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Intentional communities: ethics as praxis

Ruth Rewa Bohill

Southern Cross University

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Intentional Communities: Ethics as Praxis

Ruth Rewa Bohill
BA LLB, M (QUAL)

Thesis submitted to fulfil the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate College of Management, Southern Cross University

December 2010
DECLARATION

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University’s rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

Name: Ruth Rewa Bohill

Signature: __________________________

Date: 13 December 2010
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Peter Hamilton
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank the many people who have supported me during this research process:

As a researcher, I am incredibly grateful to the research participants—and the communities they live on—who gave of their time, opened the doors to their houses, and shared their stories.

As a student, I have an enduring appreciation for Associate Professor Michelle Wallace for her guidance, expertise, perseverance and good humour. I have also valued the wisdom and insight of Associate Professor Allan Ellis. Both Michelle and Allan have inspired me through their commitment to research excellence.

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To the community at Patchs beach, which, while not an intentional community, has an immense wealth of social capital and has been a supportive place in which to finalise this thesis.

To my three dogs, Sam, Jet and Emma, who make me smile every day. Many more walks are on the way.

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PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
AND AWARDS

Refereed Journal Articles


Conference Proceedings and Seminars


The following refereed journal is used as a guide to electronic citations in this thesis:


Awards

2006 The Australian Sociological Association (TASA) Postgraduate Conference Award, University of Western Australia, Perth.

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ABSTRACT

Intentional communities are formed by a group of people who have voluntarily chosen to live together for a range of reasons in the creation of a shared lifestyle. They concern practical forms of living that may reflect diverse structures and distinct philosophies. The intentional community literature is both broad and unique in its representation of intentional community living. Intentional communities may also be considered sites that form the basis for resisting mainstream forms of living and representations of subjectivity. Through an active process of self-constitution, participants engaged in communal forms of living may construct different identities and styles of life.

Although the term ‘intentional community’ is fairly recent, notions of utopian living have a long history. Forms of utopian living can be found in early biblical times, while Foucault’s domain of ‘ethics’ is also derived from what the intentional community literature considers to be early utopian communities. Despite an extensive literature, very little research explicitly focuses on communal living as a form of ethics as praxis. This may be due to the characterisation of ethics as a form of rules, duties and consequences, rather than ethics as a relationship that a person cultivates with their ‘self’. Foucault’s domain of ethics provides a valuable context to explore whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics.

Although there is contemporary interest in Foucault’s domain of ethics, relatively few texts have sought to use Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a qualitative methodology in the context of empirical research. Even fewer studies have
drawn on Foucault’s theoretical framework in the context of empirical research on intentional communities. This is despite a number of themes that the literature shares concerning notions of resistance, identity as a form of self-constitution and the potentially transformative effect of communal living. This research therefore seeks to make a significant contribution to a relatively under-researched and under-theorised area of the literature.

Drawing on Foucault’s ethics as a theoretical framework, this thesis explores twenty-eight narratives of participants who live on five rural communities in northern NSW, Australia. Fieldwork was conducted over a nine-month period between 2004 and 2005, with periods of time spent on each community. One community was revisited for the purpose of collecting further empirical data. Foucault’s ethical analysis and Foucauldian constructionism are used in the analysis and interpretation of the interviews that resulted from this fieldwork. Where individual interviews were not undertaken, a document analysis of former empirical research serves to affirm participant observations. Ethical issues concerning confidentiality and representation were addressed through the attendance at communal or ‘tribal’ meetings where required.

The findings suggest that intentional community living may be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics, with an analysis of the empirical research providing further insight into each of the four aspects of Foucault’s ethics: the ethical substance, the mode of subjection, the self-forming activities and the telos. The findings also indicate that communal, or co-operative, living may reflect the dominant form of ethics for intentional community members by the way it permeates all other aspects of ethics. In this light, it can be said that intentional community living is an ethics as praxis—a truly practical philosophy. The implications of these findings suggest that through their very practice of an
ethics, intentional community participants may be ethical, or ‘individualising’, subjects. That is, through notions of personal choice, acts of resistance and the performance of practices on the self that effect transformation, participants may construct both a ‘self’ and ‘styles of life’ that they both like and affirm, thereby positioning themselves differently against mainstream representations of ‘suburbia’.
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Citation Method


Electronic Sources: The citation method for electronic sources and web pages used in this thesis are reported Bohill (1997).

Foucauldian texts: The American Psychological Association (APA) style format provides that the original publication date for a publication in another language appears before the publication date in English. This convention is adopted when citing the works of Foucault, enabling an effective chronological ordering of Foucault’s original French works. Authors such as Scheurich and McKenzie (Scheurich and McKenzie 2005) and O’Leary (O’Leary 2006) have also adopted this approach when citing Foucauldian texts.

Spelling and Punctuation

Use of italics: italics have been used to emphasise particular words.

Use of [sic]: denotes that a word or sentence has been reproduced accurately although it may be grammatically incorrect and/or fail to accord with gender-neutral principles.
**Foucault—Foucauldian:** The change in consonant from a ‘t’ to a ‘d’ in ‘Foucauldian’ is a popular transformation of the term ‘Foucault’ in English texts. The term ‘Foucauldian’ is used instead of ‘Foucault’ when used as an adjective.

**Spelling and Punctuation:** As a general guide, all editorial conventions (including spelling, punctuation, hyphenation, and capitalisation) are in accordance with the Australian standard *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6th edition; revised by Snooks & Co. Published by John Wiley & Sons Australia 2002).

**Gender Neutral Language:** The personal pronouns ‘he’ ‘she’ ‘him’ ‘her’ are used interchangeably to denote gender neutrality throughout this thesis. The use of these terms does not imply any signification of gender difference, unless otherwise stated.
DEFINITIONS

**Bruderhof**
This term is used to refer to all members of the newly named *Church Communities International* including members of the formerly named *Danthonia Bruderhof* based in Australia, the Woodcroft community and other communities (the Bruderhof Communities, Society of Brothers, and the Hutterian Society of Brothers) formerly known as Bruderhof communities, unless specified otherwise.

**Communal**
An elastic concept that refers to a spectrum of shared living arrangements. Metcalf, for instance, argues that some communities are ‘far more, and others far less, communal’ (2004:11).

**Communal living**
A term used interchangeably with ‘intentional community’ and does not denote other generic forms of communal living.

**Commune**
An intentional community where most property is owned collectively and members may hold a common purse and where social life revolves around the group rather than individual pursuits. See Metcalf (2004:11).

**Discourse**
Refers to both an implicit form of knowledge (or *savoir*) that includes philosophical ideas, practices and conventions, but also formal bodies of knowledge (or *connaissance*) such as disciplines and their corresponding literatures, theories and justifications (Scheurich and McKenzie 2005: 846). Discourses represent large-scale systems of knowledge that bring realities, including who we are, into being (Miller 2008:252).

**Ethical conceptualisation**
A term coined by Davidson (1994:117) that refers to Foucault’s four aspects of ethics: the ethical substance, the mode of subjection, the self-forming activities and the telos. This phrase is discussed more fully in section 1.9.

**Ethical substance**
That part of the self that is the focus of ethical conduct. Defined more fully in section 3.6.1. See Foucault (1984a:352-353).

**Ethics**

**Freedom**
Ontologically prior to an ethics; the form an ethics assumes. See Foucault (1984b/1988:12-13).
**Hamlet**
A small community within a larger intentional community. May range in membership size with members sharing residences, resources and other economic and social benefits. See Munro-Clarke (1986:127).

**Intentional community**
This term is defined extensively in section 2.4.1 of Chapter Two. Generally, it refers to a group of people who have chosen to live together for a range of reasons in the creation of a shared lifestyle.

**Land-sharing community**
For the purposes of this research, a community that is not an intentional community. It is however recognised that there may be land-sharing communities that are intentional communities.

**Member**
A person who has been accepted by an intentional community as a member of that community and enjoys the rights and privileges that membership brings.

**Mode of subjection**
The way in which a person is incited to recognise their ethical obligations. Defined more fully in section 3.6.2. See Foucault (1984a:353).

**NSM**
A term used by Schehr to refer to ‘new social movement’ literature or ‘new social movement’ organisations (1997:5).

**Participant**
A resident or non-resident member, or resident of an intentional community who has agreed to participate in this research. May be used interchangeably with the term ‘member’ where a person is both a participant and a member.

**Power**
Defined in Chapters Three and Four as relational rather than as a ‘thing’ in itself.

**Resident**
A person who has been accepted by an intentional community as a resident of that community and may not enjoy the full rights and privileges that membership brings.

**Self-forming activities**
The means by which a person transforms their ‘self’ to become ethical. Defined more fully in section 3.6.3. See Foucault (1984a:352-355).

**Subject**
Used interchangeably with the ‘self’ to refer to an individual.

**Telos**
The goal of ethical work. Defined more fully in section 3.6.4. See Foucault (1984a:355).
Chapter One
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITY LIVING: A FOUCALDIAN FORM OF ETHICS

1.1 Introduction
This thesis explores intentional community living as a form of ethics as *praxis*. In this exploration it draws on two distinct bodies of literature: the intentional community and utopian literature that focuses on diverse forms of concrete communal living, and Foucault’s later work on ethics. Bringing this literature together enables a discussion on key themes that are shared by both. It also provides an avenue for applying Foucault’s ethical analysis to twenty-eight interviews resulting from fieldwork conducted on five different communities in northern NSW, Australia. This analysis enables the key *practices* participants perform on themselves through communal living to be identified, and the resulting constructions that arise from these practices to be evaluated. An application of Foucauldian constructionism through the use of discourse analysis then considers whether participants discursively position themselves differently through communal living.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the background to the research, which considers that intentional community living has a long history and yet despite an extensive literature, is relatively under-theorised when considering ethics as a form of praxis. It also explores key aspects of Foucault’s later work on ethics, which may provide an explicit understanding of communal living as *ethical*. The research field and significant gaps in the research field are considered in this context. The purpose, justification and methodology of the
research are then discussed. The outline of the research provides a brief synopsis of each chapter, noting key definitions and delimitations. The conclusion then provides a synthesis of this chapter.

1.2 Background to the research

Although the term ‘intentional community’ is fairly recent, notions of utopian living have a long history (Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1996; Sargent 2000). Historians, and intentional community writers, point to communal living in early biblical times (Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1996; Sargent 2000), while Foucault’s later work on ethics is also derived from what are considered to be early utopian communities in the intentional community literature, such as the Stoics (Foucault 1984h/1986:54), the Epicureans (Foucault 1984h/1986:46) and the neo Pythagorean communities (Foucault 1984h/1986:51; see also Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1986; Sargent 2000). Foucault argues that these social groups were limited in number and were bearers of culture ‘for whose members a techné tou biou—art of existence—could have a meaning and reality’ (1984h/1986:45). Contemporary intentional communities therefore reflect a trend that has existed for at least two millennia (Kozeny 2000a:17; Metcalf 1986).

The utopian and intentional community literature is therefore extensive. However, scholarly interest in intentional communities as a phenomenon grew in the 1970s with the rise of ‘alternative lifestyles’ following the cultural revolution of the 1960s. The works of Kanter (1972) and Zablocki (1971; 1980; 1976) on American communes are considered seminal. Abrams, McCulloch, Abrams and Gore (1976) conducted research on secular family communes in Britain around the same time, while a number of Australian scholars have made significant contributions to the literature surrounding intentional communities in Australia from the 1970s onwards, such as Cock (1975; 1977;
1979; 1995), Munro-Clark (1986) and Metcalf (1995; 1998; 2003; 2004; 1996; 1987; 1984; 1986; 2002). Contemporary research is unique because, in addition to scholarly research, it includes the voices of intentional communities as distinct entities and represents intentional community members as unique authors.

My interest in utopian themes has been cultivated through early English studies of literary utopias and dystopias that predominantly characterise the utopian literature. For example, the works of Ursula Le Guin, including The Left Hand of Darkness and The Dispossessed, formed part of my Year 11 curriculum, while Frank Herbert’s Dune series was also influential during my teenage years. An interest in utopian themes continued into my twenties and thirties, with Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale accompanying me during my studies of sociology and law at university and Starhawk’s The Fifth Sacred Thing journeyed with me during activist work in my early thirties.

My early thirties however found me living amongst concrete ‘utopian’ communities in the form of intentional communities in the Rainbow Region. Intentional communities, as opposed to literary utopias, represent practical forms of living that are incredibly diverse in form, structure and philosophical orientation. The experience of living among these communities has also served as a catalyst for this research. Though utopian themes have formed the basis for my interest in communal living, this thesis primarily considers the literature surrounding intentional communities as a practical phenomenon and the utopian literature that considers concrete communal societies as opposed to the literature that considers utopias as literary creations.

Although contemporary intentional communities have a long tradition, and extensive research considers the phenomenon, very little research within the intentional community literature explicitly theorises communal living as a
form of ethics\(^1\). This is despite a wide-ranging body of literature that considers the various ideological and philosophical typologies that may classify and inform intentional community living (Butcher 1991; Cock 1975, 1979; Metcalf, 1984; Munro-Clark 1986; Zablocki 1980). These classifications, however, tend to signify an implicit, rather than an explicit, characterisation of intentional community living as an ethics. This may be due to the stress that is placed on ethics as a form of ‘rules, duties and consequences’ (Levy 2004:20), rather than ethics as a relationship a person cultivates with their ‘self’ (Foucault 1984a:352). The later work of Foucault, which emphasizes the latter form of ethics, provides a useful context in which to explore intentional community living as an ethical practice.

Foucault’s theorisation treats ethics as distinct from moral precepts or rules (Davidson 1986:228; Foucault 1984g/1985:25-26; Infinito 2003b:160). Ethics primarily concerns the ‘self’s relationship to the self’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:29) and the way a person may construct their ‘self’ as an ethical person. It is in this light that Infinito argues ‘a subject’s own life and his or her thinking about that life is the stuff of ethics’ (2003a:73; 2003b:160). Ethics is therefore a creative—or active—process, where certain practices performed on the self aim to effect a transformation of one’s very being (1984b/1988:2-3, 11; Foucault 1984g/1985:29). Ethics may therefore engage a particular techné—or style—of life, grounded in praxis that facilitates a transformational goal.

Based on Foucault’s argument that there is no essential human nature (1984b/1988), the ethical subject as a form of power (Infinito 2003a:72), is therefore free to engage in strategies of resistance that refuse an imposed identity, while also creating an identity or style of life it affirms (Infinito 2003a:71; 2003b:158; Sybylla 2001:74). Though as Miller (2008) and Hacking

\(^1\) In comparison, Stillman (2001) writing within the literary utopian genre, argues that utopias are a practical political philosophy.
(2002a, 2002c) point out, this is always within the confines of discursive possibilities that, in turn, are historically and culturally situated. The ethical subject is therefore an *individualising* subject—or what Foucault refers to as a ‘mature adult’ (1969b/1984:49; see also Fillion 2005:53-54, 63;) when engaged in an ethics. Many of these themes resonate with the intentional community literature and the utopian literature that discusses concrete communal societies. For example, Schehr argues that intentional community living exemplifies ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (1997:3), while Abrams et al. (1976) and Munro Clark (1986) focus on the importance of communal living for constructions of identity.

When considering ethics, Foucault proposes four elements, or what Davidson refers to as a ‘grid of ethical intelligibility’ (1986:232). Foucault’s ‘ethical conceptualisation’ (Davidson, 1994:117) consists of the following: the *substance éthique* (ethical substance) or the aspect of the self that is to be worked on (Foucault 1984a:352-353); the *mode d’assujettissement* (mode of subjection) or the way in which a person is invited to recognized their ethical obligations (Foucault 1984a:353); the *techné* (self-forming activity) or *travail éthique* (ethical work), which is the work to be performed on the self to effect the transformation (Foucault 1984g/1985:27); and the *telos* (Foucault 1984a:352-358; 1984g/1985) or goal of the ethical work. Drawing on this grid of ethical intelligibility as a theoretical framework and domain of analysis, this thesis seeks to explore intentional community living as a form of *praxis*—or practical philosophy. The various consequences of this exploration are discussed in more detail when considering the further purposes of this research.

The following section provides an overview of the literature that has considered Foucault’s ethics. It highlights a significant gap in the literature concerning the use of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a theoretical framework and domain of analysis, and its application to the intentional
community literature. This is despite a number of intentional community theorists who focus on similar themes that characterise a Foucauldian form of ethics, including notions of resistance and identity.

1.3 Research field


Although Foucault’s later works have been broadly under-utilised (Miller 2008:266; Scheurich & McKenzie 2005:843), cross-disciplinary attention in the last decade has occurred in the following areas: constructionist research (Miller 2008); ethics (Fillion 2005; O’Leary 2006; Sybylla 2001; Thompson 2003); education (Infinito 2003a; 2003b; Peters 2003; 2004); eco-communes (Eräranta, Moisander & Pesonen 2009; Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Skinner 2007); medical humanities (Chambon & Irving 2003; Coors 2003; Duff 2004; Frank & Jones 2003; Goldstein 2003; Prado 2003); philosophy (Levy, 1998; McNeil, 1998; Palmer, 1998); political theory (Olssen 2003; White & Hunt 2000); spirituality (Davisson 2002; Peltonen & Keleman 2002); and information technology (Aycock 1995). There are, however, significant gaps in the research field, which are discussed in the following section.

1.4 Gaps in the research field

Although there is contemporary interest in the later works of Foucault, relatively few texts have sought to use Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as

Even fewer studies have drawn on Foucault’s theoretical framework in the context of intentional communities. There are some examples. Moisander and Pesonen (2002) take a constructionist approach in the analysis of narratives of Finnish eco-communards located on four eco-communes in Finland. Their research explores representations of green consumerism in both institutionalised discourses and self-narratives by focusing on practices of the self that form the basis of participants’ resistance to normalised subjectivity as consumers. Using Foucault’s ethics as a theoretical perspective Moisander and Pesonen seek to understand eco-communards’ subjectivities as constructed through communal life. Skinner (2007), also uses a Foucauldian ethical framework to explore, as part of her ongoing doctoral thesis, individual and organic constructions of ‘organic-ness’ on a rural community. While Eräranta et al. (2009), seek to build on their earlier work (Moisander &
Pesonen 2002) by focusing on Finnish eco-communes as sites of resistance and political activism.

The following section considers the purpose of the research.

1.5 Purpose of the research

This research is directed towards a number of aims. As discussed above, the intentional community literature is under-theorised when considering ethics as a form of praxis. Further, the literature surrounding Foucault’s later domain of ethics is under-utilised, particularly when undertaking empirical research. This research therefore seeks to make a significant contribution to a relatively under-researched and under-theorised area of both the intentional community literature and the Foucauldian literature on ethics.

In addressing the gaps in the literature, this thesis primarily explores whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics or an ethics as praxis. Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation is therefore utilised as a significant theoretical framework and form of analysis to understand the practices participants perform on themselves through communal living and the way in which they might construct an ethical ‘self’ and style of life. This analysis consequently considers how participants might construct their selves and lives as ethical. The interrelationship between each aspect of ethics is considered, which also serves to illuminate the dominant form of ethics practised by participants on the communities in this research.

If the practices participants perform on their selves through communal living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics, individual participants may exemplify what Foucault refers to as an individualising or ethical subject. Foucauldian constructionism as discussed by Miller (2008) therefore provides an avenue for exploring the discursive representations that arise from a
practice of an ethics by participants in this research. The work of Eräranta et al. (2009), which applies Foucault’s later work on ethics to Finnish eco-communes, is drawn on for an understanding of the discursive representations that may arise from communal living. However this thesis seeks to extend their research in an evaluation of those representations in the Australian context.

A consideration of Foucault’s individualising subject also entails an evaluation of core concepts that underpin Foucault’s notion of the ethical subject, including freedom, power relations, resistance and agency. Resistance and identity are discussed in the context of the intentional community literature in Chapter Two, while all four notions are discussed in the context of Foucault’s ethics in Chapter Three. An evaluation of these concepts is then made in the context of the findings of this research in Chapter Six and the evaluation of those findings in Chapter Seven.

Theoretically, this research seeks to extend research that has been undertaken on intentional communities, in particular from the 1970s to the 1990s, and contemporary Foucauldian literature that considers intentional communities. For instance, intentional community theorists such as Kanter (1972), Abrams et al. (1976), Munro-Clark (1986), Metcalf (1986), Cock (1975, 1977) and Schehr (1997) acknowledge the way in which intentional community living may form the basis for both resisting mainstream society and providing an avenue for positive constructions of the self. Furthermore, the work of Moisander and Pesonen (2002) and Eräranta et al. (2009) considers the way in which eco-communes may act as sites of resistance to perceived Western subjectivities through discursive constructions of the self. This research again seeks to extend and complement their research by contextualising discursive representations of the self and styles of life within an Australian context.
Methodologically, this research also seeks to contribute to an understanding of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a tool of analysis. Though recognised as a domain of analysis (Davidson, 1986: 221), or what Scheurich and McKenzie allude to as a broadly defined qualitative methodology (2005:843), it is under-utilised in the literature. Further, Foucauldian constructionism is a relatively new area of research that builds on social constructionist frameworks in understanding the way the self is positioned, and positions itself through discourse (Miller 2008:268). This thesis therefore explores an application of Foucauldian constructionism to the practices participants perform on themselves and subsequent discursive representations that may arise through communal living.

The following section provides justification for the research.

1.6 Justification for the research

Many of the justifications for this research have been discussed above in the context of the purpose of the research. Although there is a growing interest in Foucault’s later work on ethics, it remains under-utilised. In addition, few works draw on his ethical conceptualisation as a theoretical framework, while even fewer works employ this domain as a form of analysis within the context of empirical research. Further, works that draw on Foucault’s ethics in the context of the intentional community literature are also relatively rare. As discussed above, this is surprising given that intentional communities and the Foucauldian literature on ethics share common themes.

Furthermore, many intentional communities are predicated on the notion of a ‘common ideal or vision’ that may be underpinned by particular philosophical notions (Metcalf 2004:9). These notions are lived out in practice. Texts that discuss the variety of ideals and visions that community living may offer constitute an implicit recognition of an ethics as praxis in the intentional
community living, and that intentional community living may offer an ethical way of life. However, an application of Foucault’s ethics provides instead an *explicit* understanding of an ethics performed by participants on communities in this research. Intentional community living may therefore be considered as a form of ethics that is, a relationship that is cultivated with one’s self.

1.7 Methodology

This research employs Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as an ethical analysis (Davidson, 1986: 221) and Foucauldian constructionism as a form of discursive constructionism (Nikander 2008) in the analysis and interpretation of twenty-eight interviews resulting from fieldwork conducted on five different communities during 2004 and 2005 in northern NSW, Australia. The use of a Foucauldian constructionist framework complements a Foucauldian theoretical perspective, as they both view practices participants perform on themselves as a form of self-constitution. Foucauldian constructionism also supports the use of discourse analysis in determining the predominant discourses participants may seek to resist or create through intentional community living.

Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation informs the research design discussed in Chapter Four; the analysis of participants’ narratives that are contextualised against five case studies in Chapters Five and Six; the structure of the findings presented in Chapter Six; and the overall evaluation of those findings discussed in Chapter Seven. Foucauldian constructionism and the use of discourse analysis also forms the basis for analysis in Chapters Six and Seven.

As discussed above, the use of a qualitative research methodology that employs Foucault’s ethics as a theoretical framework and domain of analysis also makes a significant contribution to the research in this area.
1.8 Thesis outline

Chapter Two introduces the intentional community literature. It begins with the historical context of intentional communities by considering the long history of the ‘utopian’ tradition (Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1996; Sargent 2000). It then considers definitional and classificatory schemes surrounding the identification of intentional communities using a number of works (Butcher 1991; Metcalf 1984, 1995, 2004, 1996; Questenbury 1995; Zablocki 1980). This consideration highlights some significant characteristics particular to intentional communities. It also discusses some classificatory schemes and notes some key conceptual terms surrounding these typologies (Cock 1977, 1979; Metcalf 1984, 1986; Munro-Clark 1986; Zablocki 1980). An overview of the intentional community literature considers some key texts (Abrams et al. 1976; Cock 1977; Kanter 1972; Love-Brown 2002; Metcalf 1995, 2004; Munro-Clark 1986; Schehr 1997), while also highlighting the diverse context of intentional community authorship. This authorship is unique as it includes the voices of intentional communities as discrete communal entities in addition to participants who are individual members of intentional communities.

The chapter then focuses on some clear themes in the intentional community literature that resonate with the work of Foucault. The notion of resistance is explored in the work of Schehr (1997:3), who argues that intentional communities are ‘subaltern modes of resistance’, while Love-Brown (2002:153) contends that intentional communities play an important role in conscious cultural critique. The construction of identity is discussed in the context of the work of Munro-Clark (1986:39), who argues that communal living facilitates the constitution of an ‘authentic self’, while Abrams et al. (1976:93-96) discuss the notion of ‘self-seeking’ in the pursuit of an individual identity. Key texts are discussed that examine intentional communities’
contestation of values and the historical shifts that have occurred around the nature of these values (Cock 1977; Kozeny 1993; Metcalf 1995, 1996; Miller 1999; Schehr 1997). In addition to playing an important role in the construction of identity, values also underpin particular social structures and practices that are integral to intentional community life. A very brief discussion of self-transformation draws on the work of Love-Brown (2002), McLaughlin and Davidson (1986) and Sargisson (2001).

Chapter Three discusses Foucault’s domain of ethics (1984a; 1984b/1988; 1984c/1994; 1984d/1988; 1984f; 1984g/1985; 1984h/1986). The first section provides an introduction to this domain. It considers the contextual underpinnings of his ethics, including the acknowledgment that early utopian communities are the communities on which Foucault has theorised his ethical domain (Foucault 1984h/1986:45-54). It also considers the importance Foucault placed on Christian doctrines and practices, which led him to earlier Greek texts that focus on practices of the self. Foucault’s original enterprise is discussed in the context of the The History of Sexuality series (1976/1978, 1984g/1985, 1984h/1986), which begins with an interest in sexuality in his first volume (1976/1978) and concludes with a focus on ‘practices of the self’—or ethics—in his two subsequent and final volumes: The Use of Pleasure (Foucault 1984g/1985) and The Care of the Self (Foucault 1984h/1986). Both these texts are briefly explored. This thesis argues elsewhere that there is a distinction between Foucault’s conceptualisation of ethics and care of the self as a dominant form of ethics (Bohill 2006). This research primarily explores and applies the former conceptualisation as an organising principle for analysis rather than focusing on care of the self, which Foucault argues was a dominant form of ethics in classical Greek culture.

The second section of Chapter Three focuses on Foucault’s ethics as a theoretical perspective and domain of analysis. It considers the nature of the
ethical subject as fluid, non-determined, an active player in its self-
constitution and potentially *individualising* in its creative ability to construct
an identity it alone affirms or creates. Core conceptual frameworks that
support this notion are considered, including freedom, power relations,
resistance and agency. A critique and defence of power relations and agency
follow. Foucault’s four-part ethical conceptualisation is then discussed and
considered as a domain of analysis (Davidson, 1986: 221), or what Scheurich
and McKenzie allude to as a broadly defined qualitative methodology
(Scheurich & McKenzie 2005:843). This is because it shows how participants
construct their selves and their lives through an ethical practice. Significant
texts that have applied Foucault’s ethics across a range of research strategies
are reviewed as part of this discussion (Aycock 1995; Davidson 1986; Eräranta
et al. 2009; McPhail 1997, 1999; Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Moore 1987;

Chapter Four discusses Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008) within a
qualitative research structure. Foucauldian constructionism complements the
use of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as an analytical tool because it
provides the *why* and *what for* of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation. While
Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation provides the organisational principles for
analysing the way in which participants in this research might perform an
ethics, Foucauldian constructionism provides an avenue for exploring the
social constructions that are made possible through communal living and the
way participants might discursively position themselves differently through
this style of life.

Case studies of five distinct communities have been used to historically and
culturally locate participants within a very particular discursive framework,
while fieldwork was undertaken to collect data from twenty-eight
participants living on these communities through interviews and participant
observation. A layered approach is adopted towards the overall interpretation and evaluation of the empirical data. Systematic coding provides demographic information on participants in each community that forms the basis of the five case studies presented in Chapter Five. Foucault’s ethical analysis, derived from Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, and Burr’s (1995) style of discourse analysis provides a deeper level analysis of the way in which participants might practice an ethics on these communities, which is presented in Chapter Six. A number of limitations particular to the research methodology are discussed and issues pertinent to the validation of the research and ethical considerations are also explored.

Chapter Five presents the case studies of four intentional communities and one land-sharing community, all of which have been founded for well over twenty years. The chapter introduces the three areas where the communities are based: the Rainbow region, the Thora Valley and the New England tablelands. The first two areas formed part of the original ‘hippy trail’ in Australia which, in the 1970s and 1980s, provided many with their first introduction to alternative community living (Cock 1979:24; Metcalf 2005:2). Figure 1 in Appendix A shows the area of these communities in northern NSW, Australia. The communities have been chosen for their longevity, rural location, difference in philosophical orientation and very practical concerns, such as my ability to visit and access them. The land-sharing community serves to illustrate key points that are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

Chapter Six focuses on an application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation (Davidson 1994:116), or what Davidson also refers to as Foucault’s ‘grid of ethical intelligibility’ (1986:232), to the empirical research derived from the five communities discussed in Chapter Five. Thus Foucault’s four aspects of ethics (1984a:352-353) provides the organisational principles for the analysis of the empirical data. The first section considers the ethical substance or the
'relevant domain for ethical judgment’ (Davidson 1986:228; Foucault 1984a:352-353) of the participants in this research. The *mode of subjection*, or the way participants are invited to recognise their moral obligations (Foucault 1984a:353) is discussed in the second section. The third section focuses on both communal and individual *self-forming practices*, or techniques, of research participants. This is a significant section because it discusses the predominant *practices* participants choose to perform on their ‘selves’ in order to achieve the type of transformation that is discussed in the *telos*. The fourth section focuses on the *telos* attributed to communal life for participants in this research.

Chapter Seven evaluates the findings presented in Chapter Six. It primarily considers the research issue of whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics as *praxis*. It then focuses on the discursive representations that arise through a practice of ethics on these communities and the constructions that may result from intentional community living. It also discusses the implications of the research for theory in relation to intentional community living and the intentional community literature, Foucault’s ethics, and the methodology of this research. Limitations of the research and future research directions are then considered, before a final section concludes the research.

1.9 Definitions

A definitions table follows the outline of the contents of this thesis. The term ‘intentional community’ is defined comprehensively in section 2.4.1 and therefore is only briefly referenced in the definitions table. Another term that is only briefly cited in that table is worthy of further mention here. Davidson’s term ‘ethical conceptualisation’¹ (1994:117) is utilised throughout this research.

¹ Similarly, Moore (1987) refers to Foucault’s ethical conception.
to refer to Foucault’s four aspects of ethics, which are discussed in sections 1.2 and 3.6. This coined phrase provides a means of negotiating the seemingly awkward way of describing Foucault’s four aspects of ethics in addition to providing a short phrase that nonetheless encapsulates each aspect. Use of the term also serves to delineate the four aspects of ethics that form part of the organising principles for analysis in Chapter Six from wider discussions on Foucault’s ethics that focus on care of the self. As noted above, this thesis draws a distinction between Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation and ‘care of the self’ as a dominant form of ethics (Bohill 2006). This distinction is discussed further in the following delimitations section.

1.10 Delimitations

There are six delimitations to the research project reported in this thesis. The first concerns the intentional community literature, which is discussed in Chapter Two. The second, third and fourth delimitations are specific to the work of Foucault, whose work is discussed in Chapter Three. The fifth concerns identity, which is relevant to the entire thesis, and the sixth delimitation concerns the empirical research.

The intentional community literature is extensive. It represents ‘a polyphony of voices and irresolvable differences’ (Yeatman 1994:2), with texts written by academic scholars, scholarly research groups and intentional community research centres (Metcalf 2004:124-125). Intentional community members and intentional communities also contribute to this broad discussion on intentional community living. Many of these texts are concerned with the practical exigencies of communal life. In comparison, there is an opulent literature on utopian living that predominantly focuses on Thomas More’s first coined definition of utopia as both a ‘good place’ and a ‘no place’ (cited in Schaeer 2000:3). This thesis primarily focuses on the former body of
literature rather than on the very extensive literature surrounding literary utopians and notions of ‘utopian’ living. However, a handful of texts that focus on ‘utopia’ as a form of practical philosophy or as concrete communal societies are referred to, such as the work of Stillman (2001) Metcalf (1996) Schehr (1997) Sargisson (2004a) and Sargisson and Sargent (2004).

Foucault’s work broadly covers three ‘domains’ of analysis: archaeology, genealogy and ethics (Davidson 1986). His earlier works, which include the first two domains, are well known, with a rich literature of their own. Works such as Madness and Civilisation (1961/1965) and The Archaeology of Knowledge (1969a/1972) are recognized texts in Foucault’s early archaeological corpus, while The Birth of the Clinic (1973) and Discipline and Punish (1975/1977) form part of his genealogical works. This thesis does not consider these domains of analysis. As discussed in section 1.2 and Chapter Three, the current research is primarily concerned with Foucault’s domain of ethics.

However, the thesis does not consider the wider literature surrounding ethics. For example, Alan Donagan’s The Theory of Morality (1979), which precedes Foucault’s The History of Sexuality series, and Alistair McIntyre’s After Virtue (1984), written in the same year as Foucault’s death, may contextualise Foucault’s later work on ethics. Both Donagan and Foucault use similar early Greek texts and the work of Nietzsche in the development of their theoretical frameworks (Donagan 1979:1-2; Foucault 1984h/1986:54). However, these works and others that concern a wider philosophical enquiry about ethics will not be drawn on in the context of this research.

This thesis also differentiates Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a tool for analysis from care of the self as a dominant form of ethics within ancient Greek culture (Bohill 2006). Cross-disciplinary texts that consider Foucault’s ethics as a tool for analysis are therefore primarily considered in this research,
as opposed to texts that focus on Foucault’s care of the self. Though there is significant overlap between the two notions, a focus on Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a form of analysis enables the exploration of other forms of ethics that participants may practice in this research.

Although notions of identity are discussed throughout this thesis, the focus is not on identity as a theoretical concept. For that reason, literature focusing on identity is not reviewed. Rather, identity is limited to notions discussed in the intentional community and Foucauldian literature surrounding ethics, which consider identity as a form of self-constitution derived from the practices participants perform on themselves through communal living. Foucault’s (1971/1984:92-94; 1984i/1985:11-12) idea of an ethical or ‘individualising’ subject and Foucauldian constructionism is therefore used as a conceptual tool for understanding identity formation.

