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The Ecovillage as a Regenerative Peacebuilding Agent: Tamera – Healing Biotope I and the "Global Campus" in the West Bank.

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Abstract

This article explores the nature of the agency of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding through the analysis of the "Global Campus", a program launched by the ecovillage of Tamera (Portugal), focusing on its activities in the West Bank. The analysis adds to existing theories on peacebuilding agents by arguing that, in such circumstances, the role of ecovillages is to diffuse the ecovillage model as a whole-system strategy of post-conflict reconstruction and promotion of sociocultural understanding and psychosocial stability among the parts formerly in conflict. It also argues that, when it is not possible to spatially reproduce the ecovillage model, due to recurring hostilities, political obstacles or cultural reasons, ecovillages can still act as agents of diffusion of technologies and strategies for working on issues of trauma, power, identity and historical memory between parts in conflict, as well as promoting energy autonomy and food security among those in disadvantaged positions.

Introduction

What is the nature of the agency of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding? There is a gap in literature on the topic, largely explained by the fact that the active involvement of ecovillages as agents in peacebuilding is very recent, although the ecovillage model has been promoted for a while as a strategy of post-conflict reconstruction by public actors and NGOs. This article explores such involvement through a unique case study: That of the "Global Campus"1, an international program of cooperation with grassroots peacebuilding initiatives launched by Tamera – Healing Biotope I2, an intentional community and ecovillage founded in 1995 in southwestern Alentejo, Portugal. At the time of research, this program has already produced significant results in Palestine, Colombia, Brazil and Kenya. It helped to pave the way for the involvement of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)3 in the construction of the first ecovillage in the West Bank, in natural and human-made disaster prevention and reconstruction in various parts of the world, as well as in the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean.

This article focuses on the activities of the "Global Campus" in the West Bank, where the program began and where it has its longest-standing partners in the field. It indicates that the nature of the agency of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding is that of being agents of diffusion of the ecovillage model, for the purpose of post-conflict reconstruction of infrastructures and ecosystems, as well as the promotion of sociocultural understanding and psychosocial stability among the parts formerly in conflict. It also shows that, when it is not

possible to fully reproduce the ecovillage model in the field, due to political or cultural reasons, ecovillages can still act as agents of diffusion of technologies and strategies for working on issues of trauma, power, identity and historical memory between parts in conflict, as well as promoting energy autonomy and food security among those in disadvantaged positions.

The article begins with a dialogue between literature on regenerative peacebuilding and ecovillages. It proceeds with examples of the application of the ecovillage model to post-conflict reconstruction by public agents and NGOs, as well as an account of the move, from the part of GEN, from a focus on the internal consolidation of ecovillages to that of orienting them towards serving as agents of diffusion of strategies and technologies for sustainability. The empirical analysis starts with an overall presentation of the "Global Campus" in its different geographical areas of activity and then focuses on cooperation with partners in the West Bank. Such cooperation includes support to existing grassroots projects, including the transformation of the village of Farkha, in the West Bank, into the first ecovillage in Palestine. It also includes the plan of creating a new ecovillage and intentional community: The Peace Research Village – Middle East (PRV-ME).4 It describes the political and material conditions faced by these processes in terms of developing material commons and implementing knowledge on regenerative ecology and community-building.

Given the focus on context and process, I chose to use a hermeneutical methodology. The analysis is based on data collected during fieldwork that took place in Tamera between April and October 2015, in the West Bank in December 2015 (Bethlehem and Tulkarem) and once again in Tamera in August 2017. Fieldwork included 22 semi-structured interviews, of which 15 took place in Tamera and the remaining among partner projects in the West Bank. It also included archival research in the two fieldwork sites, as well as participant observation in a month-long meeting of partners of the "Global Campus" in Tamera in July/August 2015, as well as two one month-long educational programs offered by the community in the same year: "Terra Nova School"5 and the "Community Course"6. These programs explore the synergies between the interpersonal, social and ecological dimensions in the application of the ecovillage model to regenerative peace building.

Fieldwork in the West Bank focused on visits to two project partners of Tamera, the "Holy Land Trust" and "Hakoritna Farm", during which I interviewed their main carriers and collected documents on their activities. This period of fieldwork coincided with the second Ecovillage Design Education program (E.D.E.) in Farkha. I was requested not to conduct fieldwork at this site during that period, in order not to interfere with the program. However, in August 2017, I had the chance of interviewing the main carrier of the application of the ecovillage model to Farkha during "Defend the Sacred"7, an international gathering of peace activists that took place in Tamera. I also had the chance of collecting further information on the evolution of the process from "Global Campus" team members.

