on the more limited secular culture. Until these processes of incorporation and embodiment have taken place, the new personality will remain uninformed, inoperative, and secular, subject to early extinction. (Mumford 1951, 103)

If this point is not recognized the constraining/conservative forces of culture can be so great that such forces might constantly exert pressure on the individual, limiting the chances for personal growth to occur. The role of group support and mutual aid becomes paramount.

As a point of interest, it is with this recognition—the importance of the group in the process of self-awareness and personal development—that organicism is speaking directly to classical religions and philosophies. Specifically, while the practice of classical religion obviously takes place in a social context, it is up to the individual alone to seek higher states of being. Organicism sees this as dubious, recognizing the massively important role of mutual aid during this developmental process as in all other aspects of life. At the same

9 Consider for example, the capitalist-defined work week and its draining nature on the individual. The inability to find time to engage in such a developmental process is a result of the current economic and social system; likewise, what is valued and done in spare time is also an institutional reality.
time, with respect to classical philosophy, organicism finds collectivism (or the total rejection of the individual) as suspicious. Rather, as has been suggested, there is a role for both the individual and the group to bring about a process of self-awareness and the larger process of institutional adjustment. Mumford states,

The group molds the person and gives him a function in his community, provides him with a role to play, bringing out the possibilities of social man: but the person, when he is absorbed and made over what the community provides, in turn, by his very detachment, gives the group itself the possibility of acting with some of the freedom of the person. Eventually the person must take the group with him on the path of development or perish for lack of support. (Mumford 1951, 124)

Individual and cultural change is an interdependent process. One cannot live independently of the group and expect to gain personal awareness and growth. The person is defined by the group just as the group takes on its own autonomy when compared to other human communities. By participating in, reflecting upon, and seeking clarity, the individual, through the group, is able to realize their own place in existence as well as the role of the group and community in shaping that process. Mumford argues that it is with the recognition of this socialized individual in the process of self-awareness that moral investigation and discovery might emerge. He suggests,

while the person, then, is an emergent from society, it is within society that he lives and functions; and it is for the purpose of sharing values and meanings with other persons that the moral life become something more than a lonely tightrope walk in a private theater….Without that constant support, without the interplay between the person and the group, only a meager and half awakened life as possible…. It is partly in other men’s eyes that one sees one’s true image; it is partly through other men’s example and support that one fathoms one’s own potentialities; and it is toward a purpose that we share increasingly, not merely with our immediate fellows, but with all mankind and with generations still unborn, that we rise as men to our utmost height. (Mumford 1951, 190)
Plainly stated, this process must be a social one. More specifically, from the organicist position, it is our duty as recipients of extra-organic capabilities to do so.

In summary, the organicist process of human development is one that takes place not only from an individual perspective but is supported and is in context of the human group and community of which it is a part. While the person is the center stage of this process, the person is always in a social and cultural context. Given this recognition, the process of individual and social development allows the possibility of a moral discourse that will have meaning for the actual community and group in which it resides. Furthermore, because of the non-absolute nature of this process, this discourse and developmental strife will be evolutionary and ongoing and ease the dilemma of dogmatism. The role of education and mutual aid practices during the educative process becomes paramount to facilitate organicist development.

**Organicist Mutual Aid in Practice**

_Education in the Organicist Development Process_

The role of education is paramount in the organicist process of development. Without supporting institutions that build awareness and develop the tools necessary to engage in such a process, the progression of self-awareness and cultural change faces constraints. This is because the current institutional and cultural setting will be adding feedback that inhibit the possibilities for the time needed to engage in self-development.\(^\text{10}\) It

\(^{10}\) Clearly the current institutional life does not support or recognize the importance of this development process as this is the vision which Mumford is setting out to describe. Mumford is in essence responding to what he sees as a crisis in current culture, where the individual is lost and has little chance to emerge from a dominating economic and social system; one which values monetary value over actual human needs. Mumford, with respect
is with the educational process where the impetus for the development practice occurs; where both children and adults can engage, participate, and cultivate organicist values and culture. As has been suggested, it cannot be with the individual alone that the organicist process of development is undertaken; for such a culture to exist, the whole community at large must participate in and value such a system. This section discusses the role of education in the organicist philosophy as well as the function of the educator in this process. With these sections established, the forthcoming discussions of organicist political life as well as a One World culture will be in context.

As an application of the organicist philosophy, education takes the role of advancing the institutions necessary for the transformation from a society based upon growth, expansion, and monetary value to one that is based in the organism, self-awareness, and realization of actual human needs. This is a movement away from a system that seemingly ignores and devalues life to one that seeks to enrich, protect, and foster it. Mumford suggests,

> the age of expansion was the age of unbalance: unbalanced environments, unbalanced activities, unbalanced men. …we must prepare to modify profoundly our conceptions of both the personality and the community. And this means, in turn, that we must make fundamental changes in our entire educational program. (Mumford 1946, 141)

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to the current institutional setting states, “our present civilization lacks the capacity for self-direction because it is committed itself to mass organizations and has built its structures from the top down, on the principle of all dictatorships and absolutism, rather than from the bottom up: it is deficient in giving orders and compelling obedience and providing one-way communication: but it is in the main still inapt in everything that involves reciprocity, mutual aid, two-way communication, give-and-take” (Mumford 1951, 276).
This reorientation of education is seen as a major key for new generations but also existing; providing the tools necessary to engage in a process of self, political, economic, ecological, and cultural transformation.

Yet, it is not the case that this educative program immediately provides the basis for a new social order; it concurrently must seek to identify the current mode in order to provide the basis for progress. The educational process will mirror and promote organicist-based self-awareness: identification, disassociation, integration, and transformation. As has been suggested, this does not mean a wholesale abandonment of all previous cultural values and institutions, but rather, the preservation of those that contribute to the life process and the disassociation of those that cause mass destruction and disillusionment.\footnote{Recall, that this process is undertaken by communities at large, and there is no absolute set of “best practices” or “best institutions”; the hope is that with a cultural of reflection and development, a process of institutional analysis becomes commonplace, where groups and individuals consider their social environment and seek to better it to the best of their ability.}

Mumford states,

\begin{quote}
Precisely because old objectives still have a delusive hold on our minds, it becomes the duty of education to recast its program, not merely in order to preserve valued elements from the past, not merely in response to dynamic pressures in the present: but also to work out a program in terms of emergent social possibilities, realizable step by step in the future. (Mumford 1946, 145)
\end{quote}

Education in this sense reflects the organicist axioms of an evolutionary social process of development and sees this as necessary for self and social progress to occur.

To effect such a change, in line with the organicist philosophy, education must move away from the independent, compartmentalized, disciplinary practices of life, to a more integrated, holistic, and organismic existence. Education will promote the social individual but more importantly, will have the human at the center stage rather than as an isolated and
passive observer. The educative process must make aware the reality of the human being as the interpreter and influencer of all life; the organism who impacts all other organic life to a degree that cannot be replicated by any other creature. Mumford argues that this change in education means a——

Shift [away] from the belief in a science of dead things, analyzed, isolated, dissected, reduced to a tissue of simple abstractions…. In this new science, a qualitative understanding of pattern, form, configuration, history, is as important as statistical analysis; and in terms of the method that accordingly develops, no situation is fully resolved, no problem is fully explored until it is seized in all its ultimate social relationship to human values and human purposes. (Mumford 1946, 147)

Mumford is suggesting that the educative process must move humans away from an isolated existence; one where individuals see themselves and their actions as wholly separate and non-influential to all other human and non-human organisms. With this philosophy undertaken, the age of educative specialization, from those who become technical or manual workers to those who become thinkers and philosophers will become outdated. It will be

12 While this has been seemingly the goal of a liberal education, the organicist and henceforth regional vision believes that the educative process has not become integrated enough; still producing students who think in an isolated fashion, upholding the goals and missions of the existing capitalist economic system and its curators. Mumford states, “we must understand that [it is with] the capitalist who knows only his markets, the engineer who knows only his machines, the teacher who knows only his books, [that they] are all intellectually crippled people. The fatal weakness of their education and training is that it makes them, incapable of dealing with the real world: they are helpless except dealing with a series of abstractions in which they achieved a minor competence. [Yet] [t]his weakness was no weakness under capitalism. On the contrary, it was rather a condition of success: a lopsided personality was at home in a lopsided environment because it made no inconvenient demands for opportunities that the environment could not supply” (Mumford 1946, 150).

13 This philosophy is also highly reminiscent of the views of Peter Kropotkin. In his Fields, Factories, and Workshops, Kropotkin states, “We maintain that in the interests of both science and industry, as well as of society as a whole, every human being, without distinction of birth, ought to receive such an education as would enable him, or her, to
with the educator and educative administration that this synthesis and application of organicist thought will take place.

Educators obviously have an integral part in the process of education, although they have purposes beyond that of instruction. From the organicist perspective, the educator must at the same time be a student as well as engaged in their own self-developmental process. This is seen as a necessary component as it is recognized that for such an education process to exist, there must be wholesale buy-in from the instructors themselves. They must be a product of an educative system which incorporated an integrated approach to learning; they must at the same time be specialists and generalists. Mumford suggests that this must be a core social responsibility of the educator:

he should understand civilization and his community in all their concrete diversities and unities. It is important that the concept of society and organism should be fundamental to his systematic thought. But it is also important, in this new regime, that the teacher, is the public servant par excellence, should exemplify the social man” (Mumford 1946, 155)

They must practice and have passion for what they instruct, for continuous development of both themselves as well as the educative process in itself. Yet, even with a highly robust

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combine a thorough knowledge of science with a thorough knowledge of handicraft. We fully recognize the necessity of specialization of knowledge, but we maintain that specialization must follow general education, and that general education must be given in science and handicraft alike. To the division of society into brain workers and manual workers we oppose the combination of both kinds of activities; and instead of technical education, which means the maintenance of the present division between brain work and manual work, we advocate the education integral, or complete education, which means the disappearance of that pernicious distinction.” (Kropotkin 1899, 172)
education system, the organicist vision and regionalist life will falter unless there is a community-wide transformation toward greater civic and political participation.

The Role of Civic and Participatory Democracy

Civic participation, just as education, is paramount to the organicist philosophy and to regional vigor. With organicist human development coupled with an organicist-based educational system, the importance of political and civic participation comes to fruition. Civic participation—from the neighborhood to the community to the region and beyond—is the ultimate expression of the socialized individual. The active pursuit of self and community improvement is necessary for the continuous development of cultural and economic institutions. The training and practice of civic participation initially takes place in our education system. This section delineates organicist civic participation as participatory democracy and will further discuss the role of such political activity in the organicist regionalist vision.

Just as in the organicist educational philosophy, civic participation is a necessary component of the organicist regional life, providing a diversity of thought and opinion in order to actively work toward the improvement and progression of human living. This aspect of the vision is necessary to combat the current individualized life which sees participation and public involvement as a chore or extra-curricular activity. As Mumford suggests,

the first thing for us to realize is that the type of social economy we are creating will demand far more constant political activity on the part of the individual citizen. The sole alternative to repressive regimentation, whether by personal despot or by impersonal but equally tyrannical and irresponsible “system,” is steady, and relaxing participation. (Mumford 1946, 160)
This constant participation is thus a reflection of a more socialized individual who seeks not only to understand their self but understands this self in the context of the social whole. Civic participation in this sense is an expression of mutual aid and a more developed human life: behaviors that support the continuity of the life process and seek to eliminate and combat those which destroy it.

To engage in civic participation, a number of activities are suggested. From the organicist perspective, these activities must start early on in life. Activities that promote the maintenance, development, and improvement of the local, social, and ecological community are thought to be ways which will create a sense of responsibility and meaning in one’s community and a sense of stewardship. Mumford suggests,

Through such work, each citizen would not merely become at home in every part of the city and region; he would take over the institutional life of his community as a personal responsibility. In a new discipline for the daily life, then, public work must receive, along with one’s vocation and one’s domestic life, its due share of energy, interest, loving care. (Mumford 1951, 282)

Accordingly with the promotion of one’s environment, the individual is able to promote their own self-development as well as the community’s.

From the organicist position, with a greater sense of inclusion in the community, political interests may also become vivified. This is related to an organicist principle of flourishing human life; diversity of opinion and thought, as well as political spontaneity are valued as components that contribute to a dynamic human experience. For rich human communities, a strong civic work participation as well as a sense that one’s political opinion is important, are necessary values to a more developed and democratic human life. Additionally, Mumford suggests,
Not merely has everyman, ultimately, a claim to be understood and right to be heard: but every shade and variety of belief, opinion, doctrine, must be represented if an issue is to be soundly defined or rationally decided…. Unity by inclusion rather than unity by suppression, extirpation, exclusion, is the principle of democracy” (Mumford 1939, 38)

With a movement toward a greater sense of personal awareness as well as a movement toward the understanding of others and the group, a deeper responsibility to respect others ideas and see them as critical for effective government may result.

Inclusion reveals much of what can be considered the spirit of organicist democracy. Democracy in this sense is much more than simply a system of voting or representation; it is a body of institutions that promote the cooperation and socialization of individuals. Furthermore, from the organicist viewpoint, the concept and practice of democracy—just as in individual personal development—must be fostered and incorporated into the social system as a whole. Arguably then, democratic behavior is possible only when widespread human personal and social development has occurred. Mumford states,

democracy is the substitution of education for rational coercion: this rests not so much upon the institution of schools as upon the search for a common ground in every situation that involves conflict: an effort to substitute intelligence for brute force, law for caprice or prejudice, rational morality for blind mores. Democracy, just because it cannot afford to sacrifice freedom in order to arrive at quick decisions, does not prosper in a crisis: it must take its time. (Mumford 1939, 38)

Democracy in this sense is not possible in a system that is in constant conflict and “last resort” situations and also where propaganda and advertising cannot be denoted from factual information; it must take place in a social system which provides the time and resources
needed to engage in intelligent and respectful debate as well as one that fosters the
development of the human being and the ecological environment.\textsuperscript{14}

From this perspective, the role of local participation, as has been noted, is
paramount. As will be discussed in a forthcoming section, the home-base provides the space
needed to engage in the type of social activities that allow personal development, including
the growth of mutual aid institutions such as social and ecological stewardship. Organicist-
based democratic living is to a large degree one that promotes decentralization of political
and economic activities yet in the context of a global human community. Mumford states in
respect to the importance of local life,

no matter how worldwide and inclusive the province of any association or
institution, whether it be trade union or church or a bank, there must be, at the
central core, an organic form of Association: a group small enough for intimacy and
for personal valuation, so that its members can meet frequently as a body and know
each other well, not as units but as persons: small enough for routine offices and
roles, for direct, face-to-face meeting, for discussion and decision the basis of
intimate understanding: the close loyalties of friendship are needed to tide over all

\textsuperscript{14}This use of democracy is strikingly similar to that of John Dewey and rightly so. As
Mumford was a student of Dewey’s, it is clear in his writing that much translated from one
theorist to the next. While it is the case that Mumford broke away from Dewey’s democratic
program, believing that it provided no answer as to how to act or engage such a social
system or how to promote human development, the basic notion of the system remains. The
introduction of Mumford’s criticism can be found in a chapter entitled \textit{The Pragmatic
Acquiescence} where he argues that Dewey followed more of an idealism found throughout
American literature which promoted technology as an end in itself and which had limited
connection to human needs and behavior (see: (Mumford 1926) . Yet beyond these
differences, strong similarities exist. Both believed that it must be an institutional
adjustment, both at the individual and social level, which would promote the creation of a
more intelligently guided social system. Both viewed human social systems as evolutionary
and malleable, not formed on absolute laws of human nature, but rather on the historical and
emergent result of human interaction, value creation, and institutional education. Lastly,
although many more similarities exist, both theorists see education and civic participation as
the key behaviors which would promote a democratic form of associated living; without
such practices, both feared that the chances for greater human development would be lost.
See: (Dewey 1939); (Dewey 1927); (Dewey); (Dewey 1930).
conflict and internal opposition. All organic communities of a larger stature should, ideally, be formed by the federation of smaller units: any other method is but a provisional and mechanical solution, destructive of the very purpose of Association. (Mumford 1951, 276)

With this remark, it becomes clear how the region becomes a meaningful political unit.