The case studies presented in Chapter Five include five long-term rural communities in northern NSW, of which four are intentional communities and one is a land-sharing community. Further, the research participants represented, in some cases, a very small proportion of the community being researched. The research findings are therefore limited to this context and are not intended to characterise other communities in Australia or overseas. An application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as the organising principle for analysis and Foucauldian constructionism to other communities may produce very different results than those discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

Although not considered in this thesis, the utopian literature, the contextualising of Foucault’s later domain of ethics within the ethical literature, and theoretical frameworks surrounding identity may well form the basis of future research in the context of intentional communities.
1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has introduced intentional communities and the key literature that has explored this phenomenon, while also situating Foucault’s ethics within his review of early utopian communities. It has acknowledged that although intentional communities may have a long history, very little research explicitly focuses on intentional community living as a form of ethics as praxis. Further, Foucault’s ethical domain is under-researched when considering empirical work and intentional communities. Thus the use of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation may provide a theoretical framework and domain of analysis for understanding whether the practices participants perform on themselves through communal living may be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics. The use of Foucauldian constructionism also serves to highlight the discursive constructions that may arise through communal living, providing a useful insight into Foucault’s notion of the ethical–or individualising–subject, and the way participants may position themselves in and through discourse.

In addition to addressing the gaps in research, a number of other factors motivate and justify this research. Ethics is represented in the intentional community literature as an implicit concept in its consideration of a diverse range of philosophies that may inform intentional community living. An application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation may therefore provide an explicit understanding of ethics performed by the participants in this research. Theoretically, this thesis seeks to extend earlier research on intentional communities that arose between the 1970s and 1990s and some of the key concepts that resonate with Foucault’s later work on ethics. Further, it seeks to enhance contemporary works that use Foucault’s ethical work in the context of intentional communities by situating the results of the research within the Australia context. Methodologically, this thesis also seeks to
contribute to an understanding of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a domain of analysis.

This chapter has discussed the thesis outline, noted key definitions and considered the delimitations of the research. The following chapter explores the intentional community literature, focuses on the nature of intentional communities and considers key concepts that resonate with Foucault’s domain of ethics.
Chapter Two
INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

2.1 Introduction
This chapter explores the literature surrounding ‘intentional communities’ and is divided into two sections. The first section considers the historical context of the ‘utopian’ tradition, provides a brief overview of Australian utopian experimentation, and then moves into a discussion of the way in which intentional communities have been defined and classified. Significant texts that emerged from the ‘wave’ of communal experimentation in the 1960s and 1970s (Metcalf 1995:38) are then explored, in addition to contemporary research on intentional communities. This section highlights the eclectic nature of intentional communities while also acknowledging the diversity of voices that are represented in the intentional community literature.

The second section focuses on significant themes in the literature that concern resistance, identity and the way contestation around values implicate communal practices and transformations in identity and ways of life. Schehr’s argument that intentional communities represent ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (1997:3) and Love-Brown’s contention that intentional communities are ‘revitalisation movements’ focused on cultural critique (2002:158) are reviewed. This exploration leads into a discussion of significant works that consider the way intentional community living facilitates the re-articulation of values and construction of identity. In addition to drawing on the intentional community literature, this section draws on a small number of texts from
utopian studies that focus on concrete communal societies, such as Metcalf (1986; 1995; 1996) Sargisson (2000; 2001; 2004a; 2004b), Poldervaart (2001) and Stillman (2001). The historical shifts that have occurred in relation to both values and practices utilised by intentional communities are also explored, concluding with a brief synopsis on the potential of personal transformation for individual communal participants living on intentional communities.

2.2 Historical context

Because mainstream media fails to understand the phenomenon, very few people realize that the hippie communes of the 60s were collectively just one small blip in history’s timeline of intentional communities. (Kozeny 2000a:16)

There is general agreement in the intentional community literature that utopian communal living supports a long history (Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1996; Sargent 2000). Early historical utopias existed in myths that featured characteristics of simple living, abundance, security, unity and a life of pleasure. Greek and Roman myths of heroic resting places, such as the Elysian Fields, encapsulated similar depictions, while ‘hell was available as a contrast’ (Sargent 2000:8). Many historians point to communal living in earlier biblical times, noting early expressions on Sumerian clay tablets, and in the poetry of Hesiod in the eighth century B.C.E (Sargent 2000:8), as well as in the Old Testament (Kozeny 2000a:17; Metcalf 1996:11; Sargent 2000:8).

In the sixth century BCE, the Bikkhu-Sangha (Union of Bikkhus) formed the first ‘ordained followers of the teacher from Sakka’ (Armstrong 2000:109-110), with Buddha’s followers forming successive collective groups to share the path of enlightenment (Kozeny 2000a:17). Similarly, early Christian communities, from the Essenes in the second century BCE, to ‘communities of

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1 Within the intentional community literature, concrete communal societies may also be referred to as intentional communities or any one of the terms discussed in section 2.4.1. That is, they concern a life of praxis, as opposed to being a literary creation.
goods’ noted in Acts 2:44-45, and early Monastic communities in the fourth century AD (Kozeny 2000a:17) formed the basis of early utopian communal living clearly showing a trend that has existed [for] at least two millennia.

Although the idea of utopia is as old as humanity itself (Metcalf 1996:11), the term was originally coined in 1516 by Thomas More in his novel Utopia (Levitas 1990:2; Schaer 2000:3; Touraine 2000:18) to refer to both a ‘good place’ and a ‘no place’ (Levitas 1990:2; Schaer 2000:3). More’s Utopia was ‘a nonexistent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space’ (Sargent 2000:15). A large body of utopian literature explores this ‘rhetorical conceit that gave rise to this literary genre’¹ (Schaer 2000:3) that will not be explored in any depth here.²

Levitas (1990) and Sargisson (2004a) note the importance of the tension in the etymology of the word. Levitas argues that the concept of ‘utopia’ entertains a deliberate ambiguity that begs the question of whether a eutopia, or a good place, is the same thing as a utopia, or a no place (1990:2). In comparison, Sargisson, in the context of the utopian literature that concerns concrete communal societies, argues that as ‘good places’ intentional communities lead ‘people to experiment… to change their lifestyle and to make their dreams come true’ (2004a:2). By contrast, as ‘no places’ the term is countered by the mistaken view of ‘utopia as perfect’ or as a more plausible ‘nuanced view of utopia as the desire for something better’ (Sargisson 2004a:3).

¹ Touraine provides a discussion on early utopian writers, such as Thomas More, George Orwell, Karl Mannheim and in particular Ernst Bloch, whose works dominated ‘more than a half century of our reflections on utopia’ (Touraine 2000:18).
² Both Schaer (2000:3) and Touraine (2000:18) point out that More’s Utopia gave rise to ‘a whole literary genre’, with Touraine arguing that ‘the idea of utopia’ proposed ‘a specifically social theory of society’, ‘freed from any religious legitimisation’ and an ‘affirmation that society is its own foundations’ (Touraine 2000:19). Those foundations, in More’s Utopia, rested on the idea of society founded on law and equality and principles espoused by Plato such as common property (Touraine 2000:19).
Levitas (1990) ultimately argues for a concept of utopia that remains constant while the content, form and function of utopias may vary. In this light she argues that ‘utopia is the expression of a desire for a better way of life’ (Levitas 1990:7-8). Metcalf argues that ‘utopian refers to the intention to achieve an ideal society, not the outcome’ (1996:8). Metcalf also affirms the more ‘nuanced view of utopia’ when referring to Kozeny’s observations that ‘each is based on a vision of a better life’ (Kozeny 2006:80; Metcalf 1996:13). In contrast, Schehr (1997) argues that ‘the dubious and misleading signification’ of intentional communities as utopian has resulted in their ‘status of insignificance’ in social movement theory. However, Schehr affirms that ‘without some conceptualisation of utopia, without the cultivation of alternative perceptions of reality, society would be dead’ (1997:133). Schehr further argues that Ricoeur anticipates Schehr’s interpretation of intentional communities when he states ‘Utopias … create the distance between what is and what ought to be’ (cited in Schehr 1997:147). Texts that discuss utopias as concrete communal societies are discussed further in the context of resistance in section 2.6.

Stillman discusses literary utopias as a form of ‘practical political philosophy’, arguing that they are ‘a kind of political thought that considers and assesses ideals, means, and circumstances in order to facilitate wise human action’ (2000:10). He argues that utopias explore ‘what is not’ by developing alternative imaginary societies, which are then examined against ‘what is’ in contemporary society’s norms and practices. Utopian writers then ask ‘about the relationship between what is to what is not’ by exploring the possibilities and desirability of change (Stillman 2000:11). Part of this process involves the re-evaluation of ‘norms, principles, or patterns that are alternatives to the values of contemporary society’ (Stillman 2000:11). Rather than presenting abstract principles, utopias therefore display principles in practice (Stillman
2000:12), including ‘how human beings live those principles’ (Stillman 2000:13). Although Stillman focuses on literary utopias, his writings resonate with utopian writers who consider concrete communal societies or intentional communities, such as Metcalf (1986, 1995), Schehr (1997) and Sargisson (2000, 2001, 2004a, 2004b). This discussion will now turn to a consideration of Australian utopian experimentation.

2.3 Australian utopian experimentation

Metcalf (1995:15; 1986:111) places the various waves of communal experimentation in Australia squarely within the utopian tradition. He discusses four waves, each of which is characterised by the common utopian notion of a desire for a better way of life. In the first wave, utopian communal experimentation prior to the 1890s began with early migrants establishing communities based on a variety of utopian ideologies (Metcalf 1995:17). The second wave, in the 1890s, saw an influx of communal experimentation based on American and European utopian literature that was lived out through the historical conditions of severe drought, economic depression and violent labour unrest (Metcalf 1995:18-19). In the third wave, government regulation of communities continued in the era of communal experimentation in the 1900s to 1970s, with a variety of utopian schemes either established or supported by various state governments (Metcalf 1995:26, 34-35). The emergence of religious utopian groups permeates all of these waves, with migrants, often persecuted in their countries of origin, finding a more tolerant society in Australia.

In contrast, the fourth wave – from the 1970s to the mid 1990s – is characterised as a ‘back-to-the-land movement’ connected with anti-Vietnam War sentiments and an environmental movement. The Aquarius festival in

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1 For a comparison see (Dunne 1992).
Nimbin in 1973 signified what Metcalf refers to as ‘a solid social movement’ (1995:38). Although Metcalf places the fourth wave of communal experimentation within the Western utopian tradition, Munro-Clark (1986) and Dunne (1992) clearly argue that this upsurge arose from an international wave of communitarianism that formed part of the radicalism of the 1960s in both America and Europe (Munro-Clark 1986:49), rather than from any indigenous utopian inspired movements of the Australian past (Dunne 1992:2).

Arguably, a fifth wave of communal living has transpired which is not limited to Australian conditions. Schehr (1997), drawing on the work of McLaughlin and Davidson (1986), articulates eight significant characteristics that distinguish intentional communities of the 1960s from those of the 1990s. A decline in the intensity of community living, in addition to a reduction in many communities ‘radical zeal’, is a significant characteristic of this wave and is well documented in the literature (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986; Metcalf 2004; Pitzer 1989). Schehr’s eight characteristics are discussed further in section 2.6.

This thesis focuses on empirical research that has been undertaken on communities that were formed during the fourth wave of communal experimentation in Australia. However, further texts not limited to the Australian context, which also consider intentional communities of the 1970s onwards, are discussed further in the following sections.

\footnote{For a comparison see (McGregor 1975:15).}
2.4 Definitions and classifications

Definitions, classifications and typologies surrounding the identification of intentional communities are relatively recent constructions\(^1\) and tend to reflect an increasing diversity of communal lifestyles. Following the advent of alternative and experimental communities in the 1960s there arose an early, yet thorough, stage of academic interest in the growing phenomenon. The following sections follow the shifts in both definitions and classifications of intentional communities.

2.4.1 Definitions

Butcher (1991:14) and Questenbury (1995:5) argue that the term ‘intentional community’ was coined at a Community Service Conference in 1949. A more detailed definition was printed in the 1959 Intentional Communities Yearbook and Newsletter, which ‘specified a minimum size of three families or five adults, the sharing of land and housing’ and made reference to a statement discussing the essence of community\(^2\) (Butcher 1991:14). Although much of the literature within the utopian tradition has continued to refer to utopian communities, even when discussing concrete communal societies, other terms began to be used more frequently from the 1960s onwards that focused on communal living as a form of praxis. For instance, terms such as ‘commune’ (Abrams et al. 1976; Zablocki 1980:7), ‘alternative lifestyle’ (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:16; Metcalf 1984:67, 1986:13; Zablocki & Moss Kanter 1976:271), ‘alternative community’ (Cock 1979:1-2) and ‘alternative society’ (Borowski, 

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\(^1\) Authors such as Munro-Clark (1986) and Metcalf (1986) note that there is an abundance of classificatory schemes. Munro-Clark for instance argues that ‘There are as many different typologies of communes or of communitarian ideologies as there have been sociologists to observe them …’ (1986:117). However, many of the typologies noted by Metcalf range from the period 1972-1982 (Metcalf 1986:127 footnote **).

\(^2\) ‘The essence of community is spiritual, that is the feeling of mutuality, the practice of mutual respect, love and understanding. Physical forms and practices alone will not create community, but forms, methods and practices will grow out of the spirit’ (see Morgan 1988; cited by Butcher 1991:15).
were used by intentional community researchers, marking a fragmentation in the ‘utopian’ nomenclature.

Zablocki’s definition of ‘commune’ below expands on the earliest printed version of the term ‘intentional community’. Zablocki (1980) defines a commune as:

any group of five or more adult individuals (plus children if any), the majority of whose dyads are not cemented by blood or marriage, who have decided to live together, without compulsion, for an indefinite period of time, primarily for the sake of an ideological goal, focused upon the achievement of community, for which a collective household is deemed essential. (P. 7)

Zablocki is, however, keen to point out that the definition ‘does not necessarily imply a utopian program’; and though it is not without its problems, it seems to underpin ongoing formulations. For instance, Metcalf’s ‘working definition of alternative lifestyle’ mirrors many of the qualities of Zablocki’s definition of commune, while he also uses similar definitions in subsequent publications when defining an intentional community (Metcalf 1995:11-12; 2004:9; 1996:8). However, distinct terms such as commune, cohousing and ecovillage are also used, to denote specific organisational structures elsewhere (see Metcalf 2004:9-10).

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1 See (Zablocki 1980:7, footnote).
2 Zablocki notes that an ‘unintended consequence’ of the definition was ‘the elimination of most homosexual communes from the sample’ of which a surprising result of their research indicated that there were a ‘great number of homosexual communes (both male and female) to be found in most large American cities’ (1980:7).
3 ‘Five or more persons, drawn from more than one family or kinship group, who have voluntarily come together for some purpose, in the pursuit of which they seek to share certain significant aspects of their lives together, and who are characterised by a certain consciousness of themselves as a continuing group (Metcalf 1984:67). Metcalf acknowledges that the term is adopted from the work of Rigby (1972), Jerome (1974) and an earlier work of Zablocki (1971).
Metcalf, in his text, *The Findhorn Book of Community Living* (2004) provides a contemporary definition of an intentional community:

Five or more people, drawn from more than one family or kinship group, who have voluntarily come together for the purpose of ameliorating perceived social problems and inadequacies. They seek to live beyond the bounds of mainstream society by adopting a consciously devised and usually well thought-out social and cultural alternative. In the pursuit of their goals, they share significant aspects of their lives together. Participants are characterised by a ‘we-consciousness’, seeing themselves as a continuing group, separate from and in many ways better than the society from which they have emerged. (P. 9)

There are significant similarities between Zablocki’s (1980) earlier definition of commune and Metcalf’s (2004) more contemporary meaning of an intentional community. Whether there are three families or five adults, these people are *unrelated biologically*. In addition, living together is *voluntary*; that is, it is non-coercive and a matter of *choice*. Further, the group lives together for a period of time and pursues a goal, vision or purpose that underpins the choice to live communally—hence the notion of *intentionality*. Living together is also perceived as a *communal* enterprise—no matter what the extremes of communality. As Metcalf (2002, 2004) argues, we all live more or less communally. However, intentional community living may be far more communal than a community of neighbours living on one street (see Metcalf 2002:3; 2004:11). For Metcalf (2004), there is also an inherent sense of *identity* attached to being part of a particular group. This identity both transcends a notion of individualism and is characterised by a communal sense of self—what Metcalf refers to as a ‘we-consciousness’ (Metcalf 2004:9). Metcalf also perceives that intentional communities are an alternative to mainstream society and, through participation, *actively* seek out a contrasting lifestyle to the dominant cultural paradigm. The shift in this definition is not
insignificant in the context of Schehr’s argument that intentional communities represent ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (Schehr 1997), which will be discussed further in section 2.6.

In contrast, Sargisson and Sargent (2004) argue that there is no agreed upon definition of intentional community. Rather, common ground exists between key factors and functions that identify an intentional community. For instance, Sargisson and Sargent draw on key factors identified by Bouvard, such as size and organisation, in addition to the key function of social change, as distinctive attributes of intentional communities (Sargisson & Sargent 2004:5). Other key factors such as shared goals (Kanter 1972:2-3; Metcalf 2004:9; Zablocki 1980:7) and group life (Abrams et al. 1976:45; Metcalf 1984:67; Zablocki 1980:7) are also distinctive traits of intentional communities. Sargisson and Sargent (2004:5) note other factors, such as economic ties, organisational features and the deliberate creation of an alternative to mainstream living, may also be key indicia of intentional communities.

One of the difficulties in defining an intentional community rests in the many forms an intentional community may take. For instance, Metcalf, in his thesis *Dropping Out and Staying In* (1986) on alternative lifestyles acknowledged a plethora of terms that have altered in relevance and meaning over the course of time. In addition to these terms, he notes that there ‘are probably other terms I have forgotten’ (Metcalf 1986:11). Contemporary forms may reflect both ecological and specific orientations of intentional communities and include: rural and urban communes\(^2\) (Bartsch et al 2000); eco-villages (Sirna 2000); ecological communities (Bartsch et al 2000); co-housing communities

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\(^1\) These included: ‘utopian, communal, co-operative, collective, communistic, alternative lifestyle, intentional community, hamlet development, village settlement, hippies, freaks, new settlers, new age communities, crazies, hips, rural retreaters, survivalists, and sustainable communities’ (Metcalf 1986:11).

\(^2\) As discussed further on, communes usually display far more indices of communal sharing than intentional communities.
Lindemann 2000); co-operatives; companies; income-sharing communities (Renwick-Porter, 2000); ashrams; kibbutzim (Weiss Simon 2000); permaculture communities; spiritual communities (Abbott-Richards 2000; Caplan, 2000); resistance communities (Frankel-Streit 2000); and student housed co-ops (Case 2000). In addition, the names of some intentional communities have become symbolic with their philosophy, ideology, geographical location and practices. The Findhorn Foundation in Scotland, one of ‘the best known intentional communities in the world’ (Metcalf 2004:59), is known for its spirituality, its ecological roots, its distinct organisational structure and its Scottish location. ZEGG,\(^1\) in Germany, reflects ecological ideals and liberal ‘political, social and sexual ideologies and practices’ (Metcalf 2004:79). Many more communities’ names play an important role in their symbolic representation in Australia. For example, the Tuntatable Falls Co-operative located near Nimbin in Northern NSW is closely associated with the Aquarius Festival due to it evolution from this event; Bodhi Farm in the Channon, also located in Northern NSW, is associated with the Terania Creek protests and the establishment of early Buddhist retreats; and The Wolery, on the south coast of Western Australia, is known for its communalism and eco-friendly housing (Metcalf 2004:71).

\[\text{2.4.2 Classifications}\]

Given the difficulties associated with defining an intentional community and the many forms it may take, Abrams et al. (1976), Metcalf (1986), Metcalf and Vanclay (1987), Munro-Clark (1986) and Sargisson and Sargent (2004) also allude to the difficulties associated with classifying intentional communities. For instance, Metcalf (1986) discusses the problems inherent in researchers imposing definitional order on others, pointing to Pelto and Pelto’s

\[\text{\(^1\) ZEGG is the acronym for ‘Zentrum für Experimentelle Gesellschaftsgestaltung’, or Centre for Experimental Cultural Design (see Metcalf 2004:80).}\]
conceptualisation of an ‘emic’ approach which enables participants to self-
define their reality (Metcalf 1986:12). Although Metcalf goes on to define an
alternative lifestyle group ‘at least for the purposes of social movement
analysis’ (Metcalf 1986:13), Metcalf and Vanclay were able to leave the
definition open, enabling substantiation ‘by the notion of self-definition’
(Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:16-17).

Abrams et al. although initially open to self-definition of commune members,
note that ‘we quickly found ourselves uneasy about regarding all these
empirically given groups as the same sort of project [and found that] there
were some groups we did want to treat as communes despite their own
resolute resistance to being labelled that way’ (1976:26). They subsequently
limited their research to ‘secular family communes’ based on ‘an attempt to
cultivate friendship’ (Abrams et al. 1976:26). Munro-Clark is careful to
acknowledge the limited nature of classificatory schemes in addition to noting
the antipathy intentional community participants may express ‘at obtuse
attempts to fit their enterprises into reductive categories’ (1986:117). She
separates the role of classificatory schemes: which simply identify dimensions
that differentiate sets of entities from others. However she points out that
such schemes have no bearing on the unique character of particular concrete
entities (Munro-Clark 1986:117). Munro-Clark concludes that ‘without some
overall classificatory scheme by which to compare and locate different
instances (course-grained and overlapping though this may be), inquiry
would simply drown in a sea of particulars’ (1986:117).

Zablocki (1980) shares a similar view:

The purpose of introducing a classification scheme at this point is not to
impose a unique taxonomy upon the subject matter. Although other schemes
might have been equally justified, the choice of a single classification scheme
is necessary to avoid drowning in the wealth of ideological diversity\textsuperscript{1} evinced by the 120 communal groups in our sample. Which taxonomy is ultimately best is a question in which we have no interest. (P. 204-205)

A desire to construct an intelligible language that could best describe and categorise intentional communities led, however, to the development of elaborate typologies and classifications from the 1970s onwards. Many of these typologies were closely linked to the type of research each theorist was seeking to explore.

For instance Zablocki (1980) devised an eightfold classification of communes, based on eight different types of communitarian ideologies. He notes an important division between religious and secular communes;\textsuperscript{2} a division that is followed in subsequent typologies (see Metcalf 1984; Munro-Clark 1986).\textsuperscript{3} Abrams et al. envisaged ‘four general types of communal projects: the quasi commune, the utopian community, the purposive commune and the family commune’ (1976:38). Cock (1977; 1979) adopted two successive typologies. His first typology classified communes as counter-cultural, bourgeois and religious, with subsequent sub-divisions into rural and urban, and religious communes further subdivided into eastern and western (Cock 1977). His second typology maintains the distinction between urban and rural communes; however, he drops the religious division (Cock 1979).

Based on a classificatory scheme that is exhaustive, creates distinctions that are ‘real’, uses terms that are acceptable to the group and facilitates understanding (Metcalf 1984:68-70; 1986:127-129; see also Munro-Clark 1986:118), Metcalf argues that Cock’s classifications fail on the third criteria

\textsuperscript{1} Munro-Clark further notes however, that in future communard writings ‘a place may be found for rich particularity’ (1986:224, fnb 10).

\textsuperscript{2} Zablocki notes that his ‘research substantiates the long-standing claim that the religious/secular distinction is important in the analysis of communal groups’ (1980:205).

\textsuperscript{3} Metcalf uses the term ‘spiritual’ instead of religious (1984:72).
because ‘the meaning of counter cultural and bourgeois ... are not words which would be readily acceptable,’ (1984:72); counter culture being seen as a relic of the late sixties and early seventies\(^1\), while ‘bourgeois’ is perceived as inherently contradictory to the term ‘commune’ (Metcalf 1984:72). Munro-Clark (1986:117-125) discusses the classifications utilised by Zablocki (1980), Metcalf (1984) and Cock (1977, 1979) and she is highly cognisant that the classificatory schemes adopted ‘do not...have any bearing at all upon the unique character of particular concrete entities’ (Munro-Clark 1986:117). She concludes, with respect to Metcalf’s criteria, that ‘It would be difficult to quarrel with any of these criteria though it may not always be easy to satisfy them’ (Munro-Clark 1986:118).

There are, however, some clear distinctions that these theorists agree upon. Munro-Clark for instance, confirms the importance of the ‘religious-versus-secular distinction’, noting that ‘those who have studied post-1965 intentional communities [find this distinction] the most powerful differentiator of communitarian groups’ (1986:121). Her conclusions correspond with Zablocki’s findings ‘that the religious/secular distinction is important in the analysis of communal groups’ (Zablocki 1980:205). A variant of this position is also maintained by Seal (1973), Rigby (1974) and Cock (1977), while the division rural/urban, consistently used by Zablocki (1980), Kanter (1972) and Munro-Clark (1986), is also maintained by Seal\(^2\) (1973) and Cock (1977; 1979). Metcalf (1984) subsequently employs both these classifications—religious/secular and rural/urban—with the term ‘spiritual’ used in place of ‘religious’. Thus the geographical split, rural/urban, forms a significant division, with spiritual/secular forming a subdivision to which Metcalf (1984:72; 1986:130) adds the additional subdivision ‘political’. This thesis

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\(^1\) Metcalf argues that the term ‘counter cultural’ is akin to the terms ‘hippy or flower child which became so hackneyed as to lose its meaning or at least its acceptability’ (1984:72).

\(^2\) Seal uses the term ‘Agrarian’ (see Metcalf, 1984:71, Table 1).
draws on these broad divisions in the discussion on the intentional communities explored in Chapters Five to Seven.

This discussion illustrates that defining and classifying intentional communities today is far more elastic, in flux and open-ended, than in previous historical epochs. It also represents a shift from more modernist and bounded definitions and classifications of ‘utopia’, and singular explanations of ‘intentional community’, to an ongoing acknowledgement of the changeable and varied nature of intentional communities. Though Metcalf’s (1984) earlier work avoids the term ‘commune’ in preference to the generic term ‘group’, his later work consistently uses the term ‘intentional community’ while also acknowledging an ongoing variety of types of communities that this term may represent (Metcalf 2004:8-9). This thesis uses the term ‘intentional community’ in the same way as Metcalf while also acknowledging that the term itself may often be best defined by the people who live such communal lifestyles.

2.5 Research on intentional communities

Bader, Mencken and Parker (2006) argue that past research on communes takes three forms: (1) case studies/ethnographies of particular communes, such as the work of Zablocki (1980) and Metcalf (2003; 2004); (2) studies that place the communal movement within the context of particular historical periods, such as the work of Kanter (1972) and Metcalf (1998; 2002); and (3) research on communes within the context of the countercultural movements of the 1960s and the 1970s, such as Gardner (1978), Zablocki (1980), Metcalf (1986) Munro-Clark (1986), Cock (1979), Dunne (1992) and Miller (1999).

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1 One indicator that a group is a commune is the communal ownership of property (see Metcalf 2004:9).
Bader et al. categories, however, miss an important element that distinguishes the intentional community literature from other research paradigms. This includes the ever-growing body of literature that is generated by both intentional community members and intentional communities, in addition to the growing number of organisational bodies that represent collective intentional communities and their interests. The following section therefore explores significant texts that have contributed to the intentional community literature since the 1960s in America, Britain and Australia. It concludes by recognising the diversity of texts that are now produced by intentional community participants around the world.

2.5.1 American research

2.5.1.1 Kanter

Kanter’s text *Commitment and Community* (1972), is considered seminal research (Hall 1988; Metcalf 1986). Her research focuses on American utopian communities and is the cornerstone of what I refer to as the ‘success debates’ (Bader et al. 2006; Gardner, 1978; Hall 1988; Kitts 1996; Latimore 1991; Wagner 1985). Kanter, in collaboration with Zablocki (Zablocki & Kanter 1976), authored a later article on the differentiation of lifestyles of communal participants; however, it is her earlier work that is most influential. Kanter’s text is an accumulation of a number of research projects. Her initial research of thirty utopian communes in America in the period 1780-1860 formed the basis of her doctoral dissertation (Kanter 1972:viii, 246-7), while her

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1 The term ‘utopian communities’ is used here to provide consistency with Kanter’s work. However, I continue to acknowledge that many utopian writers, such as Kanter, discuss concrete communal societies that are intentional communities and that this term, in turn, may represent diverse forms.

2 The ‘success debates’ stem from Kanter’s research that equates ‘success’ with ‘longevity’, that is, of twenty-five years or more, or one generation (Kanter 1972:245). This contention has generated significant debate around the nature of ‘success’ in the context of intentional communities.

3 Kanter studied thirty, of a total number of ninety-one communes established in this period (Latimore, 1991:34).
contemporary research on utopian communes in the 1960s and 1970s resulted from personal experience, through both living on and joining a variety of contemporary communes. In addition to field research, Kanter also sent a questionnaire to fifty communes (Kanter 1972:ix).

Kanter’s principal thesis revolves around commitment mechanisms; that is, ‘how groups are built and maintained’ (Kanter 1972:vii). From a functionalist structuralist perspective, Kanter argues that there are three forms of commitment contiguous with a social system: continuance, cohesion and control (1972:67). Continuance involves the retention of members; cohesion refers to ‘people’s willingness to stay in the system’ (Hall 1988:679), and control is defined as ‘the readiness of people to obey the demands of the system’ (Hall 1988:679). Kanter further argues that participants will orientate themselves towards that system in three ways: instrumentally, affectively and morally (1972:68); orientations that are contingent with the three ‘problems of commitment’ (Hall 1988:679).

By an ‘instrumental’ orientation—or what Hall refers to as the problem of ‘continuance’ (Hall 1988:679)—Kanter means that ‘participants find that the cost of leaving the system would be greater than the cost of remaining’ (Kanter 1972:69). Thus particular commitment mechanisms, such as sacrifice (forsaking particular behaviours or engaging in austerity practices) or

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1 Hall argues that ‘Kanter’s theory of commitment elaborates Talcott Parson’s functionalist approach … by positing commitment as the central process by which the personality system and the social system become articulated’ (1988:679). Kitts argues that Kanter uses structural characteristics of communes to explain their contribution to the three forms of commitment (1996:14).

2 Sacrifice requires ‘members to give up something as a price of membership’ (Kanter 1972:76). This may be through the sacrifice processes of abstinence, such as giving up ‘alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, rich foods, or meat’—or today’s parallel—drugs (Kanter 1972:79); or austerity practices such as a vow of poverty or when community members ‘deliberately return to a struggling, subsistence level of existence in the midst of an affluent society’ (Kanter 1972:79).
investment\(^1\) (giving tangible and intangible resources and the irreversibility of those invested resources) leads individual members to remain in the group (Kitts 1996:14), and creates a perception that ‘individual interests are sustained by participation’ (Hall 1988:679).

In comparison, in an ‘affective’ orientation—or what Hall refers to as the problem of ‘cohesion’ (1988:679)—a person’s cathectic orientations binds members emotionally to each other and the group (Kanter 1972:69). Thus the commitment mechanisms of renunciation\(^2\) (relinquishing old relationships) and communion\(^3\) (the development of collective unity) generates ‘individuals’ affective solidarity with a group’ (Hall 1988:679), leading to members remaining in the group (Kitts 1996:14).

Finally, a ‘moral’ orientation—or what Hall refers to as the problem of ‘control’ (1988:679)—reflects ‘a person’s evaluative orientations’ (Kanter 1972:69) whereby individual and group values are concomitant with each

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\(^1\) Kanter argues that ‘through investment, individuals are integrated with the system, since their time and resources have become part of its economy’ (1972:81). Investment can therefore involve tangible resources such as the provision of financial donations on membership, buying shares in the stock of the company or assignment or transferal of member’s property for the benefit of the community, or ‘intangibles like time and energy’ (Kanter 1972:80-81).

\(^2\) Renunciation focuses on relinquishing relationships that potentially affect group cohesion with the view to strengthening the individual’s relationship to the group. Kanter indicates that relationships involving both the outside world and particular relationships within the community may be the focus of renunciation practices. For instance, diminishing relationships with the outside world may involve rules and structural arrangements that minimise member’s contact with the outside world and,or geographical isolation that effectively segregates the group from other neighbouring towns. In the context of internal relationships, practices may be observed that regulate and minimise the autonomy of the couple or the family to increase communal cohesion. Kanter argues that those communities that do preserve the nuclear family may still observe practices that ensure a ‘diffusion of intimacy’ throughout the group (Kanter 1972:82-91).

\(^3\) Communion aims to develop a strong ‘we-feeling’ in the group (Kanter 1972:93). Processes of communion include homogeneity, persecution and social vaccination. Kanter argues that successful communities tend to possess a greater homogeneity such as ‘a common religious background, similar social or educational status, or a common national or ethnic origin’ (Kanter 1972:93). In addition, persecution and social vaccination enable the development of an ‘in-group/out-group’ relation which further strengthens the group dynamics and values. Types of persecution may include, ‘economic discrimination; public denouncement … and physical persecution’ (Kanter 1972:102-103).
other. The commitment mechanisms of mortification\(^1\) (developing an identity based on group membership) and transcendence\(^2\) (feeling part of a greater whole) therefore function to ensure the internalisation of ‘a comprehensive moral system’ (Kitts 1996:14) and effective group control (Hall 1988:679-670).

2.5.1.2 Zablocki

Zablocki (1980:14) in his text *Alienation and Charisma*, followed a ‘sample’ of one hundred and twenty rural and urban communities from 1965 to 1978 and 1974 to 1976 during the formative years of the 1960s American communitarianism. In comparison to Metcalf (1995) placing the fourth wave of Australian communitarian experimentation within a utopian tradition, Zablocki (1980:19-40) argues that the American tradition is a recurring social phenomenon, despite the varying geographical and historical contexts. He contends that there is a correlation between the incidence of communal experimentation and a breakdown of traditional value and meaning systems. Zablocki’s work, like the work of Kanter (1972), is therefore often

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\(^1\) *Mortification* enables the development of a new identity ‘based on the power and meaningfulness of group membership’ (Kanter 1972:103). In particular, mortification processes ‘convince the person that true meaning and worth derive from opening his [sic] self-concept to direction by the group’ (Kanter 1972:103). In non-coercive groups mortification may be a sign of trust in the group or a willingness to share personal tendencies (Kanter 1972:105). Kanter found that the mortification processes of confession and mutual criticism in 19th century communities enabled a ‘baring of the soul’ to the group (Kanter 1972:106). Spiritual differentiation aimed to distinguish members on the basis of their achievement, (Kanter 1972:108) and ‘de-individuating mechanisms’ involving ‘strategies for removing the individual’s sense of isolation, privacy, and uniqueness’ (Kanter 1972:110).