I secured consent from all the informers to use their real names in this article. All the quotes from interviews or conversations were transcribed in the original language of communication (English) and are inserted here in the exact way they were spoken. For reasons of privacy and cultural sensitivity, it was agreed that I would not include information about the reasons why the informers do not reproduce, in their organizations, one of the core aspects of the psychosocial

dimension of the model developed by Tamera, which is the promotion of an environment where solid and lasting partnerships can coexist with free sexuality.

Regenerative peacebuilding and ecovillages

Reconstruction and regenerative approaches to peacebuilding

The existing literature makes a distinction between the reconstruction-based and regenerative approaches to peacebuilding. The former approach focuses on the post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation of physical, political, legal and civil society structures and institutional processes. It also promotes the resolution of the conflicts of interest which led to confrontation, with the purpose of restoring pre-war conditions (Forman, Patrick and Salomons 2000; Pugh 2000; Fischer 2004). Regenerative peacebuilding goes a step further than the former approach in preventing a return to violent conflict, by addressing not only the political causes of conflict, but also what Pugh (2000) calls the sociocultural and psychosocial dimensions of conflict. This approach aims to alter the power relations which promoted conflict in the first place, as well as to promote conditions which allow peace to become self-sustaining, namely by supporting those who have been affected by conflict in envisioning goals beyond their immediate survival (Op. cit.). These include "the militarization of social life, politics and economy" (Fischer 2004: 3) and the dismantlement of the war economy (Caritas Schweiz 2000). They also include the overcoming of cultures of violence, not only by promoting reconciliation between parts in conflict, but also through the promotion of psychosocial stability by working on issues of trauma, power and identity (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1999; Fischer 2004). According to de Coning (2016), the purpose is to promote the emergence, in a collaborative manner from within the parts formerly in conflict, of self-organizing processes aimed at building self-sustainable, resilient social institutions informed by the local culture, history and socio-economic context. The author claims that the role of peacebuilding agents in such process is to safeguard, stimulate, facilitate and create the space for societies to develop resilient capacities for self-organisation. The analysis of the involvement of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding adds another role to those identified by de Coning, which is that of diffusor of technologies and strategic frames.

Developing "cultures of habitat"

Ecovillages are intentional communities that follow a whole-systems approach that uses integrative design, local economic networking, cooperative and common property structures and participatory decision-making, with the purpose of minimizing ecological footprints and developing sustainable human settlements by internalizing production and consumption processes (Lockyer and Veteto 2013: 15). Central to the ecovillage model is a process of "commoning", which de Angelis (2014) defines as the process, inherent to the pooling of resources, which creates and reproduces the commons. The governance of pooled resources in ecovillages is based on the promotion of synergies between three dimensions: An ecological dimension, comprised of strategies of resource management aimed at regenerating natural cycles; The sociocultural and psychosocial dimensions, which are collectively reproduced by internal structures and regulatory processes for group facilitation and collective decision-making.

These structures and processes integrate the management of pooled resources into a wider process of community-building which, besides co-creating and reproducing norms for the usage of the commons, addresses issues of culture and conviviality (Joubert and Alfred 2014). The purpose is twofold: On the one hand, to minimize isomorphism by critically addressing how the norms and practices of mainstream society affect the governance of the commons and relationships between community members. On the other hand, to promote internal cohesion by critically addressing how the members' socialization affects community dynamics and the governance of the commons, as well as co-creating social structures of mutual support, trust and transparency which favour the self-expression and full personal development of each member. The purpose is to co-create a culture which promotes solidarity, cooperation and the development of a common vision and goals among community members (Op. cit.).

Ecovillages can be regarded as prefigurative attempts to "mitigate the antagonism between humans and nature" (Ergas and Clement 2015: 1195) by "putting bioregional thought and permaculture methodology in practice at the community level" (Lockyer and Veteto 2013: 15). Their goal is to become "human-scale, full-featured settlements in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future" (Gilman 1991: 10). They pursue this goal through the collective and cooperative management and use of natural and constructed commons, as well as the internalization of production, consumption and waste management processes. These processes are supported by the use of renewable energy-based technologies, as well as local economic networking for accessing goods and services which cannot be produced internally (Lockyer and Veteto 2013: 15). Key literature on ecovillages identifies them with a cosmopolitan ethos, condensed in a bioregional vision where "cultures of habitat" are privileged over arbitrary political boundaries (Snyder 1995; Nabhan 1997). They are "(…) theoretically designed to suit local needs and thus reflect local culture" (Le Vasseur 2013: 255), therefore reflecting the recognition of cultural specificities and grassroots self-determination that characterize many bottom-up responses to neoliberal globalization (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992; Veltmeyer and Petras, 2000). This form of thinking from the standpoint of "place" implies a non-essentialist view of community and culture, which privileges rootedness in territories and ecosystems and "a sincere nod in the direction of the deep value of the natural world and the subjecthood of nonhuman beings" over identitarian concerns (Snyder 1995: 234).