Mumford’s social program envisions a federation of regions world-wide; where organicist human development can be a moral common ground even in the midst of various cultural and social institutions; for these differences only create vibrancy for the human population.

With organicist human development, the educative process, and the role of participatory democracy having been described, the role of the regional survey will now be discussed. The regional survey represents the training ground for all three of these organicist expressions and is a paramount tool for the development of the regionalist social system. With the presentation of this section, it will then be possible to discuss the organicist global perspective.

**The Regional Survey as an Expression of Organic Education and Civic Participation**

In practice, one of the ways the organicist view of education and participatory democracy is fostered is through the regional survey. The regional survey is the exploration of one’s surroundings: the social, historical, biological, geological, and geographic conditions. This survey forms the basis of an organicist education that can promote the stewardship of both ecological and social realities. It is thought that with the understanding of one’s region, a greater appreciation and care of the landscape, its ecological conditions, and the social and cultural conditions that reside in it will occur. This movement toward stewardship, in turn, is thought to increase civic participation as well as personal identity.
and growth in an individual’s life; then allowing for a global consciousness, and as will be discussed, a One World Culture.

The regional survey is a practice that Mumford adopted from Patrick Geddes—an early (late 1800s) environmentally aware sociologist and geographer—who also understood the importance of regional awareness as a precursor to civic and ecological engagement.

Geddes states,

The essential matter for all of us is to become more and more of surveyors ourselves; it is to vivify and rationalize our own experience, which is always so far unique; as well as to compare and co-ordinate our observations and ideas with those of others. As this ever fresh and fascinating interest in our immediate surroundings gains upon our too common apathy, the citizen upon his daily walk and his long familiar streets may gradually or suddenly awaken to a veritable revelation—that of the past and present interest, and the unexhausted possibilities of the everyday social scenes around him, as of their actual or latent beauty also. (Geddes 1972, 282)

Geddes sees surveying of the land and territory as an essential activity of humans within their own environment. Becoming in tune to the world in which one lives invites the surveyor to gain perspective as to what has been accomplished in a particular place and also allows for visions of what could become. In essence, the survey for Geddes represents the path of both personal and social awareness and the development of a place identity. For Geddes just as Mumford’s organicism, this identification of place is evolving and non-absolute; this characteristic contributes to the idea that places, just as the people that inhabit them, are always discovering and becoming. Geddes states,

Our survey, then, is a means towards the realization of our community’s life history. This life-history is not past and done with; it is incorporated with its present activities and character. All these again, plus such fresh influences as may arise or intervene, are determining its opening future. From our survey of facts we have to prepare no mere material record, economic or structural, but to evoke the social personality, changing indeed so far with every generation, yet ever expressing itself in and through these. (Geddes 1972, 262)
In essence, the survey is more than a simple report; it becomes a living document of human and ecological life. It serves as a guide to what have been successful and detrimental human activities; promoting the informed development and hopeful progress of the community and region.

Similarly, Mumford sees the regional survey as the tool that allows the organicist philosophy to be realized and practiced. He suggests,

When the landscape as a whole comes to mean to the community and the individual citizen what the single garden does to the individual lover of flowers, the regional survey will not merely be a mode of assimilating scientific knowledge: it will be a dynamic preparation for further activity. (Mumford 1938, 385)

The regional survey is a tool that aids the process of self and social discovery; the scientific and spiritual mechanism which can integrate private and public life. Just as Geddes described, the survey fosters the exploration and vision of personal and social development. Mumford states,

Once this more realistic type of education becomes universal, instead of being pieced into the more conventional system, we will create a whole generation that will look upon every aspect of the region, the community, and their personal lives as subject to the same processes: exploration, scientific observation, imaginative reconstruction, and finally transformation by art, by technical improvement, and by personal discipline. (Mumford 1938, 385)

Furthermore, the survey is a way to promote social unity as well as practices of mutual aid. With the education about one’s surrounding, and as mentioned, a greater tendency toward social and ecological stewardship, it is thought that individuals will embrace a more civic and humane personality both of their local environment as well as other existing regions, and ultimately other cultures. Mumford believes this to be true:
These people will know in detail where they live and how they live: they will be united by a common feeling for their landscape, their literature and language, their local ways, and out of their own self-respect they will have a sympathetic understanding with other regions and different local peculiarities. They will be actively interested in the form and culture of their locality, which means their community and their own personalities. (Mumford 1938, 386)

In essence, the surveyor becomes part of the survey.

The regional survey is the educational tool for new generations as well as the existing one. As was mentioned, a robust education system would not be enough for the organicist regional vision to come to fruition; it also needs a vigorous sense of political and civic participation and education for all generations. As Mumford suggests, “The task of a regional survey, then, is to educate citizens: to give them the tools of action, to make ready a background for action, and to suggest socially significant tasks to serve as goals for action” (Mumford 1938, 387). Again, it is thought that the survey should be incorporated into both childhood and adult education.

For childhood education, the survey represents the tool that allows the advancement of human development and organicist-defined freedom. It is the way in which students will become students of the world, seeing this world as an organic whole rather than isolated units of observation. Mumford suggests,

regional survey is not something to be added to an already crowded curriculum. It is rather (potentially) the backbone of a drastically revised method of study, in which every aspect of the sciences and the arts is ecologically related from the bottom up, in which they connect directly and constantly in the student’s experience of his region and his community. Regional survey must begin with the infant’s first exploration of his door yard and his neighborhood; and must continue to expand and deepen, at every successive stage of growth, until the student is capable of seeing and experiencing, above all, of relating and integrating and directing the separate parts of his environment, hitherto unnoticed or dispersed. (Mumford 1946, 151)
The survey represents a direct application and tool towards self-discovery as has been described. With the direct observation, but more importantly experience, the student is able to place themselves in the context of the world surrounding them. They become less a passive observer and more a direct interpreter; such a concept is not one that can be understood quickly, and the survey allows such an idea to become accessible. With a similar observation to both Geddes and Mumford, and with respect to a “hands on” education, Kropotkin states, “Through the eyes and the hand to the brain” (Kropotkin, Huxley, and Paul Avrich Collection (Library of Congress) 1955, 175). The organicist values will be made attainable by an educational process whereby one is able to learn about the world in which they live by actively engaging in it.

The regional survey for newer generations is a way for future generations to have the tools as well as personal development necessary to continue a path toward human progress and development. Yet the survey is also important for the existing adult generations and

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15 While Kropotkin is speaking toward an education where students have a more hands-on approach—that is to say learning by doing—the sentiment is no less similar. All three theorists believe that for greater civic and ecological stewardship, education must foster the connection of the self to the whole (natural and social). Furthermore, it is with this type of education that the student will be able to realize the non-absolute nature of the world and envision what it might become. Kropotkin states, “Be it handicraft, science or art, the chief aim of the school is not to make a specialist from a beginner, but to teach him the elements of knowledge and the good methods of work, and, above all, to give him that general inspiration which will induce him, later on, to put in whatever he does a sincere longing for truth, to like what is beautiful, both as to form and contents, to feel the necessity of being a useful unit amidst other human units, and thus to feel his heart at unison with the rest of the community” (Kropotkin 1899, 178).
serves as a tool that promotes self and social development through all stages of life.\textsuperscript{16} Mumford suggests, 

Regional survey carries with it, as part of its method, the habit of thinking interrelatedly and acting cooperatively: it makes the fact of society real…And this in turn breaks down the disabling breach between facts and values, between past conditions and future possibilities… because regional survey is a study of social processes and activities, it leads inevitably to critical re-evaluations, and finally to the formation of policies, plans, and projects that will alter the existing situation. (Mumford 1946, 153)

By its nature, the survey represents an exercise in the organicist process of self-development; the recognition, dissociation, and transformation of the institutional environment. Through the process of discovery, one is able to seek clarity into the institutional environment of which they are a part, allowing access to the historical time in which they live rather than simply continuing as an unconscious or self-unaware participant. Speaking to the social discovery component of the survey Mumford suggests, 

it includes the facts of man’s life and activities as the culminating point in the study of nature itself. The structure of society in the dynamic processes of human history, the world of culture as conditioned by nature and the world of nature as modified by human culture, enter into this final picture. The knowledge of where people live, what they do, how they feel and express themselves, what types of association they form, in what realm their fantasies play, is an integral part of the regional survey: like self-knowledge, like the appraisal and direction of the personality – which is in effect the subjective, individual aspect of the regional survey – \textit{such knowledge must begin at home}. (Mumford 1946, 153)

\textsuperscript{16} Geddes believed that the survey had no age requirement and should be a component of all communities, whereby individuals are able to either directly exploring or through museum-like presentations, gain the knowledge which helps foster regional education. By the same token, Mumford sees the survey as imperative to proper resource and development planning as well as civic participation.
Mumford sees the survey as the starting point of a life-long process of worldly education. By promoting and seeking out a way where humans can become both scientists and philosophers, studying the natural and social worlds, it is thought that such a process, as it is a continuous and expanding activity, will lead to greater human intelligence as well as civil and empathetic behavior. Though the survey is just one step in the process of self and social renewal—advancing from a world that grows institutionally more automatic each day—it represents an important step in such a pursuit. Adding to this point, Mumford suggests,

withdrawal, detachment, simplification, reflection, liberation from automatism – these are all but preliminary steps in the rebuilding of the self and the renewal of the society of which we are apart. These initial acts, and in fact must, be taken by each of us alone: but the purpose of our withdrawal, or fasting and purgation, is to reawaken our appetite for life, to make us keen to discriminate between food and poison and ready to exercise choice. Once we have taken the preparatory steps, we must return to the group and reunite ourselves with those who have been undergoing a like regeneration and are thereby capable of assuming responsibility taking action. (Mumford 1951, 374)

Mumford sees this process as paramount toward a new society in which, as has been stated, the human being and the natural world—as opposed to, for example, technology, nationalism, and pecuniary value—has become the focus and concern for development and progress.

To overcome the possibility of regionally isolated personalities—a sort of regional xenophobia—organicism promotes a One World Culture. Although it is thought that the region is a geographic level that might best suit human development, political engagement, and cultural growth, the organicist philosophy promotes a unification of the human being across all regions, countries, continents, and the world. This last axiom of organicism solidifies the holistic perspective—of humans and nature—and seeks to rectify the problem
associated with nationalistic behavior; this being human and cultural intolerance. The organicist philosophy promotes the human being and the ecological world and is not prejudiced of any particular nation or region. To such a value, a One World Culture is promoted.

A One World Culture: A Regional World Based in Organicist Human Development

The culmination of the organicist philosophy taking place in a global network of regionalist communities allows the possibility of a One World culture. ¹⁷ This cultural shift would be the result of a worldwide pursuit of organicist human development, whereby individuals seek their own personal, social, and ecological awareness. In essence, a One World culture is the personal and social realization of a human race; although separated by cultural and geographic boundaries—a point to be celebrated—humans are of the same species and share more fundamental similarities than differences. Mumford believes that the One World culture is the inevitable outcome of a world dedicated to human progress and with such a transformation, the human race might finally begin the process of creating a more humane, civil, equitable, and ecologically sound life.

The advance of the One World culture is made possible by the creation of a new ideal for mankind. This ideal is one where the whole of life is taken into consideration whereby all resources—physical, spiritual, philosophical—will be used to pursue a higher advance of life. Mumford suggests,

Man’s principal task today is to create a new self, adequate to command the forces that now operate so aimlessly and yet so compulsively. This self will necessarily

¹⁷ In keeping with Mumford’s hopeful vision and use, One World is capitalized to signify it as a proper expression.
take as its province the entire world, known and knowable, and will seek, not to impose a mechanical uniformity, but to bring about an organic unity, based upon the fullest utilization of all the varied resources that both nature and history have revealed to modern man. Such a culture must be nourished, not only by a new vision of the whole, but a new vision of a self capable of understanding and co-operating with the whole. (Mumford 1966, 134)

Such a vision is the result of common minded people seeking the advance of human association and the environment in which such communal activity takes place. This in no way implies a mono-culture. As was stated in the previous quotation, the One World culture seeks to create a state of common ground, whereby the life progressing aspects of human history are utilized to bring all of humanity to a higher order, and importantly, a cooperative plane of living; differing historical and cultural conditions thereby enrich this process, providing a plethora of experience.

The One World culture is an organicist expression of emergence. With the development of such a culture, all existing institutions are modified in relation to the new form of holistic associated living. This is an important distinction, as it recognizes that humans live in historical time and cannot simply start over. Consequently, to achieve such a culture, all of history must be considered, reinterpreted, and evaluated from the vision of the developed human being and world cooperation. This is to say, we must evaluate human history by seeking out the institutions that have contributed to the life process and evaluating those that might deter or produce inhibitors to human development.

This process of cultural emergence is a mirror of the organicist process of personal human development and cannot take place without such a personal transformation. To this point, Mumford suggests,
To be on friendly terms with every part of mankind, one must be on equally friendly terms with every part of oneself; and to do justice to the formative elements in world culture, which give it greater significance and promise than any earlier stage in man’s history, one must nourish the formative elements in the human self. (Mumford 1966, 140)

Before the process of local and ultimately world human development, the process must begin with the individual person.\(^{18}\)

As has been noted in this chapter, the organicist personal transformation occurs for the individual at the local and regional level. The role of localism and regionalism is paramount for both individual human development as well as the pursuit of the One World Culture. It is thought that to become stewards for the world and the human race, we must first become responsible stewards for our local home-base. The development of personal relationships at this level—coupled with an organicist regional philosophy and practice—will foster the type of social relationships that promote mutual aid institutions locally and globally; this applies equally to the world ecological system. Mumford states,

> the more readily we can see the planet as a single unit and move about freely on missions of study or work, the more necessary it is to establish such a home base, such an intimate psychological core, with visible landmarks and cherished personalities. The world will not become a neighborhood, even if every part of it is bound by instant communication and rapid transportation, if the neighborhood itself as an ideal social form is allowed to disappear. (Mumford 1966, 146)

\(^{18}\) Yet as has been discussed, this is in no way a radically individualized process; it is a highly social activity, whereby, through mutual aid behaviors, individuals are able to pursue such an activity. Furthermore, there is no predictability as to what such a culture will look like; cultural transformation as emergent process rectifies such false teleologies.
It is clear that Mumford sees the importance of the local level as a fundamental component of a One World Culture; this socio-geographic level is what helps administer organicist world cosmopolitanism rather than a push toward world metropolitanism.  