\(^2\) *Transcendence* encourages members to be part of a greater whole. Great power and meaning within the group may be instilled through charismatic leadership or institutional awe whereby charisma is diffused throughout the group. The foundations for institutional awe may be based in an ideology shared by all members of the group or through power and leadership which is structurally reinforced by the group. For instance, hierarchical decision-making may enhance a sense of mystery around group leaders. Further strategies, such as guidance and ideological conversion reflect the commitment mechanism of transcendence by both ordering individuals’ lives within a group and giving meaning and legitimacy to that order. For instance, probationary periods for joining effect ‘a test of faith’ ensuring that agreed structures and meaning within the group are maintained (Kanter 1972:111-125).
acknowledged as the cornerstone of later writings on intentional communities (Munro-Clark 1986:7).

Like Kanter, Zablocki’s research evolved from earlier research he had conducted on the Bruderhof community\(^1\) and is reported in his text *The Joyful Community* (1971). Unlike Kanter, Zablocki focuses on collective decision making in communes and only secondarily on communes as providing an alternative lifestyle (Zablocki 1980:xv). Thus Zablocki’s typology reflects the overall aim of his research: ‘to understand more clearly how consensus is gained and lost among groups of people striving for similar ideological goals’ (Zablocki 1980:14). In particular, he focuses on ‘the problem of abstracting the dimensions of consensual decision-making that are relevant to communal survival and achievement’ (Zablocki 1980:15), although more subsidiary aims such as the provision of information on communes as a phenomenon and as a social movement are also addressed. He also focuses on a diversity of communal types, with charismatic communal structures also treated as a variable (Zablocki 1980:xv).

One of Zablocki’s main arguments focuses on ‘investments of the self’ in communal life. Zablocki defines the self ‘as that entity on behalf of which choices are made’ recognising that ‘the individual can identify with larger social entities wholly or in part’ (Zablocki 1980:12, 267). Zablocki refers to such identifications as ‘investments of self [whereby] investment of self into a collectivity shall be considered an assignment to that collectivity (or some agent thereof) of some degree of power to shape the preferences of the given individual’ (1980:12-13). Thus an individual invests either resources (time, land, knowledge, money or support) or ‘some portion of himself or herself’ into the community on the basis that the community may be able to

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\(^1\) Zablocki used the Bruderhof as a model for his successive research because of their structural stability and their ‘repeated charismatic renewal’ (1980:xv).
undertake actions that benefit the individual in a far more significant way than if the individual used the investments independently, or on the basis that the collectivity utilises its preference shaping powers to achieve benefits the individual could not achieve alone (Zablocki 1980:12-13, 267). Zablocki employs a typology to ‘distinguish among collectivities … in terms of the investments of their participants’ (1980:266). Table 1 below is a reproduction of Zablocki’s (1980:268) typology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment of Resources</th>
<th>Investment of Self</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Community (unity)</td>
<td>Crowd (homogeneity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Association (unanimity)</td>
<td>Assembly (uniformity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Typology of collectivities based upon the investments made by their members (Zablocki 1980:268 Table 6-5)

Members of the ‘Association’ collectivity invest their resources but not themselves, while the ‘Crowd’ invests in and of themselves but not their resources. In contrast, the ‘Assembly’ collectivity invests neither their resources nor themselves, ‘converging in time and space but with no investment of any kind being made’, while the ‘Community’ invests both their resources and themselves (Zablocki 1980:268).

2.5.2 British research: Abrams et al.

Working within the context of British communes, Abrams et al. in their text *Communes, Sociology and Society* (1976), undertook research that comprises a mixture of successive visits to communes, returned questionnaires and a review of the existing literature. Their text focuses on secular family communes, in particular those that aim to cultivate friendship. It is this criterion, and the way in which they classify communes, which will be
discussed further below, that distinguishes their work from both Kanter (1972) and Zablocki’s (1980) research. In contrast to Kanter and Zablocki’s research, Abrams et al. found that ‘ideologically elaborate mechanisms of social bonding and commitment bore little resemblance to what we ourselves seemed to be observing in the communes we visited’ (1976:viii).

Like Kanter and Zablocki, Abrams et al. treat communes as ‘a phenomenon of importance for social theory’ (1976:viii). However, their research emphasises the humanistic and ‘non-utopian’ communes that they found had been established in Britain and which ‘the American studies simply did not help us to understand’ (Abrams et al. 1976:viii).

Abrams et al. main argument focuses on the construction of identity. Thus ‘self-seeking’ is a response to Western society’s preoccupation with ‘possessive individualism’, with intentional community participants attempting ‘to possess a self’ (Abrams et al. 1976:93-94). They stress what they call a ‘peculiar cruelty’ of our society, whereby individuality is a collective representation. Western cultural themes impose the necessity of grasping a ‘unique identity’, resulting in commune seekers escaping ‘the routine processes by which selves are constructed’ (Abrams et al. 1976:94). It is this struggle for personal authenticity that lies at the heart of communal self-seeking. Resistance is therefore directed against the dualism of ‘self’ and ‘the social’, which Abrams et al. argue lies at the heart of Western capitalism. It is, they argue, the possibility of overcoming this separation and the opportunity of grasping a personal reality that makes communes so attractive (Abrams et al. 1976:95).

1 Abrams et al. argue that it is this symbiosis of self and others that distinguish commune members from those who reside in quasi-communes (1976:35).
2.5.3 Australian research

2.5.3.1 Cock

Cock’s work spans a number of decades and reflects his involvement in the alternative communal movement in Australia. His earliest work began in his unpublished thesis, *A Study of Alternative Communities* (Cock 1977). His second text, *Alternative Australia* (Cock 1979), explored ‘Australia’s alternative subculture’ (Cock 1979:1), and in particular ‘the origins of the alternatives movement in Australia’ primarily from 1971 to 1974 (Cock 1979:2). His work provides significant insights into localised Australian responses to the cultural shifts that were occurring both overseas and in Australia, focusing on the discrepancies between value systems of the New Left and the Corporate State (Cock 1979:17). Other texts discuss particular issues relevant to the movement in the 1970s (Cock 1975) or to historical shifts within his own community (Cock 1995). This chapter explores Cock’s work in more detail in section 2.6.2.

2.5.3.2 Metcalf

Metcalf is a prolific researcher of intentional communities (Metcalf 1984; 1986; 1995; 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003; 2004; Metcalf & Huf 2002; Metcalf & Vanclay 1987). Like Cock, his earliest research began through his involvement in the intentional community movement, with one of his earlier articles focusing on a classification of alternative lifestyle groups (Metcalf 1984). His doctoral thesis examines recruitment, socialisation and commitment within the contemporary alternative lifestyle movement (Metcalf 1986). A subsequent article examines the social characteristics of alternative lifestyle participants in Australia (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987). As discussed in section 2.3,

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1 Over his career, Metcalf has published under different first names, including William, William James and Bill. Metcalf, B, Metcalf, W and Metcalf W, J are however the same Metcalf, and are therefore referred to as (Metcalf) only throughout this thesis.

Metcalf writes in the utopian tradition, acknowledging a continuing history of utopian experimentation (1986:77; 1995:15; 2002:2-3). As an historian he has written about the earliest intentional communities in Australia. These include the first Australia commune, Herrnhut, in Victoria (Metcalf 2002); the Gayndah communes in Queensland (Metcalf 1998); the Murray River communal settlements in South Australia; New Italy in Northern NSW; and New Australia, a community that originated in Australia and settled in Paraguay (Metcalf 1986:100-106).

In addition to writing about intentional communities, Metcalf utilises a methodological technique called ‘biographical discourse’ to enable individual intentional community members to discuss communal living. He argues that this technique empowers communal participants to facilitate their understanding of intentional community living (Metcalf 1996:10; 2001:157). Biographical discourse is evident in a number of significant texts (Metcalf 1995, 1996, 2001) that explore many localised conditions of intentional community living and the great diversity of communal living and practices that exist around the world. In comparison, Metcalf’s most recent text, Community Living (2004), explores eleven contemporary intentional communities and concludes with a discussion on his views regarding issues particular to communal living and the future of intentional communities.

2.5.3.3 Munro-Clark

Munro-Clark’s research, titled Communes in Rural Australia: The movement since 1970 (1986) focuses on rural communes and is primarily concerned with addressing the issue of whether rural co-ownership communities could be regarded as a potential solution to urban housing difficulties and unemployment. However, the aims of her research are broad. Firstly, Munro-Clark focuses on the historical and socio-cultural underpinnings of
contemporary communes. Her findings display similarities with the work of Zablocki (1980) and Abrams et al. (1976). Like Zablocki, Munro-Clark argues that rises in communal living often correlate with periods of cultural fragmentation and the dissolving of traditional constraints. Similarly to Abrams et al. (1976), she argues that contemporary secular communes, unlike their predecessors, tended to be directed towards the interest of the individual rather than the collective (Munro-Clark 1986:17). Also, similarly to Dunne (1992), she contextualises the Australian ‘communitarian impulse’ in American and British youth radicalism of the 1960s (Munro-Clark 1986:49, 59-61). Munro-Clark then concerns herself with classifying intentional communities. She provides detailed information from surveys conducted in 1980 on thirty-six rural intentional communities in NSW Australia, and in particular, communities located in the Rainbow Region (Munro-Clark 1986:18). She also addresses the relevance of Australian rural communitarian experimentation to the wider Australia society. Again, like Dunne (1992), she assumes a classical social movement stance that asks what benefits might flow on to the wider society (Munro-Clark 1986:182). However, unlike Dunne (1992), Munro-Clarke acknowledges the important role that intentional communities play in the construction of an identity that counters mainstream cultural conceptions (Munro-Clark 1986:13-13, 32-45). This chapter further explores Munro-Clark’s discussion on identity in section 2.6.4.

2.5.4 Contemporary research and literature

Contemporary research on intentional communities, in addition to the literature surrounding intentional community living as a form of praxis, is broad. Many of the researchers discussed in section 2.5 are also intentional community participants. Kanter’s text, Commitment and Community, is founded on research and personal experience gained by Kanter while visiting and living on communes from 1967 to 1970 (Kanter 1972:i). Metcalf’s work
(Metcalf 1984; 1986; 1995; 1996; 1998; 2001; 2003; 2004; Metcalf & Huf 2002; Metcalf & Vanclay 1987) is founded in his early experiences of forming an urban commune in Brisbane in 1972; his participation in the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin in 1973; visiting and living on numerous communities around the world; and his continuing membership of an urban communal household called ‘Mabel’s Treat’ in Brisbane. Cock (1975; 1977; 1979; 1995) also has roots in the foundations of the fourth wave of communal experimentation in Australia and is a continuing member of the Moora Moora Co-operative Community in Victoria. These researchers are not alone in their experience of living in, and writing about, intentional communities. Oved (1986) comments that his book, *Two Hundred Years of American Communes*, ‘ensued from the questions and deliberations that originated in my way of life as a Kibbutz member’ (P. vii). Many other intentional community participants have written about aspects of intentional community living within an academic framework (Fisher 2002; Irvine 2003; McLaughlin & Davidson 1986; Spain 1998).

Academic research may also facilitate hearing the voices of communal participants. As discussed in section 2.5.3.2, Metcalf’s (1995; 1996; 2001) use of ‘biographical discourse’ enables communal participants to write about their own lives on a diverse number of intentional communities around the world. Communal participants may also write about communal living in conference proceedings such as those produced by the *International Communal Studies Association*, communal magazines that discuss communal life such as *Communities,* or encyclopaedias, such as the *Communities Directory*, that explore positive alternatives to mainstream culture. Further, participants

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1 *Communities* is published by the Fellowship for Intentional Community. The editorial policy notes that it is a ‘forum for exploring intentional communities’ and includes contributions from ‘people who live or have lived in a community, and anyone with insights relevant to cooperative living’. See (2000) *Communities*, 106, p:6.

from intentional communities may write about their own experiences in their communal journals or through dedicated websites. The sheer variety of voices and communal lifestyles that are epitomized in these texts tends to mirror Yeatman’s contention that postmodernist accounts are committed to representing ‘a polyphony of voices and irresolvable differences’ (1994:2).

In addition to the academic accounts, there are the personal accounts of intentional community participants. Eileen Caddy (1976) in *Foundations of Findhorn*, writes about her experiences of establishing the Findhorn Community in Findhorn, Scotland; David Spangler discusses his vision of Findhorn in *Vision of Findhorn Anthology* (Spangler 1976); and years later, Karin Bogliolo writes of her experiences of living on the Findhorn community from 1975 to 1998 in her text *In Search of the Magic of Findhorn* (Bogliolo & Newfeld, 2002). Kat Kinkade discusses her experiences of living on the Twin Oaks Community in rural central Virginia in *A Walden Two Experiment* (Kinkade 1973) and also in *Is it Utopia Yet?* (Kinkade 1994). Geoph Kozeny (1993, 1999a; 1999b; 2000a; 2000b; 2004a; 2004b; 2006; 2007a; 2007b), who calls himself ‘The Peripatetic Communitarian’, has written about a plethora of issues relevant to both his own experiences of living on various communities over a thirty year period and visiting other communities over the last fifteen years.

Others have followed suit, discussing particular issues relevant to their experiences of intentional community living. For instance, the growing interest in eco-villages has resulted in a thriving body of literature enabling participants to share their ecological knowledge (Bartsch, Bayer, Hug, Schrom & Schwan 2000; Christian 2006; Cock 1995; Davison 1995; Jackson 1998; Jackson & Svensson 2002; Kennedy 2001; Revington n.d.; Sira 2000; Walker 2000).

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1. See the Twin Oaks Community website at: http://www.twinoaks.org/
Some communities have also written about their experiences. For instance, participants from the Kerista Commune wrote about their ideals founded in polygamy and intentional community in *Polyfidelity* (1984). With the advent of the internet, many communities now have websites that enable access to a significant amount of information about their community and its structure, ideals and connections with other organisations.¹

Then there are the organisations that facilitate access to those both interested in, and living on, intentional communities. For instance, the multidisciplinary International Communal Studies Association (ICSA), based in Israel, provides a common framework for scholarly exchange in relation to communes, intentional communities, collective settlements and kibbutz throughout the world. The ICSA hosts both local and international conferences, most notably the triennial ICSA Conference, which is held on location at various intentional communities around the world. It also provides a biannual bulletin.² The Communal Studies Association (CSA), based in America, is dedicated to the understanding and study of intentional, contemporary and ‘utopian’ communities. The CSA hosts an annual conference, again held at an intentional community, giving participants the opportunity to experience intentional community living.³ The CSA also publishes the *Communal Societies* journal, which includes scholarly articles about intentional communities.

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Communities have hosted conferences, such as the week long *Eco-Villages and Sustainable Communities: Models for the 21st Century*, held at the Findhorn Foundation in October 1995. This conference brought together a range of intentional community participants and interested parties, resulting in a wide range of publications on the issues raised at the conference. The Gaia Trust, a Danish trust, established by Hildur and Ross Jackson, longstanding members and supporters of eco-villages, subsequently published the proceedings of the conference,¹ in conjunction with the Findhorn Foundation, also a charitable trust, established in 1972, to further the aims and ideals of the Findhorn community.

At a communal level, there are also the associations that represent a conglomeration of intentional communities. For example, the Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) promotes community living and cooperative lifestyles across North America. It enables the nurturing of connections and cooperation among communitarians and their friends. The FIC also provides publications, referrals and support services in addition to sharing opportunities for a wide range of intentional communities.² The journal *Communities* provides access in particular to the voices of intentional community participants on a very wide range of issues: from the nature of community (Christian 2003a; Kozeny 2000b, 2004a, 2007a; Ludwig 2002); to discussing particular communities, such as The Farm in Summertown, Tennessee (Schweitzer & Wartinger 1998), Twin Oaks in Louisa, Virginia (Kuhlmann 1999), Bright Morning Star in Seattle, Washington (Betz-Zall 1998), Skywoods Cosynegal in Michigan (Niezgoda 1999) and South Whidbey Island (Kenny 2000). The journal has also explored the changing nature of communities (Christian 1999; Kozeny 1999b, 2006; Miller 1999); conflict

¹ See (Conrad et al. 1995).
management and resolution (Christian 2003b; Christian 2005a, 2005b; Kozeny 2007b; Schaub, 2006; Stevenson, 1999); ageing in communities (Abraham, Delagrange, & Ragland 2006; Fenger 2006); engaging in rituals (Butcher 2000; Christian 2000); and the importance of sharing communal meals (Ludwig 2003). Other associations also support intentional communities, such as the Cohousing Association of United States, which produces the journal *Cohousing*, and the Global Eco-village Network (GEN), a website that links and supports sustainable settlements1 (Kennedy 2001:251).

This is the face of the intentional community literature. It involves individual voices, speaking of local situations, engaging in dialogue that is facilitated through a network of researchers and organisations at the global level. In *Dynamic Utopia*, Schehr (1997) maintains that contemporary communities have become innovative and sophisticated in articulating their political, cultural and economic concerns. He argues that what is most significant about intentional communities is their ‘commitment to a more holistic vision of community’ (Schehr 1997:48). This innovation and vision is not merely located in scholarly academic texts, but in the very voices of participants engaged in intentional community living on a day-to-day basis. It is these voices that contribute to what Schehr refers to as the ‘level of the lifeworld’ and which support his argument that intentional communities are ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (Schehr 1997:3), an argument that is explored in the next section.

**2.6 Intentional communities as subaltern modes of resistance**

Schehr (1997) argues that within the context of social movement theory, intentional communities are either ignored as ‘non-movements’ due to their utopian or communal themes, or incorrectly identified as ‘a social movement

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in the classical collective behaviour tradition’ (Schehr 1997:3), which requires social movements to aim at effecting structural transformations at the level of the state (Schehr 1997:10). Schehr (1997:10) points out that early intentional community scholars such as Kanter (1972) and Zablocki (1980) took this view, to which I would add the Australian scholars1 Cock2 (1975, 1979), Metcalf3 (1986) and Munro-Clark4 (1986).

Schehr further argues that social movement theory adopted this view, despite contemporary ethnographic work that focused on ‘modes of resistance’ undertaken by a variety of groups, including minorities, women, environmentalists and other organisations and activists (Schehr 1997:3). These groups, as new social movements (NSM), represent a form of unique ‘dynamism’ within civil society (Schehr 1997: 3-4) which conventional social movement literature5 is theoretically and conceptually unable to deconstruct (Schehr 1997:4). Drawing instead on chaos theory and postmodern literature Schehr identifies three key themes that are relevant to an articulation of resistance, which in turn create ‘alternatives’ to dominant cultural capital, and

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1 Though, as I point out further on, these theorists also discuss elements that would fit within Schehr’s three themes that underpin new social movements.
2 Cock discusses ‘confronting the corporate state’ which includes ‘challenging our institutions’ to effect a change in the corporate state (1975:10-11; see also Schehr 1997:45).
3 Metcalf explores whether alternative lifestyle movements provide a viable critique of corporate society, which he discusses within the context of radical structural social change (see Metcalf 1986:ii, 390-398).
4 Munro-Clark addresses the question of what benefits might flow to the wider society of intentional communities. She notes five claims regarding the ‘relevance’ of these communities of which the first three claims relate to the designation of social movements. The first claim considers the way in which intentional communities may lead the way ‘towards very broad and general social change’. The second focuses on evolving ways of living for specific groups within society such as the young, urban and working-class. The third considers the claim that intentional communities ‘have a critical or heuristic role to play in relation to mainstream society’ (Munro-Clark 1986:182-200).
5 Schehr argues that conventional social movement literature privileges particular theoretical paradigms orientated towards class distinctions that reflect collective behaviour or resource mobilisation, and this tends to dominate social movement theory in America, which then fails to account for the dynamic modes in which actors resist at the level of the lifeworld (1997:4, 129-130).
Firstly, Schehr (1997:3) argues that NSM offer ‘a dynamic interplay of agentic activism,’ which specifically focuses on *inter alia,*¹ identity, spirituality, non-violent conflict resolution, expressions of desire and the redefinition of work roles and childcaring. Secondly, these contemporary efforts at resistance also signify an appropriation of civil society and the ‘lifeworld’² by invoking each with dynamic meaning where the lifeworld provides a space for cultural expression by ‘a complicated composition of cultural actors’ (Schehr 1997:3). Thirdly, NSM engage in what Schehr refers to as ‘a sempiternal construction and reconstruction of intra and interpersonal relations’ (1997:4) at the level of civil society and the lifeworld, that may include notions of ‘cultural angst, fear and conflict’ in addition to ‘political, economic and cultural confrontations’ (Schehr 1997:4).

Though Australian intentional community scholars such as Cock (1975, 1979), Metcalf (1986) and Munro-Clark (1986) evaluate the effect of intentional community living on structural transformations at the level of the state, many of the themes discussed by Schehr (1997) are also identifiable in their works. For instance, Cock (1975) focuses on the philosophical reconstruction of ‘the nature of man’, non-violence, agency and radical critique as a way of exploring possibilities for personal, social and political change. Munro-Clark (1986) considers the claim that intentional communities in the Rainbow Region are pioneering an ‘ecological niche’ that:

¹ Schehr also notes ‘time and space relations, sexual experimentation and renewed conceptions of leisure’ (1997:4).
² Schehr fails to define ‘lifeworld,’ however he refers to it as a space ‘where creativity, anxiety, anger, rage, love, compassion, confusion, mistrust, allegiance, dedication, violence, peace, awareness, and ignorance’ are explored (1997:3) and as ‘the quantum level of analysis’ (1997:129).
represents a social milieu which affords more human diversity, a wider range of culturally sympathetic opportunities and services and the promise of greater durability ... in which a low cash-income and a materially simple standard of living are acceptable for adults of good education and middle-class background, and in which personal identity is not based on place in some career-structure. (P. 198)

Smith and Crossley, editors of The Way Out. Radical Alternatives in Australia, note the ‘enormously wide range of critiques, visions and solutions’ that argue ‘a coherent, yet extremely diverse, philosophy of practical alternatives to improve our present-day society’ (1975:1). They conclude that ‘the movement’ was not simply a reaction to western society, but rather an affirmation of a ‘way of life’ that would lead to ‘self-evolution’ (Smith & Crossley 1975:1-2).

Though Schehr distinguishes intentional communities of the 1990s, from those of the 1960s, for reasons discussed in section 2.5.4, he argues that intentional communities play an important role in re-articulating meaning against a backdrop of ‘postindustrial malaise.’ This malaise is characterised by ‘a crisis in meaning for an entire generation of young people’ (Schehr 1997:5) who reject both the value structures of their parents and ‘the alienating components of capitalist production and consumption’ (Schehr 1997:5). Symbolically, intentional communities represent an ‘all-inclusive affront to dominant efforts at intensifying rationalisation’ (Schehr 1997:9; see also Eräranta et al. 2009). On this basis Schehr (1997) argues that intentional communities are:

a social movement complete with their own domestic and international modes of communication (books, newsletters, lectures, and conferences), research, education, production, distribution, and interpersonal non-violent conflict management techniques, each of which represents alternatives to the
proliferation of dominant cultural capital, and, while primarily directed at the lifeworld... [offers] the possibility of broader system-level change. (P. 9)

Intentional communities are also ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (Schehr 1997:3) that provide the means for ‘resistance to oppression by political, economic and cultural subordinates through their silent redefinition of the social world’s constitutive elements’ (Schehr 1999:249).

As discussed above, Schehr’s contention rests on his argument against classical social movement theory that, in order for a social movement to be classified as a movement, it must aim to effect structural transformation at the state level. Schehr argues that, on this basis, much of the early intentional community literature that assumed a position of ‘historical continuity’ focused on the decline of the communal movement (1997:11). In contrast, a postmodern reading which values ‘flux, heterogeneity, diversity, orderly disorder, chance and spontaneity’ (Schehr 1997:16) looks to the historically contingent, multiple and diverse ways, in which intentional communities ‘identify their communal mission’ (Schehr 1997:11). Pitzer similarly argues for a view that supports the notion of ‘developmental communalism’ which acknowledges ‘the entire history and influence of the movements of which communalism is a single facet’ (1989:70). Schehr concludes that it is the ‘uniqueness’ of intentional communities that ‘demands their recognition as social movements’ rather than their need to effect structural transformation at the state level (1997:11).

1 Though Schehr acknowledges that intentional community scholars would not be surprised by the designation of intentional communities as social movements. However, Schehr notes that scholars such as Zablocki (1980) and Kanter (1972) inadequately distinguish the ‘uniqueness’ of intentional communities. Instead, they continue to apply classical social movement theory which means intentional communities are only classified as a social movement if they produce structural transformations at the level of the state (Schehr 1997:10).
In a similar way to Schehr (1997), Love Brown (2002:153) argues that intentional communities, as revitalisation movements, play an important role in cultural critique. Revitalisation movements are characterised by their deliberate intent to bring about change in their ‘mental image of society and its culture’ (Love-Brown 2002:157). Further, change in revitalisation movements is based on conscious critique. Love Brown (2002) argues:

Revitalisation movements constitute indigenous forms of cultural critique in state societies, often separate from critiques of scholars and public intellectuals but not unrelated to or unnoticed by them. Thus, revitalisation constitutes a nonelitist form of critique available to the privileged and unprivileged alike. (P. 158)

Love-Brown discusses five phases of revitalisation movements in America and the six major tasks revitalisation movements must perform (2002:158-173). Three tasks are worth mentioning here. Firstly, revitalisation movements engage in ‘mazeway reformulation’, which focuses on restructuring elements and subsystems that already have currency in the larger society (Love-Brown 2002:166). Secondly, revitalisation movements often encounter resistance by the larger society and therefore engage in adaptation, which involves the constant reworking of doctrine in response to experience, creating a better ‘fit’ with the wider culture (Love-Brown 2002:169-170). This may explain shifts that occur in intentional communities over time, such as the movement from an intense communal framework to a greater focus on a less communal, though co-operative, structure. Thirdly, revitalisation movements encourage cultural transformation in individual participants through a shared group program or group action (Love-Brown 2002:171). This latter theme is discussed further in section 2.6.4 in the context of resistance and transformation.
Schehr (1997) and Love-Brown (2002) share a number of common elements in their work. Firstly, resistance (Schehr 1997) or ‘cultural critique’ (Love-Brown 2002) is a deliberate and conscious process. Secondly, it operates at the level of the lifeworld (Schehr 1997) or the cultural level (Love-Brown 2002) and involves appropriating civil society in rearticulating meaning (Schehr 1997) or what Love-Brown refers to as mazeway reformation (Love-Brown 2002). Thirdly, it necessarily involves transformation at the personal level that may involve identity (Schehr 1997) or cultural transformations (Love-Brown 2002) through the development of alternative modes of living. For Schehr, the rearticulation of meaning, is also a constant process, recognising ‘the perpetual nature of subaltern resistance’ (1997:5); while for Love-Brown adaptation to the larger culture necessarily involves ‘a constant reworking of doctrines’ (2002:169-170).

The theme of resistance is also replicated in utopian studies that consider intentional communities. For instance, Metcalf (1986:79) argues that utopian communities offer a direct challenge to the status quo. In the 1970s this challenge focused on materialistic and competitive ideology (Metcalf 1986:88). Stillman (2001:11) also argues that utopias operate as ‘counterfactual criticisms of the status quo’ by exploring ‘what is not’, thereby reflecting on norms that are radically different to those embodied by contemporary society. Poldervaart argues that utopian (or intentional) communities arose during the cultural and scientific critique by postmodernism in the 1960s and are exemplified by postmaterialist values that include ‘imagination, wholeness, the individual’s own experience and the quality of life’ (2001:17). Meanwhile, Sargisson (2001) contends that a key function of utopianism is transgression. That is, utopias provide the space in which people can be different. In a similar way to Schehr (1997) and Love-Brown’s (2002) arguments surrounding ‘rearticulation of meaning’ and ‘revitalisation’, Sargisson draws
on Moylan’s conception of critical utopia to argue that utopias acting critically ‘will internally destroy, transform, and revive [a] tradition, while also permitting it a revival as a transformative movement’ (Sargisson 2001:141).

The following sections focus on the nature of this resistance, drawing on particular texts from the intentional community literature. The discussion firstly focuses on the implications of resistance for constructions of identity. Secondly, it explores resistance in the context of the contestation that surrounds values, and then shifts in values that have occurred since the establishment of intentional communities in the 1960s and 1970s are discussed. Thirdly, it focuses on resistance in the context of transformation at the level of the lifeworld through the creation of new modes of living.

2.6.1 Resistance and identity

This discussion begins with the ‘organising thread’ of Abrams et al. (1976) work on British communes in the 1960s. They argue that communal participants’ ‘move from theory to practice and from individual practice to social practice’ (Abrams et al. 1976:22) was ‘curiously muted’ in the 1960s and early 1970s literature on communes. Their attention—with regard to secular family communes—is therefore aimed at discussing communal practice as a way of negating ‘the realities of British capitalism, intellectual dualism and sociology’ and in particular, they argue that for commune seekers ‘philosophical dualism … is to be denied in practice’ (Abrams et al. 1976:22).

As discussed in section 2.5.2, Abrams et al. main argument focuses on the construction of identity. In relation to this point they argue that:

Many people join communes to find or realise their selves … What is peculiar to the people who turn to communes for that end is that they have at once rejected socially given recipes for self-construction and understood that selves are constructed socially. … The point of a commune is, through living with
others, to make one’s way to a satisfactory account of oneself, an account realised and expressed in terms of one’s relations with those others. The importance of communes may be said to be the understanding they embody that personal autonomy is concomitant with interpersonal reciprocity, together with their claim that the normal social relations of modern Britain, therefore make personal autonomy unattainable for most people. (Abrams et al. 1976:95-96)

Abrams et al. arguments about communal living are interesting for three reasons. Firstly, communal living is a way of putting theory into practice. Beyond intellectual idealising, it is a life committed to praxis. Secondly, communal living offers a way to resist certain constructions of the ‘self’ found within dominant Western cultural paradigms. As one participant states:

I just had to find out who I was and where I was at. I wanted to break down stereotyped ideas of how one has to live or ought to live. I wanted to avoid hating, disliking, being indifferent, competing, ignoring. I wanted to try to live by love, not manipulation. There’s no relief in ‘I’ separate from relations with others. (Abrams et al. 1976:95)

Thirdly, communal living offers participants a social, political and economic framework in which to construct an alternative conception of the self—what Spangler refers to as ‘the modern quest…for one’s personhood’ (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:9).

Abrams et al. (1976) arguments around identity and personal authenticity are also reflected in the Australian work of Munro-Clark (1986). In her text, Communes in Rural Australia, Munro-Clark argues that the explicit theme of the then ‘current wave of communitarianism’ was aimed at the combined opportunity for ‘strong individual self-definition’ in conjunction with close involvement in a collective (1986:33). Thus, according to Munro-Clark (1986), individual identity or selfhood:
suggest[s] that what they may be chiefly resisting, in changing their patterns of living, are conditions of life in the mainstream society which tend to fragment, falsify or deaden the individual’s sense of his or her being as a particular self in the world. (P. 34)

These sentiments are also reflected in the American work of McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:54) in the same year.¹ Similar to Abrams et al. (1976), Munro-Clark (1986) argues that the problem of grasping an authentic self is at the heart of communal living. Much of her discussion reflects Abrams et al. (1976) concerns that focus on both a resistance to dominant cultural constructions of the self and the availability of alternative constructions through communal living. Yet her discussion around the tradition of Western selfhood, and the transition from sincerity² to notions of authenticity³, are more elaborate, and reflect what she argues is ‘a longstanding tendency within Western urban culture’ (Munro-Clark 1986:43) that has become habitual.

Though Abrams et al. (1976) and Munro-Clark’s (1986) discussions on the construction of identity highlights the importance of the individual, their focus does not necessarily reflect an autonomous individuality in the liberal sense (Poldervaart 2001:20). Rather, both regard the individual as a social construction that can be created through communal living. Poldervaart (2001:20) points out that the growing emphasis on the individual rather than the collective represents a postmodernist trend that, drawing on the work of Kumar, entertains the possibility that people may live in a community of self-

¹ McLaughlin and Davidson also argue that the ‘highest goal of community’ is to overcome the fragmentation caused by society in the creation of ‘whole people’ (1986:54).
² Munro-Clark argues that ‘sincerity’ is marked by ‘the truthful presentation of oneself to others in order that one not deceive them’ with it being ‘negated by hypocrisy or various forms of dissembling’. In contrast, ‘authenticity’ ‘refers rather to a characteristic of being, what one is. It implies an inner quality of strength and coherence’ (1986:36).
³ White and Hunt (2000) also argue that historical shifts have occurred between the 19th and 20th centuries around subjectivity. However, they use the notions of ‘character’, which reflects striving for a self that conforms to public virtues, and ‘personality’, to reflect ‘the quest for a unique self.’ Both character and personality reflect Munro-Clarks’ use of sincerity and authenticity respectively (see White & Hunt 2000).
constituters. Yet what is not apparent in Abrams et al. (1976) and Munro-Clark’s (1986) discussion on identity is the way resistance to certain values—what Stillman refers to as a reflection on norms that are radically different to those portrayed in mainstream culture (2001:11; see also Goodwin 2000:3)—may play a key part in the construction of ‘unique’ and ‘authentic’ selves. The discussion will now turn to a consideration of resistance and values.

2.6.2 Resistance and values

What is most apparent in the intentional community literature is the contestation that occurs around values. For instance, Abrams et al. (1976) argue that communal living is dominated by the desire to make communal values a reality. Thus values associated with communality, such as sharing, loving and a fusion of the self with the social, are contrasted against perceived dominant cultural values of ‘possessiveness, intolerance, jealousy, waywardness and varying capacity for domination’ (Abrams et al. 1976:21). Abrams et al. explore secular family communes, arguing that they constitute ‘an attempt to cultivate friendship’ (1976:26), with members discovering ‘how profoundly disqualified they are, as a result of their pre-communal lives, for the friendship of equals’ (1976:32-33). Miller, in his text The 60s Communes Hippies and Beyond, argues that at the heart of American communalism in the 1960s, lay ‘a rejection of greed, of material desire, and ultimately of individualism’ (1999:152). Materialism, possessiveness, private gain and self-centredness were to be fought with a corresponding ‘death of the ego’ (Miller 1999:152). Values that could assist in this ‘death’ reflected simplicity, communal ownership, egalitarianism, tribalism and new family structures, environmentalism and ‘voluntary primitivism’ in addition to self-sufficiency (Miller 1999:151-166). Metcalf (1986), in discussing why people continue to adopt an alternative lifestyle from an Australian perspective, also argues that factors rejected in the dominant society included capitalism, materialism,
sexism and concerns around an ‘environmental crisis’. Thus rearticulation focused on ‘intense personal attachments’ and ‘increased economic well-being through communal sharing of resources’ (Metcalf 1986:119).