The ecovillage concept was promoted by the Gaia Trust8, a charitable foundation based in Denmark, which, in response to the ecological concerns permeating the global commons, convened an international meeting of eco-communities in 1991 to discuss the further development and implementation of the concept as a model for sustainable human settlements. The meeting led to the creation of GEN, which is currently headquartered at the offices of its European hub in Findhorn, Scotland. GEN includes a range of different types of ecovillages located in the global North and South. These include traditional villages and post-conflict refugee settlements that have implemented the ecovillage model, often with the support of the local state or NGOs, as a way of promoting energy efficiency, environmental sustainability and the economic well-being and self-determination of their members (Op. cit.). However, the predominant type is that of intentional communities aimed at fulfilling the post-materialistic lifestyle aspirations of predominantly middle and upper-class members. This type predominates

among ecovillages and urban "eco-neighbourhoods" in the Global North, as well as among those in the Global South with a post-materialist orientation (Burke and Arjona 2013).

Prefigurative "micro-worlds" and the risk of isomorphism

In an interview published in issue 3 of *Logic Magazine* (2017), Fred Turner claims that ecovillages and other intentional communities are a product of 1960's "New Communalism", which is one of the two major countercultural streams which emerged in the mid- and late-20th century counterculture, the other being the "New Left". The common point between these two streams is that they both aim to overcome capitalism by de-commodifying and de-concentrating value. However, they both diverge in their conception of value, as well as the institutional forms and political strategies advocated for its de-commodification and de-concentration.

The "New Left", based on dialectic materialism, conceives value as energy extracted from biophysical entities and commodified in the form of labour. In the capitalist "mode of exchange" (Karatani 2014), such commodified energy is symbolically represented by "capital", which is used as a means of exchange in the form of currency. The production and reproduction of "capital" is made possible by the use of state bureaucracy to regulate property rights and labour relations. That is done in a way that compartimentalizes biophysical entities in homogenous groups and ranks them according to perceived hierarchies of value, so as to maximize efficiency in the extraction, accumulation and commodification of their energy (Bauwens 2016). The ecological dimension of such process reached its apex with industrialized agriculture and manufacture (Shiva, 1989), while its sociocultural and psychosocial dimensions were institutionalized in the Nation-state (Karatani 2014). The "New Left" regards state bureaucracy and redistributive politics, through revolutionary or electoral means, as the adequate institutional form and political strategy for the de-commodification and de-concentration of value. In this sense, it advocates as instruments for structural transformation the very institutional mechanisms which support commodification through the compartimentalization, homegeneization, concentration and ranking of biophysical energy.

"New Communalism", on the other hand, conceives value as energy exchanged between biophysical entities in living systems. It aims to reverse processes of commodification and accumulation of biophysical energy by dissolving bureaucratic forms of decision-making power and resource allocation, and replacing them with structures of "connectionist politics" (Turner 2006) aimed at maximizing efficiency in exchanges of energy. Such political strategy is based on the spatial expansion of horizontalist networks of collaboration, based on feedback loops of information. For that purpose, "New Communalism" advocates the building of "micro-worlds", in the form of prefigurative communities that play the function of laboratories where cultural, social and technological strategies for the de-commodification of biophysical energy can be incubated, experimented and tested for replicability. Such "micro-worlds" are supposed to promote a "change of consciousness" in wider society by "leading by example" and promoting the replication of their strategies (Op. cit.).

The downside of "New Communalism" is a tendency for social endogamy and isomorphism, in the form of reproduction, within prefigurative "micro-worlds", of the hierarchies existing within mainstream society. According to Turner (2006), the intentional communities that emerged in the

USA in the 1960's tended to reproduce the hierarchies of race, class and gender that existed in mainstream American society. These communities tended to be composed mainly by white people of middle- to upper-class background and had a marked gendered division of labour, as well as hierarchies of rank in what regards decision-making power and access to resources. Such power was largely produced and reproduced by cultural and social capital, which determined the ability to master the sociocultural and psychosocial dimensions of social interactions. Turner explains such tendencies with the following argument:

When you take away bureaucracy and hierarchy and politics, you take away the ability to negotiate the distribution of resources on explicit terms. And you replace it with charisma, with cool, with shared but unspoken perceptions of power. You replace it with the cultural forces that guide our behaviour in the absence of rules (Logic Magazine 2017).