Mumford furthers this position arguing,

The relations between world culture and the unified self are reciprocal. The very possibility of achieving a world order by other means than totalitarian enslavement and automatism rests on the plentiful creating of unified personalities, at home with every part of themselves, and so equally at home with the whole family of man, in all its magnificent diversity….Without fostering such self-knowledge, such balance, such creativity, a world culture might easily become a compulsive nightmare. (Mumford 1973, 444)

With the individual and social transformation toward human realization—again the recognition of the human individual as a member of the entire human population and environment—the possibility for a world culture emerges. This conclusion is reached given the assumption that with the personal and institutional adjustment toward a world tribe, clan, family, or incorporation—generally, any cooperative human group—mutual aid institutions

19 Cosmopolitanism is an idea which Mumford formed during his time working with his regionalist colleague, Benton MacKaye. In MacKaye’s work, a One World culture is also expressed and an organicist cosmopolitanism is also shared. He states, “Cosmopolitan does not mean standardized. Quite the reverse. It means adding to the world’s variety rather than detracting therefrom. To borrow foreign ideas which can be adapted to our local or regional environment is one thing; to inflict our own patterns on foreign lands, regardless of their environments, is quite another thing. For us to borrow china tableware from the Chinese or skis from the Norwegians, or for the Indian to borrow the riding-horse from the European, who had got it from the Asiatic—these are cosmopolitan adaptations to the environment which enrich the color of the world by transplanting beauty from one country’s medium into another’s. For us to perpetrate upon the various peoples of the earth, regardless of race, land, or climate, a standard pattern of American pantaloons, or American cigars, or American movies—these are metropolitan intrusions on home environment which pauperize the color of the world by transporting ugliness from the factories of one country to the living quarters of all others. Cosmopolitanism adds to the world’s variety: metropolitanism adds to the world’s monotony.” (MacKaye 1962, 63)
that are present at such a level will become more globally widespread and persistent. Just as the family member takes care of their young—both consciously as well as automatically—so too might the world citizen take care of any other human being.

Mumford believes that this possibility has only recently become fathomable. This is because of recent advances humans have made in terms of understanding the history of earth, society, economy, and psychology. As Mumford suggests, “for the first time in history, man now begins to know his planet as a whole and to respond to all the peoples who inhabit it: that is, he begins to see his own multiple image in a common mirror” (Mumford 1973, 445). This is to say, that because of the technical and educational discoveries that humans have realized, such a transformative process begins to be possible. The ability to share experience, history, understandings, resources, and in general life requirements is now—as compared to all of history—at a high point. Yet, the key for such use of peak communication is not the impetus that drives these discoveries—currently out existing monetary production economy. Rather, it is the unification of these advancements with the human being and a human life that will allow us to seek greater meaning and purpose.

Mumford suggests,

the problem for man today is to use his widening consciousness of natural processes and of his own historic nature to promote his own further growth. Such knowledge must now be turned to fuller uses, the projection of a fresh plan of life in a new image of the self, which shall be capable of rising above man’s present limitations and disabilities. (Mumford 1966, 164).

Plainly said, humans must take control over the parts of their life that they govern if we are to actually utilize the abilities that we have for centuries sought to foster and advance. From
Mumford’s organicist perspective, this is the most important human advancement that can be made; the continuance of the journey of becoming a human being.20

With a One World culture, the possibility for a more balanced human existence is made available. With the recognition of a universal human family, mutual aid behaviors such as the equitable distribution of income and resources would be made priority. A world culture of reciprocity and redistribution would become status quo. With the elimination of institutional prejudices such as nationalism and racism, a sense of communal correspondence with the entire human population could ensue. As will be described in Chapter 4, the world might move from a money economy to a life economy, from a power state to a service state, from resource wars and ruthless ecological destruction to resource preservation and restoration; these transformations represent a movement toward a more human-focused existence and are thought to be the possible realities of the One World culture. As Mumford suggests with respect to the purpose the One World culture,

Its purpose is to provide a means of bringing into relations of reciprocity and willing amity the entire family of man, so that they may share, as never before, not only what they have gained through their historic experience, but what they have still to create through their deliberate intermingling and cultural interchange. Peace would be the byproduct of such an effort, rather than its principal justification. Beyond that lies interchange and utilization of the entire experience of the race, past, present, and potential, so that the whole horizon of life will widen. (Mumford 1966, 141)

Implicitly, the One World culture is the movement away from a profit motivated exploration and territorial conquest. It is an exploration toward a greater human purpose, existence, and continuous development rather than absolute prize. It is recognition that we  

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20 Recall, for Mumford this means a process of realizing the animal nature of the human being while at the same time recognizing the socially created human being; then seeking to advance such a notion toward higher purpose and intelligence.
have the ability to live in a way which we think is the best for us; we are not left to the blind and passive forces of nature alone. Through our extra-organic capabilities, we are able to direct ourselves and communities and ultimately the world toward a life that we all find “fit to live in” (Mumford 1948, 530) and want to continue. As a summary of this chapter, consider Figure 6 describing the organicist-based culture.

Figure 6. Overview of organicist-based culture.

**Summary:** Toward an Organicist Regional Economy
The organicist philosophy has the potential to create a foundation for an institutional adjustment toward a humanist and ecologically sensitive-based society. This is because the organicist philosophy supports a type of existence in which individuals from early in life are driven to become aware of their human and ecological worlds, developing a sense of existence as well as stewardship. With this philosophy established as well as the type of culture that could exist given such an institutional structure, it is possible to discuss the type of economy that would support and facilitate such a life process.

An organicist-based economy would seek to fulfill and promote both the basic as well as higher order needs of human beings. The economy would be a set of institutions that would also help to facilitate the organicist process of human development and cultural progress. Furthermore, the economy would provide the basis needed to support the type of actions required for a culturally vibrant and ecologically healthy world. Rather than be the purpose of existence, the economy would take a role as the support to a richer and more diverse human existence. Chapter 4 discusses such an economy, providing an understanding of the types of social relations that would be characteristic of such a society as well as goals and purpose of economic behavior.
CHAPTER 4

REGIONAL ECONOMICS: PROMOTING AN ECONOMY OF PLENTITUDE

As has been discussed, the power complex embedded in the current megamachine inhibits, and to much degree neglects, higher order human needs—these being non-invidious-based activities and behaviors. This is because such needs are not quantifiable, standardized, able to be automated, and more importantly profitable. This is not to say that these needs could not be met in the type of production methods that are currently used. To be clear, it is rather the reason why production of goods and services occurs and the social relationships that follow which do not promote higher order human needs and wants. Understanding that these relationships are not absolute and are institutional, is where the prospect for a change in this mode of production becomes fathomable. From this process it is hoped that society will move away from a megatechnic power economy to that of a biotechnic life economy.

The promotion of regional economies guided by an organicist philosophy is a vision of a new social order whereby material necessity and abundance can occur, higher order needs and personal development can become possible, and where through a participatory democratic program, the continuous promotion of reflection and revision of the mode of production can take place. To this vision, organicist regional economics is one in which the an economy of plentitude is promoted.
The Life Economy: An Economy of Plentitude

At the core of regional organicist thinking is envisioning an economy that generates and meets material needs (both necessity and luxury); adequately provides for higher human needs (e.g., social and political interaction, personal development, sense of worth, and ability to create); and where individuals in communities are able to build, modify, and maintain the system. Just as technological development seemingly has no end, so too can the social system that supports such innovation. Believing that the paleotechnic capitalist economy has reached its limits in terms of its ability to adequately and reasonably utilize technics to provide for human welfare, the regional economy serves as an answer and purportedly logical solution to the shortcomings of a monetary production economy.

To begin the analysis of regional economics, this section considers a vision of an economy that is not based solely in the pursuit of monetary gain, but rather, in the context of an organicist philosophy, is one that promotes meaningful and satisfying employment, decentralized (localized) production and consumption of goods, and the collective ownership of capital. It is one that recognizes the importance of ecological sustainability. Rather than seeking to produce monetary value supported by mass consumption and results in mass waste, the life economy—or an economy of plentitude—seeks to create and pursue human development and wellbeing in balance with the ecological conditions that support it.

Regional economics, guided by organicist thinking, is in the most general sense a response to classical political economy and neoclassical economics that isolates the individual and mechanizes their behavior. This classical thinking relies on individual behavior, providing mechanistic results and expectations given varying stimulus. In
contrast, organicist regional economics overcomes the limitations of such atomistic thinking, recognizing interdependencies between the natural, social, economic, and political worlds. As has been previously stated, although adding to this point, Mumford advises,

Today, instead of such a series of parallel systems, the world has conceptually become a single system: if it still cannot be unified in a single formula, it is even less conceivable without positing an underlying order that threads through all its manifestations. (Mumford 1934, 369)

This realization is necessary as the things that cannot be quantified or calculated, routinized and fit into formulas, might in fact be of utmost importance when considering our economic and social system. From organicist regional economics, we need to consider economic, social, and ecological realities together and in the context of interrelationships. As well, we must consider the intangible parts, such as value systems, as integral to our understanding and analysis of social phenomena.¹

Recognizing these interrelations, organicist regional economics, as the name implies, will be of an organic nature. Organic in this context is a reference to the life process as a whole. Furthermore, an organic economics, additionally includes a progressive bent toward processes that further life as well as develop it. This analysis includes a methodological axiom that all our data is social in nature and our theory and analysis should represent these facts. Mumford states,

One begins with life; and one knows life, not as a fact in the raw, but only as one is conscious of human society and uses the tools and instruments society has developed through history—words, symbols, grammar, logic, in short, the whole technique of communication and funded experience.² (Mumford 1934, 370)

¹ It is not that this has not occurred in the discipline, but the mainstream, atomistic approach still dominates economic thinking and social science more generally.
Considering the life process in the context of total environment—including the social, economic, and ecological worlds—will be of utmost importance for an economy that puts human welfare and development and ecological balance at its core purpose.

With this attention to the whole person in the total environment, organicist regional economics will, as mentioned, be inherently progressive in purpose by including a vision of how and what the economy should represent to human beings. Generally, the normative proposition is that an economy and its processes should promote human and ecological life rather than destroy and waste it. Furthermore, our methods and modes of production should be promoting the fulfillment and development of the human and ecological environment, as will be discussed, following a biotechnic mode of production. As Mumford suggests, the focus our economics and understanding of economy and society “must be, not upon speed and immediate practical conquest, but upon exhaustiveness, inter-relationship, and integration” (Mumford 1934, 379). Our prescriptions of economy and society should be from the perspective of a conservation of energy, advancements of technical and organic processes, and development of personal, social, and environmental interconnections. This is a suggestion that we formulate a body of thought that seeks to consider the total environment, whereby social and ecological processes are seen as connected, and our approach to economic and social policy reflects such knowledge. As Patrick Geddes suggests in connection to a political economy formulated on such ground, “Place, work, and folk—environment, function, and organism—are thus no longer viewed apart, but as the

2 This is very much in accordance with original institutionalist thought associated with Thorstein Veblen, John Dewey, John Commons, and later Clarence Ayers.
elements of a single process—that of healthy life for the community and the individual” (Geddes 1972, 202). This type of thinking formulates the basis for an organicist-based regional economics.

As has been briefly mentioned, at the core of organicist regional economics is an economy of plentitude. An economy of plentitude surpasses an economy of mass production, consumption, and waste. This is because, plentitude, once taken out of capitalist monetary production-based economic context, can have an implication of satisfaction of needs and wants at a level, that in fact, recognizes the woes of consumerism. As Mumford suggests,

Under a regime of plentitude abundance is permissive, not compulsive: it allows for extravagant expenditures to satisfy man’s higher need for knowledge, beauty, or love…while it may exact the severest economy for less worthy purposes. Emerson’s advice, to save on the low levels and spend on the high ones, lies at the very core of this conception. (Mumford 1970, 402)

Recognizing that man has developed the technical ability to mass produce, the economy of plentitude is calling out the dilemma that we now currently face; the ability of the community at large to be involved in the planning, production, and distribution of goods and services. This inability directly stems from the core of the power economy; the insistent search for pecuniary profit and continuity of the social power structure.

Embedded in an economy of plentitude—as well as the life economy—is the revision of the capitalist-defined profit. Recognizing that the power economy’s sole purpose and highest value is that of pecuniary gain reveals that the capitalist system inherently undervalues true human development—in terms of creative and emotional activities that cannot be monetarily calculated as well as the ecological conditions that support it.
Furthermore, until this motivation is circumvented, technics will continue to be utilized in a way that undermines human potential and creativity as well as the ecological and social communities in which it is based. To this Mumford states,

Any program sufficient to reverse the destructive success of technological affluence will demand not merely drastic restrictions; it will demand economic and social changes directed toward producing goods and services, modes of work and education and recreation, profoundly different from those offered by the power complex. (Mumford 1970, 413)

Particularly, any plan or change in social order, away from our current system of production and distribution, will need to have a fundamental shift in its core purpose; away from production and distribution solely for pecuniary profits. This by no means implies a complete overhaul of economic and social life, but rather a shift in the perspective and purpose of our current ways and means of production and distribution. This in turn means, “in pursuing the daily routine, and even more the whole life course, no one interest will be considered sufficiently cultivated unless it is accompanied by an awareness of the other interests and activities needed to maintain psychological and ecological balance” (Mumford 1970, 405). This is a call for the motivation of production to be one that is based in the actual needs of both the social (including economic elements) and ecological environment. As was briefly mentioned, this will entail a shift toward a biotechnic method and mode of production.

From Megatechnics to Biotechnics

Organicist regional economics is one that seeks a mode of production characterized by biotechnics. This is where production is guided by the whole of the human being as well as the ecological system in which it placed. In Mumford’s words, biotechnics is a technics
based on the culture of life. This is in line with the organicist philosophy that seeks a
reorientation of society toward institutional structures which support the promotion of
cooperative and mutual aid-based practices in economic, ecological, and social life.
Biotechnics in essence would engage and seek balance of the technological and tool-using
world with that of the human and ecological.

The components of a biotechnic mode of production are the same as those that all
other human societies have faced: conversion, production, consumption, and creation. The
difference in this form of technics is that, rather than have this system be utilized to
primarily serve the initial functions of the process—conversion, production, and
consumption, that currently promotes the power complex—these processes will be used to
aid the organicist development and support the “final” step of creation. In comparison,
within a megatechnic system, creation (in the sense of higher levels of thought and culture)
is largely undervalued and when present is focused mainly on the conversion process; for
example, engineering and other activities which facilitate and expand the material
production process. In contrast, biotechnics rectifies this neglect with a promotion of the use
of production and consumption for the purpose of higher order human creation (culture, arts,
self-development, and political expression, ecological conservation and preservation).

In biotechnic production, each component of the provisioning process is refocused
and put in context of its total environment, both ecological and human. While conversion in
a monetary production economy (capitalist mode of production) views the ecological world

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3 It should be noted that final in this sense does not mean an end to the process. Just as all
other organic processes, this process is repeating; there is a means-end continuum rather
than means and ends absolute.
as a source of input to the production process—only what has been identified as a resource is valuable—biotechnics takes a “web of life” perspective. This is where the ecological world is seen as a system; each component contributes to the next, and where humans are ultimately dependent upon the continuation of such processes. For clarity, recall a quote that was mentioned in Chapter 3 in the section outlining the organicist philosophy, “every living creature is part of the general web of life: only as life exists in all its processes and realities, from the action of the bacteria upward, can any particular unit of it continue to exist” (Mumford 1938, 302). Man’s own existence and conversion ability depends upon the continued functioning of the ecological system; on its ability to convert energy for reproduction.

With this understanding, the practice of resource extraction—without consideration of the larger ecological process in which the resource is found—would be put into question as a valuable activity. From this perspective, resources are put in context to their total environment as well as their contribution to the life process as a whole; i.e., the entire ecological system from micro-bacteria to the largest tree is of equal importance, and this valuation must be considered as humans interact with the ecological system. With an organicist spirit of ecological stewardship, biotechnic conversion will move from a excessive and myopic resource extraction and exploitation to that of sensitive use, restoration, and maintenance. Ultimately this will reflect a change in world perspective from nature as a commodity to promotion of nature as the source of life.

On similar lines is biotechnic production. Whereas the megamachine mentality focused on technics that contributed to the pecuniary success of the system, biotechnic
production promotes production as an activity that provides not only material outputs, but does so with activities that are meaningful and contributive to human life while remaining ecologically sustainable. Biotechnic production will seek to refocus the business enterprise and its activities around the human being rather than the organizational success as defined by current and expected pecuniary profitability.