Cock draws on New Left political philosophy in his texts Radical Change—An Alternative Strategy (1975) and Alternative Australia Communities for the Future? (1979). As briefly noted in section 2.6, Cock focuses on the possibilities of reconstruction of the ‘nature of man’ (1975:5) and the problematic of the corporate state and its association with ‘dehumanised man’ (1975:9). Thus the corporate state, representing a fusion of government and business interests, is associated with violence (the Vietnam war; suppression of student activists; nuclear war); domination (minority monopoly of economic institutions, defining personal identity); oppression (control of both natural and material resources including ideas and values); and maintenance of the polarisation between public and private (Cock 1979:17-18, 237). Cock also explores a range of institutional values that significantly influenced intentional community living in the 1970s in Australia. For instance, the corporate state was seen to support ‘private lives in impersonal worlds’; the necessity of suburban living; and the ‘isolation of the nuclear family’; the ‘depersonalised character’ suited to a bureaucratic life; and the enforcement of divisions—between work and leisure, between family and community, between self and society (Cock 1979:237-241). Thus communal life was orientated towards alternative values that reflected pacifist ideals; interaction and participation—what Cock refers to as a ‘civilisation of interacting persons’ (1975:9)—and communal values that reflected the sharing ‘of values, aims and expectations,’ resources and responsibility in all matters of communal life (Cock 1979:234-236).

A diverse array of philosophies, visions and intentions also infuse communal and personal values in the intentional community literature. For instance,
Kozeny (1993) argues that the primary values of intentional community participants are broad:

- including ecology, equality, appropriate technology, self-sufficiency, right livelihood, humanist psychology, creativity, spirituality, meditation, yoga and the pursuit of global peace. (P. 2)

Similarly, Metcalf (1986), in his thesis *Dropping Out and Staying In*, was unable to clarify ‘a clear and distinct philosophy’ in his content analysis of alternative lifestyle magazines of Australian communes in the 1970s. He managed to identify twenty-five ‘philosophy categories’ covering personal growth, health and diet, religion, virtues of alternative living, permaculture, survivalism, ‘correct’ approach to general social issues, conservation and deep ecology, art and craft and an ‘other’ category (Metcalf 1986:267, Table 7.2). The sheer complexity of what Metcalf refers to, as the socialisation literature was both broad and difficult to constrain to specific categories.

Due to such a broad array of intentional community philosophies, McGregor (1975:15) argues that the existence of an Australian counter-culture in the seventies was a dominant myth, failing to account for a number of alternative cultures that were sometimes more opposed to each other than to the dominant established culture. In comparison, Smith and Crossley argue that this great diversity ‘of critiques, visions and solutions’ merely reflected ‘the present perilous state of the Western world’ (1975:1). Stillman argues that instead of erecting monolithic value systems, concrete utopias ‘present a plurality of sometimes incompatible principles’, and that these contradictions and resistances ‘provoke re-examination of the supposedly ‘univocal or hegemonic’ notions of utopia’ (2001:13; see also Goodwin 2000:3). Plurality of

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1 The full title of the text is: *Dropping Out Staying In: Recruitment, Socialization and Commitment Engenderment Within Contemporary Alternative Lifestyles* (see Metcalf 1986).
values also acts as a form of resistance to the notion of mainstream hegemonic ideals that assume ‘a false sense of consensus’ (Metcalf 1986:85).

Although intentional communities embody a plurality of values that play a part in the construction of identity and communal life, significant shifts in values have occurred over time. The following section considers these shifts, while also focusing on the way in which these values are implemented through particular communal and individual practices—or what Schehr refers to as ‘innovative techniques’ (1999:249). It is these ‘techniques’ that play an important role in the transformation of identity and the embodiment of the very ideals participants seek to emulate in a praxis of living.

2.6.3 Historical shifts in values and innovative techniques

In the context of the Australian alternative lifestyle movement of the 1970s, Cock (1975:7) argues that participants needed to historically account for their present ‘condition’. However, the result of this accounting led to an initial extreme juxtaposition of values. Cock argues that a lack of balance between rejected values and extreme reactionary values symbolised in anarchical structures often led to the destruction of communal life, with participants again finding themselves ‘profoundly disqualified’ for that style of living (Cock 1979:238-239). Achieving a ‘dynamic balance’ between these values also meant ‘to believe in the social necessity of tension, opposition and conflict’ (Cock 1979:239). This period focused on the way in which resistance and rearticulation could effect real social and structural changes in society, representing the limited classical view of social movement theory discussed in the context of Schehr’s work in section 2.6.

However, the 1980s and 1990s saw changes in the concomitant values of intentional communities. For example, McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:23) argue that communities of the eighties realised that they could not be built
around the things that are rejected in mainstream culture, but must be built on common positive values. They argue that a shift occurred in the communes of the 1980s, reflecting a greater sophistication in communal living. Although some values are still shared by communal participants of each era—such as simplicity, resource sharing, loving and giving in relationships, human equality, non-violence and cooperation—other values have changed significantly. For instance, communities in the eighties became less communal, less restrictive and tended to be smaller and therefore more akin to extended families than alternative societies. They used more sophisticated practices; for example, psychological techniques, such as gestalt and psychosynthesis and forms of egalitarian governance, which reflected group consensus processes. Sexual relations represented a greater balance of sexual energies rather than over-indulgence or repression, and there was a greater complexity of urban and shared households rather than isolated rural communities. Increased communication is also effected by the use of changing technology, encouraging greater interaction with society. In addition, networking and interchanges between communities were prominent features. Further, intentional community participants looked to ‘planetary consciousness’ rather than a concern only for their own communal well-being (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:88-90; see also Schehr 1997:45). Other texts also acknowledge this shift in the 1980s (Kozeny 2006; Tim Miller, 1999).

Drawing on the work of McLaughlin and Davidson (1986), Schehr (1997:96-97) argues that the following eight significant characteristics distinguish intentional communities of the 1990s from those of the 1960s, and would therefore designate intentional communities of the 1990s as contemporary members of the NSM. Firstly, intentional communities display innovative modes of cohabitation through the use of a variety of spiritual, philosophical,
psychological and sociological insights. Secondly, governance structures are often sophisticated and non-hierarchical and may promote feminist-based or consensus-based decision-making models. Thirdly, intentional communities may create and practise sophisticated methods for non-violent conflict resolution and personal growth. Metcalf (2004) refers to a number of mechanisms that may be used to resolve conflict, such as prayer, meditation and open discussion. Members of the Damanhur community in Italy, (know as Damhurians) utilise a ‘structured exercise called the Game of Life’, which uses fun, challenge and innovation to find the ‘divine humour in every situation’ (Metcalf 2004:99). Similarly, Christian discusses designing a ‘graduated series of fair, compassionate consequences, from mild to increasingly serious’ to address the breaking of communal agreements (2003:16). This indicates that clear rules, open communication and effective mechanisms for dealing with conflict provide a way to transition through conflict situations.

1 Contemporarily, ecological philosophies have become a dominant theme across intentional communities with the growth of eco-villages in addition to a broad range of ecological practices being incorporated into the range of insights noted by Schehr (1997). For instance, Metcalf notes that eco-villages achieve a great deal through the promotion of ‘environmental education, ecological designs and building’ (2004:116). Further, in some countries local governments also promote ecovillages as sustainable living models (Metcalf 2004:116).

2 Metcalf refers to two types of governance structures: ‘focused power decision making models’ which may reflect a theocracy or charismatic leadership, often used by religious-based intentional communities; and ‘diffuse power decision-making models’ which involve a mixture of majority vote or democratic decision-making which are models utilised by Kibbutzim and large eco-villages around the world (2004:94-95).

3 Consensus decision-making, according to Metcalf, is often more effective in smaller intentional communities (2004:94-95).

4 Stevenson (1999) comments on ten common sources of conflict in communities, including space and boundary issues; health and lifestyle; balancing communal and family time; exclusive and inclusive relationships; the structure of relationships; responses to problems; caring for communal tools and equipment; financial arrangements; standards of behaviour; and care of children and animals. Christian (2005a) comments on twenty-four common sources of community conflict, while in a subsequent article she discusses seventy-one ways to build trust and connection or to reduce and resolve conflict (Christian 2005b).

5 Practiced by the Darvell Bruderhof community (see Metcalf 2004:99).

6 Practiced by intentional communities such as the Findhorn Foundation and Lothlorien (see Metcalf 2004:99).

7 Practiced by ZEGG (see Metcalf 2004:99).
Fourthly, intentional communities use technology in environmentally sustainable ways, resulting in philosophically diverse communities implementing a range of environmental practices, such as the use of composting toilets and grey water systems; a focus on reducing waste and recycling; solar power and specific water purification practices; protecting nature through declaring communal land natural wildlife habitats and sanctuaries; and engaging in wider environmental education and activism. Fifthly, many intentional communities undertake significant forms of outreach in the form of research, book publications, newsletters and conferences. These aspects have been discussed above in section 2.5.4. The sixth point emphasised by Schehr (1997) reflects a focus on a greater balance in the pursuit of cultural, economic, and personal liberation and awareness, leading to more humane experiences of love, sex, play work, child rearing, self-identity and relationships to time and space. The seventh characteristic reflects a greater commitment to self-sufficiency. Communities such as Damanhur in Italy and Church Communities International, of which the latter is discussed further in Chapters Five and Six, represent communities that aim for a broad characterisation of self-sufficiency which extends to social and economic structures and which is not limited merely to environmental practices. For instance, Poldervaart (2001) argues that the concept of sustainability refers not only to the preservation of nature, but also serves as a guide to the organisation of social life. Cultural and social integrity, in addition to ecological principles, may therefore play principal roles in communal life (Poldervaart, 2001:23). The eighth characteristic points to a firmer commitment to non-violence, race and gender harmony, and peace, with many communities instilling these attributes in their communal rules or by-laws.
This shift in ideals also reflects differences in resistance to dominant cultural paradigms. For instance, Kozeny (1993:2) argues that the problems that were perceived to be ‘out there’—such as greed, dishonesty, excessive ego, lack of self-esteem, factionalism, inadequate resources, poor communication skills—were also perceived to play a significant role within intentional communities. Although effecting change in the wider society is still a preoccupation with many communities, transforming at the level of community—or what Schehr (1997) refers to as ‘the lifeworld’—rather than at the level of the state, is seen as a more effective way of generating societal change. Schehr (1997) also argues that this change represents a post-industrial shift in Western relations that symbolises ‘renewed identity construction’ and a ‘rearticulated reappropriated lifeworld’, which is consciously focused on the transformation of interpersonal and intrapersonal relations. The effects of self-transformation are then seen to flow ‘to the entirety of human social existence’ (Schehr 1997:44).

The following section focuses on the way in which resistance, the contestation around values and the engagement in certain techniques may result in personal transformation for individual communal participants living on intentional communities.

2.6.4 Resistance and transformation

Caplan argues that the transformative possibility that communal living provides is not a well-recognised value of communal living (2000:54). Much of this has to do with the initial focus of intentional communities on the need to effect structural transformation in the dominant culture. As discussed in section 2.6.3 in the context of Cock’s work, an initial extreme juxtaposition of values emulated the way in which resistance and rearticulation could effect real social and structural changes in society. An historical shift in values in the
1980s subsequently led to a greater inward focus and recognition that communities must be built on common positive values (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:23). However, despite this shift, Schehr (1997:249) maintains that limited notions of social movement theory that require effective shifts to occur at the state level fail to recognise the small changes at the level of the lifeworld that may lead to unanticipated changes at the societal level.

Self-transformation is alluded to in the intentional community literature through shifts in identity construction, such as the self-constitution of a ‘unique’ or ‘authentic self’ as discussed in section 2.6.1 in the context of Abrams et al. (1976) and Munro-Clark’s (1986) work or the re-construction of the ‘nature of man’ as has been noted in the context of Cock’s (1975) work in section 2.6. Further, as discussed above, values expressed in the dominant society are highly contested and resisted in intentional communities, with antithetical values often forming the basis of communal living and the work of personal self-transformation. For instance, McLaughlin and Davidson discuss in *Builders of the Dawn* the way in which intentional community participants are not just building new social structures, they are also building ‘new people’ (1986:2). It is these new people who are learning to change fear, selfishness, and conflict—values associated with the dominant culture—into love, co-operation, and sharing. Thus, ‘living in these communities is a powerful training in the art of relationship’ (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:2); a point recognised by many other writers on intentional communities (Kanter 1972; Metcalf 1995; Munro-Clark 1986; Schehr 1997; Zablocki 1980).

Sargisson (2001) clearly recognises the transformative value that transgression plays in critical utopias, in addition to forming the basis for rearticulating and transforming traditions. Sargisson argues that it may also facilitate a transformative function that permits intentional community participants ‘to break significantly with confining traditions of thought and behaviour’
Love-Brown (2002) also recognises the transformative possibilities of communal living in her discussion of cultural transformation. As part of her research, Love-Brown draws on her own fieldwork at Ananda Village in 1967. She discusses the main philosophical mode of the community as an attempt to ‘live a simple life devoted to God’ (Love-Brown 2002:171). In doing so, members reduce the amount of stress in their lives and in their environments. Love-Brown (2002) goes on to ask participants about changes they had experienced in their own behaviour, since joining the community:

Ananda members responded with comments like ‘more empathy’ as a result of ‘inner peace’; ‘I rarely lose my temper, which is something that happened frequently’; ‘more open and able to show love to others’; ‘I used to be very introspective and non-conversational and ... I’m much more open with others’; ‘less judgmental’; ‘more considerate, more sensitive to their feelings’; ‘more open, less selfish’; ‘I am less shy, more confident, mature.’ (P. 171)

Although subtle, these changes may well represent the beginning of the shifts in ‘thought and behaviour’ that Sargisson’s notion of transgression may imply.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the enduring nature of intentional communities. A number of authors argue that contemporary intentional communities are representative of early ‘utopian’ communities that featured in biblical times and in Greek and Christian periods. In this light, intentional communities have existed for at least a millennia. In contemporary times these early utopian communities may now take a wide variety of forms. From small, localised communities, to large co-operatives and federations, intentional communities present a plethora of communal styles, philosophies and social, political and religious movements.
However, they share some distinctive traits: members are often unrelated biologically; the communities are formed on a voluntary basis; communities often engage members in a purpose—hence the notion of intentionality; they may reflect a communal enterprise, regardless of the extremes of communality; and members may embody an inherent sense of identity through being attached to a particular group. Further, the diverse nature of the literature surrounding intentional communities is inclusive of a wide variety of voices from academic scholars to participants engaged in the day-to-day-life of communal living.

The second section considered some defining features relevant to this research. Firstly, intentional communities form the basis for a critique of the larger society in which they exist. Schehr (1997:3) argues that intentional communities are ‘subaltern modes of resistance’, while Love-Brown (2002:153) portrays intentional communities as revitalisation movements, playing an important role in conscious cultural critique. Secondly, a number of authors argue that communal living is essential to the social construction of identity—an ‘authentic self’ in the case of Munro-Clark (1986:39) and a ‘unique self’ in the context of Abrams et al. (1976:94). Thirdly, intentional community participants seem most concerned with contesting and resisting values that operate in the wider society and which may also construct identity and communal life. Resisting values is endemic in the works of Cock (1977), Miller (1999), Kozeny (1993) and Schehr (1997). These values are grounded in communal living and in the practices discussed by McLaughlin and Davidson (1986), and subsequently Schehr (1997), such as innovative modes of co-habitation, contemporary governance models, conflict resolution and styles of personal growth, environmental technology, self-sufficiency, and community outreach.
Finally, acts of self-transformation are essential if these new values are to be instilled in a new way of life. Sargisson (2001:140) argues that transgression forms the basis for transformation of thought and behaviour. Love-Brown (2002:171) also discusses cultural transformation and the way it effects changes in the behaviour of community participants, while McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:2) discuss the way in which *Builders of the Dawn* are not just building new social structures, they are also building ‘new people’.

Despite an extensive literature that discusses intentional community living as a phenomenon, very little research explicitly focuses on communal living as a form of ethics as *praxis*. Foucault’s later work on ethics however, provides a useful context in which to theorise intentional community living as a Foucauldian form of ethics.
Chapter Three
A REVIEW OF FOUCALUT’S DOMAIN OF ETHICS

3.1 Introduction

Many of the themes discussed in Chapter Two regarding intentional communities bear a striking correlation with concepts that frame Foucault’s later work on ethics. For instance, early utopian communities formed the basis for his conceptualisation of ethics and were also voluntary associations, small in number, with a culture and ethos of their own. Further, Foucault’s ethics entertains similar notions around resistance and conscious cultural critique; contestations around representations of the self and values; and the performance of *practices* that may effect self-transformation. These themes are explored further in a review of Foucault’s ethics in this chapter.

Foucault’s work can be divided into earlier and later stages (Miller 2000:252) that cover three domains of analysis (Davidson 1986:221; Prado 1995:24). His earlier works consist of the first two domains. The first is the domain of *archaeology*, which concerns our relations to truth: ‘this obligation to truth,’¹ (Foucault 1984b/1988:15) and the way in which we ‘constitute ourselves as subjects of knowledge’ (Foucault 1984a:340). The second is the *genealogical* domain, which concerns ‘relations of power’ and how, through these

¹ This ‘obligation to truth’ is a permanent theme throughout Foucault’s domains of analysis. For instance, in his later work on ethics, he asks: ‘… why truth? And why are we concerned with truth, and more so than with the self? And why do we care for ourselves, only through the care for truth? ... What caused all Western culture to begin to turn around this obligation to truth, which has taken on a variety of different forms?’ (see Foucault 1984b/1988:15)
relations, we ‘constitute ourselves as subjects acting on others’ (Foucault 1984a:340). His later work, and his third domain, concerns *ethics*, which focuses on how we ‘constitute ourselves as moral agents’ (Foucault 1984a:340) or more precisely, the self’s ‘relationship with the self’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:28).

This thesis focuses on Foucault’s later work, and therefore his third domain, for two reasons. Firstly, Foucault situates his examination of ethics in what are considered to be early utopian communities of the Hellenistic and Roman culture of the fourth century BCE to the second century AD. Foucault examines early Greek doctrines of these utopian communities, including the Platonists¹ (Foucault 1984h/1986:45), Epicureans (Foucault 1984h/1986:46), neo-Pythagorean communities (Foucault 1984h/1986:51), schools of Epictetus (Foucault 1984h/1986:51), the Stoics (Foucault 1984h/1986:54) and the followers of Socrates (Foucault 1984h/1986:44) and Zeno (Foucault 1984h/1986:46). He argues that that these social groups were limited in number and ‘were bearers of culture ... for whose members a *techné tou biou*—art of existence—could have a meaning and reality’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:43, 45).² Therefore, there are potential links between Foucault’s notion of ethics and intentional communities as contemporary forms of these earlier utopian communities. Secondly, Foucault’s notion of ethics is considered a substantive form of ethics (Davidson 1986:232) that may provide a theoretical and interpretive framework for analysing practices performed on the self by intentional community participants.

¹ Sargent points out that Plato’s major works, the *Republic* and *Laws*, have been called *eutopias*, that is, utopias ‘that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived’ (2000:10, 15).

² Sargent notes that ‘the Lycurgus of Plutarch, the Cyropaedia of Xenophon, Aritophanes, and Plato’ (discourses of the period Foucault is concerned with) were all early examples of utopias brought about by human effort, with ‘Plato ... and the Essenes ... early attempts to bring the vision into being’ (2000:10).
This chapter is therefore divided into two sections. The first section provides a literature review of Foucault’s work on ethics. It considers the context of the third domain and reviews the ‘corpus’ that surrounds Foucault’s work on ethics (Kritzman 1990a:vii). This section then provides a brief exposé of Foucault’s History of Sexuality series, considers core themes that permeate his later work and then considers his notion of the ethical subject. Some principal critiques of Foucault’s work are also discussed in this section. The second section then explores Foucault’s four-part ethical conceptualisation that may be utilised as a broadly defined qualitative methodology (Scheurich & McKenzie 2005:841).

3.2 Background to Foucault’s ethics

3.2.1 Historical context

Two significant contexts infuse Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation (Davidson 1994:116). Firstly, Foucault’s concern for ethics originated in practical political concerns. He initially held a sympathetic viewpoint towards both the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979 and the emergence of the Solidarity movement in Poland, where Foucault had previously lived. According to Bernauer, he continued to closely follow the country’s fortunes thereafter (Bernauer 1991:64-65). Further, Foucault’s activism in many causes, such as the rights of prisoners, reflected his own critical reflective thought regarding the ‘single experience’ of imprisonment. Themes relating to imprisonment ranged from the insidiousness of surveillance discussed in his work Discipline and Punish (Foucault 1975/1977) to the way human beings are caught in webs of power

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1 Scheurich and McKenzie argue that Foucault’s archaeology and genealogy could be broadly construed as ‘qualitative’ methods because Foucault uses texts as data. They further assert that St Pierre (1995) may ‘creatively interpret’ Foucault’s ‘care of the self’ period as a methodology (Scheurich and McKenzie 2005:843) This thesis uses Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as both a theoretical perspective and as a domain of analysis when analyzing texts (transcripts) giving rise to the consideration that this research is using Foucault’s ethics as a broadly defined qualitative methodology.
and knowledge constructed by and for themselves. Bernauer (1991) comments on Foucault’s concern with:

the incarceration of human beings within modern systems of thought and practice which had become so intimately a part of them that they no longer experience these systems as a series of confinements but embraced them as the very structure of being human. (P. 45)

Foucault’s ethics therefore formed part of his unthought ‘to try to think of something other than what one thought before’ (Foucault 1984e/1988:256; 1984g/1985:8), and a provocation of his curiosity ‘that…enables one to get free of oneself’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:8) Theorists, such as James Miller (1993), note the way in which Foucault’s later work also served as a method of personal excavation, providing a way for Foucault to ‘think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:8).

Foucault’s curiosity also led to what Bernauer refers to as Foucault’s ‘study of Christian experience’ (Bernauer 1991:47). Rigorous Christian self-analysis enabled personal transformation and the production of ‘a unique form of subjectivity’ (Bernauer 1991:52). Yet Bernauer argues that this unique subjectivity borne from a subjectivisation of the human being results from two processes. The first is ‘the constitution of the self as a hermeneutical reality’; that is, the realisation that within every subject resides the truth that demands ‘permanent interpretation through ever more sophisticated practices of attentiveness, concern, decipherment and verbalisation’ (Bernauer 1991:52). Yet the second process has as its purpose the objectivisation of the self; that is, ‘to foster renunciation of the self who has been objectified … an admission that “I am not who I am”’1 (Bernauer 1991:53). Bernauer argues

1 ‘I am not who I am’ clearly establishes that whatever ‘truth’ is interpreted and held out about the self is also subsequently renounced. This is why Bernauer refers to this process as a ‘continual mortification’ (Bernauer 1991:53).
that it is this ‘continual mortification by a permanent hermeneutic and renunciation of the self [that leads Foucault to] the politics of ourselves’ (1991:53) and its consequence: ‘his vision of a contemporary philosophical ethos [or] ecstatic thinking’ (Bernauer 1991:53) that is encapsulated in his ethics.

Given these two contexts, Foucault’s ethics considers two goals: How do we think differently if we are incarcerated in systems of thought? And how do we free ourselves from the very subjectivities that have been defined for us? These questions led Foucault back to early Christian and Greek texts that focused on forms of transformation and the production of unique forms of subjectivity, from which he formulates his ethical conceptualisation. Foucault’s analysis of Greek texts is explored further in section 3.2.2, while his ethics are discussed in section 3.6.

The following section provides an overview of texts written by Foucault that are intimately linked to his later work on ethics. As with Foucault’s earlier works, his corpus (Kritzman 1990a:vii) always went beyond his texts. The dialogic form, ‘which Foucault used … masterfully to gloss and supplement his theoretical works’ (Kritzman 1990a:vii), is a particularly French phenomenon that permits a more precise and thus reflective discussion of both former works and works in progress. Thus interviews with Foucault, and seminars provided by him, provide additional commentary around his main texts, concepts and the proclaimed aims of his work on ethics.

### 3.2.2 Foucault’s corpus

Foucault’s text *What is Enlightenment?* (1969b/1984) introduces two elements important to the notion of ethics: critique and self-stylisation. Both are dependent on the subject constituting it’s self (McDonald 2004). Further, in seminars, such as *Technologies of the Self* (Foucault 1982a/1998), presented at
the University of Vermont, Foucault also developed a new line of enquiry (Martin et al 1988:3), by focusing on how the individual turns him or herself into a subject (Foucault 1982a/1998:19). In this seminar, Foucault focuses on ‘technologies of the self’:

which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection or immortality. (Foucault 1982a/1998:18)

He subsequently considers the development of a hermeneutics of the self in two different historical periods: Greco-Roman philosophy and Christian spirituality. He discerns a difference between the Greek maxim ‘to take care of yourself’ and the Delphic principle ‘know yourself’ associated with Christian thought and practice (Foucault 1982a/1998:19). He discusses technologies of the self that are utilised in the context of each philosophy, with the Greek ‘care of the self’ linked to a practice of writing, and the Christian focus ‘know thyself’ linked to confession (Foucault 1982a/1998:27, 48). The content of this seminar resembles work reproduced in his later text The Care of the Self (Foucault 1984h/1986) which is discussed in section 3.3.2. Further, technologies of the self are synonymous with Foucault’s articulations on ‘self-forming activities,’ which form one aspect of his four-part ethical conceptualisation in The Use of Pleasure (Foucault 1984g/1985), which is discussed further in section 3.6. The Subject and Power (Foucault 1982b), an ‘Afterword’ in Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982:208-226), re-establishes the subject as the prime focus of Foucault’s later works.

Truth, Power, Self (Foucault 1982c/1988) highlights the importance of thought in Foucault’s works. He argues that political and social processes have become habitual landscapes. He maintains that these processes are dependent
on ‘precise historical changes’ and are neither necessary nor universal (Foucault 1982c/1988:11). He further argues that discourses are anthropomorphic at their core, resulting in man as ‘normative’, ‘self-evident’ and ‘universal’ (Foucault 1982c/1988:15). Based on these arguments, Foucault articulates a notion of resistance and critique:

My role ... is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes, which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticised and destroyed. To change something in the minds of people—that’s the role of an intellectual. (Foucault 1982c/ 1988:10)

Thus resistance and critique are complimentary to the study of the relationships between ‘truth, power, and self’ in the development of practices of freedom. Politics and Ethics (Foucault 1983/1984) subsequently explores politics as an ethics, and ethics as a practice (Foucault 1983/1984:375-377).

On the Genealogy of Ethics (Foucault 1984a) and The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom (Foucault 1984b/1988) are invaluable texts in understanding Foucault’s later work. The former text provides an overview of work in progress, presenting ‘preliminary formulations’ of his subsequent work in The Use of Pleasure (Foucault 1984g/1985) and The Care of the Self (Foucault 1984h/1986; see Foucault 1984a:340 fnb). In pursuing his interest in ‘techniques of the self’ (Foucault 1984a:340) Foucault argues that ethics, for the ancient Greeks, was a matter of ‘personal choice’ (Foucault 1984a:341) and therefore ‘an aesthetics of existence’ (Foucault 1984a:343). Foucault argues that the Greek ‘problem’ was not necessarily techniques of the self but the ‘techné of life,’ that is, how to live. Greeks were most concerned about the proper techniques that needed to be used ‘in order to live as well as I ought to live’ (Foucault 1984a:348; see also O’Leary 2006). In this text Foucault introduces the four aspects of ethics, in addition to defining ethics as the type
of relationship you should have with yourself in order to constitute one’s ‘self’ as a moral subject of one’s own actions (Foucault 1984a:352).

Interestingly, this text also begins to counter the differences between Foucault’s ethics and his concern with care of the self (Foucault 1984a:359-360), discussed in more detail below.

The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom (Foucault 1984b/1988), alternatively translated as The Ethics of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom (Foucault 1984c/1994), differentiates between concepts associated with his earlier works and those relevant to his focus on the ethical subject. For instance, he draws a distinction between coercive practices associated with his earlier works and the passive subject, and practices of freedom—which was his current focus at the time—and the active subject (Foucault 1984b/1988:2-3, 11). This distinction is discussed further in section 3.5.

Foucault additionally explores power, freedom and truth—concepts that are complimentary to both his earlier and later works.

In An Aesthetics of Existence (Foucault 1984d/1988), Foucault focuses on the way in which the subject constitutes itself through ‘practices of liberation,’ that is, ‘rules styles, inventions to be found in the cultural environment’ (Foucault 1984d/1988:51). In this context Foucault highlights the transition from Antiquity, associated with the search for a personal ethics, and Christianity, associated with morality and ‘obedience to a system of rules’ (Foucault 1984d/1988:49). The Concern for Truth (Foucault 1984e/1988) reflects on his former project and his current work. He again affirms that the focus of his current work is the ‘art of existence’ or ‘technique of life’:

It was a question of knowing how to govern one’s own life in order to give it the most beautiful form (in the eyes of others, of oneself, and of future generations for which one might serve as an example) ... the formation and
development of a practice of self whose aim was to constitute oneself as the worker of the beauty of one’s own life. (Foucault 1984e/1988:259)

In *Final Interview* (Foucault 1984i/1985), conducted several weeks before Foucault’s death, Foucault recasts his work into three major problems: truth, power and individual conduct; arguing that he had not taken the latter into account in his previous texts (Foucault 1984i/1985:2). He again discusses the question of ‘style’ as central to antiquity: ‘stylisation of the relation to oneself, style of conduct, stylisation of the relation to others,’ (Foucault 1984i/1985:2) yet again confirms that this ‘stylisation’ for the Greeks, was practiced by a small number of people and yet it was a matter of choice—‘anyone could come and share in it’¹ (Foucault 1984i/1985:3). The interesting point that Foucault raises in this text is not that we take up Greek morality again; rather, the challenge is whether we take up Greek thinking again—as a lived experience (Foucault 1984i/1985:7).

These texts lay the foundations for his work on ethics. Ethics is thus a practice—or practices—that a subject performs on him or herself. They are primarily aimed at a transformation of the self and they are concerned with the question: How ought I to live? Separate from morals—associated with obeying rules—it is an ethics or philosophy of life that can be held out to others, in addition to oneself, as an example of a beautiful life. It involves choice—one chooses rules, styles, or inventions in one’s culture by which to fashion one’s self. Yet it also implies a resistance and critique of the representations that are not of one’s choosing. These texts constitute the corpus of Foucault’s work that underpins his articulations on ethics.

¹ Though it is readily acknowledged by Foucault that Greek ethics only concerned ‘free’ men and that it was very difficult to know who did participate in it. All ‘others’ including women, men of lower status and slaves would not have participated in what Foucault refers to as the ‘morality of antiquity’ (see generally Foucault 1984i/1985:3).
The following section focuses on the three volumes that make up *The History of Sexuality* series.

### 3.3 The History of Sexuality series

Foucault’s original project, which began with the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1976/1978), aimed to produce a six-part series on sexuality. (Foucault 1984f:338-339). However, the second volume, *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1984g/1985) which appeared eight years later, was based on a very different enterprise (Foucault 1984e/1988:255). This later venture rested in his desire to analyse more closely his third historical ontology, ‘the modality of relation to the self’ (Foucault 1984f:338). Though he considered sexuality an extremely important ‘locus of experience’ (Foucault 1984f:338), Foucault confessed elsewhere: ‘I am much more interested in problems about techniques of the self and things like that than sex … sex is boring’ (Foucault 1984a:340).

Sexuality instead became a form of an historical problematisation (Foucault 1984a:343) in both *The Use of Pleasure* and in his third volume in the series, *The Care of the Self* (Foucault 1984h/1986), enabling Foucault to explore ‘practices of the self, bringing into play the criteria of an aesthetics of existence’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:12, 13). The domain of the ‘self’s relationship to itself’ therefore enabled Foucault to utilise a ‘very specific form of analysis … ethics’ (Davidson 1986:221).

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1 In addition to the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1976/1978), the six part series included: *Flesh and Body* (vol. 2); *The Children’s Crusade* (vol. 3); *Women, Mother and Hysteric* (vol. 4); *Perverts* (vol. 5); and *Population and Races* (vol. 6) (see Bernauer 1991:49; Davidson 1994:117). Foucault argues that he ‘nearly died of boredom writing those books, they were too much like the earlier ones’ (1984d/1988: 47). Though quite flippant in some interviews about this change: ‘I changed my mind … Out of laziness’ (Foucault, 1984e/1988:255); there were real conceptual difficulties that led him to abandon this line of approach. As Davidson notes, ‘An attempt to study modern sexuality would have to combine all three axes of analysis, the self, power, and knowledge, and would take many more volumes than even Foucault’s originally projected six volumes (1986:230).
3.3.1 The Use of Pleasure

In *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault1984g/1985) Foucault discusses his journey away from his original enterprise and his focus at that time on ‘practices of the self’. As discussed in section 3.2, he argues that his motivation rested in a ‘curiosity, which enables one to get free of oneself’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:8). As discussed in *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault1984g/1985) his focus on ‘arts of existence’ reflects a belief that such practices have held unquestionable importance in our societies. In particular, sexuality in Greco-Roman culture which preceded the effects of Christianity and priestly power, were regarded by Foucault as a founding influence on techniques of the self. Foucault therefore focuses on classical Greek texts, which he describes as ‘prescriptive texts’ that problematise sexual activity and provide an outline in which to analyse practices of the self (Foucault 1984g/1985:12-13).

A particular framework informs Foucault’s ethics in *The Use of Pleasure*. For instance, Foucault notes ‘some methodological considerations … when one undertakes to study the forms and transformation of a morality’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:25). He divides morality into three components: the ‘moral code’; ‘the real behaviour of individuals’; and ‘the manner in which one ought to form oneself as an ethical subject’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:25-32). Foucault therefore delineates ethics as a separate sphere of research that complements the moral code and people’s behaviour with respect to it. Foucault argues that these distinctions ‘have consequences for historical analysis’ (1984g/1985:29).

A history of ‘moral behaviours,’ for instance, would focus on a person or group’s conformity or departure from ‘rules and values that are prescribed for them by various agencies’ (Foucault 1984g/1985 :29). In comparison, a history of codes would evaluate the various rules and values existing within a community or society, methods of enforcement and the various ‘forms …
divergences … and their contradictions’ (Foucault 1984g/1985:29). In contrast, Foucault hypothesised that a focus on the ethical constitution of the self would result in a whole rich and complex field of historicity [that identifies] how that subjectivation was defined and transformed [through these periods’] (Foucault 1984g/1985:32). Thus, an historical analysis of ethics:

would be concerned with the models\(^1\) proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as the object. (Foucault 1984g/1985:29)

Davidson (1986; 1994) argues that this differentiation serves to isolate a distinctive ‘stratum of analysis’ without denying the importance of the moral code or the actual behaviour of people. It also shifts the emphasis to another side of the moral prescriptions—to one’s relationship with oneself—‘which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral agent of his own actions’ (Foucault 1984a:352).