Turner (2006) argues that such tendencies are a result of the fact that the whole-system approach inherent to "New Communalism" implicitly tends to regard their internal consolidation of prefigurative "micro-worlds" as an end in itself, ignoring how such process interacts and is integrated in wider social systems. The author claims that the manifestation of the transformative potential of such "micro-worlds" relies on whether or not they intentionally look beyond the "micro-politics" of organizational development and "build a world that takes responsibility for people not like ourselves" (Logic Magazine 2017). That's what happens with the participation of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding efforts.

Beyond prefiguration: Ecovillages as global actors

The involvement of ecovillages in regenerative peacebuilding is largely the result of a concerted effort within GEN, from the mid-2000s onwards, to move from an inward focus on organizational consolidation and self-sufficiency to an outward focus on building strategic alliances (Dawson 2012). Such move led those ecovillages who "survived the test of time" and reached a stage of internal consolidation to shift their strategic priorities towards "serving as educational models and living laboratories of sustainability" (Lockyer and Veteto 2013: 19).

So far, social scientific literature has tended to neglect the role of ecovillages as agents in regenerative peacebuilding efforts, focusing instead on the application of the ecovillage model as a strategy for grassroots post-conflict reconstruction by the state and NGOs. One of the most comprehensive accounts on the topic is Burke and Arjona's (2013) ethnographic analysis of the trajectory of the Nashira Ecological Community in Colombia, composed by women with low incomes and no access to capital who were displaced by the guerrilla conflict. This ecovillage grew out of the Association of Women Heads of Household (ASOMUCAF) to support women heads of household with low income and no access to capital. ASOMUCAF was founded in 1993 by Angela Cuevas, a feminist lawyer and member of the women's peace network, who developed the project based upon her contacts among activist and international development donor circles in the Global North, as well as her landowner family's properties. By 2003, the "contours of an alternative political ecology", based upon GEN's matrix of sustainable human settlements, emerged in discussions among participants, facilitated by Cuevas and her team of internationally trained technicians, about how to fulfil the basic needs of displaced women: housing, health, nutrition and better incomes, while taking into account ecological goals (p. 243).

The discussion materialized into an ecovillage project for 88 families to live and work together when Cuevas donated three hectares of her family's land and raised funds and technical expertise to develop the project.

Tamera's "Global Campus"

Tamera's "Global Campus" foresees the full reproduction of the ecovillage model, in its ecological, psychosocial and sociocultural dimension, as a strategy of regenerative peacebuilding in post-conflict areas. However, the fact that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was still recurrent when Tamera started its collaboration with grassroots partners in the West Bank, as well as at the time of fieldwork, made it impossible for the "Global Campus" to fully achieve that goal with the implementation of the ecological dimension of PRV-ME. Still, the "Global Campus" managed to diffuse, among its partners in the field, technologies and strategic frames aimed at building "cultures of habitat" for peaceful coexistence between parts in conflict, as well as promoting autonomy in terms of renewable energy and food production.

Order out of chaos: Bridging inner and outer spaces

When the ecological, sociocultural and psychosocial structures that support capitalism collapse under their own weight, promoting peacebuilding only through the restoration of the state apparatus and the resulting hierarchies of power and resource allocation will fail to address the underlying causes of conflict. In these circumstances, creating sustainable order out of the ensuing chaos only becomes possible through regenerative strategies which centre upon the psychosocial dimension and regard the sociocultural and ecological dimensions as its dependent variables. This is the basic premise of the "Global Campus", a strategy for regenerative peacebuilding which emerged from Tamera in the early '00s, after nearly a decade during which the community focused on its own internal development and consolidation. Such strategy is supported by the "Grace Foundation", created by Tamera to develop a worldwide network of philanthropists aimed at mobilizing funds for projects envisioned within this framework. Since the creation of the "Global Campus", Tamera has become a key agent of regenerative peacebuilding, within and beyond the initiatives developed by GEN.

The book *The Sacred Matrix: From the Matrix of Violence to the Matrix of Life* (Duhm, 2008), makes an account of how such role was incubated in previous experiences of the founding group, which originated from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with the "New Left", the anti-war movement and intentional communities between the 1970's and 1990's. The resulting "Healing Biotopes plan" originates from criticism of Marxist thought by the co-founders of Tamera, German-born sociologist Dieter Duhm (b. 1942) and theologian Sabine Lichtenfels (b. 1954), based on their own experience of mid and late-20th century Central European counter-culture. Its core purpose is to overcome the gap between theory and practice within Marxism as identified by Duhm and his comrades, through the creation of intentional communities that aimed to prefigure the "emotional or mental depths of a 'concrete utopia'" by publicly dealing with the basic causes of intra- and inter-personal conflict that interfere with communal living. Questions of identity, historical memory, power and competition are central, as well as the promotion of an environment where solid and lasting partnerships can coexist with free sexuality. A complementary and equally important aim is to promote a communitarian economy based on a

symbiotic, non-extractive and non-accumulative relationship with nature, as well as forms of conflict resolution which can be applied in peace projects around the world. Tamera was developed with the purpose of becoming a replicable model of peaceful coexistence between humans and with nature.