With this transformation in this process, a defining characteristic of biotechnic production is the use and purpose of the machine. Whereas megatechnics seeks and institutionalizes the need for growth and speed of the production process through technical refining, specialization, and automation—in order to reduce costs and improve profitability—biotechnic production seeks a “manual override” of the system, rethinking the machine production process along organicist principles. To clarify, Mumford states,

Under the power complex the purely quantitative concept of unlimited abundance, not merely material but symbolic abundance, has served as the guiding principle. As opposed to this, an organic system directs itself to qualitative richness, amplitude, spaciousness, free from quantitative pressure and crowding, since self-regulation, self-correction, and self-propulsion are as much an integral property of organisms as nutrition, reproduction, growth, and repair….Balance, wholeness, completeness, continuous interplay between the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective aspects of existence are identifying characteristics of the organic model. (Mumford 1970, 395)

Consequently, the role of the machine—in terms of a model of the system as a whole as well as actual machines in the life process—will be reconsidered in terms of human fulfillment. In such a case, the megamachine will be abolished, as both the view and practice of human beings as inputs to the production process runs contrary to an organicist philosophy. Subsequently, the production process will be reorganized around a principle that work/labor should not only be the process that yields material requirements but also is capable of
enriching the life process. As Mumford suggests, technics should be concerned with
“creating human beings capable of understanding their own nature sufficiently to control,
and when necessary to suppress, the forces and mechanisms that they have brought into
existence” (Mumford 1970, 187). Expressively, humans must rethink and regain control
over the processes and tools which are used to satisfy life conditions. This does not imply
that we need to abolish the machine and its use and aid in our civilization, but we must not
become machines ourselves—automatons that have lost the ability to discern, evaluate, and
reorganize the system we have created. Mumford with a fearful voice suggests,

   At all events, the most serious threat of...automation comes, not so much from the
displacement of the worker in the process of manufacture, as in the displacement of
the human mind and the insidious undermining of confidence in its ability to make
individual judgments that run contrary to the system—or that proceed outside the
system. (Mumford 1970, 192)

Under biotechnics, the machine will be brought in line to aid the organicist human
development; allowing for the time and resources that foster education, personal growth,
and political participation that a “human being” requires. 4 Mumford states with some
degree of concern but also jest,

   The point is that the machine is not a substitute for the person; it is, when properly
conceived, an extension of the rational and operative parts of the personality, and it
must not wantonly trespass on areas that do not belong to it. If you fall in love with
your machine there is something wrong with your love-life. If you worship a
machine there is something wrong with your religion. (Mumford 1964, 81)

4 Recall that Mumford sees “human” as a concept that must be realized. We are all homo
sapiens; becoming human is the result of a social process whereby we recognize our animal
selves as well as our social heritage that makes up our personal and social consciousness.
From this viewpoint then, we must reconsider all the ways and means by which we maintain and develop human life; seeking to refocus these activities toward the growth, development, and maintenance of the human and the ecological environments in which we live.

To this degree, the system of extraction and production must be understood by not only the users but also by the community at large. Additionally, there must be a localization of the process so that a humanization of such processes might commence. This will allow the system to be governed and constructed around the actual human condition.

To develop biotechnic resource extraction and production, a movement towards localization of such processes becomes a more important consideration. In support of this idea is that individuals and their communities are better able to manage and be an active participant in economic and resource planning activities. This not only fosters ecological sustainability but also contributes to the organicist process of human development.

Regional communities who have engaged in the organicist process of education—including the regional survey—are considered to be in the best position to use and maintain a balance within the extraction and production process; this is so given the idea that through the educative process, members of the community will learn to be stewards of the environment taking a stakeholder position to maintain the ecological and social environment in which they live.\(^5\) With a hopeful and organicist spirit, Mumford states,

\(^5\) Although it should be noted and as has already been mentioned, regionalism does not mean an absolute localization; it is recognized that interdependencies and interactions with other regional entities is needed as differing regions have different resources and capabilities. The point is that each region is in a better position to manage their environment than, for example, foreign entities who located for cost reducing motives.
A local supply of fresh vegetables and fruits in every season will presently become the mark of biotechnic agriculture: for with the spread of electrical energy and the contraction of the agricultural acreage there is no reason why the major part of the supply should not come from the local region. (Mumford 1938, 342)

With such a vision, a basic proposition of biotechnic production asserts that “big is not necessarily better.” Centralization for efficiency’s sake—as will be discussed in a following section regarding a revision of profit—may not actually be providing savings or added benefit when the ecological and social environments are considered. There may be greater value—for people and the regional ecology—when local communities manage the resource base and focus on regional and local production of goods and services. Given that Mumford lived at a time when technological change (specifically, the electrical grid) enabled decentralized production, he argued,

bigger no longer automatically means better: flexibility of the power unit, closer adaptation of means to ends, nicer timing of operation, are the new marks of efficient industry. So far as concentration may remain, it is largely a phenomenon of the market, rather than of technics: promoted by astute financiers who see in the large organization an easier mechanism for their manipulations of credit, for their inflation of capital values, for their monopolistic controls. (Mumford 1934, 226)

Localization and decentralization of the extraction and production process are key aspects of biotechnics. Given this localization, consumption will then be expected to be a more meaningful event and a movement away from the “throw away economy.” Biotechnics, by its nature is conservation-minded and seeks to eliminate production and extraction waste, which has become a mainstay in a capitalist mode of production.

With biotechnic production, biotechnic consumption becomes a meaningful concept. The use of resources and end products no longer represents the bare inputs that are required for the extraction and production process. Furthermore, as we consume, we will be mindful
of the source and process which took place to make consumption possible; correspondingly, consumption can also be a component of the organicist human development process. Humans will be able to reflect upon the process as well as their role in the existence of the thing that they are utilizing. As a result, a commodity—an output that is created to be sold—becomes less meaningful; what is created is not simply to be used to be sold and consumed but also contributes to higher order human development, providing the energy needed to undertake activities that enrich human life. Biotechnic production, as was mentioned, seeks to “reboot” the system so that creation becomes of greater significance in the economic system.

Creation from this standpoint is differentiated from production. Biotechnic production allows for the possibility of organicist-minded creation. Creation represents those activities which foster the process of human development for the individual as well as the community, region, nation, and world. These are activities which have both tangible and intangible outputs; they may result in physical monuments as well as visions and dreams of the future; both are seen as productive activities. Mumford argues,

> literature, music, religion, those artful byproducts of man’s subjective life, are no less integral part of man’s existence than the natural world and the ingenious instruments he has devised for mastery. In other words, the dream is no mere mechanism of escape, but the foundation of man’s own specific mode of life: a life that emerges in that person out of the stolid animal limitations as compulsive social controls. (Mumford 1951, 54)

Basically, creation in this sense is the ability and freedom to have access and to use the produce of the economic process to be able to grow, develop, think about, and act toward, one’s personal and social surrounding. Additionally, while these events may help develop the process of biotechnic extraction, production, and consumption, they may serve other
purposes; fulfilling social and political needs and artistic and cultural needs, as well as
building and maintaining the social relationships which both current and future generations
may be able to use. As a result, biotechnic creation develops a social produce where all of
these activities enlarge and diversify the scope of human experience. Accordingly, where
production might in some sense yield private ends, creation must be understood as
producing social goods. Furthermore, this helps to establish the link between biotechnics
and organicism as the promotion of social goods in order to promote individual and social
development.

In summary, biotechnics is a mode of production which puts the human being before
the produce which it results. It helps to develop a social system which seeks a greater
energetic output than that which it takes to produce. Biotechnics goes beyond a balance
between social and ecological systems, it seeks to add back in the economic process,
conserving as well as protecting the environment in which it is based. To practice a
biotechnic mode of production will require a change and redefinition of a number of social
relations which would inhibit its working; these are things like the capitalist-based property,
profits, labor, and the role of the government. These will be discussed in the following
sections of this chapter.

**Property in an Organicist Regionalist Economy**

A main component of the regionalist economic vision is the practice of a communal
ownership of resources. This is seen as a necessary component of economic life, as it is
thought that private ownership of resources causes a misallocation of their use and
furthermore a use which does not promote and respect ecological life. This section will
elaborate the need, advantage, and importance of communal ownership and the role it plays in the organicist vision.

To begin, Mumford recognizes that private ownership of resources (where land is divided, bought and sold) is for the most part a characteristic of a capitalist social order and a recent human institutional development. From the organicist perspective, this institution, which facilitates the power complex, has already outlived its welcome. This perspective declares the communal assets should be seen as culturally and functionally superior to those that are private. Mumford suggests, “the most valuable forms of property are communal ones, and the system as a whole, with its great surpluses of power and goods, is unworkable unless every member of the community can participate in its benefits” (Mumford 1946, 144). With the previous discussion of the deficiency of the profit motive and the need for a reorientation of the mode of production, it becomes clear that a movement toward communal property accompanies a reworking of such definitions. With communal ownership, the community itself defines the purpose of resources as well as their use and subsequently their protection and maintenance. The role of organicist democratic and mutual aid institutions becomes paramount.

As the regionalist position declares that improving actual life conditions of both the earth and the people that reside in it is of utmost importance, institutions which prohibit these goals should be evaluated and eliminated. Private ownership of land—coupled with the idea that “people have come lightly to believe that land may be bought and sold, divided up, monopolized, and speculated in like any other commodity” (Mumford 1938, 329)—does not recognize the importance of the region and landscape as a whole. Mumford suggests
with respect to land use, “What is important in a sound scheme of land utilization is not individual ownership but security of tenure: this is what makes possible continuity of use, encourages permanent improvements, permits long range investment of effort” (Mumford 1938, 327). Public ownership, by its nature, has the capability to promote long term use and tenure of the land.

This perspective of ownership is fundamentally arguing against the acceptance that the pursuit of private ends will lead to social optimality of resource use. With pure private ownership, social and ecological purposes can remain persistently deficient. From an organicist perspective, this inhibits the type of human and ecological associations needed to promote a more developed human community, both locally and globally. Consequently, local and widespread governance of property is paramount for effective resource use as well as social development.

With an organicist philosophy embraced, as well as the communal ownership of land coupled with the redefinition of profit (as will be discussed), the community as a whole will be able to reap the full advantage of land use and resource extraction while at the same time promoting its continued use in the long term. Given the reality that investment in monetary production economies for the most part only occurs with the expectation of pecuniary profits, communal ownership has the capability to promote social investments as needed and those for which the community has an actual need. Mumford suggests,

By owning the land, the community will dispense with the economically inert (that is privileged or piratical) role of the private landlord: it will then be able to collect in the form of rent all those values that derive directly from social organization. Since regional communities are more permanent bodies than individual families or business organizations, they can undertake improvements of the land that the individual cannot wait for or hope to profit by. (Mumford 1938, 328)
With communal ownership, investment in the community promotes the long-term social gain, as compared to short-term focus of the profit-seeking individual. Again, organicist/biotechnic/regional economics seeks to eliminate the myth that private interests always understand, promote, and provide for the actual needs of the community, ecology, and future generations.

As long as individual ownership is regarded as sacred, the most important needs of the community may be balked, and its most vital plans may be mangled: nothing can be done, even under the law of eminent domain, without more or less paying the landlord’s price. (Mumford 1938, 328)

Communal ownership of resources has the potential to provide a greater responsibility with respect to resource use as well as social and ecological investments.

Communal ownership is simply another expression of what might be called basic communism; characterized by the socialization of the means of production as well as the socialization of its produce. Mumford suggests,

the claim to a livelihood rests upon the fact that, like the child in a family, one is a member of a community: the energy, the technical knowledge, the social heritage of a community belongs equally to every member of it, since in the large the individual contributions and differences are completely insignificant.6 (Mumford 1934, 403)

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6 In Veblenian terms, this is a process of a socialization of the joint stock of knowledge. Furthermore, Mumford makes a point that this use of communism is post-Marxist, suggesting, “communism, as used here, does not imply the particular nineteenth century ideology, the messianic absolutism, and the narrowly militaristic tactics to which the official communist parties usually cling, nor does it imply a slavish imitation of the political methods and social institutions of Soviet Russia, however admirable soviet courage and discipline may be” (Mumford 1934, 403).
Arguably, basic communism seeks to eliminate the 1850s marginalist myth of wages being tied to marginal pecuniary contribution.⁷

Basic communism does not imply in any sense absolute control or a power state. Communism in this sense is simply a push towards a more communal economic and social spirit rather than radical individualism. Additionally, communism simply implies the “obligation to share in the work of the community up to the amount required to furnish the basis, does not mean the complete enclosure of every process and the complete satisfaction of every want in the system of planned production” (Mumford 1934, 405). Basic communism, communal ownership of resources, and finally the planned use of resources seeks to accomplish the normalization of production and consumption—to levels which stabilize employment and resource extraction as well as take advantage of labor and time saving technological advancements.

**Reimagining Profits: Organicist Accounting**

With socialized production and basic communism, the capitalist-based profit can be reoriented toward organicist principles. While production for pecuniary profits seemingly appears highly productive—in terms of the conversion of material into saleable output, technological change, as well as pecuniary capital accumulation—from an organicist viewpoint, capitalist production tends to produce societal and ecological losses. This is so, given that profits as we understand them in contemporary capitalism are defined according to goals of the power economy; simply put, the gains that we purportedly observe are

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⁷In neoclassical economics, labor is paid their marginal contribution to the production process. This is how wage and income inequality is justified.
relative to the values which are contained within the capitalist motives. For example, monetary gain (both expected and nominal) is highly valued as it is the proxy for status and power. Similarly, technological change—the other great capitalist symbol of progress—while needed to expand production, sales, and revenue as well as the means to communicate and convince consumer benefit, at the most basic level is employed for the accumulation of capital. Mumford purports that these goals have become more an obsession than motives which actually enrich human life. Reflecting upon Thoreau at Walden Pond, he states

people are so eager to get the ostentatious “necessaries” of a civil life that they lose the opportunity to profit by civilization itself: while their physical wants are complicated, their lives, culturally, are not enriched in proportion, but are rather pauperized and bleached. (Mumford 1926, 53)

Mumford suggests that these rather shallow gains and feats are only realized given a lack of more advanced evaluative methods which are able to critique and provide context to these supposed developments and successes.⁸ This is because contemporary business accountancy is not held accountable for cultural and ecological influence and furthermore, society increasingly lacks the ability to judge progress other than in terms of monetary and material growth.

Organicist regional economics in the economy of plentitude suggests that, if profit accountancy were calculated with what might be called “life” requirements and had a

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⁸ Mumford traces out this phenomenon whereby during the industrial revolution, a lack of attention was paid to evaluative measures which could ascertain whether the gains of the productive process were actually bettering human life. He attributes things such as mal-distribution of income, poor ecological conditions, and lack of human happiness not simply to the mismanagement or the individual greed of the capitalist system but rather the philosophy and values of the system as a whole. Simply put, these theorists did not believe that it was their purpose to consider such things.
critical method capable of evaluating perceived gains and benefits accruing from production and service industries, the business enterprise would be seen in a much more realistic light in terms of actual social, cultural, and material gains produced by their energy expenditure. Furthermore, Mumford suggests in an essay written to the future educators regarding his contemporary state of the economy and envisioned path, that, “In terms of production for profit, of goods produced for the individual random consumer, we are over expanded and overbuilt. Today, expansion can take place only by raising the standard of living” (Mumford 1946, 138). Respectively, our contemporary understanding of profits, as Marx would suggest, is largely fictitious values, or as Veblen would suggest, putative earnings. From the organicist perspective, true “profit” can only be realized when increases in the quality of life as a whole occurs; i.e. beyond simply material conditions.