Thus a Foucauldian analysis of ethics enables one to go beyond the contemporary philosophy underpinning the moral code to a substantive ethics regarding ones relationship to oneself ‘conceived independently of the structure of the moral code’ (Davidson 1986:232). Davidson argues that, from a Foucauldian perspective, ‘heirs to Kant’ and ‘successors to Schopenhauer’ ‘ignore [this] domain of ethics proper’ (1986:232), and those who do articulate duties to oneself—such as Donagan in The Theory of Morality (Donagan 1979)—highlight the importance and complexity such a relation to oneself can take within ‘a grid of ethical intelligibility’ (Davidson 1986:232). Ethics in this

\(^1\) It is the basis of this thesis, that Intentional communities may be an example of such a ‘model’ that enables an ethics to be practiced.
sense is not concerned with rules or principles, but rather with ‘our selfconstitution as subjects’ (O’Leary 2006:11).

*The Use of Pleasure* cements a philosophical shift in Foucault’s work. It moves away from genealogical interpretations that concern discursive subject formation and processes of normalisation—a *passive* form of subject formation where ‘self-constitution is not the result of active, conscious decisions, but of subliminal socialisation’ (Hoy 1986:15), to a more *active* subject constitution—where the subject self-constitutes in accordance with certain discursive practices of their choosing. As Hoy points out:

He pays attention to the practices by which individuals train themselves to become a certain sort of person ... Unlike the prison book, then, which studies how people constrain others, the history of sexuality studies how people constrain themselves. (1986:16 emphasis added)

### 3.3.2 The Care of the Self

Foucault’s third volume in the history of sexuality series, *The Care of the Self* (Foucault 1984h/1986), primarily discusses ‘care of the self’ as a dominant mode of ethics during the Hellenistic period. Foucault considered this mode so pervasive during this time that it became ‘rather general in scope’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:44). In addition to dominating each aspect of ethics, which will be discussed in section 3.6, ‘care of the self’ involved other core themes: it circulated in various doctrines; it was the form of an attitude, a mode of behaviour, and it was instilled in ways of living; it grew into practices, procedures and formulas that people ‘reflected on, developed, perfected and taught’; it constituted a social practice, gave rise to relationships between people and sometimes institutions and developed into a mode of knowledge and ‘the elaboration of a science’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:45).
I have argued elsewhere that Foucault’s conceptualisation of ethics is often perceived as indistinguishable from ‘care of the self’ (Bohill 2006; for example St Pierre 2004). Foucault, however was very clear that ethics was not synonymous with care of the self and pointed out that an *entire* ethics during a certain point in Greek antiquity revolved around ‘care of the self’ (Foucault 1984c/1994:285). Though this thesis takes up Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a theoretical framework and domain of analysis separate from ‘care of the self’, there are common enterprises between these texts.

Both texts concern ‘practices of the self’ that effect a conversion or transformation. While *The Use of Pleasure* concerns practices of the self as conceptualised through *ethics* as a domain of analysis, *The Care of the Self* focuses on practices of the self through care of the self as a dominant *mode of subjection* (which will be discussed in section 3.6.3), again using ethics as a domain of analysis. Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation therefore formed the basis for identifying and analysing each aspect of a culture’s ethics in addition to shifts that occurred over time in a particular culture’s ethics. This aspect is discussed further when considering the interrelationships between each aspect of ethics in section 3.6.5. In addition, as has been discussed in section 3.2.2, ethics involved a way of Greek thinking¹ and according to Foucault:

> This elaboration of one’s own life as a personal work of art, even if it obeyed certain collective canons, was at the centre, it seems to me, of moral experience, of the will to morality in Antiquity. (1984d/ 1988:49)

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¹ Foucault argues, ‘Trying to rethink the Greeks today does not consist of setting off Greek morality as the domain of morality par excellence which one would need for self-reflection. The point is rather to see to it that European thinking can take up Greek thinking again as an experience which took place once and with regard to which one can be completely free’ (Foucault 1984i/1985:7).
It is this Greek form of thinking that Foucault contemplates we could take up again as a lived experience, as opposed to care of the self (Foucault 1984i/1985:7).

Further, the type of communities that are the focus of both texts are acknowledged in the intentional community literature as very early utopian communities (see Kozeny 2000a; Metcalf 1996), including a range of early Greek and Christian communities that are noted in section 3.1. Foucault also contended that these communities were thought to be ‘a small elite’ (Foucault 1984a:341; 1984i/1985:3) who were ‘bearers of culture’, for whose members cultivation of the self could have a meaning and a reality (Foucault 1984h/1986:45). For these communities, an ‘arts of existence’ was therefore a matter of personal choice (Foucault 1984a:341, 348, 356, 361; 1984d/1988:50; 1984i/1985:3) in the aim to ‘live a beautiful life, and to leave to others memories of a beautiful existence’ (Foucault 1984a:341). These groups were therefore small in number, open to people to join, and practised an ethics that was not generally experienced by the larger culture. Many of these elements are present in the way intentional communities are defined in section 2.4.1.

It is important to note that Foucault distinguishes the classical Greek care of the self and his ethical conceptualisation from the ‘Californian cult of the self’ (Foucault 1984a:362). In his text, On the Genealogy of Ethics (Foucault 1984a), he argues that the former rests in a continued notion of an essential self. He therefore characterises the ‘Californian cult’ as a search aimed at discovering ‘one’s true self: to separate it from that which might obscure or alienate it, to decipher its truth’ (Foucault 1984a:362) through the use of contemporary discourse in the true Freudian fashion, such as psychology or psychoanalytic science ‘which is supposed to be able to tell you what your true self is’

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1 As discussed above, Greek ethics only concerned ‘free’ men (see generally Foucault 1984i/1985:3).
(Foucault 1984a:362). In contrast, the subject in classical Greek culture who practised an *ethics*, acted upon and within the discourses that were already available to him. As Foucault argues:

> The point is not to pursue the indescribable, not to reveal the hidden, not to say the nonsaid, but, on the contrary, to collect the already-said, to reassemble that which one could hear or read, and this to an end which is nothing less than the constitution of oneself. (1984a:365)

The ethical subject of Foucault’s texts is therefore concerned with a stylisation of the self that utilises available cultural artefacts, rather than deciphering an *essential* self. Before turning to a fuller discussion of Foucault’s ethical subject in section 3.5, the following section considers core themes of Foucault’s later work on ethics that also underpin his ethical subject.

### 3.4 Core Themes

Although Foucault’s later works have been broadly under-utilised (Miller 2008:266; Scheurich & McKenzie 2005:843), attention in the last decade has occurred in the areas of constructionist research (Miller 2008); *ethics* (Fillion 2005; O’Leary 2006; Sybilla 2001; Thompson 2003); *education* (Infinito 2003a; 2003b; Peters 2003; 2004); eco-communes (Eräranta *et al* 2009; Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Skinner 2007); *medical humanities* (Chambon & Irving 2003; Coors 2003; Duff 2004; Frank & Jones 2003; Goldstein 2003; Prado 2003); *philosophy* (Levy, 1998; McNeil, 1998; Palmer, 1998); *political theory* (Olssen 2003; White & Hunt 2000); *spirituality* (Davisson 2002; Peltonen & Keleman 2002); and *information technology* (Aycock 1995). Core themes discussed in many of these texts, such as freedom, power, resistance and agency, are central to Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation. I turn to each of these themes in the next section.
3.4.1 Freedom

When Foucault was asked whether his ethics was a mode of liberation, he responded that he would be ‘more cautious about that’. His concern rested in the danger that liberation would again refer back to an essential human nature (Foucault 1984b/1988:2), a notion which a large portion of his earlier work had carefully attempted to dismantle. According to Rajchman (1986), Foucault’s ‘modern practical philosophy’ had resulted from his way of questioning anthropologism, which had led him to freedom as the fundamental category of that philosophy. Hence, he was cautious of returning to a position he was seeking to leave behind. Rajchman points out that Foucault’s questioning is a form of scepticism which challenges the assumption ‘that there is only one unified thing, the world’ (Rajchman 1985:4-7).

Foucault instead insisted on ‘practices of freedom’ (1984b/1988:3) rather than processes of liberation. In this light, Rajchman (1985) points out that Foucault’s freedom is not liberation per se, but rather the endless questioning of constituted experience. Bernauer (1991) argues that self-constitution is always in the context of a struggle for freedom within an historical situation. He explains that this is why Foucault refers to the subject as an ‘agonism’: because it permanently subjects it’s self to an ongoing critical attitude in pursuit of its own freedom (Bernauer 1991:71). Others point out that freedom is also contextualised within a particular historical condition, providing both the practices and the possibilities for a very specific form of liberty (Fillion, 2005:58; Infinito 2003b:160).

Infinito (2003a) argues that the problem for Foucault is the compatibility of an individual freedom that also requires the individual to act ethically towards others. Infinito contends that Foucault wanted to overcome the traditional
notion of negative and positive freedom and therefore conceptualised freedom as only concerning positive action. Foucault’s notion of freedom is therefore *productive*. In this sense it has dual aims: resistance to that which controls our subjectivity, and therefore our identity; and a creative process that entails ‘having a say in the formation of the self’ (Infinito 2003a:70; Infinito 2003b:157-160). Others have similarly argued that in this context, the self becomes the author of one’s own conduct (Fillion 2005:55; Rajchman 1986:170; Sybylla 2001:76). Foucault’s form of freedom therefore entertains the possibilities that we can play an active part in creating our ‘selves’ and our world, rather than merely reacting to it (Sybylla 2001:76).

For Foucault, freedom is also ontologically prior to a practice of ethics; yet, when practiced, is the form that liberty assumes (Foucault 1984b/1988:12-13; see also Infinito 2003b:157; Sybylla 2001:74). This position results from Foucault’s notion of power relations, which is discussed in the next section.

### 3.4.2 Power and resistance

In his later work, Foucault redefines power as a relationship—a discursive form of power—rather than a form of domination or disciplinary power (Foucault 1984b/1988:3, 11-12; see also Coors 2003:282-283; Frank & Jones 2003:180; Miller 2008:255). He therefore refers to ‘relationships of power’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:3, 11-12) which are characterised as a network that interlinks a variety of social positions, constitutes a very complex field and is ‘rooted in the system of social networks’ (Foucault 1982b:224; 1984b/1988:3; Barker 1993:77 94; Bilton, Bonnett, Jones, Lawson, Skinner, Stanworth et al. 2002:196). Foucault’s concept of power informs the methodology of this research and is discussed further in section 4.5.7.
Foucault’s notion of discursive power has two implications for the ethical subject. Firstly, power relations presuppose that the subject is free. For, as Foucault argues:

there cannot be relations of power unless the subject is free … in order to exercise a relation of power, there must be on both sides at least a certain form of liberty. (1982b:221; 1984b/1988:13)

Where there are blocks in power relations there is domination and therefore a limitation on the subject’s liberty. For instance, slaves can only negotiate in a power relations exercise in a very limited way because slaves exist in a state of domination where the ‘margin of liberty is extremely limited’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:12). Instead, they exist in ‘a physical relationship of constraint’ (Foucault 1982b:221). In a similar way, earlier research on Foucault’s notion of ‘disciplinary power’ viewed the subject as an enslaved construction of discourse. Miller (2008) argues that Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power within this early research viewed the subject as ‘only acted upon’ and therefore entirely constructed by discourse, thereby closing off ‘all possibility of agency’ (Miller 2008:255).

Secondly, and in contrast to his earlier research, Foucault’s notion of discursive power always entails the possibility of resistance and ‘[a]t the very heart of the power relationship, and constantly provoking it, are the recalcitrance of the will and the intransigence of freedom (Foucault 1982b:221-222). As Miller argues, ‘the oppressed in short, were never entirely powerless’ (2008:257). For free subjects, there are many available and possible forms of resistance; that is ‘strategies that reverse the situation’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:12). The person seeking to exercise their choice to die (see Prado

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1 Miller argues that this position reflects a deterministic version of constructionism which emphasized the ‘power of dominant discourses to construct meaning for actors and to endow them with essentializing qualities’ (2008:255-256).
may refuse to engage in allopathic medical discourses. For example, the Amish, through their extended kinship network, care for dying or incapacitated loved ones until their deaths (Bryer 1979) rather than utilising mainstream palliative care or nursing homes. For the ‘mad’ person, there is the possibility of contesting disciplinary techniques and practices that impose on her the construction of a mad subject. Within discourse, resistance enables the subject to ‘take up dominant discourses and strategically rework them in specific social settings to pursue their own interests’ (Miller, 2008:259). As Infinito (2003b) states ‘our behaviour as free beings will be ethical only as long as we “think about” or consciously consider what we wish to make of our freedom’ (Infinito 2003b:157). In comparison, as Foucault points out, the slave has limited possibilities—suicide, killing the other or submission (Foucault 1984b/1988:12).

For Foucault, freedom, power and resistance are therefore inextricably linked, for without freedom there is no relationship of power, and without that relationship, no possibility of resistance. Thus, where subjects are free, resistance is always possible:

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\text{At the heart of power relations and as a permanent condition \ldots there is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight. Every power relationship implies, at least in potentia, a strategy of struggle \ldots} \\
\text{(Foucault 1982b:225)}
\]

Foucault consequently argues that ‘[o]ne cannot impute to me the idea that power is a system of domination which controls everything and which leaves no room for freedom’ (1984b/1988:13). Despite these significant articulations in his later works, his notion of power is often mistakenly perceived as a continuing form of disciplinary power—of domination or oppression; that is, ‘a thing in itself’ that curtails any form of choice or change (Barker 1993:80). Prado, for instance, argues that power (Foucault’s disciplinary form of power)
is a genie that won’t return to its bottle (2003:205), representing in a similar way, what Miller refers to as a ‘no way out’ interpretation of Foucault (2008:255). In contrast, Barker argues that a presentation of Foucault’s notion of power is ‘omnipresent … [and] can only be developed at the expense of misreading Foucault’ (1993:80) which, he points out, incorporated different modalities—with disciplinary power representing just one of those modalities (Barker 1993:80). This research returns to a critique of Foucault’s ethics, including Prado’s argument regarding disciplinary power, in section 3.5.1.

3.4.3 Agency

Part of the misconception that surrounds Foucault’s notion of discursive power stems from the assumption that choice can only be exercised by a free autonomous subject. That is, an autonomous subject equivalent to the Cartesian rational knower: ahistorical, impartial and objective and free from any form of domination. The Cartesian subject however, is the antithesis of Foucault’s subject. For Foucault, although the ethical subject is both free and able to resist certain constructions of a ‘self’ in discourse, it is still only able to choose or resist constructions that are available to it in its culture\(^1\) (Foucault 1984b/1988:11).

Foucault instead supports a form of autonomy that is based on thought and action within discursive frameworks. An interview titled *Polemics, Politics, and Problematisations* (Foucault, 1984j) was undertaken to answer questions often raised by American audiences (Foucault 1984j:381 fnb). One question elicited an answer that reflected the form of autonomy a subject may have based on thought and action. Foucault (1984j) argues that:

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\(^1\) Foucault notes that ‘practices of the self’ are ‘not something that the individual invents by himself. They are patterns that he finds in his culture and which are proposed, suggested and imposed on him by his culture, his society and his social group’ (Foucault 1984b: 11).
Thought ... allows one to step back from this way of acting or reacting, to present it to oneself as an object of thought and question it as to its meaning, its conditions and its goals. Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects on it as a problem. (P. 388)

In this sense he separates a subject’s ability to think from discursive representations (Foucault 1984j:388). He argues in an earlier dialogic text, *Is it really important to think?* (Foucault 1982d), that ‘thought exists well beyond and well within systems and edifices of discourse’ (Foucault 1982d:33). Criticism is thus the form in which thought is driven out of hiding and becomes indispensable to all transformation. As Foucault argues, where there is permanent critique, there is profound transformation (1982d:33). It is the very fact that we can think and critique that means we can also ‘refuse what we are’ (Foucault 1982b:216). This is the basis of the *active* and *creative* subject in Foucault’s ethics associated with a discursive form of power, which is distinguished from the passive subject associated with disciplinary power depicted in Foucault’s earlier works.

Sybylla (2001), for instance, argues that the layers of history are etched upon our bodies. However, each body is active and can therefore have an effect upon both the world and itself. Thought is thus the (bodily) activity that enables individuals to form their selves (Sybylla 2001:75-76). Miller (2008), in her analysis of Twigg’s work on older people’s constructions of ‘bathing,’ notes the way in which the dominant administrative discourse that constructs ‘clients’ as having ‘personal hygiene deficits’ can be challenged. Twigg’s research instead brings other meanings of bathing to the fore including the construction of bathing as being pleasurable and erotic, as an experience of

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1 Twigg explores the personal care of people in what she refers to as ‘deep old age’ (see Miller 2008:260-261).
well-being and a luxury, and as a form of discipline and punishment (Miller 2008:260-261). Miller (2008) argues that Twigg’s respondents:

live in a rich world of meaning and are evidently able to draw on them in artful ways to assert their own preferences and feelings and especially to refuse the dominant discourse of the service provider. Thus they have considerable agency. But they are far from self-determining or autonomous meaning makers, for what they can say (including the way they have to resist the administrative version of care) is clearly grounded in and circumscribed by the meanings available to them in their discursive environment. (P. 261)

Foucault argues that ‘everybody both acts and thinks’ (1982c/1988:14). Change is therefore possible (see Barker, 1993:79-80), which is precisely what Foucault’s earlier work had shown: the possibilities of change in scientific thought, ideas about madness and shifts in disciplines. His work ‘shows how a new way of thinking took place [and that] to the same situation, people react[ed] in very different ways’ (Foucault 1982c/1988:14). For instance, an analysis of relations between knowledge and care of the self required that the one who took the maxim ‘care of self’ had to ‘choose among all the things that you can know through scientific knowledge, only those kind of things which were relevant to him and important to life’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:360). In this sense agency is situated in social and cultural forces (Dissanayake 1996:xiii).

Foucault’s notion of discursive power however, and the return of some form of agency to the subject is considered problematic by critics of his later work (Bilton et al. 2002; McDonald 2004; Prado 2003). These concerns are addressed in section 3.5.1. The following section considers the implications of these themes for the ethical subject.
3.5. Foucault’s ethics: the ethical subject

A key feature of Foucault’s subject throughout his domains has been that the subject is not fixed, immutable or constant but changes over time and in various discursive practices. For Foucault, there is no fixed essence in the self, no essential nature of the subject, no continuous thread that we can point to and call a universal subject. For Foucault, there is no inherent human nature. Foucault’s position therefore contrasts starkly with Cartesian rationality, which assumes a relatively fixed subject position (Rabinow 1984:3).

The subject of Foucault’s earlier works, however, is not necessarily the subject of his later works. As discussed in the context of *The Use of Pleasure* (Foucault 1984g/1985) in section 3.3.1, Foucault’s earlier work concerned passive subject constitution developed as a result of coercion – or disciplinary power—which resulted in certain subject positions such as the mad subject (Foucault 1984b/1988:11) or the sexual subject (Foucault 1976/1978). Passive subject constitution is therefore associated with Foucault’s notion of subjection; that is, subject formation occurs through various normalising and disciplinary techniques embodied in discursive and non-discursive regimes. Thus, the subject is subjected to certain constructions of the self that are either forced upon her through the process of normalisation, or that she herself adopts through disciplinary techniques.

In comparison, Foucault’s later ethical work is concerned with a form of active subject constitution that focuses on the way in which the subject constitutes...

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1 Both the processes of normalisation and the imposition of disciplinary techniques involve what Foucault refers to as ‘practices of subjection’ (Foucault 1984d/1988:50).

2 Though Foucault seems a little reluctant to admit that he is now interested in an active subject. In an interview where Foucault is asked about the characterisation of the ‘subject’ as ‘passive’ and ‘active’ and the correspondence of this characterisation with his earlier and later periods, he responds tentatively: ‘I would say that if now I am interested, in fact in the way in which the subject constitutes himself as an active fashion, by the practices of the self …’ (Foucault 1984b:11, emphasis added). Yet, the active constitution of the self is a significant
herself via practices or technologies of the self\(^1\) (Foucault 1982a/1998:18; 1984b/1988:11). Active subject constitution reflects a form of discursive power, whereby subjects constitute themselves through what Foucault refers to as 'practices of liberation or freedom' (Foucault 1984b/1988:3) that draw on 'a number of rules, styles, inventions to be found in the culture environment' (Foucault 1984d/1988:50-51). Unlike practices of subjection, practices of liberation or freedom involve either an examination of the representations that are given to the subject or a refusal of given subject positions in favour of constructions that she herself approves. With respect to the ethical subject, these constructions are still found in the cultural and historical locations in which the subject is situated. For example, in *The Care of the Self*, Foucault notes the importance of medical thought and practice in the cultivation of the self. Shared concepts such as 'pathos' and medical metaphors were employed to describe ills of the body and of the soul (Foucault 1984h/1986:54-55).

Foucault argues that there are two meanings of the word 'subject,' these being 'subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge' (Foucault 1982b:212). The first meaning reflects the passive subject and correlates with his earlier works on technologies of domination. The second meaning—tied to his identity by a conscience or self-knowledge—is the focus of Foucault’s ethics and the active subject. Foucault’s curiosity about how a subject is tied to his identity—and historically constituted—results from a different question he poses in response to Kant’s question: ‘What is Enlightenment?’ (Foucault 1969b/1984) Foucault does not ask ‘Who am I?’ which results in a quest for an essential or ‘true’ self. Rather, he asks, ‘What are we today?’ (Foucault 1981/1988:145) His

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\(^1\) Or self-forming activities, as discussed in section 3.6.3.
subsequent analysis of this question reflects the way in which the subject has been historically constituted over time.

Rajchman discusses the various ways a subject can be constituted, through expertise above and also through the practice of living below, and he acknowledges Foucault’s stress on this sheer variety through what we do to our bodies and ourselves, as well as through discourse (1986:167-169). Rajchman notes ‘[w]e can constitute ourselves by what we wear, where we live and what we eat’ (1986:169). Given that Foucault rejects ‘a certain apriori theory of the subject’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:10) and that there is no essential self; that is ‘the idea that the self is not given to us’, he concludes ‘that there is therefore only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art’ (Foucault 1984a:351; see also St Pierre 2004: 347, fnb 1). It is in reflection on the constitution of the ‘self’, that Foucault suggests we have the freedom to constitute our ‘selves’ differently and practice an ascetics or ethical way of life.

Finally, for Foucault, a subject is an individualising subject when it constructs itself and gives itself an identity it alone affirms or creates. Drawing on a Nietzschean discourse, Foucault argues that ‘Europeans no longer know themselves’ and that ‘they lack individuality’ (1971/1984:92). What Foucault seems to be arguing is that traditional history, which maintains a sense of continuity and is infused with universals and an essential humanism, denies our ability to construct an identity of our own making, thereby sacrificing the subject of knowledge (see Foucault 1971/1984:93-97). The ethical subject, however, struggles against the ignorance of individuality, through the process of experience (Foucault 1984i/1985:11-12), refusing the subjectivities that are given to it through the power of normalisation (Foucault 1982b:212). The ethical subject also struggles against ‘that which ties the individual to himself’ (Foucault 1982b:212), and in doing so enters a space that permits the
possibility for an alternative construction of the self. Falzon refers to this as an ‘ethico-critical reflection’ (1998:67); Rajchman, as an ‘etho-poetic constitution’ (1986:170); and O’Leary, as a process of poesis (2006), implying a creation of one’s own self.

The next section returns to a critique of Foucault’s ethical subject.

3.5.1 Critique

Singleton argues that Foucault’s return to the subject in his later works is ‘a failure of nerve’ (see Prado 2003:205), while others argue that it is a form of narcissism (Bilton et al. 2002; McDonald 2004), or potentially an end of life’s ‘personal curiosity’ (Fillion, 2005:50). In contrast, Foucault argues that his later works reintroduce the problem of the subject to show that the dilemma of the subject had not ceased to exist (1984i/1985:11). Miller for instance, supports the notion that Foucault’s later work highlights a shift in emphasis that is played out in different research directions which includes his work on ethics (Miller 2008:252).

Prado (2003) however, is particularly critical of Foucault’s ethics. He argues that Foucault’s movement from a subject determined by power relations in and through discourses (characterised by his notion of disciplinary power), to a subject capable of self-determination (encapsulated in his discursive form of power), is ‘significant and problematic’ (Prado 2003:204). He argues:

   Effective self-determination presupposes a high degree of self-knowledge; to remake oneself into the telos of Foucauldian ethics, one must know who and what one is and what to do to change. (Prado 2003:205)

Prado (1995) contends that if power configures subjectivity, as it does in Foucault’s earlier works, then it also conditions self-knowledge. If it conditions self-knowledge, it also configures any choices we might make
about changing our selves or becoming the ethical person we want to be. As Prado notes that Foucault himself argues that ‘what people don’t know, is what they do does’ (see Prado 1995:205). This is also termed the ‘paradox of reflexivity’ because we are unable to step outside the discourses that construct our being in order to evaluate them (Prado 1995:19).

For Prado, Foucauldian ethical self-determination isn’t possible because Foucault doesn’t offer any *values* by which to ‘distinguish between our real and apparent wants, intentions and assessments in choosing to act to attain a certain state of perfection’ (Prado 2003:206). O’Leary argues that this is a well-known critique that questions Foucault’s failure to provide a set of normative principles and universal grounds for ethical action (2006:114). Moore (1987) and Pignatelli (2002) also argue that Foucault fails to provide a set of values by which discourses can be evaluated and criticised. Pignatelli argues that this makes the idea of a Foucauldian ethics ‘suspect’ (2002:158-159). Moore, on the other hand, argues that rather than seeing ethics as a search for universal values, Foucault’s use of criticism is ethical when its focus is self-understanding (1987:86). Yet this leads us back to the very predicament posed by Prado: that ‘one must know who and what one is and what to do to change’ (2003:205). There are no easy answers to Prado’s question and perhaps, at the end of the day, disciplinary power really is ‘a genie that won’t return to its bottle’ (Prado 2003:205).

There are, however, three possible ways of addressing Prado’s critique. Firstly, the need for a set of universal values tends to reintroduce the modernist preoccupation with the ‘univocal and monocultural project of modern rational mastery’ (Yeatman 1994:9). It therefore fails to give deference to the multitude of voices and representations that are available in different discourses. Prado, for instance, seems to presume that dominant discourses are monolithic in nature. In contrast, subjugated discourses may counter and
contest the norms and values imposed by the dominant discourse. For instance, in section 3.4.3 Miller’s (2008) analysis of Twigg’s research on ‘bathing’ has been discussed, as well as the way in which older people contest the dominant discourse of service providers. Rather than seeing their selves as a hygiene problem they reposition their selves in various ways (Miller, 2008:2670). Miller clearly points out that resistance may involve actors taking up both dominant and marginalised discourses to ‘strategically rework them in special social settings to pursue their own interests’ (2008:258). Further, as Yeatman argues, an emancipatory politics insists that meaning, truth, identity, right and community are values that lie within a politics of representation and are thoroughly contestable concepts (1994:viii). The point then isn’t about being given a set of values by which to determine our ‘apparent wants’, thereby reinforcing dominant discourses. Rather, it is the freedom of the subject, as has been discussed in section 3.4.3, to be able to choose between different values that may offer alternative ways in which to think and critique, in order to refuse or accept the representations of who we are (see also Miller 2008:261, 265).

Secondly, Foucault’s ethical subject is also a form of power (Miller 2008:266). Section 3.4.3 has considered the way in which resistance lies in thought and action. As has been discussed, criticism is the form in which thought is driven out of hiding and is therefore indispensable to all transformation. As Foucault argues, where there is permanent critique, there is profound transformation (1982d:33). It is because we can think and critique, that we can also ‘refuse what we are’ (Foucault 1982b:216). Moore (1987) notes that the call for ethics to serve as criticism permits one to move from ignorance to knowledge, or in the political context, from a repressive discourse to an idealised speech situation. Ethics is thus a means for transcending certain conditions (Moore 1987:87). Sybylla (2001) defines ‘empowerment’ as:
the individual gaining a sense that she or he is not tied to an origin but has the capacity to choose new actions and behaviours in the present time of volition. Change becomes ... a taking of control over one’s life, and, to achieve this, the collection of knowledge, reflection, and a regime or practice, training, and drill carefully designed to cultivate the desired habits and strengths. (P. 77)

Foucault’s concept of freedom, as discussed in section 3.4.1, enables the ethical subject a ‘freedom within limits ... [to] ... reflect on ways it is positioned in such discourses ... and to consider other styles of self ...’ (Miller 2008:265). It is to position one’s self, rather than to be positioned, that is at the cornerstone of Foucault’s ethics (see Miller 2008:259, 267).

Thirdly, and very briefly, Prado’s argument tends to reinforce what Miller (2008) refers to as a deterministic view attributed to Foucault’s earlier work. This view characterises the subject as impoverished, and as one who is only ‘acted upon’ thereby closing off all possibility of agency (Miller 2008:255). It also represents a top-down perspective of discourse that fails to account for bottom-up narratives of everyday situations with actors that actively engage in creating meaning (Miller 2008:256). As Miller points out with respect to Twigg’s work, the creation of meaning around ‘bathing’ by older people indicates that our ability to be ethical – that is to create and position one’s self – ‘is not a lofty enterprise but a mundane, everyday one’ (Miller 2008:267).

3.5.2 Summary

This section has focused on Foucault’s later work on ethics. It has delved into the contextual underpinnings surrounding Foucault’s focus on ethics and the importance of early Christian experience, which led Foucault to Greek texts on practices of the self. Significant texts that concern his later work on ethics have also been discussed. Core themes, such as freedom, power relations, resistance and agency have been examined in the context of his ethics, while
the nature of Foucault’s ethical subject that engages in self-constitution has also been explored. Significant critiques that mostly concern the problematic nature of power relations and agency have also been discussed.

The following section introduces the four aspects of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation.

3.6 Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation

Foucault proposes four elements of an ethics when considering the self’s transformation as an ethical subject: the *substance éthique* (ethical substance); the *mode d’assujettissement* (mode of subjection); the *techné* (self-forming activity) or *travail éthique* (ethical work) (Foucault 1984g/1985:27); and the *teleology* or *telos* (the goal of ethical work) (Foucault 1984a:352-358; 1984g/1985). O’Leary states that Foucault’s four aspects ‘constitute any system of ethics’ (O’Leary 2006:133), while McHoul and Grace similarly affirm that ‘according to Foucault, any ethics, that is, any ethos of the self’s relation to the self, has four components’ (McHoul & Grace 1993:95).


Foucault’s interpretation of ethics stems from the way in which I think it can be used to transform our understanding of texts and historical periods that he himself did not discuss. (P. 116)
As discussed in sections 1.8 and 3.3.2 there is a distinction between Foucault’s four-part conceptualisation of ethics (Davidson, 1994:117) and ‘care of the self’ as a dominant form of ethics in Greek culture (Foucault 1984a: 357-361; 1984c/1994:285; see Bohill 2006). While Foucault used his ethical conceptualisation as a domain of analysis to examine specific ancient texts (Davidson 1994: 117-118), he found that care of the self was an outcome of that analysis, forming a dominant mode of ethics during the Hellenistic and Roman culture of the fourth century BCE to the second century AD (Foucault 1984a: 357-361; 1984c/1994:285; McNeil 1998:59). Foucault was very clear that Greek morality located in care of the self could not necessarily be reproduced in our times, however he did argue that the challenge might be whether we take up Greek thinking again. For instance, O’Leary (2006) argues that for Foucault, the most important aspect of Greek ethics was the fundamental question: ‘How are we to live?’ Ethical practice was ‘primarily a matter of giving form to one’s life through the use of certain techniques’ (O’Leary 2006:144). An ethical life therefore involved the invention for oneself of ‘the principles and rules according to which these techniques would be developed and this form would be given’ (O’Leary 2006:144).

The following sections focus on each aspect of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, or what Davidson refers to as a ‘grid of ethical intelligibility’ (1986:232), separate from care of the self as a particular form of ethics practised within Greek culture. Each section draws on Foucault’s primary texts concerning ethics (Foucault 1984a, 1984b/1988, 1984g/1985, 1984h/1986), with secondary texts providing either further commentary on each aspect of Foucault’s ethics or an example of an application of Foucault’s ethics across a range of disciplines and research strategies (Aycock 1995; Davidson 1986; Eräranta et al 2009; McPhail 1997, 1999; Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Moore 1987; St.Pierre 2004).
3.6.1 Ethical substance

The first aspect answers this question: which is the aspect of the part of myself or my behaviour which is concerned with moral conduct? … That’s the aspect I call the ethical substance. (Foucault 1984a:352-353)

Foucault argues that the ethical substance concerns part of one’s self or one’s behaviour that is the focus of ethical judgment (see also Davidson 1986:228). Foucault notes that in our present culture it is our feelings. However, it may also concern our intentions, our desires or some other aspect of our self that we are seeking to transform (Foucault 1984a:352). McPhail suggests that the ethical substance concerns the parts of our lives which engage our moral reasoning (McPhail 1997:16). Both Moisander and Pesonen, and St Pierre argue that it is the ‘material’ or ‘the part of the self’ that is worked on by ethics (Moisander & Pesonen, 2002:331; St. Pierre 2004:342), while Aycock proposes that the ‘inner substance may be discerned by the way people speak of themselves’ (1995:2). Moore suggests that ‘one needs to ask “which is the aspect or the part of myself or my behaviour which is concerned with moral conduct?”’ (1987:82, emphasis added). The ethical substance may refer to an image of ‘the right person’; however, it may also extend to an image of ‘the right life’ (Rajchman 1986:172).

According to Foucault, the ethical substance of Greco-Roman ethics was the _aphrodisia_, which during the latter Christian period changed to _desire_ (1984a:353). For Moisander and Pesonen the ethical substance of eco-communards is personal and spiritual growth, which includes working on ‘one’s feelings and personality; acts in relation to oneself, to other people and to nature’ (2002:340). For St Pierre, the women of Milton work on ‘the sinful part of a humanist self, that part of a unified, stable self that is flawed and unable to sustain the love and duty expected by one’s personal God’ (St Pierre 2004:342-343). Aycock found that internet chess discourse revealed that people speak of themselves as ‘deep and authentic’ while also being
‘receptive to personal improvements and achievements that reveal them as they really are.’ Aycock’s analysis reveals an ‘inner’ substance which is associated with a romantic image of ‘strength’ or a modernist image of ‘skill’ (1995:2). For McPhail, accounting education may affect a student’s ethical substance by encouraging students to view the accountant part of their lives as an area where ethical issues need not be considered (1999:846).