The book *GRACE: Pilgrimage for a future without war* (Lichtenfels, 2007) makes an account of the emergence of the "Global Campus" and its vision. The earlier activities took place in response to the 2nd Intifada: "We Refuse to be Enemies", Tamera's first Israeli/Palestinian Peace Camp (2002), and the "GRACE Pilgrimages", a peace march led by Tamera which connected Arab, Israeli and international peace activists during a journey across the West Bank (2005) and the Negev Desert (2007). The account is based on the observation of social and ecological conditions in the field, visits to refugee camps, reconstruction and peacebuilding projects, as well as on exchanges between participating activists, some of which ended up joining the first cohort of non-German speaking community members of Tamera. Its main argument is that the causes of the enduring conflict in the Middle East are rooted in psychosocial structures of scarcity which create and reproduce the dynamics of capitalism. The extraction, accumulation and commodification of value from biophysical entities is the mirror image of the fear of predation and annihilation by those affected. Both dynamics form a feedback loop, based upon a fear of scarcity that results from a lack of consciousness of the regenerative nature of biophysical exchanges. Such fear leads to the development of sociocultural dynamics based on segregation and domination, as well as to ecological structures, based on the compartimentalization and standardization of natural resources, which disturb the natural regenerative cycles of ecosystems. The de-commodification and de-privatization of value is therefore dependent upon a shift in perception about the core dynamics of ecosystems, as well as the place and role of humans in them.

From replicating the "Healing Biotope model" to global outreach

The major outcome of the earlier initiatives of the "Global Campus" was the envisioning of the PRV-ME, aimed at gathering Arabs, Israelis and internationals in the development of an intentional community that would reproduce the "Healing Biotope model" in the region. In the beginning of 2014, after two years living together in the outskirts of Jerusalem, while focusing of the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of their community-building process, the founding cohort managed to secure a land rental contract from Ben Gurion University. However, the Israel-Gaza conflict and 3rd Intifada that happened later in the year led to the cancelation of the contract. This led many of founding members to return to Tamera until conditions improve in the field, while others followed different routes.

Meanwhile, Tamera's activities in the Middle East attracted international attention and visitors, leading to the establishment of a collaborative relationship with the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartadó in the Colombian jungle, centred around reciprocal visits and transfer of knowledge on regenerative ecology and community-building. The same happened with "Favela da Paz", a community development project in the shantytown of Jardim Nakamura (Sao Paolo, Brazil), as well as OTEPIC – Organic Technology Extension and Promotion of Initiative Centre, a Pan-African Permaculture school based in Kitale, Kenya.

More recently, the "Global Campus" got involved in the development of models for regenerative disaster preparedness and relief efforts. In 2013, a group of experts, social entrepreneurs and representatives of aid organizations convened in Tamera to form the Blueprint Alliance, a platform of knowledge exchange aimed at developing integrated and regenerative models for coordinated interventions in crisis and disaster areas. Such models are based on the promotion of autonomy in renewable energy production and management of water cycles, as well as livelihoods through the use of local knowledge to promote food security, local economies, natural building and craft industries. The design of the models also includes governance structures aimed at promoting not only democratic and inclusive decision-making, but also trust, solidarity and cooperation among members. Since its creation, the Blueprint Alliance has already acted as a consultant on the design and construction of regenerative infrastructure and emergency settlements in Pakistan, Greece, Nepal, South Sudan and the Palestinian Authority. Members of the Alliance also collaborate with GEN's EmerGENcies Programme, which uses regenerative models to reconstruct and promote resilience in communities that experience natural or human-made disasters.i In 2016, following the participation of Tamera community members as RefuGEN volunteers at the Moria refugee camp in the Greek Island of Lesvos, the Blueprint Alliance decided to create two demonstration sites, one in Tamera and another in a different location, in which their regenerative design principles are applied to the creation of "model refugee camps".