With this reorientation of profit, investment will take on a new character. Capital investment, which under a monetary production economy would only be undertaken given expected pecuniary gain, would now be carried out based on the expected and planned return of social goods. “This means, in turn, a shift in capital investments from industries promising a high profit to industries promising a better fulfillment of social need” (Mumford 1945, 170). On this basis, profit and capital might still be useful words, but only when put in the context of organicist principles. Profit would be defined as the accumulation

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9 Note: This quote, in context, regards the reorientation of economic life away from the unrelenting pursuit of monetary growth which characterized periods of industrial revolution. The organicist viewpoint recognizes the destructive nature of such expansion both ecologically and culturally and seeks to reorient human activity towards life sustaining and life enriching activities.
of social goods and services as well as maintenance and restoration of the ecological environment. Profit implies a real output beyond the initial value of the used resources. To this end, capital accumulation would mean the increase in social goods and services that will aid the process of human development and continuance of the life process. As Mumford eloquently distinguishes,

The permanent gain that emerges from the whole economic process is the relatively non-material elements in culture—the social heritage itself, in the arts and sciences, in the traditions and processes of technology, or directly in life itself, in those real enrichments that come from the free exploitation of organic energy in thought and action and emotional experience, in play and adventure and drama and personal development—gains that last through memory and communication beyond the immediate moment in which they are enjoyed. In short, as John Ruskin put it, *There is no Wealth but Life*; and what we call wealth is in fact wealth only when it is a sign of potential or actual vitality. An economic process that did not produce this margin for leisure, enjoyment, absorption, creative activity, communication and transmission would completely lack human meaning and reference. (Mumford 1934, 377)

With a transition away from a system described by a mode of production driven by profits, to a system that seeks to increase the quantity and quality of social goods, we might actually as a human society produce “real” productive gains; productive in terms of both material output, but more importantly, the use of such output to facilitate human development, cultural growth, and ecological sustainability. Mumford suggests, “Once the objective of industry is diverted from profit-making, private aggrandizement, crude exploitation, the unavoidable monotonies and restrictions will take a subordinate place, for the reason that the process will be humanized as a whole” (Mumford 1934, 412). While the details of this accountancy have yet to be worked out, the organicist vision is clear: we must reorient our productive process away from a fictitious value economy toward that of the
economy of life; where satisfying real human needs and development becomes the objective.\textsuperscript{10}

**Labor in a Biotechnic Regional Economy**

Given the bent towards a humane and ecologically sensitive economy, labor follows a similar perspective. A central concept for a regional economy is the importance of human labor as a means of fulfilling higher order human needs. In capitalist production, labor is viewed as an input or commodity to the productive process. In the context of a machine economy and even within a service economy, labor is seen as merely a secondary consideration to the product or services productive process. This becomes more obvious when one considers an industry where technological change has profitably allowed for a reduction in physical labor for a more capital intensive process. Within a regional economy, this “alienation” of work is rectified. Labor will be in the context of fulfilling human creativity, socialization, and personal and cultural development.

As has been mentioned, the machine in a megatechnic economy is not utilized as a labor saving device in the purest sense of the meaning; rather, it is used as a labor cost saving device. This by no means implies that labor will be rewarded with legitimate leisure time or that labor will be channeled towards more fulfilling projects, forms of creativity, or cultural development. Speaking to industrial times past—although the sentiment is no less powerful—Mumford states,

\textsuperscript{10} While this may seem fanciful or impossible, Mumford points out that “To fancy that such a non-profit system is an impossibility is to forget that for thousands of years the mass of mankind knew no other system” (Mumford 1934, 412).
thus the shorter working day promised by this system is already turning into a cheat….The effect, ironically, is to turn the newly won six- or seven-hour day to twelve or fourteen hours; so in effect, the worker is back where he started, with more material goods than ever before, but with less time to enjoy them or the promised leisure. (Mumford 1970, 329)

Even today, the rewards of machine life have not been synchronized with society so as to allow for the benefit of use. Rather, both the machine and labor continue to be utilized in a way that furthers pecuniary reward for capital owners, allowing for mass production and consumption, but at a cost of extreme waste and cultural and individual aimlessness. As Mumford suggests,

megatechnics, so far from having solved the problem of scarcity, has only presented it in a new form even more difficult of solution. Result: a serious deficiency of life, directly stemming from unusable and unendurable abundance. But the scarcity remains: admittedly not of any machine-fabricated material goods or of mechanical services, but of anything that suggests the possibility of a richer personal development based upon other values than productivity, speed, power, prestige, pecuniary profit. (Mumford 1970, 337)

It is not technics alone that has caused technical unemployment. It is rather the power system itself that utilizes technics, causing a lack of work and human fulfillment within labor. With this understanding, the regional economy suggests a system of production that continues to utilize technics as well as human labor, but reorients the purpose, output, and systems of evaluation associated with the business enterprise. To this point Mumford suggests,

Under an organic economy that sought the advantages of plentitude, more and more of the automatic functions would be restored to conscious control, decentralized, and brought back often for the first time, under the full sway of the whole personality

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11Want to reference discussion of technical unemployment….it is rather the power system values which cause this issue. Furthermore, it is not simply the production side, labor unremittently gives up and accepts the values furthering the systems premise as a whole.
enforced by a culture no longer confined either to a petrified past or a deliquescent here and now. (Mumford 1970, 400)

Within the organic economy of plentitude, labor reinforces the human spirit and purpose.

These latter ideas thus represent the backbone of what would be considered regionalist labor. To clarify, regional labor might be understood as an expansion of Veblen’s instinct of workmanship. While Veblen seemed to be more concerned with how the institutional environment of his day had come to be, organicist-based regionalism adds a normative element to the discussion. Veblen believed that humans have an instinct towards doing good work, where “good” and “work” become defined by the institutional environment. Mumford’s regionalism accepts this position and pushes for an economy whereby this human tendency can be fully realized as well as understood and evaluated; this could include broader social and economic goals which seek to shape the institutional environment.

The regional economy pushes for labor and employment opportunities that allow for more than pecuniary reward and are structured in a way that promotes higher order human needs—for example, where humans can develop cultural outputs such as art and literature, connect with the natural environment such as in local food production, or allow for participatory political work. In Veblenian terms, the regional economy realizes the instinct of workmanship and seeks to create opportunities to fulfill it while at the same time promoting the development of the community and natural environment. As a result, employment allows for labor to be fulfilled in a non-invidious and non-predatory way.

To accomplish this, a fundamental concept related to the regional economy is the ability to diversify type of work. The regional economy allows for a division of labor but
seeks to promote the ability to experience various types of employment. Put simply, given modern technics, there is no need for strict labor specialization; the ability to become masters of many crafts and trades can be efficiently pursued. Furthermore, as suggested by Kropotkin, varied work is more in line with the natural human state of mind and promotes a higher quality of life. This would be a more complete utilization of the technics that humans have so painstakingly advanced. As Mumford suggests, we must utilize the potential that has been created by the technics that our economy has utilized, although,

> the leisure now available is waiting to be filled not just with sport and television, and tourism. The happy alternative open to us is for more varied forms of work, private and public. Such work will be increasingly voluntary and gratuitous, without the meretricious incentives of money or publicity. (Mumford 1970, 407)

The regional economy is one that sees employment and work as more than a way to gain access to the provisioning process; it is the opportunity to structure and develop the provisioning process and the system of values that constitute it. At the same time, employment serves a fundamental purpose in the fulfillment of the organicist human development. Moreover, employment provides a mechanism to engage in and recognize one’s self in their ecological and social surroundings.

As was suggested, diversified employment opportunities is a fundamental component of the regional economy. Having the ability to seek out numerous types of labor is understood to be more in line with actual human needs. It is thought that there is no need for deep specialization in an age of technics that has the ability to mass produce the needs of life. Furthermore, it is also thought that specialized work is an unnatural human quality perpetuated by a classical capitalistic economic logic. As Kropotkin suggests,
Humanity perceives that there is no advantage for the community in riveting a human being for all his life to a given spot, in a workshop or a mine; no gain in depriving him of such work as would bring him into free intercourse with nature, make of him a conscious part of the grand whole, a partner in the highest enjoyments of science and art, of free work and creation. (Kropotkin 1899, 25)

Similarly, from a Mumfordian perspective, we are submitting to the megamachine mentality when we continue to employ and promote specialized mechanistic labor—believing that this leads to efficiency and productivity—in an age of gross abundance and great technological capability.

In an era of advanced technics, there is no need for mindless work, and if it is argued that these types of jobs are needed for the products that are created from them, it is time that we re-evaluate the actual need of such outputs. The economic and technological conditions that resulted from the massive expansion of technological capability suggest that the need has diminished to specialize [(employment)] at an early age, [and] achieve quick eminence in a narrow field, [seeking] to enlarge the individual’s income and a sense of power over his rivals. (Mumford 1946, 149)

Clearly, extreme labor specialization is a value and practice associated with industrial capitalism. While this institution played a part in expanding the economic system—as part of the technics and method of production—the promotion and practice of deep labor specialization in contemporary society, from the organicist position, should be seen as a deficiency in terms of the overall life conditions in which it results.

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12 As has been suggested in an early section, “All these goods remain valuable only if more important human concerns are not overlooked or eradicated” (Mumford 1970, 333). It is assumed that given a reorientation of motives away from profit towards the more complete human and ecological environment, this type of evaluation will be more commonplace.
Furthermore, from Kropotkin, it is understood that there exists a progressive economic component of regional life; employments that allow for “outside” work should be encouraged. Kropotkin is addressing the local production of food that will be consumed by the people whose labor generated it. Yet, the local production can also be applied to manufactured goods. As Kropotkin suggests, “Each region will become its own producer and its own consumer of manufactured goods. But that unavoidably implies that, at the same time, it will be its own producer and consumer of agricultural produce” (Kropotkin 1899, 40). It should be noted that this does not mean complete self-sufficiency. Regions are understood to be interdependent, both in terms of ecology and culture. Decentralization and the advocacy for local production of food and goods simply implies a greater push towards local production for local consumption.13 This is in line with a idea that regional economies guided by a spirit of organicism will promote the cultivation of life rather than conquest. Local production of goods and services coupled with varied employment in this process, allows humans to develop a greater sense of purpose and connection to their immediate

13 Mumford addresses this issue: “Economic regionalism does not aim at complete self-sufficiency: even under the most primitive conditions no region has ever been economically self-sufficient in all respects. On the other hand, economic regionalism does aim at combating the evil of over-specialization: since whatever the temporary commercial advantages of such specialization it tends to impoverish the cultural life of a region and, by placing all its eggs in one basket, to make precarious ultimately its economic existence. Just as every region has a potential balance of animal life and vegetation, so it has a potential social balance between industry and agriculture, between cities and farms, between built up spaces and open spaces. A region entirely specialized for a single resource, or covered from boundary line to boundary line by a solid area of houses and streets, is a defective environment, no matter how well its trade may temporarily flourish. Economic regionalism is necessary to provide for a varied social life, as well as to provide a balanced economy” (Mumford 1934, 388).
world, and eventually a sense of respect for other regions. Mumford suggests to this
component of the regionalist vision,

    The watchword for the new age is not conquest but cultivation: not more power but
more life, and only so much power as directly serves life. We must turn from the
wisdom of the machines, contrived for specialized tasks, to the wisdom of the
body…the wisdom of the living organism, prepared to establish its own inner
equilibrium in an environment that itself must be kept in balance if every creature in
the partnership is to achieve its optimum share of life. (Mumford 1946, 141)

Varied work in the regional economy thus represents a more civilized existence; one where
humans work to establish a more human-based and developed sense of life and purpose, all
while positively contributing to both the social and ecological environments.

    Along these lines comes the idea of how the social body as a whole will contribute to
regional life. Mumford identifies that in the movement towards a biotechnic mode of
production in regional society, the governing body will be redefined to support human
development rather than control it. From the Mumfordian perspective, this is known as the
service state.

    **The Organicist System of Economic Governance: The Service State**

    The culminating institutional structure that supports a regional organicist-based
economy is that of a service state. The service state represents the activities performed by a
government that help foster and promote the needs and resources for a vibrant regional
economy and society. Mumford makes clear that the service state is not necessarily a new
concept but has received less focus and attention given the institutional structures related to
a power economy. The point to be made in this section is that with the eventual dissolution
of the power economy and megamachine mentality, the advancement toward a service state
will be an obviously needed component for a regional system. This section will delineate the service state, discuss its importance to an organicist development process, and describe why a service state is needed for a successful organicist-based regionalist economy.

The service state represents a movement away from what Mumford refers to as the power state. The power state is in the most general terms the nation state. Mumford purports that the national state has become an entity in itself and furthermore becomes an impediment for local communities to have an active political voice and the ability to develop their communities on their own terms. Mumford suggests that the national state creates an identity that is fundamentally different from that of the actual constituents it purports to represent, and it serves needs and interests which are vastly different from what the actual population might need to thrive. Mumford states, “All the great national states, and the empires formed around a national core, are at bottom war states: their politics is war-politics; and the all absorbing preoccupation of its governing classes lies in collective preparation for armed assault” (Mumford 1938, 349). As the national state becomes an overwhelming—and conservative—identity of the population as a whole, Mumford argues that the organic development of regional communities becomes lost in the strongholds of nationalist agendas and institutions. To clarify,

[N]ationalism is an attempt to make the laws and customs and beliefs of a single region or city do duty for the varied expressions of a multitude of other regions. To the extent that such a unity does not grow out of spontaneous allegiances and natural affiliations it must constantly be held together by deliberate effort: indoctrination in the school, propaganda in the press, restrictive laws, extirpation of rival dialects and languages, either by mockery or mandate, suppression of the customs and privileges of minorities. (Mumford 1938, 348)
Mumford suggests that with the strong institutionalization of the national spirit, the national identity which develops becomes a limiting factor to the organic process of community development and regional awareness; and furthermore the development of the One World Culture. This is because the state is too large an entity for individuals to develop a meaningful identity and too small an entity—in terms of cultural, individual, and economic needs—to form a basis for personal, local, and social organicist development.

On one hand the state, as at present organized, tends to obliterate the intimacy of primary communities, organized on a basis of active daily association and face-to-face intercourse. And on the other hand, it often viciously obstructs the organization and control of activities on a continental and finally a worldwide scale. (Mumford 1938, 353)

Yet, all this dismay aside, organicist regionalism represents a positive force against such possible paths of human association. From Mumford’s perspective, the deep seated institutions of cooperation and mutual aid are always at work to try to balance institutions that are endemic to the human and ecological environment. Mumford believes that this recognition of the power state is the first step in the advancement toward a more organicist-based society and furthermore toward a service state. “It is highly important to recognize the basic regional and economic realities that have been ignored by the mythology of the national state” (Mumford 1938, 354). With this awareness, regionalism purports a dissolution and limitation of the power/national state to that of a service state and the regionalization of the country.

As regional awareness and the organicist process of human development become more commonplace, the development of the service state will be an accompanying movement. As has been only briefly described, the service state represents the progressive
contributions of government in order to support the economic, social, and ecological environment. To this understanding, Mumford suggests,

What we have to conceive and work out is a federal system of government which shall be based upon a progressive integration of region with region, of province with province, of continent with continent: each part loose enough and flexible enough to adjust to the continuing changes in local and trans-regional life” (Mumford 1938, 354)

In consequence, the service state will not represent in any sense a governmental relic but rather a new development in human political culture.

The service state will grow out of the power state and ultimately outweigh and inhibit the growth of power politics. The state, in Mumford’s view, is not associated with historical precedent of authoritative power. He suggests that the service state represents “the outcome of the effort, through democratic pressure to reappor tion the existing balance of power within the ‘nation,’ to equalize the privileges of different regions and groups, and to distribute the benefits of human culture” (Mumford 1938, 364). The service state can be understood as a collection of mutual aid institutions and to this designation then, “the service state, to perform its services effectually, must accept these realities of communal life at full value” (Mumford 1938, 365). The service state grows out of the process of participatory democracy, which is a part of the process of organicist human development.