3.6.2 Mode of subjection

The second aspect is what I call the mode of subjection (mode d’assujettissement). (Foucault 1984a:353)

The mode of subjection concerns ‘the way in which people are invited or incited to recognise their moral obligation’ (Foucault 1984a:353). Examples suggested by Foucault include divine law; natural law; cosmological order; rational rule (that is, universal); ‘the attempt to give your existence the most beautiful form possible’ (Foucault 1984a:353); or care of self as a practice of freedom (Foucault 1984c/1994:285). Moore asks, ‘Do we act because it is required by divine law, natural law, the cosmological order or a rational rule?’ (1987:83). Moisander and Pesonen (2002) argue that the mode of subjection relates to the way in which the individual establishes their relation to the rule and recognises an obligation to put it into practice. They further suggest a spiritual tradition or group membership and custom as examples (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:331). St Pierre suggests that the mode of subjection is ‘the way in which one is invited to become ethical’ (2004:343), while Aycock characterises the mode of subjection as the degree, and kind of commitment internet chess players display (1995:3). Rajchman argues it is the authority that incites ‘the image of the right person’ or ‘the right life’ (1986:172). In his earlier work, Rajchman also argues that the mode of subjection represents the possibility of making freedom a practical reality through choosing a mode of being (1985:219).
Foucault argues that the Stoics moved from an idea of aesthetics of existence to the idea that we must act because we are rational beings (1984a:354). St Pierre found an official and unofficial mode of subjection. Officially, divine law invited the women of Milton to become ethical, while unofficially, women’s desire ‘to have a beautiful existence as defined by their culture’ provided a basis for an ethics (St Pierre 2004:343). Aycock discusses four devices that shape internet chess players’ sense of commitment. These include posting facts or techniques that displayed shared interest in a topic; use of the smiley or emoticon; ‘flaming’, which defines the rule of emotional distance; and the purchase, use and discussion of commercial chess products (Aycock 1995:3-4). McPhail argues that accounting education favours rational analysis, as opposed to feelings or emotion, which leads to conventional modes of subjection that subjugate alternative forms of aesthetic knowledge (McPhail 1999:847). Moisander and Pesonen (2002) found that no single rule, or set of clearly stated rules, was recognised by Finnish communards. They argue that, since the communards aimed at a harmony with nature, the law of nature established their personal ethics. Significantly, they also found that ‘a mutual quest for ‘community’ both guides and constrains people in these communes’ (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340).

3.6.3 Self-forming activities

What are the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects? That’s the third aspect, which I call the self-forming activity (pratique de soi) or l’ascétisme—asceticism in a very broad sense. (Foucault 1984a:354-355)

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1 Moisander and Pesonen do not indicate whether the eco-communes in their research observed covenants attached to their land title and/or accepted other communal rules that would require observation. Many intentional communities in Australia may have covenants attached to their property title that limit and restrict certain acts in relation to the land. Other documents such as Articles of Association, Constitutions, or conditions attached to shareholdings, may further limit and guide behaviour on intentional communities in Australia. These limitations are created and imposed by intentional community members.
Foucault asks: ‘What are we to do, either to moderate our acts, or to decipher what we are, or to eradicate our desires ....all this elaboration of ourselves in order to behave ethically?’ (1984a:354). Thus, work or techniques used on the self that bring about a desired transformation are the basis of self-forming activities. In this sense, Foucault uses asceticism in a very broad way to denote the activities or moderations one may engage in to decipher what we are, to obtain certain aims, to ‘behave ethically ... you can do different things to the self’ (Foucault 1984a:354-355). Techné may therefore include:

- exercises, practical tasks, various activities ...
- care of the body ... health
- regimens, physical exercises without exertion ...
- meditations ...
- readings, the notes that one takes on books or on the conversations one has heard.

(Foucault 1984h/1986:51)

Davidson points out that the practice of self-examination, which formed the basis of self-deciphering in early Christian times, ‘gave rise to a set of techniques that help to change us into the kind of being who can behave ethically’ (1986:229). Moisander and Pesonen argue that self-forming activities refer to the ways in which people work on the ethical substance. They provide examples such as ‘learning, monitoring, testing, self-reflecting, deciphering one’s desires and renouncing pleasures’ (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:331). Aycock refers to ‘personal routines or disciplines’ as the cornerstone of ‘self-fashioning’ (1995:5), while McPhail refers to ‘our self-imposed discipline’ as the ‘means by which we change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects’ (1999:844). Rajchman argues it is the practical means provided that enable an ‘image of the right person’ or ‘the right life’ (1986:172). Rajchman also recognises that, in engaging in ‘the means of transformation’, there is a need to identify what it is a person may struggle against ‘in order to free ourselves from ourselves’ (1985:220).
Foucault argues that the *techné* used by the Greeks varied and included ‘the *techné* about the body, or economics [in addition to the] rules by which you define your role as husband’ or ‘the erotic as a kind of asceticism toward oneself in loving boys’ (Foucault 1984a:357). For the Epicureans and Stoics, ‘exercises in abstinence were common’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:59), though for very different reasons. Morning and evening self-examination, as part of the Pythagorean teaching, was habitually prescribed by numerous authors and is given a detailed description by Seneca in *De ira* (Foucault 1984h/1986:60-61). Self-examination aims at the ‘matter of evaluating a performed activity in order to reactivate its principles and ensure their correct application in the future’ (Foucault 1984h/1986:61). Foucault further argues that the role of writing in Greek culture formed the basis of a new technology as disruptive and transformative as the contemporary computer in private life today (1984a:362-363).

St Pierre (2004) discusses a variety of self-forming activities utilised by the women of Milton that are ‘related to resistance, ambivalence, or accommodation to the codes [and so cross a number of divides, including] gender, religion... education, kinship, widowhood ... old age, and a practice I call “cheerfulness, significance, and pride”’ (St Pierre 2004:343). Further, education is considered to be significant in Milton women’s lives and is reflected in women’s membership in a large number of book and study groups that cover a wide range of disciplines (St Pierre 2004:343). Engagement in these book clubs involves a range of self-forming activities:

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1 Foucault quoting Seneca: ‘And he is mindful of the need to prepare for a blissful sleep: Can anything be more excellent than this practice of thoroughly sifting the whole day. And how delightful the sleep that follows this self-examination—how tranquil ... how deep ... and untroubled ... when the soul has either praised or admonished itself’ (1984h/1986:61).

2 St Pierre lists nine book clubs, many of which had been established for a significant period of time. For instance, The Shakespeare Club, had been established in 1898 and the Tuesday
They do research, write and present papers at club meetings, read controversial books on occasion, invite guest speakers from neighboring universities to lecture, and privilege scholarship in their clubs. (St Pierre 2004:343)

Aycock (1995) argues that the self-forming activities displayed in internet chess discourse are reflected in personal routines that in turn mirror the four devices that underpin commitment, discussed in the mode of subjection. Routines are replicated in ‘the use of ‘words without things’, which in turn ‘become resources for self-fashioning’. Thus ‘factual talk’ is presented as a universal that is both rational and of commonsense, giving the impression that one is ‘in the know’ (Aycock 1995:5). For Moisander and Pesonen, the self-forming activities of Finnish eco-communards include:

self-reflection, self-education, and a style of consumption that can be characterised as conscious in a number of ways ... Moreover, the mere idea and the act of moving into a commune can be considered as a technique of self, in which people expose themselves to the hard school of communal living. (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340)

In comparison, McPhail (1997, 1999) argues that there are two ways in which accounting students engage in self-discipline. Firstly, accounting techniques such as performance evaluation and budgeting processes (McPhail 1997:14) act as an external form of self-discipline, imposed on students through the process of accounting education. In contrast, an internal form sees accounting students ‘regulate their behavior not because they have too, but rather because their sense of telos means they want to’ (McPhail 1999:845).

Study Club in 1919. The Women’s Literacy Club had been established in 1901; however, according to St Pierre, had ceased in 1975 (see St Pierre, 2004:343).
3.6.4 Telos

The fourth aspect is: Which is the kind of being to which we aspire when we behave in a moral way? ... that’s what I call the telos (teleology). (Foucault 1984a:355)

In the constitution of an ethical self, we may aspire ‘to become pure, or immortal, or free, or masters of ourselves’ (Foucault 1984a:355). Davidson asks: ‘What is the goal to which our self-forming activity should be directed?’ (1986:229). McPhail argues that it is ‘the type of person we aspire to be when we behave morally’ (1999:844). Aycock contends that the telos is the ‘goal of personal transformation’ (1995:6). Similarly, St Pierre asks: ‘What is the goal of their work?’ (2004:344), while Moisander and Pesonen maintain that the telos represents ‘the kind of person people aspire to become when they behave in a moral way’ (2002:331), and Rajchman argues it is ‘the aim of transformation’ (1985:220).

For the Greeks during the classical period, the telos represented ‘the mastery of oneself’ (Foucault 1984a:357), while for the Christians the aim was immortality and purity (Foucault 1984a:358). Moisander and Pesonen comment on the telos of Finnish eco-communards:

the kind of person the communards aspire to become by behaving in a moral way could be depicted as a being who is in harmony with his/ herself and who lives in harmony with other people and with nature. (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340)

For St Pierre (2004), the telos of Milton women reflects the two modes of subjection. The first is to be immortal and live forever with God, while the second goal, reflecting the unofficial mode of subjection, is described as an ‘ethics of pleasure’ and ‘an ethics of control’ (St Pierre 2004:343-344). In contrast, McPhail argues that, within a marginalist economic system, an ‘accountant’s sense of telos might be influenced by the kind of profit
maximising, rational, economic man within that system’ (1999:845-846). The telos is therefore determined by profit as opposed to morality (McPhail 1999:846).

### 3.6.5 Interrelationships

When asked whether these ethical aspects were independent of each other, Foucault responded, ‘there are both relationships between them and a certain kind of independence’ (1984a:355). For instance, different tele [telos]—to be master of oneself or to be pure—required different ‘techniques of self-forming activity’ (Foucault 1984a:355). Thus, self-examination in the form of writing for the Greeks changed to forms of self-deciphering in confession in the Christian period (Foucault 1984a:358). Although only one aspect of the ethics may change, in the case of the Christians, as the telos changed to immortality and purity, the asceticism, the mode and the ethical substance all changed (Foucault 1984a:358).

Further, different eras may give rise to a different form of ethics. For example, Foucault argues that from the Classical Greek and pagan eras through to Christian times, the philosophical code regarding behavior did not change to any great extent. However, the ethics of the classical Greek period—‘the relation to oneself’ (Foucault 1984a:355)—did. For instance, the telos of Classical Greek culture, self-mastery, took into account only oneself and not the other resulting in a dissymmetrical relation to others. In comparison, later Greek culture was orientated towards self-mastery and care of the self, not in order to have power over others but to be master of oneself ‘because you are a rational being’ (Foucault 1984a:357). Ethics are therefore contingent (Fillion, 2005:58), contextual, and situated within the possibilities of any given historical situation (Infinito 2003b:160).
3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the four aspects of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation: the *ethical substance*, the *mode of subjection*, the *self-forming activities* and the *telos*, or goal of ethical work. Secondary texts have provided additional commentary on each aspect of ethics, while further texts highlight the way in which Foucault’s ethics have been applied across a range of disciplines and research strategies, thus resulting in different ethical forms. The final section has considered that there are interrelationships between each aspect of ethics and that the form ethics takes may change in different historical eras.

Foucault’s ethics forms the theoretical framework for this thesis, while his ethical conceptualisation—the four aspects of ethics—configures the organising principles for analysis of the empirical research discussed in Chapters Six and Seven. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, Foucault’s ethics are concerned with the way we may construct both our selves (Foucault 1984a:351) and our lives (Rajchman 1986:172) when considering a ‘techné of life’, or how is one to live? (O’Leary 2006:1). Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008) therefore informs the following chapter on the Methodology of this research.
Chapter Four
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on the design of the research and the methodology adopted to explore the research question. The previous chapter on Foucault’s conceptualisation of ethics informs an exploration of Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008) as an interpretive framework in this Chapter. The use of case studies as a research strategy is discussed, while the data collection methods used in this study are outlined, including interviews, observations and document analysis. The chapter then sets out the layered approach adopted for the interpretation and evaluation of the research data, which includes Foucault’s ethical analysis and discourse analysis. The final section considers the limitations of the methodology, issues concerning validation and the ethical approach taken towards the research process.

4.2 Interpretive framework
This section focuses on the interpretive framework within which the research for this thesis was undertaken. It is linked to the theoretical bodies of knowledge discussed in Chapters Two and Three, and also engages the remaining research process, including the research strategy, the methods of data collection and analysis and the movement from text to negotiated meaning. Denzin and Lincoln note that an interpretative framework is akin to a net ‘that contains the researcher’s epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises’ (2003:33).
A qualitative research structure has been chosen as my field of inquiry. Quantitative research focuses on measurement and analysis of causal relations and fosters the use of objective criteria in addition to claiming a value-free framework. In contrast, qualitative research focuses on the qualities of entities and meanings that are not examined or measured within a quantitative framework (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:13). It focuses on the socially constructed nature of reality; the intimate space researchers share with the research; the contextual nature of the inquiry—which is also value-laden; and the problematic way in which social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin and Lincoln 2005:10).

Denzin and Lincoln contend that there are four broad interpretive paradigms that structure qualitative research: ‘positivist and postpositivist; constructivist–interpretive; critical; and feminist post-structural’ (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:33; Denzin and Lincoln 2005:22). This research has adopted Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008) as the interpretive framework, which falls within a constructionist paradigm. The following sections explore this framework, while the justification for adopting Foucauldian constructionism is discussed further in section 4.3.

4.2.1 Epistemology

The epistemology concerns the philosophical theory of knowledge, or how we know what we know. It therefore concerns the relationship between the inquirer and the known (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:33). A Foucauldian constructionist framework shares similar characteristics to a social constructionist paradigm, which asserts that the world we live in, and our place in it, are not evidently ‘there’ for participants (Denzin and Lincoln 2008:3; Miller 2008:268). Miller (2008:269) argues that Foucault adopted this stance as the touchstone of his work, which also became a personal credo.
Foucault therefore exposed seemingly ‘natural’ categories as constructs, which were constituted through language and discourse (Miller 2008:269). For example, for Foucault there is no inherent human nature.¹ Epistemologically, we therefore know what we know through language and discourse. Within a social constructionist framework, language is an active form of social practice (Burr 1995:5; Gergen 2003:41). Meaning is continuously negotiable and no collection of words possesses a single meaning² (Burr 1995:3; Gergen 2003:236). Within a Foucauldian constructionist framework however, language is further framed by discourses, which may represent large-scale systems of knowledge that bring realities, including who we are, into being (Miller 2008:252). Discourses are therefore a ‘whole way of constituting the world through the ways we have to know and talk about it’ (Miller 2008:252).

Historical and cultural processes also limit discourses by framing the possibilities of how we know what we know (see Hacking 2002a). Meaning is therefore contingent, contextual and situated within discursive frameworks. Discourses are therefore a form of power that may assert a preferred version of the world that disqualifies competing versions (Miller 2008:252). These themes have been touched on when considering Foucault’s ethics in Chapter Three. These themes are revisited when considering the ontology of this research.

4.2.2 Ontology

The ontology considers the question: What kind of being is the human being and what is the nature of reality? (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:33). In

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¹ These aspects have been discussed in section 3.5 in relation to Foucault’s notion of the ethical subject.

² Gergen uses the metaphor of a ‘sponge’ to highlight the way in which bodies of thought, and therefore meaning, have a ‘porous’ or ‘spongy’ quality. Words, concepts, meanings and bodies of knowledge are fragile and are ‘subject to multiple renderings depending on their context.’ (Gergen 2003:236)
considering these issues, Foucauldian constructionism again shares similar views with social constructionism. Both these paradigms consider that participants actively construct the world of everyday life in addition to its constituent elements (Miller 2008:268; see Denzin and Lincoln 2008:3). This includes 'who we are' because as Miller points out, this too is a construction (Miller 2008:267). That Foucault’s ethical work is concerned with a form of *active* subject constitution, as discussed in section 3.5, supports this position. However, though there are many versions of social constructionism, as argued by Hacking (1999), Nightingale and Cromby (2002) and Gergen and Gergen (2003), Foucault’s ethical work brings a very particular flavour to the form of constructionism discussed in this thesis.

Firstly, the acknowledgment that the subject *is* a social construction leads Foucault to his ethical turn. As Miller points out, ‘the recognition that the self can only be a story is thus the ethical moment’ (2008:267-268) that leads Foucault to the ethical life and the way we may constitute ourselves as moral agents (Foucault 1984a:340). As discussed in section 3.5, Foucault’s contention that there is no *inherent* human nature; that is, that there are no *natural* categories that designate who we are, leads him to the ethical subject that engages in an active constitution of the self in the consideration of how one is to live (see Miller 2008:267-268).

Secondly, as discussed in section 3.5, we can be constituted in many ways: above through discourses; and below through practices of living (Rajchman 1986:167-169). Within a Foucauldian ethical framework, subjects are constituted *primarily* through the practices they perform on their selves as ethical subjects. As discussed in section 3.6, Foucault’s ethical subject works on an ethical substance; they engage in a form of self-regulation through a mode of subjection; they participate in self-forming activities that they perform on their selves; and there is a goal to which this ethical work is
directed. It is this very ethical practice that constitutes Foucault’s subject as ethical.

Thirdly, these practices that constitute ‘who we are’ are nonetheless configured by discursive possibilities which, as discussed above, are underpinned by historical and cultural processes. Hacking (2002a) refers to this as ‘historical ontology’, which focuses on the way in which possibilities for choice and being arise in history. Though Hacking’s historical ontology is not concerned with character formation per se, it is concerned with the space that opens up to enable possibilities for self-constitution that surround a person (Hacking 2002a:23). For instance, we may experience ‘trauma’ or ‘child development’ however these are concepts that have come into being through very specific historical processes (Hacking 2002a: 17-22). Discursive meaning is then both relative to, and the product of, specific historical and cultural periods (Burr 1995:3). Thus communal living is explored in this thesis as a site that gives rise to particular discursive possibilities.

Fourthly, though ‘who we are’ is limited by discursive frameworks that are in turn shaped by historical and cultural possibilities, Foucauldian constructionism considers the way in which subjects are positioned, and how they position themselves within these discourses (Miller 2008:265, 268). As discussed in section 3.4.2, Foucault’s notion of discursive power means that the subject, as a form of power, can resist normalising discourses in favour of constructions they have actively chosen. Miller (2008:265) points out that Foucauldian constructionism opens up an expanded position of freedom for the subject of power which enables the ethical subject to reflect on the way in which it is positioned by normalising discourses, while also considering other ways of constructing it’s self.
4.2.3 Methodology

The methodology considers how we know the world and gain knowledge of it (Denzin and Lincoln 2003:33). Though Foucauldian constructionism is presented as the interpretive paradigm, as discussed in section 3.6, Moore (1987:82) refers to Foucault’s ethics as a methodological guide. Further, Scheurich and McKenzie (2005:843) also suggest that Foucault’s later work on ethics could be creatively interpreted as a methodology. This section focuses on the method of analysis, while the research methods and approach towards interpretation and evaluation are discussed in detail below.

I refer to the first method as the ‘ethical analysis’ because it draws on Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, which has been discussed in section 3.6. That section identified that Foucault’s four aspects of ethics have been variously described as an interpretive framework (Davidson, 1994:116) and a domain of analysis (Davidson, 1986: 221). Foucault’s ethical analysis presents the how of Foucault’s ethics; that is, how participants might construct their selves and their lives through communal living. It further focuses on the practices that participants perform on their selves and their lives through communal living. The ethical analysis therefore serves to evaluate whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics—for as O’Leary (2006) and McHoul and Grace (1993) point out, Foucault’s four aspects of ethics constitute any system of ethics.

The ethical analysis also highlights the discursive practices through which participants construct both their selves and their lives. Foucauldian constructionism is the why and what for of Foucauldian ethics. As Miller (2008:268), points out Foucauldian constructionism shares with social constructionism the basis tenet that the world is not evidently ‘there’. For Foucault, this is why we construct our selves and our lives because, as
discussed in Chapter Three, the world, including our selves, is not given to us. The purpose of self-construction is therefore aimed at constructing and positioning ourselves differently. As Miller (2008) points out, Foucault’s interest in larger discourses and bodies of knowledge formed part of his focus on the subject throughout his works.

Discourse analysis is therefore used to ascertain the way in which subjects position themselves through these discourses (Miller 2008:268). There are many ways in which discourse analysis can be undertaken (Foucault 1969a/1972; Fairclough 1992; Burr 1995; Flick 2002; Nikander 2008) and any method could have been used in this thesis. However, Burr’s (1995:116) approach to ‘doing’ discourse analysis was adopted for several reasons. Firstly, she is explicit about a method that may be obscured by the researcher’s intuitive and interpretive processes (Burr 1995:115). Secondly, she adopts a simple thematic approach which complements this research (Burr 1995:115). For instance Erääranta et al. (2009) in their application of Foucault’s ethical work, identify major themes that were discussed by participants in their research on Finnish eco-communes. Similarities and comparisons can therefore be drawn between their work and the findings presented in this research.

Furthermore, Burr’s approach represents a discursive analysis of written dialogue, rather than a more complex socio-theoretical analysis (Fairclough 1992:3-4), complementing a focus on the way in which participant’s construct both their selves and their lives through narratives. Participant’s transcripts as narratives are therefore analysed as a form of discourse (Nikander 2008) because they create conversational realities; they are constituents of institutional patterns of social conduct; and they are sites of representation where subjectivities are contested, transformed and constructed (Moisander and Pesonen 2002:331). As Nikander (2008:423) points out, they are a highly
detailed and accessible representation of social action. The discursive analysis goes towards evaluating whether participants in this research are *individualising* subjects, in the Foucauldian sense.

The following section considers the justification for the research methodology.

### 4.3 Justification for the research methodology

The research methodology is intimately linked to the research problem and the literature review (Perry 1998). However, it is also connected to the theoretical framework that is used to explore these areas. The research methodology may therefore be justified in relation to two fields. Firstly, it provides an avenue for discussing the research topic that is founded in the literature reviews. Secondly, the chosen methodology should complement the theoretical framework. This section explores these elements in the context of the research problem.

As discussed in Chapter Two, intentional communities are diverse and may have their own cultural, social, political, economic and religious contexts that differ markedly from mainstream society. Though there is a wealth of literature on intentional community living, very little research focuses on whether communal living is a form of ethics as *praxis*. This may arise because morals, including ethics, are often associated with rules and values that are prescribed by *others*, rather than the sort of relationship you might cultivate with your *self*. Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as a form of analysis therefore provides a way to ascertain whether intentional community living could be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics. Participants’ communal and individual *practices* on five different communities therefore form the core of the research focus.
The intentional community literature and the Foucauldian literature also share common themes and conceptual frameworks. For instance, identity, agency, resistance and the problem of values have been discussed in both Chapters Two and Three, while the constitution of one’s self is a conceptual framework that is also discussed in both bodies of literature. Foucauldian construction (Miller 2008) offers a way to examine these commonalities through the process of discourse analysis to ascertain whether individual participants, through the practices they perform on themselves, might be characterised as an ethical—or individualising—subject. This necessarily entails identifying what might not be evidently ‘there’ for intentional community participants; the way in which they construct their everyday life through the practices they perform on themselves; and the way in which they position themselves within discourses (Miller 2008:268).

Foucauldian constructionism therefore complements the interpretive framework that has been used in this thesis. Miller argues that ‘[a]nyone who knows anything about Michel Foucault knows that he was a constructionist’ (2008:251). This sentiment is shared by Hacking (2002c; 2002d). Miller discusses the basic tenets that Foucault’s work shares with social constructionism (see Miller 2008:268) and how his later work on ethics in particular, and ‘who we are’ also fits within a constructionist framework (Miller 2008:267).

4.4 Research strategies

4.4.1 Fieldwork

A range of intentional community texts could have been used to undertake a document-based analysis of ethics, including: the case studies of intentional communities by Zablocki (1971; 1980), Munro-Clark (1986) and Cock (1979); the biographical discourse of individual intentional community participants
by Metcalf (1995; 1996); and the plethora of contemporary literature written by intentional community participants. However, fieldwork was chosen to provide a contemporary empirical picture of communal living in Northern NSW, Australia.

Fieldwork involves going out into the field to collect research data (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2006:64). At the time of research I was located in the Rainbow Region and was employed on a part-time basis by an organisation whose members were founders of a local intentional community. Due to my geographical proximity to a variety of intentional communities, and a connection to the Mountain Range community, fieldwork presented itself as a viable option, enabling the collection of data and an experience in communal living first-hand. It also complemented the theoretical framework of the thesis and the use of the case-study method.

4.4.2 Case Studies

Denzin and Lincoln (2003b:34) recognise that case studies may inform a constructionist paradigm. Examples of other texts that have used case studies in the context of social constructionism include the following: Nightingale & Cromby (2002), who use a case study to discuss social constructionism; Gurney (1999), who uses a case-study of analogy and metaphor in the social construction of home-ownership; and Abrams (2007), who uses case studies of two flea markets to discuss the social construction of order in the informal economy.

In this research, multiple exploratory case studies (Blaxter et al. 2006:74) were utilised which focused on five long-term1 communities. Case studies were

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1 Communities in this research were established in 1976 (Evergreen); 1977 (Thora Valley); 1973 (Mountain Range); 1989 (Stoney Creek); and although Danthonia Bruderhof was established in Australia in 1999, the Bruderhof originated with the establishment of the first community by Eberhard Arnold and his wife, Emmy Arnold, in Germany in 1920.
chosen because it enabled participants’ data to be contextualised within the framework of discrete entities (Blaxter et al. 2006:71) that are ‘bounded systems’ (Stake 1995:2). Taking into account the definitions of intentional communities discussed in section 2.4.1, an intentional community is considered to be a discrete entity and, given membership requirements, is a ‘bounded system’. Further, as noted in section 4.4.1, a significant quantity of research on intentional communities focuses on these communities as discrete entities and bounded systems.

Case studies were also specifically used to historically and culturally locate participants’ experiences and practices within a particular communal setting. As discussed in the context of the ontology above, discursive possibilities are shaped by historical and cultural process (Hacking 2002a), which in turn inform the way participants engage in any form of constructionism or discursive positioning. Case studies therefore provide instances of specific and localised knowledge that may provide more general frameworks (Blaxter et al. 2006:74). Common conceptual frameworks derived from the case studies are then used to draw together commonalities in research participants’ practices. Case studies further enable the researcher to show the complexity of social life, while exploring alternative meanings and interpretations (Blaxter et al. 2006:74). While this research focuses on multiple cases, representations of individual participants are equally important when considering discursive frameworks.

4.5 Method of data collection and analysis

This section discusses the research steps undertaken to collect the empirical research data from each community. As Denzin and Lincoln argue, ‘the case study strategy relies on interviewing, observing, and document analysis’
(2005:25). All these methods have been used in this research. Further, the interpretation and evaluation of the research material consisted of transcribing interviews and the use of computer-assisted analysis to both code demographic data and undertake an initial analysis of interviews. Two forms of analysis were undertaken, including an ethical analysis based on Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, and discourse analysis which was used to evaluate discursive frameworks of participants in this research.

4.5.1 Research steps

The intentional communities of Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range were initially approached through a nominated representative of each community to ask permission to attend a tribal meeting or monthly community meeting1. I attended meetings to discuss my work, to seek community approval to undertake the research on the community and to ask for volunteers to participate in the research. Each community meeting varied in both its processes and responses to my research. In comparison, I contacted Danthonia Bruderhof via their public email, and Stoney Creek through a friend living on the community, which is discussed further below.

4.5.2 Communal meetings

4.5.2.1 The Evergreen community

The Evergreen intentional community was visited in October 2004. Prior to entering the community hall where the meeting was being held, I came across a women sobbing in the garden. Although this did not set the tone for the meeting, it certainly had an impact on my initial impressions of the

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1 Mountain Range refers to their community meetings as tribal meetings. Community meetings form part of the governance structure for decision-making on the intentional communities in this research. Communities such as Mountain Range, Evergreen, Thora Valley and Stoney Creek also have elected members that serve specific terms on local boards, which may be responsible for both formal decision-making and the administration of the community. This is discussed further in sections 6.4.1.1 and 6.4.1.2.1.
community and raised subsequent ethical issues, briefly discussed in section 4.9. Members at the meeting affirmed the nature of the research, with ten members and one resident volunteering to participate as a purposive sample. Purposive sampling enabled the selection of a subgroup of intentional community members as a representative group of the wider community (see Miller & Salkind 2002) and is also consistent with a social constructionist framework (see for example Seccombe, James & Battle Walters 1998).

The only caveat imposed on my research concerned using the name of the community. As members were unclear about the potential outcome of the research, they were concerned that any negative findings might directly impact upon the community as a whole. Community members also raised issues relating to representation, which will be discussed in section 4.9. In accordance with my ethical obligations—also discussed in section 4.9—pseudonyms have been used for both the community and individual participants.

Interview appointments were made with each person at the end of the meeting. Interviews were held in participants’ homes on the community and were spread out over a two-day period. The interviews were interspersed with other events, including a dinner on the Saturday with two members of the community; participation in a workday on the Sunday morning; and a communal evening meal, with clean up, on the Sunday night. Accommodation was provided on the community in a member’s house, and although I had taken my own food, I was consistently invited to eat with other members of the community.

**4.5.2.2 The Thora Valley community**

The intentional community of Thora Valley was visited in November 2004. The night before I visited the community, a member of the community
telephoned to indicate that both the media and protestors would be present at the communal meeting being held the next day. The member advised me to arrive later in the morning to avoid this disruption. A number of contentious issues were being discussed at the communal meeting, including changing the community’s constitution—which all members were voting on that day. One member of the community, who disagreed with the changes, had sought external assistance from both the media and protestors, to try to influence the decision being made by the community. All other community members were in favour of the changes—which were subsequently passed that day. I arrived towards the end of the community vote on the changes and sat through other community business before discussing the nature of my research.

Again, my research was met with very positive comments, with seven members and one resident of the community volunteering to participate in the research over a two-day period. Once more this represented a purposive sample of community members. I camped on this community, paid a camping fee and was otherwise left to my own devices—although one interview occurred during a small social gathering on a Friday night. In comparison to Evergreen, this community did not request anonymity. However, as specified in the Southern Cross University (SCU) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) application for this research, pseudonyms were used for both the community and for individual participants. The use of pseudonyms and participant anonymity in this research is discussed further in section 4.9.

4.5.2.2 The Mountain Range community

The intentional community of Mountain Range was visited in March 2005 for the purposes of attending a tribal meeting. Although it is unclear whether my research had been listed on the tribal agenda, it was not considered until the end of the three hour meeting. A significant issue being discussed at that
meeting concerned the allocation of a youth space on the community. The youth representative presented a proposal developed by young people of the community, who at that point in time had no youth space in which to gather and participate in youth activities. Many members at the meeting opposed the proposal, resulting in much heated debates.\textsuperscript{1} At the end of the three hour meeting I was invited to discuss my research proposal. It is hardly surprising that no-one volunteered to participate in my research and that members were very keen to leave the meeting. However, permission was granted to undertake the research on the community, provided the community was accorded anonymity. This community raised similar issues to those discussed by members of the Evergreen community with respect to their concerns surrounding the potential outcome of the research and the impact of those representations on the community.

Although no members volunteered to participate in my research at the end of the tribal meeting, I did interview one participant shortly after the meeting. A mutual friend, who was also a member of the community, introduced me to his neighbour who agreed to be interviewed. The interview occurred at the participant’s house in the same hamlet as my friend on the community. As my visit to this community was only for one day, at the communal shop I left information brochures that contained the same information as that provided in the informed consent form (see Appendix D) for members to read, with contact details should they require further information. Following the visit a member of the community, who had also been present at the tribal meeting, volunteered to participate in a phone interview. This was the only phone interview conducted in this research. Unlike other interviews, it was not digitally recorded; however handwritten notes were taken. I visited the

\textsuperscript{1} The proposal was defeated due to the highly accessible location of the youth space and not because communal members opposed a youth space per se.
community again in June 2005 for two days. On this occasion three members of the community were interviewed. Two interviews took place in participants’ homes. The third interview took place at the communal shop while the member was performing communal work. The five participants interviewed represented five different hamlets, which provided interesting contrasts and produced common thematic threads that are discussed in Chapter Six.

4.5.3 Contact with other communities

4.5.3.1 The Danthonia Bruderhof community

The Danthonia Bruderhof community was contacted by email in December 2004 through a generic community email address located on the internet. After explaining the nature of my research and why I would like to visit the community, I received a personal email invitation from a community member to attend the community for a day. I was not permitted to research individual members of the community, nor tape record my discussions. Out of respect for the community I also decided not to take notes on the day; however, I recorded my observations immediately after returning home from the community.

In December 2004, I spent one day on the community with a young married Bruderhof couple called David and Anne. As the Bruderhof dress modestly I felt that it was important to observe a dress code while visiting the community. I therefore wore a very long skirt with a long blouse and modest

1 In hindsight, the research on this community would have been more fruitful if I had door-knocked an entire hamlet. Given the importance of hamlets on this community, interviews elicited from an entire hamlet may have provided more ‘thick description’ relevant to the research question.

2 Pseudonyms are used here for these members.
shoes. David discussed the nature of communal life with me in the morning, took me on a tour of the Danthonia Designs workshop, and invited me to attend a communal morning tea that also served as a communal meeting. At lunchtime I attended the communal lunch in the community’s hall with all the other Bruderhof members. In addition to eating, members sang hymns and read letters from other Bruderhof members. In the afternoon Anne invited me to visit different sections of the community, including the communal gardens, the kindergarten and communal residences. We then engaged in further discussions about the nature of Bruderhof life. The remainder of the afternoon was spent preparing afternoon tea in the kitchen with young Bruderhof women.

4.5.3.2 The Stoney Creek community

In contrast, my contact with the Stoney Creek land-sharing community arose through a friend who then contacted members of the community to ascertain whether they would be interested in participating in this research. Permission was not required from the Board to conduct interviews on the community, as all shares are owned individually by each shareholder. Four members of this land-sharing community agreed to engage in the research in February 2005, with all interviews occurring in research participants’ homes. I stayed overnight at a friend’s house during my time on the community and was already familiar with its communal layout and topography prior to the interviews.

4.5.4 Interviews

Interviews are one of the most common and powerful ways in which to comprehend others. The most common form involves face-to-face verbal

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1 The wearing of modest clothing probably made me feel less conspicuous amongst the members of the community than allaying any concerns community members may have felt about my presence there.
exchanges, although a range of other forms such as focus groups and brainstorming may also be used (Fontana & Frey 2003:61-62). Though there is much debate within discourse research over ‘naturally occurring’ data as opposed to ‘researcher-provoked’ data, Nikander (2008:417-418) recommends caution in applying these distinctions too rigidly. She notes that much influential work in discourse analysis originates from studies using interviews (Nikander 2008:418).