Partner projects in the West Bank

At the time of fieldwork, the "Global Campus" hasn't yet managed to reproduce the "Healing Biotope model" as a whole-system, in the form of the PRV-ME. However, it had already built by that time a noticeable legacy of contribution to regenerative peacebuilding in the region, in the form of collaboration with three organizations: The "Holy Land Trust", a Bethlehem-based NGO specialized in non-violence training from community leaders; the "Hakoritna Farm", a permaculture training and demonstration in Tulkarem; and the municipality of Farkha, which in 2015 began a process of transforming its physical and institutional infrastructures into those of an ecovillage, with the support of Tamera and GEN. Each of these initiatives benefited from the transfer of knowledge from Tamera on different dimensions of the ecovillage model.

The "Holy Land Trust": Beyond "us versus them"

Since its inception, the collaboration between Tamera and the "Holy Land Trust" has focused on the transmission of knowledge on the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of regenerative peace building. The founder, a US-educated Palestinian Christian named Sami Awad, claims that acting as a focal point in the West Bank for the organization of the GRACE Pilgrimages began a process which transformed his outlook on non-violence. Such transformation was from a resistance-centred outlook inspired by the legacies of Ghandi and Martin Luther King to one based on building "cultures of habitat" for peaceful coexistence between warrying factions:

In the year 2000, during the 2nd Intifada, I was engaged in non-violent resistance, protests, sit-ins, boycott campaigns, non-violent direct action, such as protecting trees from being uprooted. We developed a training book of non-violent resistance. (…) Tamera made us ask ourselves the question 'what comes after the occupation?'. It's very easy to point our finger at the perceived

enemy. It's a lot more difficult to imagine ways of existing with that 'other' as well as with our own selves, which does not imply this 'us-versus-them' dichotomy. (…) Peace in the Holy Land is possible, but in order to achieve political peace, we need first to find communal peace, the recognition of the responsibility of all communities towards each other. Classifying people and assigning them a territory according to their religion and ethnicity is a heritage of colonialism. We have to overcome that. We need to recognize equality and the rights of all people to this land. (…) We still believe in non-violent resistance, that oppressive structures have to be resisted. However, we need to look beyond that.

Such conceptual shift was accompanied by the introduction, in the methodologies used in non-violence training for community leaders, of a psychosocial understanding of trauma and its effects, with the purpose of critically assessing inherited narratives of collective trauma, as well as find common ground between parts in conflict. This is done in a way that addresses the systems of privilege, domination and extra vulnerability from the part of Arab Palestinians to violence from the part of the state and the army, as a result of nearly 70 years of Israeli occupation.

Such methodology is the core of the "Non-linear leadership transformation program" for village-level community leaders, as well as cultural programmes such as the yearly Beth Lahem Festival of music and arts, as well as the "Immersion Program", which integrates international visitors in activities such as olive harvesting or reconstructing houses for displaced Palestinians whose livelihoods have been destroyed by the Israeli army. It is also at the core of the leadership role that Sami Awad and the "Holy land Trust" played in the Sumud Freedom Camp, set up in 2017 in the South Hebron Hills, with the purpose of rebuilding the Palestinian village of Sarura:

I discovered my enemy: The collective narrative of fear and trauma, and how Israeli society is motivated by fear and trauma, the effect of centuries of persecution leading to the Holocaust. Palestinians have also been motivated by trauma since 1948. (…) People like to amplify things. That's when we lose credibility. It's part of the human consciousness. When we don't learn to state the facts, we learn to tell stories. The intention is not to lie, but to justify positions. For me to be able to justify the present, I have to be able to convince you of the past. The only way I can present my past is to present it with all my cultural, religious lenses. In order to overcome that, we do a lot of work on narrative, stories, telling fact from fiction. Before, people worked with trauma individually, instead of at the community level. They focused on inherited narratives. We focus on what communities do with such stories and how to overcome their divisive power without silencing any part. (…) Our purpose is to reach the essence of what it means to be a human being on this earth, without denying identify.

"Hakoritna Farm": Towards an "economy of resistance"

Fayez Taneeb is the owner and manager of the "Hakortina Farm", a family homestead and permaculture project which borders the Israeli West Bank wall in the city of Tulkarem, northern West Bank. The farm is a demonstration centre for renewable energy technologies and organic farming. Its produce is sold at the Tulkarem Central Agricultural Market and used to prepare food for visitors during the farm's "Open Days". Fayez first got in touch with Tamera and the "Global Campus" in 2005 through Sami Awad, with whom he already had a long-standing

relationship of collaboration. Such contact happened in the framework of the preparation of the first GRACE Pilgrimage. Fayez organized the program of visits and was the main guide during the 14-day journey. By that time, Fayez and his wife Mona already had lived through nearly 30 years of activism. Their trajectory happened in the framework of the Palestinian Communist Party, the Palestinian Farmers' Union (which Fayez coordinated until 2013) and the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee, of which he was a coordinator at the time of fieldwork, as well as the local Women's Club, of which Mona was the president.