With respect to governmental power, given the organicist philosophy, the size of each governmental unit will not necessarily determine its relative strength; each unit is just as important. With almost uncanny foresight, Mumford suggests that with the advancement of instantaneous communication and the growing sense of interconnectivity between all
human settlements, the sense of entitlement and power that had previously been associated with larger urban forms will become less important.

Authority under the emerging regime of political relativity is a matter of functional competence, not a matter of mere bulk or spatial advantage: neither size, position, nor physical power—nor a monopoly of all these qualities—by itself determines the importance of a city or a community. For cultural individualities are incommensurable. (Mumford 1938, 355)

The service state will not only be aware of regional identities but serve the task of supporting them as a political unit given the relative advantages of which a larger and more interconnected organization structure is capable. With respect to this governmental organization,

Our main problem is to constitute the service state so that it can operate, not as the arbitrary ruler and dictator of regional life, but as the willing agent of life in all those functions which transcend the immediate limits of local control and regulation. (Mumford 1938, 365)

While Mumford does not elaborate further on the details of such a governmental unit, he does so in his idea that these processes must be not defined by any one individual or minority power.

These institutional structures will occur as the result of local initiatives and actions that will then form the basis of a larger societal process of democratic behavior. Moreover, there is no sense that any outcome will somehow immediately be optimal or absolute; this would be contrary to the organicist spirit of continuous development. What can be suggested with a bit more confidence is the growing importance of such a political unit, the dissolution of the power state, and the focus toward a more humanly defined governmental organization. The service state fosters an organicist regional economy and society acting in the interest of the collection of regional entities rather than a competing or authoritative
unity. From the Mumfordian perspective, the role of the government should not solely be to protect its own interests as an independent state but represent and support the collective needs of local and regional communities. Lastly, with the development of a One World Culture, and a growing sense of cooperation and respect for all human communities, Mumford envisions a more civil, ecologically sustainable, and culturally diverse human population. Consider Figure 7 for a summary of this chapter.

*Figure 7. An overview of an organicist regional economy.*
CHAPTER 5

PATHS AND CONNECTIONS: SYNTHESIZING ORGANICIST REGIONALISM AND ECOLOGICAL ECONOMICS

Introduction

With Chapter 4’s delineation of a vision of organicist-based regionalism, the next step in the visionary process is to find paths or routes which might facilitate the vision. To accomplish such a task, this chapter reconnects the organicist regionalist vision to ecological economics, looking within the literature to explore existing research that fits within the lines of Mumford’s vision. In taking this approach, it is hoped that the authors of the found research—when presented with their research in the context of organicist-based regionalism—might then follow up with a response; thereby facilitating the visionary method of participatory discussion. As a secondary goal of this chapter, it is hoped that a larger conversation of regionalism might ensue within ecological economics and bridge the “regional” ecological economists with the more methodologically visionary-minded ecological economists.

As a brief summary, this chapter finds that there are multiple routes and discussions that are highly related and applicable to organicist-based regionalism. Topics in these routes and discussions include: (a) an economics of community and sustainability with connections to eco-stewardship and participatory democracy—these areas seek to redefine the study and practice of economics to be in line with sustainability in the economy, society, and ecology.
of the human life; (b) eco-localism and eco-tourism—discussing the importance of the local production and distribution of goods as well as eco-based recreation to reduce waste and promote cultural development; and (c) the promotion of sustainable cities—discussing the importance of envisioning urban communities that facilitate sustainable futures. In discussing these topics and relating them to this dissertation, this chapter seeks to create cohesion among these topics under an umbrella of organicist-based regionalism. This then helps to develop a viable visionary path toward organicist regionalism.

Connecting Methods: Toward an Economics of Discursive Sustainable Communities

An Economics of Community

As was briefly noted in Chapter 1, Costanza, Daly, and Cobb, among others, have sought to engage ecological economists with the task of envisioning sustainability. In doing so, they have also sought to re-envision the discipline of economics as well as the democratic process in order to facilitate sustainable living. In Chapter 3, these discussions were found to be highly compatible with a philosophy of organicism in terms of human development and politics. As a way to bring the philosophy of organicism as a methodological consideration to ecological economists, in this chapter, a discussion of an economics of sustainability and communities, stewardship, and discursive politics is presented and then connected to organicism.

Farley and Costanza (2002) point out, “economics has been defined as the science of allocation of scarce resources towards alternative ends. This definition implies that the first

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1 (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989; Prugh, Costanza, and Daly 2000; Costanza et al. 1996)
step in economic analysis is to determine what ends are desirable for society” (Farley and Costanza 2002, 245). With ecological economics’ visionary approach and an accepted goal of sustainability, numerous ecological economists delineate actions that promote local sustainable communities. This is very similar to the organicist proposition of disciplinary and educative reflection and restructuring.

At a most basic level of this discussion is Daly, Cobb, and Cobb’s (1989) “economics of community”. Contrasted to neoclassical economic market-based conceptions, they perceive the market as an “excellent instrument for certain functions, especially the allocation of resources…[but they] also find it dangerous….The [real concern is the] management of the community so as to increase his value to all members over the long-run” (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 158). In this sense, economics for community is an approach to the study and application of an eco-social science.

In essence, these authors have a vision in which a process of institutional adjustment has altered the current ideological state of affairs; a world where community welfare has become just as important as at the individual level. They suggest, “the unity we want in our towns, states, and nations is not merely a legal and contractual one. Such arrangements belong to the pattern of external relations that allows people to keep one another at distance, indifferent one another’s fate” (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 170). Economics of community seeks “maximization” of community utility as well as an individual’s utility, in comparison to neoclassical economics, which focuses solely on the individual. According to Daly, Cobb and Cobb, what is equally important for the new model—and absent in the traditional one—is a recognition that the well-being of the community as a whole is constitutive of each
person’s welfare. This is because each human being is constituted by relationships to others, and this pattern of relationships is at least as important as the possession of commodities. These relationships cannot be exchanged in a market….Hence this model of person-in-community calls not only for provision of goods and services to individuals, but also for an economic order that supports the pattern of personal relationships that make up the community. (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 164)

Furthermore, it is from this radical change in perception of social and environmental relations that Daly and Cobb envision a transformation in our understanding and connection to nature so that we might begin to “view human relations with other living things in the context of a community of communities” (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 203). With this “systems thinking,” humans might then be able to expand their thought process in terms of evolutionary and interdependent existence.

Daly and Cobb, in their 1994 For the Common Good, articulate with great detail the need for a trans-generational and ecological worldview; specifically with a methodological commitment to “oikonomia” rather than “chrematistics.” They explain,

Oikonomia differs from chrematistics in three ways. First, it takes the long run rather than the short run view. Second, it considers costs and benefits to the whole community, not just of the parties to the transaction. Third, it focuses on concrete use value and limited accumulation there, rather than on abstract exchange value and its impetus towards unlimited accumulation. (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 159)

Consequently, under this approach, both current and future communities are given value and consideration, and the unit of analysis goes beyond specifically individual transactions.

Given this distinction, when applied to economics, it is understood that “oikonomia views the market from the perspective of the total needs of the community” (Daly, Cobb, and Cobb 1989, 158). As ecological sustainability is inherently concerned with future living, the commitment to oikonomia must be embraced for any ecologically sustainable vision to occur.
With oikonomia embraced, sustainability community economics could be practiced. In his 2002 *Economics, Ecology-Based Communities, and Sustainability*, Gerald Walter promotes such a sustainability economics. The visionary connection between the latter theorists mentioned above is notably apparent. For Walter, sustainability economics implies “the study of the use of resources for the achievement of an ongoing high quality of life, individual and social, within a context of co-stewardship of natural and human communities” (Walter 2002, 84). Similar to the previously noted authors, Walter envisions a theoretical approach in which the radical individual is absent and in which individuals are able to perceive themselves in the context of a social-environmental context; as stewards to the community.

For Walter, this stewardship implies “concern and action regarding the justice, healthiness and continuance of communities” (Walter 2002, 84). This is where communities are,

> group[s] of people living together and having interests, work, etc. in common and/or a group of animals or plants living together in that same environment…[as well,] the term community does not involve some fixed concept of life, but rather commitment, adaptation and evolution in order to maintain shared interest in the face of environmental change. (Walter 2002, 82)

In essence, Walter is helping to define the “community individual” who perceives themselves in the context of a world community (including all living and non-living things and processes). At the same time, Walter is pointing out the role of the human being given this perception; to obtain knowledge and the know-how to act in the interest of this world community. There is a purported vision that humans would act as stewards for “mother nature.”
Stewardship-based Economics

Similarly, Christophe Barrett extended this sustainability and stewardship-based economics in his 1996 article, “Fairness, Stewardship, and Sustainable Development.” Here Barrett delineates stewardship as implying “both the right to enjoy the fruits of creation and an injunction against destruction or disposal [i.e.]…use beyond [a] resource’s regeneration rate” (Barrett 1996, 11-12). Furthermore, Barrett’s discussion of stewardship comes from another viewpoint; not necessarily as a methodological commitment but rather as a way to confront both intra-generational and inter-generational equity. Barrett is envisioning a sustainable world where the current distribution of the natural world is both contemporarily fair as well as sustainable for future generations. Barrett seeks to develop a stewardship vision in which a criterion of both sustainability and fairness are included. He suggests that stewardship must imply “that the rightful ‘owner’ of resources must be able to exercise control over the distribution of usufructure rights and the enforcement of stewardship responsibilities” (Barrett 1996, 16). It follows that stewardship for Barrett is defined as economic coordination problem and as such represents an impediment to sustainability-based institutional adjustments. Barrett makes this clear by suggesting “stewardship for nature cannot proceed in the absence of stewardship for our fellow humans, both are imperative if we are to seek a fair and efficient world” (Barrett 1996, 17).

As a possible expression of these concepts of a community and sustainability-based economics as well as stewardship, Farley and Costanza (2002) envision a world that would exist under such conditions. They imagine a world in 2100 in which individuals will accept that they are part of society and recognize that it is unfair to impose costs on society for private gain. Further, ever-increasing consumption will no longer be
considered an integral component of human needs as it is today. People will pay attention to their other needs and desires, such as joy, beauty, protection, affection, participation, creativity, freedom, leisure, identity and understanding. Building strong community can help us meet those needs, while working ever harder to pay for more consumption deprives us of the time and energy required to fulfill them. (Farley and Costanza 2002, 248)

With the development of such a community—where the individual becomes radically and ecologically socialized—comes the possibility for an institutional change in policy and decision making processes.

**Discursive Ethics and Participatory Democracy**

In such a radically social environment comes the prospect for larger inclusion of stakeholders, including not only the relatively disadvantaged but also the ecological environment. To address this inclusion, Meppem (2000) delineates the discursive community. In this discursive community, he describes that decision making must not only be from the standpoint of professionals and experts but community wide; including all “members” of the ecological environment in some capacity. To argue why this decision making process is needed, Meppem discusses why contemporary methods of planning—for example, in terms of sustainability—are insufficient for the realization of sustainability visions. He states,

> there are a number of important issues that render sustainable development as being particularly unsuited to exclusively rational planning approaches: (1) the lack of a clearly defined goal for strategy; (2) the value base nature of defining strategy goals; and (3) diverse and unclear stakeholder interests, in terms of power, representation and organization. (Meppem 2000, 49)

Realizations of sustainable community visions will require institutional adjustment at numerous levels of participation, both individually and culturally. Meppem’s discursive community is a vision that seeks to facilitate this problem and similar to that of community
economics, seeks to create a community where all members (human, animal, and ecological) are represented and interactive (in some capacity). He states,

The strength of the discursive community is in establishing relational connections…. The bringing together of diverse stakeholders is not sufficient for the discursive community. Participants are not only together alongside, but are allowing the ability to be affected by not privileging some knowledges. (Meppem 2000, 54)

Meppem is illustrating the need for a planning process that not only has a goal of participation but is also socially dynamic.

Implicitly, this involves a process of evaluating the existing community culture. This is to say that culture must be addressed in the existing policy making framework. Meppem is pointing out that we must understand not only where we want to go, but also where we are now. To push for a sustainable community, we must first understand what we mean by community; in other words, we must seek to understand the “how do I know what I know issue…This allows for the problematising of knowledge or ‘different ways of knowing’” (Meppem 2000, 53). By examining the value system of the decision-making process, Meppem argues that we may reformulate the process of policy making and at the same time reformulate the institutional structure in which it exists. Meppem envisions an approach to visionary analysis in which the community not only seeks to establish the future environment in which they want to live, but in the process seeks to define and redefine the institutional structure that will allow the vision to be enacted.

From a similar perspective, in an earlier 1996 article, Sabine O’Hara describes the role of discursive ethics as a methodological approach to community decision making. From

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2 Meppem’s argument is one similar to that of an evolutionary institutional economist. For example, Marc Tool’s *The Discretionary Economy* (1979).
O’Hara’s point of view, to solve complicated issues so that all community members feel represented—such as in issues of ecological sustainability, community well-being, and in general issues of associated living—we need an approach which begets “the mutual recognition and acceptance of others as responsible subjects” (O’Hara 1996, 94).

Community members must methodologically commit to the belief that, “There is no longer only one life world admitted, one conceptual framework shaping the valuation process, but multiple ones” (O’Hara 1996, 102). Thus, implicitly O’Hara recognizes the importance of multiple visions as a means to providing open dialog in the decision making processes.

Moreover, contributing to the methodological standpoint of discursive ethical vision, O’Hara—as Meppem would later distinguish—

views reason as inseparably linked to and informed by the human experience of a social, cultural, and ecological life world which constitutes the context of human experience. This life world context includes the bio-physical world, albeit expressed in the human voices of discourse participants. (O’Hara 1996, 96).

This important consideration puts the human being as a community member in an environmental context. We must not only speak about the human community but also become representatives of the eco-community.

Along these lines, Sybille van den Hove’s (2000) Participatory Approaches to Policy Making provides a justification for such a participatory and inclusionary policy as compared to a more traditional top-down governance structure. Proposing that sustainable development is in essence a precautionary response to the growing awareness of environmental issues, she states,

More and more, sustainable development is presented as the sensible response to the increasingly worrying situation of our planet’s environment and natural resources…Many justifications for such calls for participatory approaches to
environmental problems relate to the characteristics of environmental issues. Environmental phenomena frequently present four major physical characteristics: complexity, uncertainty, large temporal and spatial scales, and irreversibility. (van den Hove 2000, 458)

Although the ability to influence eco-environmental issues can be unpredictable and highly variable, an identifiable social-institutional framework can be utilized to develop routes of action that have an intended and positive impact on such issues.

Van den Hove suggests, “All of these physical characteristics of environmental processes have consequences for what we call the social characteristics of environmental issues. In turn, these physical and social characteristics determine the type of problem solving processes needed to tackle with environmental issues” (van den Hove 2000, 459); what humans can address is the social nature of the eco-environmental issues. “These complex, dynamic aspects of…[ecological] problems suggest that we are facing problem-solving situations that need to be comprehended as dynamic processes of capacity building, aiming at innovative answers” (van den Hove 2000, 461). We need an approach that can encourage broad thinking for broad and complex issues.

To address this complexity, van den Hove envisions a process in which multiple actors—stakeholders—interested parties—come together and take part in a process of deliberation. She states,

it appears that the problem solving processes we need to confront environmental issues should be built as dynamic processes of capacity-building, aiming at innovative, flexible and adjustable answers; allowing for progressive integration of information as it becomes available, and of different value judgment logics; while involving various actors from different backgrounds and levels. Additionally, these processes should allow going beyond traditional politics and coordination across different more democratic practices. (van den Hove 2000, 462)
Similar to Meppem (2000) and many of the other theorists described above, van den Hove identifies that there cannot exist too much information in the identification and implementation of eco-sustainable policy. Moreover, a participatory procedure can facilitate this process, aiding in both the identification of problem, stakeholders, vision of solution, as well as provide instant social feedback.