This research therefore embraced face-to-face interviewing as the appropriate method for collecting empirical data and engaging participants in the research process. This allowed participants to share their experiences of communal life in a communal setting. It also facilitated participant observation of communities, bringing greater depth to the interview experience. While qualitative researchers may differentiate between in-depth interviews and participant observation, Fontana and Frey (2003:74) argue that the two go hand in hand such that data generated through participant observation may be directly related to informal interviews in the field.

Structured interviews with open-ended questions were initially used to collect data. However, this approach was very quickly abandoned in favour of ‘creative interviewing’ (Mason 2009) or ‘using tactics’ (Fontana & Frey, 2003:80), which enabled participants to answer questions as narratives or move away from the structured text. This approach views interviews as a creative process that minimises ‘how-to rules’ and enables the adaptation of interviews to changing situations (Fontana & Frey 2003:80).

1 Participants tended to answer questions either before the question had been asked or through long narratives that answered a number of questions at once. It was therefore difficult to ask questions in exactly the same way without interfering with the flow of the narrative or stilting the conversation, thereby producing a disjointed interview. In some cases, particularly with my first interview, sticking to the structured format stopped the dialogic flow. In these instances I lost valuable data that would have provided superior information if I had let the participant answer the question as a narrative. This is why I turned to ‘creative interviewing’ Mason (2009).
the work of Douglas (1985), Mason argues that creative interviewing refers to an interview that is ‘qualitative, flexible, loosely or semi-structured (non-standardised) and involves the construction of data and knowledge through processes that can be seen as ‘creative’ in some way’ (2009:para 1). This approach clearly aligns with a social constructionist approach as it views data and knowledge as constructed through the interactive process of interviewing.

The interview format, replicated in Appendix D, was therefore used as a guide during the interview process. Questions were thematically organised into general observations, general questions, individual practices, communal practices and knowledges. Other relevant community information was also sought, such as when and why the participant joined the community; whether they envisaged remaining on the community; and what they enjoyed and found challenging about life on their community.¹

The aim of the questions initially reflected a desire to understand whether care of the self functioned as a mode of subjection within intentional communities. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, Foucault’s conceptualisation of ethics is often discussed in the literature as indistinguishable from care of the self, which tends to obscure the way in which an application of Foucault’s ethics—uncoupled from care of the self—might discover other dominant modes of ethics operating within social and cultural systems. Although questions are moulded as ‘care of the self’, both care of the self and Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation concern practices that are performed on the self. Practices and discursive representations that were

¹ I originally asked participants what they did not enjoy about living on the community, which I subsequently changed to what participants found challenging living in their community.
discussed by each participant subsequently became the central focus of the interpretive framework, which will be discussed in section 4.6.

4.5.5 Participant observation

Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2003) argue that observation is fundamental to all research methods in the social and behavioural sciences. Observational techniques are often employed with direct interviews to gauge additional meaning elicited from gestures and body language. Observation may take place in ‘sterile’ environments, such as labs or clinics, or in contextual surroundings, for example, during fieldwork (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:107). Participant observation may also be used where other methods might be intrusive or are not permitted because they breach philosophical beliefs or organisational concerns. In this context, participant observation served as the primary method of data collection on the Danthonia Bruderhof community, for the reasons discussed in section 4.5.3.

4.5.6 Document analysis

As my visit to the Danthonia Bruderhof community was limited to participant observation and field notes, research on this community has been supplemented by the work of Rubin (1998), Tyldesley (2003), Metcalf (2004) and Franklin (2005). Further, a document analysis of texts, in particular the work of Zablocki (1971) and the biographical discourse of Peters (1996) has also been used to supplement this research method. I have analysed these

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1 The research of Oved (1996) on the Bruderhof has not been utilized in this research as it is predominantly historical and focuses on American Bruderhof communities as opposed to those located in Australia or New Zealand. Rubin (1998) argues that ‘Oved wrote a celebratory and uncritical account that reflected considerable editorial and scholarly control exercised by the Bruderhof’ (para 24). In comparison, Zablocki’s (1971) work provides a critical account of Bruderhof practices. The Peregrine Foundation also published a newsletter up until 2001 called ‘Keep in Touch’ (KIT) for Bruderhof ex-members, members and other interested parties that also provides a critical account of Bruderhof practices. The work of Rubin (1998) is cited on the KIT website at [http://www.perefound.org/jr_cn.html](http://www.perefound.org/jr_cn.html)
latter texts using the theoretical framework of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, as discussed in sections 3.6 and 4.2 above.

4.5.7 Power relations

One of the main issues concerning both participant observations and interviews relates to the notion of ‘observational objectivity’ and whether it is a feasible goal of research (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:109). As discussed above, Foucauldian constructionism views discursive frameworks, which would include the interview setting, as socially and historically constructed. Power therefore has certain ontological effects in the research setting.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Foucault (1984a:340) views power as relational. It differs according to the social context, the political framework and the historical period. He argues that it extends widely into human relations, creating a network of ‘relationships of power’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:3). Further, power relations are changeable, reversible and unstable; that is, they can modify themselves (Foucault 1984b/1988:12). For example, Foucault contends that an interview situation can produce all these effects:

The fact, for example, that I am older and that at first you were intimidated can, in the course of the conversation, turn about and it is I who can become intimidated before someone, precisely because they are younger. (Foucault 1984b/1988:12)

Whenever we are in a relationship with others, power is always present (Foucault 1984b/1988:12). Power therefore enters all situations, whether interpersonal, social, institutional or systemic.

Within the research context, Foucault’s view of power as relational has many effects. For instance, Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2003) argue that perceptions of ‘power’ may accord more status to the researcher than there
really is. Participants can engage in ‘subtle, yet very revealing subversive power games’ (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:117) that inevitably shape what the researcher observes and how it is interpreted. For example, research on any one of the Church Communities International (CCI) collectivities is extremely circumscribed. As I was chaperoned for the entire day and unable to conduct direct interviews with individual members, a power-relationship that favoured the representational authority of the church and not the researcher was indicated. However, through subtle interpersonal engagement with specific members, resistance to the all-embracing representation offered by the community was certainly possible.

Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2003) argue that the standard binary view of researcher and ‘subject’ overlooks the way in which both researcher and participant are constructed in particular contexts. Similarly to Foucault, they argue that it is more productive to think in terms of multidimensional power relationships of which certain contexts—and systems—are highly relevant (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:120). In this sense, researchers and participants enter into a negotiated situational identity, where interaction (the interview, or the observation) are continuously tested and potentially contested (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:125). This is in accord with the contemporary view that interviews are an active process that result in a negotiated text (Fontana & Frey 2003:62). This does not explain away the resulting representations portrayed by the researcher, which are discussed in the context of the research ethics in section 4.9.

4.6 Interpretation and evaluation

The interpretation and evaluation of data rests at the core of qualitative research and is intimately linked to the methodology that has been discussed above. The interpretation of texts serves to develop the research problem and
further the theoretical understandings of the research topic (Flick 2002:176). This section considers each step of the interpretive and evaluative process. The first step focuses on transcribing interviews and the use of computer-assisted analysis to both code demographic data and undertake an initial analysis of the interviews. The second step focuses on analysing the empirical data using Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation to ascertain the practices that participants perform on their selves through communal living. The third step draws on Burr’s (1995) style of discourse analysis to highlight the discursive practices through which participants construct both their selves and their lives. The identification of these discursive practices characterises the way in which participants position themselves through these discourses (Miller 2008:268).

4.6.1 Transcription

All interviews were transcribed, resulting in twenty-eight texts. Transcribing took between three to six hours per text, depending on the length of the interview. Interviews ranged from sixty minutes to three hours\(^1\), with texts correspondingly ranging from fourteen to forty pages. The shortest text resulted from a phone interview consisting of eight pages. The longest text, resulting from a two-and-a-half hour interview, consisted of forty-one pages. On average, transcribed interviews were twenty pages in length, producing approximately five hundred and twenty pages of text. In addition to field notes and supplementary text notes, the research comprised a large and rich data set. Fontana and Frey (2003) capture the feeling in the face of so much information:

\(^1\) Although it was pointed out to each participant that the duration of the interview would be forty-five minutes, interviews generally took much longer as noted.
no matter how organised the researcher may be, he or she slowly becomes buried under an increasing mountain of field notes, transcripts, newspaper clippings and audiotapes. (P. 661)

The sheer volume of data collected, however, served to focus the strategy of interpretation. Flick (2002:176) refers to the following process that was used in this research as an ‘interwoven’ procedure. One goal was to focus on particular aspects of the original texts through coding specific data, such as the demographic information based on participants’ responses. Other aspects, such as participants’ knowledge of the history of the community were also noted. The interpretation of this data is presented as case studies in Chapter Five. Participants’ practices were then categorised into the four aspects of Foucault’s ethics, forming part of the ethical analysis. This analysis also served to ‘reveal, uncover and contextualise statements’; a process which is explored in the context of discourse analysis. The results of this approach are discussed in Chapters Six and Seven.

4.6.2 Coding

Flick (2002:176) argues that the interpretation of data is at the core of qualitative research. Many researchers now rely on qualitative software packages, such as N6 (formerly known as NUD*IST) to assist in this process. Researchers that have drawn on the work of Foucault and a social constructionist perspective when analysing their interviews using N6 include Adam et al. (2005) in their analysis of risk constructions in the reinfection discourses of HIV positive men, and Fisher et al. (2006) in their analysis of how social context impacts on women’s fear of childbirth. The following texts have also used a social constructionist framework and N6 to analyse interviews: Eliot and Olver (2007), in their analysis of hope and hoping in the talk of dying cancer patients; Connell (2005), in an analysis of the perspectives
of young Australian women with breast cancer; and Sandfield (2006), in the role of divorce in women’s constructions of relationship status.

Drawing on the work of Strauss and Corbin, Flick (2002:177) argues that coding represents the process by which data is broken down, conceptualised and put back together in novel ways. As discussed in section 4.5.4, all participants were asked a series of demographic questions relating to gender, age, religion or spiritual orientation, employment and education. These elements were coded using QSR International N6 (N6), which is specifically designed for qualitative data analysis. This software provides an avenue for storing texts as raw data, coding data, storing ideas in memos and annotations, and creating categories. It also enables reports to be created on coded data, resulting in single reports that cover all texts on single or multiple categories. Although coding is time consuming and dependent on access to technology, once interviews were coded in this way the resulting reports provided easy access to a series of coded data that also served as the basis for interpretation and comparison.

4.6.3 Ethical Analysis

Following the coding of demographic data, the ethical analysis was undertaken. An essential feature of this analysis is the use of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, or four-part aspect of ethics. Although all interviews were utilised to inform the research, only parts of each interview were relevant to the research questions. With respect to the ethical analysis, parts of each interview that were relevant to the ethical substance were highlighted and coded. Likewise, the parts that were relevant to the self-forming activities were also highlighted and coded and so on.

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1 Also formerly known as Nvivo, NUD*IST and NUDIST.
The substantive content selected, however, depended on the characterisation of each aspect of ethics, as has been discussed in section 3.6. For instance, self-forming activities focus on the techné or practices participants perform on themselves in order to become ethical subjects, while the ethical substance focuses on the part of the self or behaviour that is the relevant domain for ethical judgment. Further, the mode of subjection reflects the way in which participants engage in forms of self-regulation, while the telos focuses on the aims or goals of the ethical activity.

As the intentional community literature is unique in its representation of the voices of communal participants, conceptual categories in this literature were also used to guide the ethical analysis. For instance, Metcalf’s definition of intentional community living, discussed in section 2.4.1, was used as the springboard to discuss participants’ intentions with respect to communal living in the ethical substance. Kanter’s commitment mechanisms were categorised into each aspect of Foucault’s ethics, which is replicated in Appendix C. Three of Kanter’s communion mechanisms comprise communal work, regularised group contact and ritual. These were characterised as particular communal techné that participants might engage in on these communities as part of their self-forming activities. Further, Zablocki’s (1980) investment of self, discussed in section 2.5.1.2, related to both the ethical substance and the mode of subjection. Limitations of this method are discussed in section 4.7.

Further texts were also used, for instance McLaughlin and Davidson’s (1986) discussion of community, in addition to the benefits and purposes of community, guided aspects relevant to the self-forming activities and the telos. Schehr’s discussion of intentional communities as new social movements (NSM) and the particular processes and practices they utilize also guided the interpretation of practices that informed the self-forming activities. Further, literature emanating from intentional community participants regarding intentions, philosophies, communal and individual practices and goals of intentional community literature also framed the way in which aspects the texts were characterized into each ethical category.
4.6.4 Discourse analysis

Though Foucauldian constructionism is a form of discursive constructionism (Nikander 2008:413), it does not provide a method for doing discourse analysis. As discussed in the methodology, there are many ways of doing discourse analysis; however, Burr’s method was adopted for the reasons discussed therein. A thematic account best represented diachronic discourse patterns, or recurrent patterns that were found in participants’ texts. However, it also enabled synchronic discourse patterns, or particular instances, to be identified (see Nikander 2008:419). These themes provided a way to elaborate on correspondences and differences between the various participants in the study (Flick 2002:188).

After reading each portion of the relevant texts numerous times, recurrent themes began to emerge in each case. Consistent statements and phrases ‘which appear to talk about or represent things in a similar way’ (Burr 1995:116), including metaphors that reflect particular images associated with participants’ identities and styles of life were noted and highlighted. Further, words that seem ‘loaded’ were also identified. Focusing on these words and phrases helped to ‘paint a picture’ that further allowed similarities and contrasts to be discussed, in addition to exploring images and associations conveyed by the metaphors used by each participant.

Analysing the texts in this way provided startling thematic imagery and metaphors that concerned ethics as praxis. This touched the heart of the research question. It also provided very clear examples of the way in which participants’ identities and their lives are constructed and transformed through communal living. It therefore offered insightful accounts that also served to highlight significant differences in the ethical construction of participants on these communities. Finally, it highlighted particular
conceptual frameworks drawn upon by participants in their daily communal lives. These conceptual frameworks are the discourses that participants use to position themselves within communal living.

4.6.5 Summary of interpretation and evaluation

In addition to focusing the data, the use of a number of interpretive methods resulted in a layered effect in the presentation of data. For instance, coding assisted in identifying the demographic nature of each community, while the ethical analysis provided insight into the nature of each community and common and individual practices engaged in by community participants. Discourse analysis provided a further deeper level analysis of particular participants’ discourses that served to represent more significant differences in identity formation on particular communities. Although a complex approach, it enabled differences and variances to be represented in increasingly subtle ways.

4.7 Limitations of the methodology

Limitations of the methodology may relate to the interpretive framework, the method of analysis, the research strategy and the process of interpretation. Though they are discussed as limitations, they fail to detract from the significance of the findings and may instead provide a basis for future research (see, for instance, Perry 1998). This section considers the limitations of a Foucauldian interpretive framework, the use of the intentional community literature as part of the method of analysis, the use of case studies, and the effects of interviewing and participant observations.

A limitation of a Foucauldian ethical framework is that it is relatively under-utilised (Miller 2008:268; Scheurich & McKenzie 2005:843), particularly when applied to empirical research. There are therefore very few texts that provide guidance in the use of Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008; cf.
Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Eräranta et al. 2009) or the way to undertake a Foucauldian ethical analysis, though there are some (Aycock 1995; McPhail 1999; Moisander and Pesonen 2002; St Pierre 2004). Unlike Foucault’s earlier work, his ethical method is relatively untested, which means the use of these methods breaks new ground.

The use of the intentional community literature to guide the ethical analysis of participant’s responses focuses on the use of categories derived from outside the text (Flick 2002:193). A limitation of this method may result in obscuring the content of participants’ views rather than exploring the ‘depths and shallows’ within each text (Flick 2002:193). However, the intentional community literature adopts a curious position vis-à-vis its separation from research. As discussed in section 2.1, many researchers, such as Metcalf (2004), Cock (1995) and Kanter (1972) have been, or continue to be, intentional community members. In this sense, many of the categories that have been used to guide the characterisation of a Foucauldian ethics are derived from an intentional community lifestyle. Although categories and concepts may be external to the text, they are—ironically—derived from other communal participants in this field. Arguably, this enhances the confirmability of the research process, as discussed in section 4.8.

The case study method relies on a priori selection of cases. Cases are identified before the research process commences, interviews are undertaken, and negotiated texts unveiled as a final product of research. As Stake (2003) argues, cases are of prominent interest before formal study begins. Case studies were used to facilitate an understanding of participants’ practices on the chosen communities. However, the same approach taken towards five different communities may have yielded very different results. The results are therefore limited to the cases chosen. Future research may use different communities to extend the findings of the current research question.
Angrosino and Mays de Pérez (2003) argue that researchers need to realise that what they observe is conditioned by who they are, and that different researchers will elicit different responses to both interviews and observation. This inevitably impacts on the validity of the research and the representations that are subsequently produced. Differently situated interviewers and participants will therefore evoke qualitatively different stories (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez 2003:133-134). It is therefore important to acknowledge that the research presented in this thesis is limited by the specificity of the researcher, the researched and the context of the research.

4.8 Validation

A positivist theoretical paradigm relies on traditional criteria, such as internal and external validity and objectivity, to validate the interpretive paradigm. In comparison, constructionist paradigms use such terms as credibility, dependability and confirmability in the place of positivist criteria (Flick 2002:228; Denzin and Lincoln 2005:25). These three criteria are utilised to affirm the methodological rigour of this research.

Nikander (2008:423) points out that transcripts, in comparison to field notes based on ethnography, are a highly detailed and accessible representation of social action. The detail of this empirical material therefore allows researchers to make their own checks and balances against the final research product. Asking research participants to validate the transcript data heightened the credibility of the transcripts in this research. A number of transcripts were returned to participants so that they could re-read what they had said and make additional comments or suggest amendments or alterations. A letter accompanied the transcript, which is attached as Appendix D. Two participants returned their transcripts with amendments, while one participant was unhappy with the way the transcript had been presented.
Transcripts were amended accordingly. This approach also confirmed the appropriateness of terms of reference (Flick 2002:229).

*Dependability* focuses on the concept of ‘auditing’ to ensure quality management of the research. An auditing trail is therefore outlined to ensure the procedural dependability of the research process. Areas that may be included in an audit trail are the method of data collection and analysis and the process of interpretation and evaluation. Both these areas are outlined above in section 4.5 and 4.6. Other areas such as process notes, personal journals and preliminary plans may also form part of the audit trail (Flick 2002:229). These elements are kept as part of my personal research file.

*Confirmability* aims to evaluate the research through external confirmation. The approach adopted in this research sought to use different data sources to confirm the research texts (Flick 2002). As has been discussed, research on intentional communities occupies a unique position where researchers may be both participants and researchers of this phenomenon. Participants’ accounts in this research were therefore compared with participants’ accounts in the intentional community literature, enabling the study of this phenomenon, which is in accordance with Flick’s approach (2002). The criteria of credibility, dependability and confirmability have been used in this research to ensure the trustworthiness of the research process.

### 4.9 Ethics

All researchers have an ethical obligation to protect the rights, privacy and wellbeing of participants in their research (Backhouse 2008:84). Within the context of this research, those obligations also extended to the community in which the participant was located. Further, ethical constraints and safeguards also serve to protect the researcher and the legal liability of a research institution. The research design of this thesis is in accordance with the
comprehensive guidelines of the Southern Cross University’s (SCU) Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), which protects all contributors to the research process.

Prior to contacting the communities and conducting the interviews, an ethics application was lodged with the SCU HREC. The application outlined the nature of the research, the questions that would be posed to participants, and the risks and discomfort that might affect participants. The application was approved on 17 September 2004 and given the HREC approval number ECN-04-135 (Appendix E). Approval was subject to providing participants a list of local counsellors and the contact names of my thesis supervisors. The names of my supervisors were added to the Informed Consent Form, which is discussed below. A list of free counselling services was provided to all participants with the Informed Consent Form (Appendix D).

As most participants were located on intentional communities, the process for selecting participants firstly involved seeking permission from each community to conduct the research. A nominated representative located either through a community web page or through my own friendship connections, was contacted to arrange attendance at a communal meeting. At three of the intentional community meetings I attended, the research had been noted as an Agenda item at that meeting. This meant that the nature of the research could be discussed with the community as a whole, allowing participants to volunteer once the community had approved the research. For the remaining two communities, designated representatives of those communities either introduced me to further potential participants or, in the case of Danthonia Bruderhof, served to represent the community as a whole.

The nature of communal meetings varied, as discussed in section 4.5.2. Two intentional communities decided that the name of their community was not to
be used in the research. Two further communities indicated that it was unnecessary to seek permission to undertake research on the community, or to seek permission to use the name of the community. That is, the use of the name of the community did not need to be authorised by the community. Further, CCI refuse on principle to participate in any research that involves the interview of individual members, although researchers are permitted to visit communities and participate in daily life. These variances reflect the different natures of the communities that were involved in this research.

In accordance with HREC guidelines, all communities and participants—except Danthonia Bruderhof and CCI—were accorded anonymity through the use of pseudonyms. In the case of Danthonia Bruderhof, participant observation did not identify particular individuals on the community. Pseudonyms have been accorded to the husband and wife who chaperoned my visit to the community. Further, members’ names have only been used where those names were used in prior research or in public interviews and were not linked to any of the participants I may have spent time with on the community. In the case of the Danthonia Bruderhof it was in fact impossible to accord anonymity to the community since it is the only community of its sort in Australia. Former texts that identify specific Bruderhof communities and members have been drawn on in the analysis of this community. Other than removing the community as an empirical source, anonymity has instead been accorded that reflects this community’s concern regarding the research of individual participants. Participant observation has therefore served to confirm descriptions of Bruderhof communities in existing intentional community literature.

Once each community had granted permission for the research to commence, a similar process was followed on each intentional community, with the exception of the Danthonia Bruderhof community. Before the interview, I
held a discussion with each volunteer, in which I outlined the nature and purpose of the research; the procedures I had followed, including seeking HREC ethics approval; and the procedures that I would follow in the interview. This included according anonymity and the provision of pseudonyms to the participant and the community. I indicated to each volunteer that the duration of each interview would be forty-five minutes and sought permission to digitally record the interview. I also discussed storage of the information with the volunteers. I conferred with the volunteers on perceived discomforts and risks and provided information on free counselling services available in the volunteer’s local area.

I also outlined my responsibilities as a researcher, including according confidentiality to the participant and the community. Responsibilities of the potential participant were also discussed. By doing this I sought to empower participants to withdraw from the research should they wish to do so. The names of my supervisors were also provided. Volunteers were then asked whether they had any questions. I then sought permission to engage them as participants in the research. Two original copies of an informed consent form, outlining the nature of the discussion detailed above, were then signed (Appendix D). The participant retained a signed original of the informed consent form in addition to a list of free counselling services. Another original copy was retained as part of the research process.

Interviews invariably raise difficult issues and researchers must take care to avoid harm to participants, including physical, emotional or any other kind of harm (Fontana and Frey 2003:87). Emotional responses to interviews occurred on two occasions. The first occasion occurred on the Evergreen community when a participant became upset while relaying an issue that had arisen

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1 Though as discussed above, interviews ranged from sixty minutes to three hours in length.
earlier during a communal meeting. The second occasion arose during a phone interview when a participant, because of fatigue, sought to complete the interview a week later at a designated time. On both occasions the interviews were stopped. With respect to the earlier occasion, a significant break was taken from the interview, which included having a cup of tea. The interview was subsequently resumed at the request of the participant. A number of participants in the research were also therapeutic counsellors, or worked in an environment that provided access to a range of therapists, including the participant on the Evergreen community. In addition to the list provided to participants of free counselling services, many participants were well situated to access professional therapeutic services, either from peers on the community or within their own networks.

Interviews often have what Fischer terms reflexive concerns about the way in which the researcher influences the research, the methods of collecting data and the interpretive framework used to report on the research (cited in Fontana and Frey 2003:80-81). Within an ethical context, moving from the collection of data and analysis through interpretation and evaluation, and then to the subsequent representations provided in a public document may trigger what St Pierre (2004) refers to as ‘successive stages of self-reflection’ (cited in Denzin and Lincoln 2005:19). Perspectives derived from this process of reflection may then inform each stage of the research process and the final written document. While we cannot make research entirely safe, we are left with choices about the nature of the representations we make (Toll and Crumpler 2004:401).

St Pierre (2004:333-334) discusses how self-reflection informs the shifts we may make as researchers, countering the way in which we may not follow textbook research processes. As researchers, our interview questions may not elicit the answers we want to hear. However, participants may answer
questions we should have asked. We may look for meaning hidden in participants as repositories of knowledge and wisdom yet find they discuss everyday encounters and practices that seem far removed from our meaning-full gaze. However, throughout the research process we may begin to comprehend what interviewees are saying in incremental ways. Further, we may only understand crucial data after it has been collected and we are left with the remaining analysis and interpretation. Finally, the research process may humble us as researchers because we come to know how much we wished we had known when developing the research design.

Many of St Pierre’s sentiments mirror my own self-reflection in the shift that I have made as a researcher. This results in a cautious approach towards representation that consistently engages a process of self-reflection. What is represented therefore reflects a personal journey. However, the representations that are presented in Chapters Six and Seven are also representations that are not entirely dissimilar to those that have been constructed in the field. Any potential sharp departures in representation are minimised through the trustworthiness of the research process, as discussed in section 4.8.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the design of the research and the methodology. It has provided a rationale for using a Foucauldian interpretive framework within a qualitative paradigm for discussing participants’ practices as an ethics as praxis. The use of case studies enables five distinct communities to be discussed as discrete entities, while fieldwork has enabled the collection of data through interviews with, and observation of, research participants. Document analysis of specific texts relevant to the Danthonia Bruderhof community has supplemented this method. A layered data analysis approach
has been outlined, including the use of coding, as well as an ethical analysis using Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation and discourse analysis. Further, the limitations of the research methodology, issues surrounding validation of the research and ethical considerations have been explored.

Chapter Five presents each community and their relevant demographic information as distinct case studies. Chapter Six discusses participant’s practices in accordance with Foucault’s four aspects of ethics, while a further discursive analysis identifies the way participants construct their selves and their lives in accordance with dominant discourses.
5.1 Introduction

Northern New South Wales (NSW) is well known for a diverse range of intentional communities. The Rainbow Region, centrally located on the far north coast of northern NSW and approximately seven hundred kilometres from Sydney, forms part of a warm temperate area, with the rural towns of Mullumbimby located in the north, Nimbin in the west and Ballina in the south. Lismore and its surrounds, including smaller villages, which play host to a number of intentional communities, are also located within this area (Coyle 2006). The coastal town of Coffs Harbour and the smaller village of Bellingen lie two hundred kilometres further south from the Rainbow Region on the mid north coast of northern NSW with the Thora Valley located on the Bellinger River near Bellingen. Both the far north and mid north coast of NSW form part of the original ‘hippy trail’—‘a mythical sort of path’ (Metcalf 2005:2)—which in Australia, started from the southern states and wound its way along the east coast through northern New South Wales to Cairns and then on to Darwin and for many, provided ‘their first introduction to the alternative world, a crash course in the experience of alternatives’ (Cock 1979:24).

In contrast, the New England region lies further inland, approximately six hundred kilometres from Sydney, forming the northwest corner of northern

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1 The hippy trail in Australia was also connected to hippy trails that began in other destinations outside of Australia, for instance the hippy trail in India (see Metcalf 2005:2).
NSW. With a colder mountain climate, the rural township of Tamworth lies in the south, Tenterfield in the north and Inverell in the west, with surrounding villages loosely bordering this very large rural area. Very few intentional communities are located in the New England region, which is located approximately three hundred kilometres west from a variety of intentional communities located in the Rainbow Region. All three regions and relevant townships and villages are identified on the map of northern NSW located in Figure 1, Appendix A.

Five long-term¹ rural communities participated in this research from the three regions of northern NSW discussed above. Four of these communities are long-term intentional communities, as defined in section 2.4.1, while the fifth community is a long-term land-sharing community. Land-sharing communities share land title only and are therefore not classified as intentional communities. According to Zablocki’s typology of collectivities discussed in section 2.5.1.2, they might be classified as an ‘Assembly’ which collectively invests neither their resources nor themselves. The intentional communities of Evergreen and Mountain Range, and the land-sharing community of Stoney Creek are located in the Rainbow Region on the far north coast of NSW. The intentional community of Thora Valley is located on the mid north coast of northern NSW, while the intentional community of Danthonia Bruderhof is located in the New England region of northern NSW. As discussed in Chapter Four, communities were chosen for a variety of reasons, with the empirical research representing a particular period in time.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of each community, as further details of communal life form the basis of the ethical analysis of each

¹ All communities in this research have been established for over twenty years, including the land-sharing community, Stoney Creek. Though Danthonia Bruderhof was established in Australia in 1999, the Bruderhof, or International Community of Churches as they are known today, was founded in Germany in 1920. See ‘Bruderhof’ in the definitions table.
community in Chapter Six. The overview of each community is then followed by a discussion of each community’s research participation. The research demographics of each community are also discussed, which includes participants’ social characteristics such as age, gender and ethnicity; marital status; number of children; education and employment; and religious or spiritual orientation. A synopsis of the research demographics is then loosely compared with Metcalf and Vanclay’s (1987) analysis of the social characteristics of alternative lifestyle participants in Australia in 1987, with a view to identifying contemporary similarities or shifts in participant characteristics in these communities. Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) researched both current and intending rural and urban participants in the alternative lifestyle movement through samples collected from readers of alternative lifestyle magazines.

I turn now to a discussion of each community.

5.2 The Church Communities International and Danthonia Bruderhof

Church Communities International\(^2\) (CCI) is a collectivity of communities\(^3\), formerly known as the Bruderhof, the Bruderhof Communities, Society of Brothers, and the Hutterian Society of Brothers that originated in Germany in 1920 (Durnbaugh 2003:104). Eberhard Arnold, and his wife Emmy Arnold formed the original religious community. Together with other young friends they decided to break with bourgeois society and develop a small community in the country, reflecting a ‘back to nature’ theme of the German youth

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\(^1\) This is not a pseudonym for this community with the actual name of the community being used in this research.

\(^2\) A recent name change—see http://www.churchcommunities.org/

\(^3\) Although a collectivity of communities, when referring to specific communities I refer to their former names, such as the Australian community, Danthonia Bruderhof, which is discussed in this research. However, the collective term ‘Bruderhof’ is used when referring to past research on the collectivity, while the term CCI is used to refer to the contemporary collectivity.
movement at the time. In 1922 the group split, with the Arnolds and five others re-grouping as the Rhönbruderhof on a nearby farm. At this point in time, the group placed their philosophical roots firmly in the Anabaptist\(^1\) tradition (Durnbaugh 2003:104). Following persecution by the Nazis, the Rhönbruderhof moved to England. However, faced with being interned as ‘enemy aliens,’ the group moved to Paraguay in 1941 with the assistance of the Mennonite Central Committee. Three settlements, collectively called Primavera, were established in Paraguay; however, after internal division, and having endured great hardship, the community moved to the United States where they have subsequently flourished.

Today, there are eleven communities that form CCI, which are situated in England, the United States, Germany and Australia (Metcalf 2004:56), with a total population in excess of 2500 members (Franklin 2005). Community is the foundation of all CCI way of life, infusing day-to-day living and faith (Arnold 2002). CCI is supported by communal businesses. For example, Community Playthings produces classroom furniture, equipment and wheeled toys for daycare centres and elementary schools, while Rifton Equipment designs and produces therapeutic equipment for people with disabilities (Church Communities International 2009). Danthonia Bruderhof also has its own business known as ‘Danthonia Designs,’ which will be discussed further in section 5.2.2.3.

Danthonia Bruderhof was established in Australia in 1999, and would be categorised as a rural spiritual community according to Metcalf’s classificatory scheme discussed in section 2.4.1. Situated on the Gwydir Highway between Glen Innes and Inverell in the New England region, the

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\(^1\) Anabaptists reject infant baptism and instead affirm adult baptism. They are also known as ‘re-baptizers’ (Durnbaugh 2003:104).
property adjoins another larger Bruderhof landholding known as Newstead\(^1\). The Danthonia Bruderhof community is predominantly self-sufficient, growing their own vegetables and raising their own cows for both meat and milk. All possessions are communally owned and so personal ownership (except for personal essentials) is discouraged. Women wear peasant-style dresses with long sleeved shirts and headdresses, based on the German Tyrolean tradition (Franklin 2006:2), while men wear jeans or slacks and shirts. Shoes are modest and usually handed down once children outgrow them. Large communal buildings dot the landscape, including a large communal hall where most meals are shared, a workshop and agricultural buildings, a pre-school and primary school, and residences that are shared by family groupings and singles. Except for the morning meal, when families and nominated singles\(^2\) breakfast together, all meals are taken together with the entire community, with women preparing the meal and men washing up. Communal meals usually commence with prayer, and stories and correspondence are shared during the remainder of the meal. As with all CCI, community is the cornerstone of daily living, with all members participating in communal activities during the day—whether this is in the Danthonia Designs workshop, in the schools, in the vast vegetable gardens, preparing meals for the community or raising children.

5.2.1 Research participation

The Bruderhof are reluctant to participate in research\(^3\) (Rubin 1998) and therefore no individual interviews of community members were undertaken

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\(^1\)Newstead was purchased in 2001 for the purposes of increasing the existing Bruderhof community on the Danthonia property and expanding agricultural pursuits (Franklin 2005). This thesis focuses on the Danthonia Bruderhof community, however both communities form CCI.

\(^2\) Single people are allocated to a particular family group for breakfast. A ‘nominated single’ therefore refers to the nominated person allocated to a particular family grouping.

\(^3\) Though readily engage in interviews when necessary (see Franklin 2005). Rubin (1998) contrasts his own work with that of the Bruderhof authorized work of Oved (1996), arguing
for this research. However, as discussed in Chapter Four, I was invited to spend the day at the Community, with my time spent with a young married couple whom I refer to as David and Anne. I spent the morning with David touring the communal gardens and the communal workshop where Danthonia signs are made, and the afternoon with his wife Anne touring the pre-school, communal residences and discussing the Bruderhof way of life. Both David and Anne were aged in their early thirties and had been raised as members of the Bruderhof in America. During the day I also participated in morning tea, which forms part of the mid-morning break from work, a communal lunch with the entire community, in addition to spending time with some young women aged in their late teens to early twenties whilst preparing afternoon tea in the kitchen. Much of this research is therefore based on participant observation and an analysis of the literature, including the works of Zablocki (1971), Peters (1996), Tyldesley (2003) and Metcalf (2004).