The couple's interest in regenerative ecology dates back to 1989, when the first out of 10 chemical factories which were built in subsequent years in the area, with the support of the Israeli government, was inaugurated near Palestine Technical University:

We became aware of the danger that chemicals represent to human health. We started organizing protests against the building of the factories. We also started to look for ways to demonstrate how to do clean agriculture, produce clean food, guarantee that we have clean water. We travelled to France, Germany and Japan to learn about different systems of organic farming, grey water recycling and composting.

In 2002, the building of the Israeli West Bank wall, which resulted in the confiscation of 60% of the land of "Hakoritna Farm", led to a change of strategy. Fayez started not only to mobilize committees against the wall, but also to look for technologies and farming strategies which could guarantee basic living conditions outside the grip of the Israeli government and its army:

Israel controls gas, electricity, water. It has big tanks to collect water. In 2002, we started thinking about developing an economy of resistance, about how to get our energy from nature, from renewable sources, about recycling. (…) The first time the people of Tamera were here, in 2005, we had very good contact. The invited me to come to Tamera, but I could only go in 2012. My son went before me, in 2008. (…) In Tamera, we found an integrated model of a 'clean life': A system of water retention8, the Solar Village9 and its Sunpulse solar energy technology10, biogas, aquaponics. (…) Right now, we don't need to buy energy from Israel. We installed an autonomous solar energy model in 2013. We currently plan to build a big lake in the farm to retain rainwater, as well as a bigger biogas system than the one we already have.

Such infrastructure improvements happened after Fayez and a team from Tamera's "Global Campus" exchanged visits in 2013 and 2014. As a result, the Palestine Technical University invited the "Hakoritna Farm" to become its demonstration centre on renewable energy technology and organic agriculture. At the time of fieldwork, the farm was receiving between 20 and 30 students per year from several Palestinian universities to do three-month internships, during which they learn how to make and operate biogas digesters, solar driers, aquaponics, raised beds and seed banks.

The "Hakoritna Farm" never adopted any of the principles or methodologies developed by Tamera to deal with the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of regenerative peacebuilding. The reason is that, according to Fayez, engaging in dialogue on trauma, identity and historical memory with Israelis is considered by many Palestinians a transgression worthy of social and political marginalisation:

Palestinians have a lot of difficulty with what they call "normalizing", meaning interacting with Israelis. There is the assumption that, if you interact with Israelis, you are a spy or sold your soul. (…) I consider myself to be an open-minded man. Thanks to my political activism, I had the chance to travel extensively and understand how other cultures deal with these issues. However, I have to take the mentality of my peers into account.

Farkha: Introducing the ecovillage model in Palestine

In 2015, Tamera's "Global Campus" program started supporting the application of techniques developed at the "Hakoritna Farm" in the transformation of the village of Farkha, in the northern West Bank, into the first ecovillage in Palestine. Saad Daager, an agronomist, municipal administrator and cadre of the Palestinian Communist Party had a leading role in the process by mediating between the Village Council, Tamera and GEN. In 2013 and 2014, Saad was invited to be one of the trainers in the "Global Campus" initiatives that took place at the Hakoritna farm. Although he has known Fayez Taneeb since 1991 from the Palestinian Communist Party, it was his long-standing interest in regenerative ecology and email contact with the "Global Campus" team in Portugal that led to such invitation. The presence of Kosha Joubert, Executive Director of GEN, at the second "Global Campus" training in Tulkarem paved the way for the implementation of the ecovillage model in Farkha, with the support of Tamera's "Global Campus":

In the second training Kosha Joubert also came and we were discussing the establishment of the Palestinian Ecovillage Network. Then I said 'OK, but we don't have any ecovillages in Palestine, what if we started converting a traditional village into an ecovillage?' Kosha asked 'Do you have such a village which is willing to become an ecovillage? And I said yes, we have Farkha. I said yes and we organized a first visit. In that visit, we met with representatives of the Village Council, the Women's Cooperative and the organic olive oil cooperative, as well as with the Youth Association of Farkha. We started to plan for the first Ecovillage Design Education program (E.D.E.), which took place in 2014. In 2015 we had a second on*e*.