Furthermore, as human institutions are clearly related to value systems, decision making requires

The participation of a wide range of concerned actors in the problem solving process, because it confers a higher legitimacy content to the decisions taken and because it allows for the taking into account of different knowledge, values, and logics, likely to permit the design of more preventive and pro-active approaches than more traditional processes of problem solving. Additionally, because many problems are of a totally new kind, one can imagine that an open process is more likely to engender an innovative type of answer. (van den Hove 2000, 463)

Thus, van den Hove provides arguments for the use of participatory democracy in terms of its ability to create a more community wide policy involvement.

Similarly, Santos et al. (2006) in their Stakeholder Participation in the Design of Environmental Policy Mixes, elaborate on the aspect of community stakeholder involvement and representation. Arguing from the perspective of overall policy effectiveness, Santos et al. argue that the use of participatory methods in the early stages of policy formation could alleviate negative externalities as well as community buy in. They state,

Participation in the development of public policies is seen as a way to gain the support of stakeholders: the more they feel that they have a voice in decisions affecting them, the more likely that they will comply with the new requirements. It is recognized that cooperation is better than conflict and that cooperative efforts produce superior solutions to problems. Moreover, public participation can also contribute to build social capital, strengthen civil society and enhance the capability of communities to solve problems and pursue common concerns. (Santos et al. 2006, 101)
Santos et al. provide further justification that cooperative methods for environmental policy seem to create a supportive setting for eco-sustainable institutional adjustment.

These authors argue that the use of greater community participation aids not only in a wider stakeholder representation but also individual and overall social learning that contributes to policy buy-in. Furthermore, there could also be gains from the governmental side of policy formation. For example, community participation can aid in policy construction, whereby non-governmental individuals inform and argue their concerns for particular issues. This may result in government policy that is based more on local concerns rather than on special interests. Furthermore, local community members may gain local activist skills that can aid in the diversification of opinion for future policy decisions.

Yet, Santos et al. do not naively suggest that there will not be costs from such participatory methods. This process is time consuming, has greater monetary costs, may not result in actual community preferences, and might backfire in terms of community trust in their local government, resulting in loss of power from both sides (government and community members). While these results are hypothetical, there is merit in envisioning possible outcomes—both positive and negative—in the pursuit of an institutional change in policy formation. Yet, even with negative results, the very use of participatory methods may contribute to community learning regarding environmental issues as well as the policy making process.

In *Public Participation for Sustainability and Social Learning*, Garmendia and Stagl (2010) speak directly to this latter point; social learning. With the understanding that ecological and social issues command more than natural scientific knowledge, these authors
explore the process of social learning as a key to understanding social and natural 
environmental interactions. Garmendia and Stagl propose that this would work most 
effectively under democratic participatory schemes. They state,

> Advances in our understanding of how natural and social systems interact along 
spatial and temporal scales need to be substantiated by democratic mechanisms 
which can deal with inherent problems of continuous change, uncertainty and 
multiple legitimate perspectives of the systems...When facts are uncertain, values in 
dispute, stakes are high and decisions urgent, scientists can provide useful input only 
by interacting with the rest of society...Making decisions about complex 
socioecological issues is then a process, where the actors involved are continuously 
learning from each other and where social learning becomes a key governance 
process. (Garmendia and Stagl 2010, 1712)

Garmendia and Stagl seek a scenario based in a vision of a community-wide process of 
learning and informing.

In essence, this vision is a system of social deliberation, similar to that of the 
classical pragmatists of the early 20th century.3 From this position, these authors argue that 
“behavior is then rational, if it is the outcome of appropriate deliberation and therefore 
rationality depends on the quality of the process that it generates” (Garmendia and Stagl 
2010, 1712). Under this designation, it is suggested that “[d]eliberative approaches that 
enhance collective learning processes among a diverse group of social actors, with different 
types of knowledge and perspectives, are thus central in the creation of new responses to 
threats for socio-ecological systems” (Garmendia and Stagl 2010, 1712). Garmendia and 
Stagl are fundamentally speaking to the methodological construction of the participatory

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3 As discussed by John Dewey. See: John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: 
H. Holt and Company, 1927). Here, public issues are described to be of a value/moral 
system, and through a process of social deliberation, a more democratic solution may result. 
This was seen as a way to ensure both individual and social intelligence rather than rely on 
*outdated* or irrelevant social institutions and practices.
process that could be involved in eco-sustainable policy formation. Yet, unlike other authors mentioned in this section, the stress for community learning proves to have more weight. It is not simply the results of stakeholder representation that is being addressed, it is the process of institutional adjustment—the change in cultural and normative systems of law and beliefs—that is seen as the way in which ecological-sustainability could occur.

Building an Economics of Sustainable Organicist-based Regional Communities: Discussion

The discussion of economics of community, stewardship, discursive ethics and participatory democratic processes is a substantial contribution to the development of organicist regional sustainable development. It brings the conversation of organicist social goals and human development, “down to earth” by creating a contemporarily-based platform found within the ecological economics discipline. At the same time, there is much to be gained to these research topics by connecting them to organicist-based regionalism; creating a more coherent and informed discussion of how regions should be defined, what a “regionalism” might be, as well as why humans should seek out and develop regionally defined communities.

Furthermore, these topics outline the type of community thinking that could result—but also be necessary for—the transition toward an organicist-based regional sustainability. As was discussed above, the communities envisioned would be much more than the common perception of “green”. These communities would seek a form of associated living where the individual could become radically socialized as well as have the time to understand their place in the larger ecological system. This type of living is thus envisioned
to be a community in which an individual’s patterns of consumption, production, and the public sphere would support and reinforce such a type of human and ecological association.

As was described in Chapter 3 with a discussion of organicism, development, and organicist-based politics, it is clear that there is a definite compatibility between the ecological economists presented above and organicist-based regionalism. Although, to elaborate, what organicism as a philosophy can additionally bring is a further support and unification of why these topics of an economics of community and sustainability, stewardship, as well as discursive participatory politics are important. These topics help advance an organicist-based society, where human association, creativity and cultural development, as well as ecological stewardship become of relatively greater importance than monetary production.

Moreover, implicit to these topics is that the current institutional environment is not yet characteristic or capable of supporting sustainable living. As was discussed in Chapter 2, our current mode of production, characterized by a power complex, has an institutional stronghold in place that constrains major economic and social change. Furthermore, as was discussed in this chapter, the power economy maintains myths of growth and development as well as technological advance as the saviors of human association. Yet the system which these myths perpetuate will also become the source of its denigration; in terms of cultural stagnation, ecological destruction, and loss of human freedom.

Organicism helps to create a sense of purpose for the transition away from the power economy. This is because, and as was discussed, organicism has powerful normative axioms of continuous improvement and human betterment. Furthermore, it is with the organicist
process of human development that analytic constructs such as an economics of community as well as discursive political processes can find their place; given organicism, there is a purpose behind why these concepts and tools are useful. These constructs help to advance human awareness and development, ecological connection and stewardship, as well as provide mechanisms to evaluate and develop our institutional structures; all of which are characteristic of organicist-based human development.

Additionally, these topics within ecological economics can be coherently combined and provide not only a stronger approach to sustainability, but also be undertaken for a larger purpose of human development; organicism pushes practices related to sustainability beyond the simple normative idea that we should undertake sustainability because there is it simply the right thing to do. Rather, we practice sustainability, we develop an economics of community living, promote stewardship, and utilize discursive politics, to advance our individual, cultural, and in general social selves in our shared human existence; simply stated, we do these things to become more human.
Toward Sustainable Organicist Regional
Community Living: Scenarios

Introduction

Beyond the more methodological-based discussions found in the ecological economics literature, there are also a number of discussants who seek to develop approaches and practices that advance sustainable living. Specifically, in the ecological economics literature, there is a large body work committed to the description and analysis of approaches to bring about ecological sustainability at the local level; providing scenarios and routes of action. Given that most if not all are hypothetical in nature—existing as a proposal—authors of this type of work are working out different components of the vision of an ecologically sustainable world. Topics include: eco-localism; eco-tourism; eco-urbanism; and eco-distributive justice.

These topics, in the context of organicist regional economies, are highly compatible and would greatly contribute in the movement toward organicist regional communities. All of these topics are expressed as topics towards ecological sustainability from the ecological economics standpoint. Moreover, they all are inherently community oriented as they are approaches to ecologically sustainable associated living. Accordingly, this section will describe these scenarios and connect them as routes not just for sustainable living but also to paths that could be utilized to develop organicist-based regional communities.

Eco-localism

Playing on economics for community is the practice of eco-localism, ecological communities, and eco-living. All three concepts share a vision for an ecologically sustainable economic development as well as a commitment to stewardship. Moreover, their
understanding of development can be related to that advanced by Daly, Cobb and Cobb, economics for community and furthermore organicist-based economic development. At base, these visions share the commonality of a process whereby advancement of a centralized social community with a decentralization of large scale production occurs. This in turn is proposed to facilitate communities that have an overwhelming goal of individual and community welfare and economic and environmental wellbeing.

Fred Curtis in his 2003 *Eco-localism and Sustainability* lays out his vision of sustainable communities through a scenario of a local-regional approach to community development. Believing that sustainability will be best achieved through the creation of tight-knit decentralized communities, Curtis is directly responding to the current institutional reality of globalization and international trade. Generally, Curtis describes eco-localism as,

> the perspective embodied in local currency systems, food co-ops, micro-enterprise, farmers markets, permaculture, community supported agriculture farms, car sharing schemes, barter systems, cohousing and eco-villages, mutual aid, home-based production, community corporations and banks, and local his business alliances (Curtis 2003, 83)

From this quote it is revealed that Curtis’s eco-localism is an approach that seeks the advancement of what others have called social capital.\(^4\)

Curtis hopes to advance the idea that social capital is place specific; furthermore that “place” matters. Describing this he states,

> Here, place refers to specific, unique locations with their particular ecosystems, communities, and resources. Place matters not only because local ecosystems provide heterogeneous and varied resources and constraints to localize economies. It

matters also because there is an inescapable correspondence between the quality of our place in the quality of the lives lived in them. In short, we need stable, safe, interesting, settings, both rural and urban, in which to flourish as fully human creatures. The local place the specific geography of life defines and is defined by its particular natural environment culture, community, history and economy none of which are replicable in a different location. (Curtis 2003, 85)

Curtis, working off of Daly, Cobb, and Cobb’s—previously discussed community economics although differentiating his theory as more local based—suggests that this view is the economics of the local placed community. They claim, “the eco-local economy is more narrowly drawn in its geography. It is a place-specific, bounded economy….bounded by limits of community, geography and the stewardship of nature” (Curtis 2003, 85).

This vision has an implicit value structure, “they include social and environmental responsibility, health of the community, stewardship of nature, affection for and commitment to place, fidelity, propriety, and sufficiency. Eco-localists also prize independence, interdependence, security and self-reliance” (Curtis 2003, 86). From an institutional reality, these values are certainly those that Curtis desires and hopes might be the result of an eco-local institutional adjustment. To aid this process, Curtis lays out what would be eco-local policy scenarios.

Curtis seeks to build an eco-local community that will develop values where community members can “produce necessary goods and services to meet fundamental needs within their boundaries….He states, ‘the point is to avoid dependence on long distance trade for core consumer goods” (Curtis 2003, 95). This is a similar to Jane Jacobs’s import

5 Stewardship will be described forthcoming

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substitution. The base assumption of this process is that “localizing consumption and its environmental cost creates pressures to produce high-quality, long-lasting necessities” (Curtis 2003, 95). From this, it follows that there would need to be a twofold discouragement of global trade dependence and an encouragement of local capital-based policy direction. For example, Curtis suggests, “ending subsidies to brown industry, and particularly cheap energy…[as well as prescribing that] external trade incentives and disincentives should be based on eco-indicators, full cost accounting, and real social need” (Curtis 2003, 94-95).

Thus, it is through economic institutions that Curtis finds the seeds of an eco-local institutional adjustment. By putting pressure on the way in which we get the material necessities and wants of life we put pressure upon our relationships between each other and with nature. To support this claim Curtis suggests,

> a self-reliant economy creates pressures to both reduce the negative and increase the positive externalities. This results in less pollution, resource depletion, etc. as discussed above. It also increases the benefits of community building, development of locally and local oriented social and human capital, ecosystem restoration and the consequent improved quality of life. (Curtis 2003, 94)

In essence, economic localism serves as both an ecological and economic adjustment helping to promote eco-stewardship which is a necessary component to achieving ecological sustainability.

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Eco-tourism

As a mixed concept of stewardship and eco-localism is eco-tourism. Eco-tourism at its core is the visitation by non-locals to others local ecological phenomena. Coria and Calfucura (2012) explain,

the term ecotourism emerged in the late 1980s as a direct result of the world’s acknowledgment of sustainable global ecological practices… Traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objectives of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas. (Coria and Calfucura 2012, 47)

Although eco-recreation is not in any way a new human activity, eco-tourism is novel in that it has an implicit vision of sustainability. When compared to so called “nature-tourism,” which “is understood as travel to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas” (Gossling 1999, 304) the difference is clear.

Eco-tourism although containing nature-tourism fundamentally differs with a component of environmental protection; it also includes stewardship. The eco-tourist vision is two-fold: first that tourism be ecologically sensitive and the area visited be protected, and second, that tourism could provide monetary compensation to locals so that more traditional methods—presumably more ecologically devastating—are both taught to be harmful and supplemented with methods of provisioning that are more ecologically sustainable.\textsuperscript{7} In relation, it could be that “tourism could therefore be a means of redistributing economic

\textsuperscript{7} Eco-tourism has been largely discussed in the context of developing countries; although the implications are nonetheless applicable to both industrial and post-industrial territories.
resources, mitigating the socio-economic situation both at local and national scale and contributing to biodiversity conservation” (Gossling 1999, 304).

Eco-tourism in a more or less weak form—the visitation to ecologically protected areas—is something that most have become familiar with, for example, through the national/state park system. National and state parks serve the interest of both citizen and eco-community. At the same time, this system seeks to influence a culture of sustainability. For example, the park system establishes programs, center of learning, and a culture of eco-community. As Coria and Calfucura (2012) distinguish,

the key feature of the national park strategy is that local livelihood is assumed to conflict with conservation. Thus, they have strictly defined borders that exclude livelihood activities and rarely facilitate local economic development. People are meant to use resources outside the parks, and plants and animals are meant to stay inside. (Coria and Calfucura 2012, 48)

Not seeking to diminish the importance of the park system, Eco-tourist theorists have envisioned a much greater role of parks and protected areas.

Eco-tourist theorists suggest that a missing component of the state park system is citizen residency. As mentioned, the park system is only a place to visit; residency is held only by the system of park regulators and supporting staff. A stronger version of eco-tourism suggests that all places should embrace the values presented in protected parks whereby residents celebrate, protect, and advocate tourists to the natural environment unique to their own town, city, or region. Eco-tourism in this strong form suggests that all areas are special and contain natural beauty; to be embraced by both locals and visitors. Additionally, all places could benefit both ecologically and possible monetarily from the local natural environment; protecting as well as attracting visitors. Local residents could
take on the role of “park rangers” in this scenario. While these recommendations have been addressed more typically with developing countries as previously noted, they arguably could be applied to all forms of communities.