The choice of Farkha as the site to develop the first ecovillage in Palestine has to do with more than Saad's personal, professional and political contacts in the village. Since 1991, Farkha has been the site of the yearly International Youth Voluntary Festival, a 10-day event which receives an average of 200 international volunteers per year, to engage in activities such as public building and road renovation and reforestation, among others. The Festival became a point of reception and diffusion of ideas on regenerative ecology, which contributed to the introduction of organic methods of agriculture and gardening in the village. It also became a point of attraction for international volunteers who have the skills and inclination to help transform Farkha into an ecovillage. Besides, Saad claims that it made the Village Council receptive to the introduction of solar energy in public buildings, as well as to regenerative methods of management of rainwater. In 2016, the mayor of Farkha joined Saad in a visit to Tamera, which in the following year send two "Global Campus" team members to help install a biogas system at the technology demonstration site of the International Youth Voluntary Festival. In 2017, Farkha became an official member of GEN.

At the time of fieldwork, the implementation of the ecovillage model in Farkha was being led by team of public officials who participated in the first and second E.D.E.. According to Saad, although they learned about the strategies used for implementing the sociocultural and psychosocial dimensions of the ecovillage model during the program, they hadn't yet implemented them in the governance structures of the village. It is not clear if the reason for such delay is because, according to Saad, the officials needed more training on such dimensions, as well as to mobilize more people in the village to implement them, or if there were cultural and political reasons like those which prevented their implementation in the "Hakoritna Farm". Still, Saad and the Village Council hope that the example of Farkha will encourage other villages in the region to adopt the ecovillage model.

Conclusions

The trajectory of Tamera's "Global Campus" contributes to theory development in two areas: The roles of international peacebuilding agents in promoting resilience and sustainability in post-conflict situations; The transformative potential of prefigurative "micro-worlds" issued from "New Communalism".

Regarding the roles of international peacebuilding agents, the analysis adds to those already identified by de Coning (2016) that of diffusor of technologies and strategic frames for regenerative peacebuilding. The main strategic frame advocated by Tamera's "Global Campus" for that purpose is the full reproduction of the ecovillage model in its ecological, psychosocial and sociocultural dimension. However, the difficulties that the founding cohort of PRV-ME have experienced in finding a space for implementing the ecological dimension of their project shows the difficulties of reproducing the ecovillage model as a whole-system in circumstances of recurring conflict. The resistance of "Hakoritna Farm" in implementing the psychosocial and sociocultural dimensions of Tamera's model in its premises also bears witness to such difficulties. Still, the analysis shows that, despite such difficulties, ecovillages can be agents of diffusion of regenerative technologies and strategic frames among established actors in the field who have the necessary skills and social capital for introducing such innovations. Tamera's collaboration with the "Holy Land Trust" exemplifies the diffusion of strategic frames from the psychosocial and sociocultural dimension of the ecovillage model. The collaboration between Tamera's "Global Campus" and the "Hakoritna Farm", as well as the municipality of Farkha, is an example of diffusion of strategies and technologies in the field of regenerative ecology.

Regarding the transformative potential of prefigurative "micro-worlds" issued from "New Communalism" (Turner 2006), the analysis points to the importance of intentionally encrypting, in the founding vision of ecovillages, the goal of reaching out and promoting transformation on a wider scale, after a period of internal consolidation. Tamera was developed with the purpose of becoming a replicable model of peaceful coexistence between humans and with nature, a goal which was incubated in previous community-building experiments that its founding members were part of. The "Global Campus" represents the concretization of Tamera's goal of becoming a centre of prefiguration and knowledge diffusion on regenerative peacebuilding strategies and technologies.

Endnotes

1 https://www.tamera.org/project-groups/global-peace-work/global-campus/ (last accessed 20 June 2016).

2 It will be referred simply as "Tamera" throughout the text.

3 http://prvme.org (Last accessed 15 January 2018).

4 http://terra-nova-school.org (last accessed 20 June 2016).

5 https://www.tamera.org/what-is-tamera/visitors3/events/community-course-2015/ (last accessed 20 June 2016).

6 http://defendthesacred.tamera.org/ (last accessed 14 September 2017).

7 https://ecovillage.org/projects/ecovillage-programmes/emergencies/ (last accessed 30 December 2017).

8 Reference to Tamera's "Water Retention Landscape", an integrated system of rainwater management, reforestation and soil renewal developed by Austrian permaculturist Zepp Holzer (https://www.tamera.org/project-groups/autonomy-ecology/ , last accessed 16 January 2018).

9 Reference to Tamera's testfield for solar energy technology (https://www.tamera.org/project-groups/autonomy-technology/ , last accessed 16 January 2018).

10 Reference to the solar energy-powered water pump (https://www.tamera.org/project-groups/autonomy-technology/sunpulse-water/), as well as greenhouse and community kitchen (https://www.tamera.org/project-groups/autonomy-technology/sunpulse-electric/) developed in Tamera's Solar Village by SunOrbit (http://www.sun-orbit.de), a company owned by German physicist Juergen Kleinwaechter. (last accessed 16 January 2018).

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