Sven Wunder (2000) addresses this concept of local stewardship as a source of both incentive to sustainable living as well as a source of revenue in his article, *Ecotourism and economic incentives*. He suggests that local participation in the eco-tourism sector may in fact benefit the community compared to that of a non-local management program. Wunder forms a system of hypothesis to address this claim he states,

Hypothesis 1: the implementation of autonomous tourism operation triggers larger local income than paternalistic models of dependency toward external tour operators…. Local resource managers need to have a stake in conservation, which tourism income can help to provide. (Wunder 2000, 467)

Said otherwise, the very act of local inclusion may help to facilitate an institutional adjustment towards a culture of conservation. With outside management, there would not exist an agent of change to influence the existing provisioning system. In connection, Wunder suggests that from hypothesis number one we might see:

First, unsustainable local management practices may be reformed reduced. Second, certain nontraditional, degrading activities may be entirely abandoned…. Finally, tourism income also motivates and strengthens local residents in struggling against environmental threats are external agents: local residents are empowered in their key position as environmental guardians. (Wunder 2000, 467)

The inclusion of local eco-management may then be seen to contribute to local ecological sustainability, promote a culture of conservation, alter the institutional system of development projects, and act as a source of income for local residents.

These conclusions are then stated as Wunder’s second hypothesis, that, “local tourism income provides a powerful incentive for conservation, by making traditional
resource management more sustainable, by substituting degrading activities, and by increasing local protection capacity against external threats” (Wunder 2000, 467). Although, as Coria and Calfucura (2012) distinguish, “ecotourism is often proposed as a way to make conservation pay for itself, an assumption that is usually wrong” (Coria and Calfucura 2012, 51).

While eco-tourism has the potential to supplement the local provisioning process, there remains the difficulty of distribution. This is more so a reality in monetary production economies compared to traditional societies; although given the influence of westernized institutions this has become a growing issue. Succinctly put,

Ecotourism as a tool for the development of indigenous communities requires, therefore, the empowerment of community members by shifting economic and political control from governments, multilateral organizations, and NGO’s to the communities…Empowerment of indigenous communities involves economic, psychological, social and political dimensions that have led indigenous peoples to create economic achievements, self-confidence, social cohesio...
activity, there are also tourist interests that are based in the exploitation of nature; for example, recreational boating, fishing, or golfing. As these latter activities generally are from the standpoint that undeveloped land is under-exploited, proponents of eco-tourism may face issue with respect to land utilization. Vail and Hultkrantz address this issue and envision a system of property rights that considers both parties and those restrictions and allowances that would be needed to reach some fair outcome. Vail and Hultkrantz conclude that for a balance to be reached between eco-tourist activities and those of more traditional tourism—a framework that includes but goes above and beyond—“carrying capacity” must be utilized. They state,

Carrying capacity is an amorphous concept with both social and biophysical dimensions. Sustainable tourism requires identification and effective management of hot spots where tourists—and their vehicles—cause congestion or resource depletion. Capacity-based inventories of natural attractions are needed, including forecasts of incremental impacts of further growth. Carrying capacity is not a definitive number of users, and an important strategic question is: how could innovations in access rights, incentives, and land use regulations augment capacity, for example, by encouraging off-peak use, a land-care ethic, and landowner investments in conservation measures? (Vail and Hultkrantz 2000, 240)

Implicitly, both types of tourism could exist, although from this approach the natural world would be constantly evaluated for current and future harm and abuse. In this sense a known carrying capacity would provide the information needed to create public policy that would curtail possible environmental harm. Although, again, similar to other sustainable scenarios, a set of institutions and values would be needed to have both stakeholders in tune with their natural surroundings.

Eco-tourism as a sustainability scenario has the potential to accomplish a number of components related to ecologically sustainable living as well as organicist-based regional
development. It is with the stronger version of eco-tourism—which includes a complete buy in of residents—that the potential for institutional adjustment seems possible. The basis for such a claim can be found in the suggestion that under this type of scenario residents would take on an unprecedented stewardship for their local environment. With this fundamental change in values, everything from development to personal consumption could be re-evaluated. The incentive to do so would initially come from monetary prospects as described above, although it would seem that, as this culture progressed, a stronger sense of responsibility would occur. This scenario seems not only plausible—given that examples of this type of behavior can be found around the globe—but also a more immediate task that could be undertaken to begin a transition toward regionalist-based sustainable living. Cities and towns across the nation could undertake—even in small areas—an eco-tourist investment. This would not only provide jobs but as well initiate a culture of stewardship.

Moving toward Sustainable Cities

The discussion of sustainable cities in the EE literature, provides some of the clearest examples of the discourses approach to organicist-based regional development. Although lacking in breadth, as well as a lack of follow-up in the last decade, authors such as Camagni, Capello, and Nijcamp provide insight as to policies that would move the city towards an “eco-city.” Furthermore, these theorists appear to be the closest to invoking the current institutional environment; where public policy is generally of a “top-down” nature.

Camagni et al. (1998) provide the justification for eco-urban policy that would help facilitate the transformation from urban agglomerations as passive resource and pollution
sinks to active entities that facilitate sustainable development. By defining the city from a social, economic, and environmental standpoint, these authors distinguish that sustainable urban development needs to be addressed as an interconnected and interdisciplinary concept. Furthermore, from this view it is understood that our economy and environment are interconnected through social interactions. From this perspective, the common understanding of agglomeration economies when social and ecological effects are taken into account may in fact generate negative externalities. For example, having an industrial urban center creates incentives for a concentrated built environment that in turn contributes to air and noise pollution as well as a loss of green space. Recognizing the short fall of conventional measures of urban success—such as the blind pursuit of agglomeration economies—Camagni et al. seek out alternative approaches.

Specifically, Camagni et al. recognize that there needs to be a clear vision and understanding of “where we want to go”; particularly for issues of sustainability. In support, these authors suggest, a

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8 Capello et al specify that they “take [their] definition of a sustainable city from Haughton and Hunter (1994) who describe a sustainable city as one in which its people and businesses continuously endeavor to improve their natural, built, and cultural environments at neighborhood and regional levels, whilst working in two ways which always support the goal of global sustainable development. Their definition means that the concept of a sustainable city is a multidimensional one and also related to higher geographical levels. Roberto Camagni, Roberta Capello and Peter Nijkamp, “Towards Sustainable City Policy: An Economy-Environment Technology Nexus,” Ecological Economics 24 no. 1 (1998) 106.

sustainable city is...first of all a city where the three environments [(social, economic, environmental)] characterizing an urban agglomeration interact in such a way that the sum of all positive externalities stemming from the interaction of the three environments is larger than the sum of the negative external effects caused by interaction. (Camagni, Capello, and Nijkamp 1998, 152)

To this end, the authors suggest that if the concept of agglomeration economies is used, it needs to be utilized in a way that minimizes negative externalities. This may imply smaller communities might be more sustainable; where agglomeration economies can still be realized without causing social and environmental disruption.

To be clear, this is not an implication of total independence and urban separation or a return to rural existence. Furthermore, this is not a suggestion of total de-industrialization. Rather, what is being recommended is a movement toward decentralization; from the standpoint of policy decisions and community commitment. Conceivably, decentralized political entities allow for greater member commitment, participation, and “follow through,” and for policy that regulates social and economic activities in favor of sustainable development.

In a later contribution, Capello and Nijkamp (2002) continue this argument, suggesting, “direct local involvement, based on a bottom-up strategy for new environmental management and energy-saving programs... may increase the support of the general public for changes in resource use, consumption or lifestyles” (Capello and Nijkamp 2002, 152). These authors are arguing that conventional top-down, centralized decision making causes more harm than benefit. With the inclusion of more representatives of the overall region, comprehensive policy—which includes a greater discussion of ecological and social stakeholders—could occur.
Again, this is not a suggestion of complete abolition of conventional methods. There is still a role for the municipal government. These authors argue,

The city is, of course, a natural institutional decision unit in this context, as it covers a well focused study area without running the risk of a heterogeneous policy structure with many horizontally organized planning agencies. Thus, the involvement of one identifiable decision-making agency at the urban level is of major importance and may enhance the institutional effectiveness of environmental and energy planning. (Capello and Nijkamp 2002, 152)

The issue is involvement in the decision making process. Capello and Nijkamp (2002) propose that sustainable urban development needs to balance the role of decentralized and centralized decisions makers. Otherwise, “failure to develop an effective balanced urban development policy will reinforce urban sprawl and will highlight inner-city problems to a much larger area, thus intensifying negative urban externalities” (Capello and Nijkamp 2002, 155).

In summary, Camagni et al. are advocating the formulation of public policy based on a larger set of facts, interests, and stakeholders. Related to the collection of information is the role that indicators can play; i.e. the indexing of relevant information in order to track trends and changes. In his 2002 piece entitled City Management and Urban Environmental Indicator, Kenneth Button addresses the issue of logging data for the purpose of public policy. Noting the complexity and the constant evolution of cities, Button thinks that a larger set of differing indices could help in the formulation of urban and regional eco-sustainability.

Button advocates for a set of indicators that transcend spatial boundaries. This is because economic, social, and environmental impacts do not exist in isolated context. He notes, “the openness of economies, the migration of people and the spatial transferability of
the worst environmental impacts of many activities makes the notion of any unique idea of “local” sustainable development almost meaningless” (Button 2002, 218). With this complexity, Button believes there is a role for urban municipal governments to play in terms of assessing and protecting trans-spatial and temporal boundaries; not only the existing urban population but those that transcend its borders as well as future populations. This is where a set of indicators could greatly facilitate public policy.

Button suggests a number of guiding principles in the construction and implementation of urban economic and environmental indicators. Button argues that indicators need to be problem-specific in terms of community goals; this is in contrast to those formulated on an ad hoc basis. For example, Button suggests that economic indicators “should reflect the key causal linkages” (Button 2002, 224); the economic problem or benefit in question should be as understood as possible before creating indicators that track it. Furthermore, environmental problems, being complex and sometimes little understood, should have a set of simplistic and easily constructed set of indicators. Lastly, environmental indicators should make sense across urban centers; that is to say, be relevant to other cities.

Button hopes to create a dialog for urban management. With greater attention paid to the type of information we collect and use concerning public policy, the complexities of environmental and economic issues might become less daunting. This article implicitly is arguing for greater research into the urban center; in terms of its growth and the decline of environmental, economic, and social factors.
The literature regarding urban development, while limited, does provide a solid base for the connection to organicist-based regionalism. The authors discussed in this section provide some of the most specific discussion of sustainable urban development. Both focus on the role of information in terms of urban public policy. The similarity between these authors represents a concern that contemporary urban policy does not address a large group of stakeholders as well as economic and environmental problems in a systematic and detailed way. Furthermore, both authors agree that the urban environment is complex, evolving, and interconnected in terms of economic, social, and environmental factors. This recognition is paramount for future discussions and construction of urban eco-sustainable development, as it is recognized that issues must address a multitude of factors, including problems related to individuals and to the environment that have yet to occur.

**Promoting Organicist-based Regional Economies: Discussion**

The previous section has shown a number of routes that are highly compatible with an organicist-based regional economy. This is because, as was discussed in Chapter 4, such an economy has a purpose to promote human development and the connection to and stewardship of human life and the ecological environment, self-recognition and reflection, and cultural growth. The topics of eco-localism, eco-tourism, and eco-urbanism all have a component of promoting a type of economic and social existence that is not only ecologically sustainable but one characterized by increasing human dignity and sense of ecological responsibility.

Eco-localism and economic regionalism are to a large degree topics of the same construct. Both of these ideas promote decentralized and locally produced goods and
services when possible. They both have a normative sense that goods and services should be transparent as to their origins and minimize social and ecological destruction in their production. Yet, what organicist economic regionalism can offer to eco-localism is a further component of varied employment, which was discussed in Chapter 4 as a mechanism to promote human development and culture. It is with an organist-based eco-localism that a biotechnic mode of production, consumption, and creation can be practiced; where the output of the system can move toward actual needs and wants of its eventual users.

As a further contribution towards the eco-local perspective by organicist-based economic regionalism is the use of shared property and a redefined understanding of profits. Eco-localism’s promotion of the ecological environment may be stifled without a revision in the pursuit of individual gain and exploit. Organicism argues that it is these very institutions that will constrain the eco-localist goal of reduced negative externalities. It is with a sense of common ownership that the needs and stewardship of “resources” will be protected, conserved, and developed in order to meet the larger goal of sustainability and purposely reduce negative externalities.

Furthermore, with the discussion of eco-tourism, there is a direct connection to the organicist-based regional survey which offers a major contribution to these types of economic activities. Eco-tourism has an implicit goal that stewardship might be realized with the development of economic activities that are fundamentally derived from a functioning ecological system. To promote a more developed and successful eco-tourist culture, the regional survey can begin the process at an early age.
Recall that the regional survey is in general a life-long study of the ecological and social conditions by which a given region is characterized. As humans engage in this process throughout their life, the hopeful outcome is a developed appreciation, respect, and sense of ecological and social stewardship. This is because the survey process is designed as a way to dispel the capitalist-based perceptions of “resources” and the environment as valuable only once put into the productive process. Furthermore, it is with the survey that the regional student is able to develop—through guidance—an ability to interconnect human life in the larger ecological and social environment. With these outcomes, it is hoped the student will become an inhabitant of the area rather than simply a user. When applied to eco-tourism with these values and insights gained, eco-tourist activities will be led by “natives” of the region who have gained a deep insight and connection to the territory. This then has the capability to enrich not only the eco-tourist guide but the visitors as well.

Lastly, eco-urbanism has much overlap with organicist-based regionalism, and this connection also has great potential to build a “regionalism” within ecological economics. As was discussed in the literature review, there is a lack of attention or discussion of how a sustainable regionalism is defined within ecological economics. As was shown, the region is a diversely defined unit of analysis rather than a unified concept, although it is generally identified in connection to urban human communities. Furthermore, there is no concept of regionalism linked to a normative-based sustainability or generally accepted as a mechanism to encourage a sustainable future. This research project in connection with an eco-urbanism has much to contribute to a regionalism that is more conducive to sustainability policy than currently exists.
Because regional communities are a topic of discussion within the ecological economics literature, the conversation of sustainable urban conditions within these regions is of utmost importance; a further elaboration of their connection is needed. While it was not discussed in this research project, organicist-based regional planning does exist. Regionalist urban development and city development along organicist lines is a major component of Mumford’s work. For example, as Mumford describes in his 1948 article “Cities Fit to Live In,”

> What kind of cities do we want? Cities in which man is at home again—at home in an orderly and calmly environment cut to the human measure: cities where every function necessary to growth and development, biological and cultural, has an appropriate place in the plan and an appropriate structure… To bring such cities into existence, we cannot continue to follow the line of least resistance. Quite the contrary, we must alter our present life-denying goals and lay down the foundations for a new civilization—not a money economy but a life economy. (Mumford 1948, 533)

The similarity between eco-urbanism and Mumford’s urban thought is substantial. When eco-urbanism is put in the context of an organicist-based regional philosophy, there exists a rich potential for a philosophical and practical discussion among ecological and urban practitioners. With organicist philosophy utilized in connection to eco-urbanism, there is potential to develop a discussion of sustainable urban and regional communities along with a sense of what “regionalism” might imply for ecological economists.

In summary, this section has shown practical applications found within the ecological economics literature that have a direct connection and applicability to organicist-based regionalist thought. Furthermore, with such a philosophy these discussed applications have potential to be enriched and find further success in their implementation. Additionally,
with these examples, further research can be done to advance a regionalism to the ecological economics discipline.
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VITA

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After earning his Master’s and while writing his dissertation, Richard began teaching as an adjunct professor in the Kansas City area. This experience crystallized his interest in teaching, helping him to figure out a path that would lead him to a life in academia. In May of 2015, Richard accepted a tenure track position at Rockhurst University as an Assistant Professor of Economics. He hopes to continue his professional life in Kansas City for many years to come.