5.2.2 Research demographics

5.2.2.1 Age, gender, ethnicity and relationships

In 2004, Danthonia Bruderhof had a population of 130 members (Franklin 2005) with approved plans to grow to 400 (Metcalf 2004:47). A large percentage of children comprise the population, with members often having large families. In comparison, Zablocki’s (1971) study of the Bruderhof in 1971 shows that the adult to child ratio declined from fifty-six percent in 1941 to fewer than forty percent in 1965. However, as the Church does not support

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that the Bruderhof ‘opposed all scholarship where they did not control the questions asked, the evidence made available for investigation, the interpretative framework employed, and the conclusions drawn’ (Rubin 1998: 24). This research therefore draws on texts that provide both critical (Zablocki 1971; Rubin 1998; Metcalf 2004) and uncritical accounts of Bruderhof life (Peters 1996; Tyldesley 2003; Metcalf 2004).

1 For instance, in 2004, nearly fifty percent of the Darvell population were children (Metcalf, 2004:56).
birth control, high birth rates are likely to continue, potentially maintaining a relatively high child to adult ratio. All members of Danthonia Bruderhof in Australia are migrants, mostly originating from American based Bruderhof communities, except for one New Zealander of Maori decent. In contrast, Zablocki found that ‘one of the remarkable things about the Bruderhof is the heterogeneity of its population’ (1971:239). For instance, twenty nationalities were represented during the 1950s, though this number had declined in 1965 to seven nationalities at Woodcrest Bruderhof, with two nationalities represented by one person (Zablocki 1971:240-241). It is arguable that given the high birth rate amongst Bruderhof, and the likelihood that many born into the Bruderhof way of life also choose to become a member¹, that the heterogeneity of CCI communities may decline further over time.

Though CCI have a relatively high child to adult ratio they also have a proportion of elderly people living on the community. As Peters notes ‘Grandmas operate computers, while others fold laundry or help set our communal dining tables’ (1996:184). Each community looks after their elderly members who continue to work ‘as long and as much as their strength permits’ (Peters 1996:184). Elderly members also play a significant role in the Church as Elders. In addition, there are a significant number of singles who are young adults living in a CCI community. Singles may also undertake tertiary studies thereby contributing as skilled professionals to communal life².

¹ For instance, Anne was one of nine siblings born into the Bruderhof way of life, with all siblings having chosen to become Bruderhof members as adults.
² For instance, one member of the Danthonia Bruderhof is a trained medical practitioner, who, in addition to serving the community, provides medical services to the wider rural community.
5.2.2.2 Education

Bruderhof communities support educational achievement, home-schooling their children until high school age. Danthonia Bruderhof has its own preschool and school for children with younger people attending the local Inverell High School. As discussed above, young adults are also encouraged to undertake tertiary studies; however this is dependent on the needs of the community. While visiting the community, one young woman expressed an interest in gaining early childhood qualifications. However, at the time, the community required young people to undertake accounting degrees, with three young people volunteering to partake in a three-year degree at the University of New England, based in Armidale. The young woman was hopeful that the community would one day need another member with early childhood qualifications.

5.2.2.3 Employment

All Bruderhof are gainfully employed on the Danthonia community. Danthonia Bruderhof runs a well-known sign business called ‘Danthonia Designs’. The signs are handcrafted in the workshop on the community. The signs are colourful with gold inlay, with orders originating both locally and overseas. While visiting the community I toured the workshop where many signs were in process—from original plaster caste, to semi-painted, to final product. Signs ranged in price from $4000 to $18000 and more. David indicated that many signs were exported to the United States, as the turn around time in production was far quicker in Australia than overseas. Many local councils in the New England area have purchased local council boundary signs in addition to local businesses, bed and breakfast establishments, and pubs in the northern NSW region. The Café Midale sign shown in Figure 2, Appendix B, is an example of a Danthonia Designs sign. If not employed by Danthonia Designs, all other members of the community are
employed in some other capacity on the community. For example, they will work as pre-school or primary school teachers (with university qualifications), in agricultural production on the farm, in the kitchen preparing meals, or managing the communal finances and running errands into town.

5.2.2.4 Religion

As discussed above, Bruderhof communities form part of the Anabaptist tradition, which is shared with the Amish, Mennonites and Hutterites. Originally founded in the student Christian Movement, the Arnolds were open to radical ideas of the time, which included Christian Socialism (Durnbaugh 2003:104). Zablocki (1971) in The Joyful Community discusses a seven-stage evolution of the Bruderhof movement from ‘communion’ at the time of founding the Church, to ‘Church-Community’ and the holding of all things in common. Tyldesley (2003) argues that Bruderhof as a whole is a Church founded on the accounts of the early Christian Church in the New Testament, which normalise Christian life as communal. Eberhard Arnold (2002) in Why we live in Community also emphasises ‘community’ as the cornerstone of Bruderhof life. Peters (1996) of New Meadow Run in Pennsylvania describes his way of life:

We live communally, like the first Christians in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:43-47 and 4:32-37 in the Bible), sharing everything except our spouses, and we do not have any private property. The Bruderhof provides all our needs; everything from housing to clothing to toothpaste. No member has any money of her or his own, but if cash is needed for a trip to town to see a doctor, for instance, the brother who cares for our finances gives out as much cash as is needed, along with a key to one of our small fleet of communally owned vehicles. Upon returning from town, any unused cash is returned, along with the car key (‘Please clean the car and fill the gas tank!’) so that the vehicle is ready for the next person who needs it. (P. 183)
To be a member of the Bruderhof is also to be a member of the Church (Tyldesley 2003:59). Christian discipleship therefore forms the basis of community life, which is symbolised in baptism by immersion (Durnbaugh 2003:106). Visitors are always welcome on the community, and should a visitor decide that this is their way of life, progressive pathways are offered, eventuating in full membership through the process of adult baptism. Though often referred to as a Christian based community, David preferred to acknowledge that community members follow the path of Jesus with the Sermon on the Mount in the Bible forming the basis of daily faith and ritual.

5.3. Evergreen

Evergreen\(^1\) is a well-established intentional community located in the Rainbow Region. The community’s germination stems from the founding members’ involvement in Vipassana or insight meditation; firstly through the ‘India Club’ which comprised founding members of the community who travelled to India, and subsequently through other founding members’ involvement in building a Meditation Retreat Centre in the local area. A number of individuals, after participating in retreats held at the retreat centre, expressed a wish to explore living together on the basis of Buddhist principles, and within a fairly short period of time the community was established. Eastern philosophy has therefore played a significant role in the development of this community, its philosophy and its practices, even though it moved quickly to a non-denominational base after its inception in 1976. On this basis it would be categorised as a rural spiritual community according to Metcalf’s classificatory scheme discussed in section 2.4.1.

The property was originally purchased for $16,000 with each share worth $1000. Twelve people purchased the property, which extends over 160 acres

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\(^1\) This is a pseudonym for the community that participated in this research. Pseudonyms are also used for each participant.
of timbered bush, bordering a ridge between two creeks, with the remaining funds raised through loans. Though the property is fairly large, communal buildings are located within a small range in an ‘L-shape’. Three houses were originally designed on the basis of an ‘expanded house’ concept which allows family units to share certain resources—such as a bathroom, kitchen or laundry—where those resources are not co-located under the one roof (Hamilton 1998:2). Further buildings include a communal hall, with a kitchen, an indoor recreation area and a large wrap around veranda where evening meals can be held in the cool of the night. Under the communal hall are visitor’s quarters, which, at the time of my visit, were being completed by communal members. Other communal facilities included a meditation hut, a communal composting toilet, a pump shed and an agricultural shed, in addition to communal water sources, roads and pathways.

In 2004, Evergreen continued to have many long-term residents. On joining the community, a donation is now made of $6000, which increases each year, by $250. The community has a medium size population of twenty-seven, including a relatively low number of children living on the community. In previous years it has had a population of forty members. More recently, the ageing population of the community, which is discussed generally in the context of intentional communities by Metcalf (2004), has meant that issues relating to the continuation of the community are points of discussion by community members.

5.3.1 Research participation

Ten members and one resident1 of this community participated in this research, making up forty percent of the total communal population of twenty-seven. One of those members was, at the time of research, a non-

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1 Although a resident non-member of this community for six years, many of the views expressed by this resident resonated with the views of members on this community.
resident member living in a nearby coastal location. Three of the participants were founding members, five joined the community shortly after it was founded, and three participants were recent members. Interestingly, seven participants were inspired by the Vipassana retreats held at the Meditation Retreat Centre on the community and also knew many of the other founding members as friends and followers of insight meditation prior to joining the community.

5.3.2 Research demographics

5.3.2.1 Age, gender and ethnicity

The age of research participants on this community ranged from thirty, the youngest participant, to the oldest non-resident member, aged eighty years old. The oldest resident member was aged fifty-nine. Eight participants were aged in their early fifties, with the mean age of all participants rounded to fifty-four and the median age of participants rounded to fifty-two. Of the eleven participants, I interviewed four female members, six male members and one resident male. One male and one female member had joined the community on the day of the interviews, of which both were aged in their early thirties. All participants were white Caucasians and, based on the high rate of tertiary education and employment discussed below, their socio-economic status would be classified as middle to upper class.

5.3.2.2 Relationships

Of the eleven participants, nine participants were married or living in a de facto relationship. Eight of those relationships were with members or residents living on the community, with one member in a de facto relationship. Two of those members had been asked to join the community the day I arrived to undertake my research; however, both had been living on the community for a number of years.
relationship with an external non-member of the community. Eight members and one resident had also been divorced, with some former partners still living on the community or having married another member of the community. Two participants were single—one male non-resident member and one female member. Nine participant members had eighteen children between them, ranging between one member having five children and four members having one child either between them or with another person.

5.3.2.3 Education

Members of this community have a high level of tertiary education. Of the eleven participants interviewed, nine possessed tertiary qualifications. Of those nine participants, three had undertaken studies seemingly unrelated to their current employment (though related to their work in the community), with another three not currently working in their field of education due to full-time motherhood and retirement. Of the other two participants, one had enrolled in a Technical and Further Education (TAFE) course and the other had undertaken private studies to work in her current field of expertise. Many of the community members had also undertaken workshops together, such as environmental and anti-nuclear workshops. In addition, some members had undertaken social ecology studies at a New South Wales university around the same time as each other.

5.3.2.4 Employment

Members on this community were variously engaged in paid employment, voluntary work or were unemployed. Two participants were employed in full-time paid work, with five participants working part-time or casually in paid employment. Four members were unemployed, whereby one member was studying at TAFE with aspirations of being self-employed in the future; two were retirees, with one of those members working part-to full-time in
voluntary work; and another member was a full-time mother working in a voluntary capacity offering free naturopathic consultations to community members.

Three members of the community were employed at Southern Cross University; two members were self-employed and another two members were employed by non-government organisations (NGOs). Five members worked in the public sector, while three members worked in privately funded organisations or in self-run businesses. Distribution of work between men and women was evenly balanced. For instance, full-time and part-time work was evenly distributed between men and women. More male members tended to be employed in the public sector, with a minor predisposition for women being either privately or self-employed.

Occupations were various, including a psychotherapist, a casual tutor at the university, a support worker, a Feldenkrais practitioner and exam invigilator, a naturopath, an administrative officer in student services, a sculptor and a lecturer at the university. Those who were retired had previous backgrounds in pharmacy, architecture and anthropology. Participants also had interesting past employment histories. For instance, some past occupations included dancing, mechanical engineering, commercial design, modelling, bookstore assistant, Indigenous homecare service, professional horse gambling and working as activists.

5.3.2.5 Spirituality

Nine of the eleven participants on this community indicated that Buddhist philosophy influenced their world view. Some indicated that Buddhist methods or practices influenced their way of engaging with Buddhism; another commented that they practiced ‘Hippy Buddhism’; whilst another considered himself an ‘existentialist who follows the teachings of Buddha’.
Awareness formed the foundation of one member’s practice, whilst others were influenced by Buddhist teachings and principles. One member commented on her ‘Buddhist earth-based spirituality,’ and another indicated that she was a ‘Zen Pantheist’. Two other members indicated that they possessed a ‘spiritual orientation’. Interestingly, four members indicated that some form of religion or ideology had influenced their early years—including a strong social justice message within the Uniting Church; growing up within a strong Presbyterian or Christian Scientist family. Another member commented on her upbringing within a communist family where those ideals were taken seriously. Again, it is important to point out that the community’s germination stemmed from the founding members’ involvement in Vipassana meditation. Given participants’ responses, it would seem that Eastern philosophy continues to play a significant role in the lives of this community’s participants.

5.4 Thora Valley

Thora Valley\(^1\), an intentional community established in 1977 on the mid north coast of NSW, is located in the Thora Valley, nestled into a bend on the Bellinger River and surrounded by the Bellinger National Park. The property covers 345 acres of timbered bush land with 150 acres, originally cleared for farming, running from the base of the Dorrigo escarpment to the flats of the Bellinger River where the community is located. Although originally founded in 1977 by members associated with the Santosha community, in partnership with the Sydney based New Awareness Centre\(^2\), the initial community folded

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\(^1\) Members of Thora Valley indicated I did not need to request permission to use the actual name of the community in my research. However, in accordance with my HREC approval, pseudonyms have been used to ensure anonymity of each participant and of the community.

\(^2\) Terrance Plowright, who had migrated to Australia from Findhorn, the Northern Scottish community founded by Eileen and Peter Caddy, established the New Awareness Centre in the early 1970s. The Centre was a bookshop/tea-room in Lindfield, Sydney, which also served as a meeting place for city people to attend workshops and classes on ‘New Age
within five years of its establishment. Members of both groups bought the property based on a common vision. However, in 1983, the original trustees of the Trust Deed declared the community ‘closed’, with residents given the option of becoming a member of the new Thora Valley Foundation. The foundation was subsequently incorporated as the Thora Valley Community Limited, with the property transferred to the company in 1988. Between 1983 and 1988 many of the original founding members left the community, and so the newer members are the subject of this research—most having joined the community from 1986 onwards. Many of these members were also drawn from Sydney—some having been influenced by their association with the New Awareness Centre. Though many members have a spiritual orientation, it is not a necessary requirement for joining the community. The community would therefore be categorised as a rural secular community in accordance with Metcalf’s classificatory scheme discussed in Section 2.4.1.

In 2004, the community had fourteen members, four resident guests and eleven children. Individual households were well spaced on the property and many members commented on their dependency on cars to get from one member’s house to another and to community meetings which were held once a month. There were a number of communal buildings, including a community hall for communal meetings and activities; a tractor and pump

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1 Reasons for closure related to differences between the trustees of the charitable trust, established to maintain the constitutional aims and objectives of the community who were beginning to question whether ‘the aims and objectives of the Trust deed were being adhered to’, and residents ‘who in turn accused the trustees of being dogmatic and out of touch’ (Unpublished historical notes of the community, ‘Thora Valley Begins,’ June 5, 2001). Three reasons for closure are cited in the ‘Summary of Official History’: ‘Contravention of Preamble and object 3a of the Trust Deed; General disinterest in pursuing objectives by current members; and Community dominated by illegal drug use’ (Unpublished historical notes of the community, ‘Summary of Official History,’ November 7, 2004).

2 Comprising twenty-six households (including four guest houses).
shed; communal grounds for animals and previously held festivals; toilet and laundry facilities; guesthouses and common roads.

5.4.1 Research participation

Seven members and one resident\(^1\) were interviewed on this community, including an absentee member\(^2\), from a total communal population of fourteen. Of the eight research participants, none were founding members of the community. Three participants had joined the community shortly after it had changed hands, in 1986 and 1988 respectively; and two other members several years later in 1989 and 1991. The remaining three participants were relatively recent members/residents, having joined the community in 1999 and 2000 respectively.

5.4.2 Research demographics

5.4.2.1 Age, gender and ethnicity

The age of research participants on this community ranged from thirty-three to fifty-six. Five participants were aged in their mid to late forties, with the mean and median age of participants rounded to forty-six years of age. Of the eight members interviewed, four were female members, one a female resident and three were male members of the community. All participants were white Caucasians and, based on their relatively low tertiary education and employment status, their socio-economic status was lower to middle-class.

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\(^1\) Although a resident of this community for four years, many of the views expressed by this resident resonated with the views of members on this community.

\(^2\) In a similar way to non-resident members on the Evergreen community, absentee members of this community are permitted to retain their membership while also living away from the community for a period of time. However, members must return to live on the community for twenty-eight consecutive days each year to sustain their membership.
5.4.2.2 Relationships

In contrast to the relationship status of participants on the Evergreen community discussed above, six participants on this community were single. Two participants lived together in a de facto relationship on the community. Six participants were divorced and one member was separated. Six participants had eleven children between them, ranging from five participants having two children and one participant having one child. No participants in this research who had children lived with the other biological parent of those children. One participant commented that on average, at least thirty-five percent of the population on this community over time have been children under the age of sixteen.

5.4.2.3 Education and employment

Participants in this research had a low rate of tertiary education. Of the eight participants interviewed, three possessed TAFE qualifications, with many members having learnt skills through employment or apprenticeship situations. Six participants were employed in paid work, predominantly in casual or part-time positions, while also supplementing that work as volunteers. One participant worked as a teacher’s aide at the local public school and undertook volunteer work at the local Neighbourhood Centre. Another made the community’s brand of tofu one day per week for distribution to shops in the local area, while also undertaking volunteer work at the local Steiner School, including various types of project work with the children. Another participant worked part-time as a caterer in the film industry, which often necessitated travel away from the community. Another worked as a part-time aged carer in Sydney, which also involved working for periods of time away from the community. Another member looked after a child on the community on a part-time basis, while another worked at the local school teaching computer skills. Two further participants were
unemployed, although both worked in a volunteer capacity. One participant had skills in computer training and offered those skills to the local public school, while another was an avid gardener and used those skills on the community.

Many participants also provided skills to other members of the community and further afield. For instance, one community member had previously provided a café service to both community members and local residents in the region. At the time of the interviews, another member was providing a karate workshop to local children and young people. These types of events and the pooling of resources were not uncommon. This community had previously convened a very successful local festival for many years. However, due to increases in insurance premiums the community had ceased organising the event a number of years ago.

5.4.2.4 Spirituality

Although the spiritual aspirations of the Scottish Findhorn community, briefly discussed in section 2.4.1, had originally inspired this community, the original intention had ceased when the community changed hands in the mid 1980s. Nevertheless, many early residents who joined the community shortly after the changeover had been inspired to join the community because of its original intent. Two members of the community indicated their disappointment when they had learned that the community no longer followed that original purpose.

Overall, this community reflected eclectic spiritual pursuits, with seven participants indicating they held spiritual inclinations. Only one relatively recent member of the community indicated he was an atheist and that he was happy to accept that this is just one random event. One long-term male member was influenced by a variety of different spiritual paths, including the
original Findhorn Christian-based philosophy, Tibetan Buddhism and the Tao. Another long-term female member expressed her philosophy as: ‘Life itself, and the living of it.’ Another longer-term female member had an ‘in the moment’ attitude, while another more recent resident indicated she was a ‘student of all religions’. Another longer-term female non-resident member had previously followed Tibetan Buddhism and now followed the path of a Neo-Sannyas or Sannyasin. Formerly known as the Orange people because of their orange clothes, Sannyasin (or Oshoites, as they are referred to in the press in India) are followers of the Guru Ghagwan Shree Rajneesh who, in 1989, took the name of Osho. Another long-term male resident called himself a Thelemite—an adherent of the philosophy/occult path/religion of Thelema. Founded by Aleister Crowley, otherwise known as the Prophet of the New Aeon, the Order of the Eastern Templars (or O.T.O) was founded in 1922 and relies on the teachings in ‘The Book of the Law’. The Thelema philosophy was reflected in another more recent female member’s individual spirituality: ‘To live your will and to find out what your will is and may others live their will as well.’ During the interviews many participants also expressed the astrological maxim ‘as above, so below’ in their day-to-day understanding of events on the community. For instance, when commenting on the effect of world events on the community, one newer male member commented:

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\text{T7} \quad \text{... we can sit here and watch the world news at night, and see the macrocosm being reflected in the microcosm. I remember when the war (Iraq) started—remember? And there were all kinds of really weird shit going on internally, in the community.}
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Other community members also commented on the community as a microcosm, reflecting events of the macrocosm in the outside world.

5.5 Mountain Range

Mountain Range\(^1\) was established ‘in the after-glow of the Aquarius Festival held in Nimbin in May 1973’ (Munro-Clark 1986:126) and to this day, would still be classified as a rural secular community according to Metcalf’s classificatory scheme discussed in section 2.4.1.. Located in the Rainbow Region, the community sits on a large, former freehold farming property of 1700 acres, backing onto a large World Heritage listed National Park. Much like the Aquarius Festival, its original intention was open-ended and primarily geared towards enabling access to shared land ownership with no criteria for acceptance of members. One of the chief initiators ‘saw the community as an experiment in a new way of life’ with its philosophy founded loosely on self-sufficiency and living in harmony with nature (Munro-Clark 1986:126-127).

Established as the first co-operative of its type in Australia (School of Arts & Social Sciences 2004) with issued shares, the co-operative can enlarge its shareholding as needed\(^2\). The land was purchased by the sale of shares to the public for $200 and supplemented by low-interest loans (Munro-Clark 1986:126). Members originally lived together in an old farmhouse, which, with a swelling population, quickly became untenable. Community members subsequently dispersed themselves across the property, eventually forming hamlets. Like Evergreen, many households in these hamlets were based on an ‘expanded household’ concept. The rise in population also resulted in a sharp increase in births on the community and the subsequent establishment of a pre-school and primary school, which continues to operate on community grounds. In a similar way to Evergreen, this community was involved in the

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\(^1\) This is a pseudonym for the community that participated in this research. Pseudonyms are also used for each participant.

\(^2\) Personal email communication with Mountain Range member, October 6, 2008.
Terania Creek protests¹ (Turvey 2006), which led to the eventual listing of the area as a World Heritage area. The landholding itself is divided into four categories: wilderness, which protects the water catchment and rainforest; forest regeneration, rivercare and woodlots, which are managed to provide firewood and protect streambanks; the commons, which is available to all members for agricultural purposes and grazing; and hamlet areas, which consist of the residential dwellings (School of Arts & Social Sciences 2004) discussed above.

In 2004, the community had a large population of approximately 200 residents, including fifty children, with an issued share capital of 296 shares and 255 shareholders. Shares cost $200, with a joining fee of $2,500 (School of Arts & Social Sciences 2004). There are also approximately one hundred and fifty non-residential members with only ten residential non-members. Houses are occasionally offered for private rental, with about five of the existing one hundred and forty houses currently rented. Hamlets still form the basis of community life within this very large community, with approximately sixteen hamlets consisting of between two to ten households² or five to fifteen people (Munro-Clark 1986:127). Individual hamlets are variously named, for example Nimbinati, Mandarin Hamlet (or Ducky Hollow), Malapeeki, Pala and Hilltop. Hamlets are often interconnected based on geographical and/or social proximity. The co-operative owns all the land and communal buildings and equipment; however, in 2008 I was alerted to a ‘raging debate’ over whether

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¹ Turvey (2006) notes that the rainforest ‘war’ began in 1979 with two weeks of protests over 77 hectares of rainforest in the Terania Creek area of north-eastern NSW. It was Australia’s first rainforest protest and lasted for three years. As discussed, it resulted in this area of rainforest being listed as World Heritage National Parks. It also stimulated other forest protests in Australia with protestors from Terania Creek also protesting against building the Franklin Dam in Tasmania and against building a road through the Daintree rainforests in Queensland.

² Personal email communication with Mountain Range member, October 6, 2008.
the co-operative should vest ownership of buildings in members.¹ This research, however, focuses on data collected in early 2005 and again provides a ‘slice in time’ of communal life on Mountain Range.

5.5.1 Research participation

In Chapter Four, the difficulties encountered in interviewing members of this community were discussed. Five members of the community were interviewed, which did not include any founding members.² One member joined the community in the mid 1970s, two members joined in the 1980s, one member joined in 1990 and a more recent member joined the community in 2000. Two members lived in the same hamlet, while four other members lived in adjoining hamlets.

5.5.2 Research Demographics

5.5.2.1 Age, gender and ethnicity

The age of participants on this community ranged from forty-nine to sixty-five. One participant was aged in her late forties, four participants in their early fifties and one participant in his mid sixties. The mean age of participants rounded at fifty-three years of age, while the median age was fifty-one years of age. Of the five members I interviewed, two were males and three were females. Two female and one male participant were single, with the remaining participants either married or living in a de facto relationship. All participants were white Caucasians. One participant—born in New Zealand—had immigrated with his family from Germany to join the community.

¹ Personal email communication with Mountain Range member, October 6, 2008.
² One founding member (who was not interviewed) returned very limited responses to the research questions posed in Appendix D. The response was therefore excluded on the grounds that the response provided very little meaningful information to an understanding of participant’s practices on this community. However, over time, this participant provided information regarding the community in private email correspondence, which is cited in this research: see Personal email communication with Mountain Range member, October 6, 2008.
5.5.2.2 Relationships

Two participants were living in a de facto relationship with another member of the community. Three participants were single. One participant was divorced while three participants were separated. Five participants had eight children between them, ranging from three participants with two children and two participants with one child each. Three children of two participants were living on the community at the time of this research.

5.5.2.3 Education and employment

Three participants held university degrees, while the remaining two participants had TAFE qualifications and/or skills learnt through employment. Two participants were employed in a part-time capacity: one as a local projectionist and the other as a part-time academic at Southern Cross University. One participant was undertaking a doctoral thesis at the same university on a stipend; while another participant, although he had qualifications to work, was ‘happily’ unemployed, working full-time in a volunteer capacity, and undertaking landscaping, gardening and tractor work on the community in addition to book keeping at the local school. This participant argued that, he did not have time to be unemployed. Another participant was unemployed, although she had experience in welfare work and was training to teach English in Japan in the near future. Participants ranged from a low socio-economic status to a more upper-class status. One community member referred to the hamlet he was living in as ‘the university-guys-with-degrees hamlet’.

5.5.3.4 Spirituality

In a similar way to Thora Valley, Mountain Range also reflected eclectic spiritual paths, with only one newer male member who participated in this research indicating he was a skeptic. The four remaining participants
indicated openness to spirituality, rather than the pursuit of a spiritual path. For instance, one female long-term member’s grandson had recently passed away which she had come to describe as ‘a very beautiful journey’. Following on from this discussion, she commented, ‘I don’t believe in God. I know God.’ Another long-term male member indicated that he didn’t have any particular spiritual or religious orientation. However, he stated: ‘I leave myself open to the possibilities … I act towards people responsibly in how I expect them to act towards me.’ Two long-term female members commented on the influence of Aboriginal knowledge and spirituality, with one participant stating:

M2 I’m really influenced by whose country we’re on, the one nation, and so I’m particularly influenced by where I live, and what I’ve been taught in that regard in terms of Aboriginal spirituality.’

5.6 Stoney Creek

Stoney Creek\(^1\) was created as a land-sharing community in 1989 and therefore does not share the features of an intentional community that are discussed in section 2.4.1. However, it provides a contrast to the intentional communities discussed above. Initiated by developers,\(^2\) Strand Pty Ltd\(^3\) held a company title in the land with an issue of forty shares. Each share was sold for $11,500, entitling a shareholder to a proprietary lease in an allotment of land on the property. Until such time as all shares were sold up in the company, Strand Pty Ltd remained the proprietary owner of the property. In the late 1980s, only fifteen shares had been sold in the community. In 2004, all forty allotments had been sold, resulting in Strand Pty Ltd transferring all shares to the new proprietary owner ‘Stoney Creek’. Under the company’s Articles of

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\(^1\) This is a pseudonym for this land-sharing community. Similarly to Thora Valley, members on this community indicated that I did not need to request permission to use the name of the community in my research. However, as with the Thora Valley community, and in accordance with my HREC approval, pseudonyms have been used for both participants and the community.

\(^2\) S1 indicated that these developers were a Real Estate Agent and a lawyer.

\(^3\) This is a pseudonym for the company.
Association, shareholders are entitled to attend and vote at company meetings. One shareholder noted that during the formative years of the company, many of these meetings had been marred by both physical and verbal violence, resulting in non-participation and a general lack of interest in the affairs of the community. Various rights and responsibilities are also set out in the community’s by-laws, which form an annexure to each shareholder’s lease. The annexure reflects the need to conform to Council by-laws around building and environmental regulations. Some members of the community had been witness to the demolition of a building, owned by a single mother and her three children, at six o’clock one morning by Lismore Council because it did not conform to building regulations. There are also requirements around tree felling, dog and cat ownership, and the maintenance of common areas such as roads, gutters and pathways. However, many shareholders felt that these by-laws were unenforceable, as no community structure existed to enforce them. All participants who were interviewed indicated that their only responsibility was to pay the rates for the community. This responsibility had also been problematic on the community due to the inability to enforce this provision, unless the rates owing were worth more than the share itself. Legal proceedings could then ensue to have the share sold to recoup the outstanding rates and transfer the share to a new proprietary owner.

Unlike other communities, each share vests in the next of kin of the original shareholder, with no input from the community over that entitlement. In comparison, transfers of shares have to be approved at a meeting of the community. In some cases peg markings, which demarcated allotments, had been lost during a bushfire, resulting in one shareholder building three dwellings on another’s share. Legal proceedings were still underway while

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1 s 132(a) of the Articles of Association of the Stoney Creek community.
participants were being interviewed for this research. No communal dwellings exist on the community—an issue that many shareholders raised—indicating that a community hall could lay the foundations for some sense of community to begin on Stoney Creek.

5.6.1 Research participation

Four resident shareholders of the Stoney Creek community were interviewed for this research from a possible forty shareholders. Two shareholders joined during the formative years of the community in 1989, another in 1996 and one member had only been on the community for eighteen months, having joined the community in 2003. All shareholders bought shares, as they were an economical way of buying land in the Rainbow Region.

5.6.2 Research demographics

5.6.2.1 Age, gender and ethnicity

The age of the shareholders interviewed on Stoney Creek ranged from forty to sixty-eight years of age. One participant was aged in her late sixties, one in his mid fifties, another in her late forties and another in her early forties. The mean age of participants rounded to fifty-two and a half years, whilst the median age differed slightly at fifty-one years of age. Of the four shareholders I interviewed on this community, three were female and one was male. All were white Caucasians.

5.6.2.2 Relationships

Three participants were single with one participant living in a same sex de facto relationship with another member of the community. All participants had been divorced. Three participants had ten children between them, ranging from one participant having five children to two participants having three and two children respectively.
5.6.2.3 Education and employment

No participants on this community held university qualifications. Most had skills acquired through experience and/or had undergone some form of elemental TAFE training. Two participants in this research were self-employed as natural therapists. One described herself as a health therapist, while the other held various skills in naturopathy, homeopathy, massage and belly dancing. Two members were on government benefits; however one was in her early forties and was a retired funeral Director who had previously owned a small business, while the other was in his mid fifties and used his computer programming skills as a volunteer at the local Neighbourhood Centre. The latter participant was also actively involved in a local energy trading system (LET) scheme, which facilitates the bartering of skills between local residents. Based on the participants’ low educational and employment status, it is arguable that their socio-economic status is low to middle-class.

5.6.2.4 Spirituality

All participants indicated they possessed some spiritual inclination. One female member in her mid forties was a practising Buddhist, having studied Buddhism for ten years. Another woman in her early forties was a practising Green Witch following occult practises in paganism, while another woman in her late sixties indicated that though she had been part of a healing circle in Lismore, she no longer followed any spiritual or religious orientation. The only male participant, in his mid fifties, indicated he had spiritual inclinations that tended to be based on Pantheism. Despite individual spiritual pursuits, the community did not share a religious or philosophical basis.

5.7 Synopsis

All of the communities that form part of this research have been established for well over twenty years. Mountain Range was established in the early
1970s, Evergreen and Thora Valley in the mid to late 1970s and Stoney Creek in the late 1980s. Although Danthonia Bruderhof is a recently established community in Australia, the ICC was originally founded in the 1920s. If assessed on longevity alone, all of these communities would be considered ‘successful’ in the context of Kanter’s work (Kanter 1972; Metcalf 1986).

Each community is rural and in all cases possesses and adjoins significant natural reserves. Evergreen sits on 160 acres and is located within an abundance of natural resources; Thora Valley is nestled on 346 acres and adjoins the Bellinger River and a State forest; Mountain Range is located on one thousand and 700 acres backing onto a large World Heritage listed National Park; Danthonia Bruderhof has acreage in excess of 8000 acres1 and is relatively self-sufficient; while the Stoney Creek community is located on an 800 acre landholding adjoining dense forest and a natural waterway.

Although all communities are relatively large, the social geography of each community varies. Houses on the Evergreen community are located close together in an L-shape on the property with some houses based on an expanded household concept, while members of the Danthonia Bruderhof community share common and close residences that surround communal buildings. On the Mountain Range community, both individual and expanded households are located in disparate locations, though hamlet clusters provide a greater connection for community members. In comparison, many of the residences on Thora Valley are spread out and lack proximity to communal buildings and each other, resulting in the use of cars to access facilities and to visit each other. While shareholders on the Stoney Creek community possess properties of approximately five acres each, and

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1 Including the Newstead property (see Franklin 2006:7).
though some members may share a boundary, they otherwise have little proximity to each other.

Each community also displays significant foundational and population differences. The Danthonia Bruderhof community has a population of 130 members that share all things in common, from following the path of Jesus and his Sermon on the Mount, to the possession of goods and a common lifestyle. Mountain Range, also a large community of 200, in comparison was borne from the counter cultural Aquarius Festival with no founding philosophy other than to participate in an alternative lifestyle. Evergreen, a much smaller community of twenty-seven, resulted from its members’ pursuit of Eastern philosophy, which formed the cornerstone of its foundations and was still interwoven into member’s spiritual paths at the time of research. Thora Valley, with a population of fourteen members, although originally based on the spirituality of Findhorn, also affirms participant’s eclectic spiritual paths. In contrast, the forty shareholders on the Stoney Creek community share neither philosophy nor communal living.

5.7.1 Research participation

With seven participants inspired by the original founding philosophy of the Evergreen community, their views will be far more evident in the analysis of this community in Chapter Six. Further, the views of two members of the Danthonia Bruderhof who were born into that way of life may also be more evident in the participant observation of that community. Further, interviews obtained from Radio National (see Franklin 2006) also tend to contain the views of members who were born into this way of life. These views may also be more apparent than the perceptions of short-term members. Instead, a range of views are represented from participants from the Mountain Range, Thora Valley and Stoney Creek communities, from those of relatively long-
term members to those of participants who have lived on these communities for a shorter period of time. For the reasons discussed in Chapter 4, the views of young adults or children are not represented in this research.

5.7.2 Research demographics

As discussed in the introduction, this section loosely contrasts the research demographics of participants with Metcalf and Vanclay’s (1987) analysis of the social characteristics of alternative lifestyle participants in Australia in 1987. This section therefore aims to briefly identify any contemporary similarities or shifts in the social characteristics of participants on the researched communities from those identified by Metcalf and Vanclay in 1987.

5.7.2.1 Age

Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) found that rural alternative lifestyle participants in Australia were most commonly aged in the thirty to forty year age brackets with ‘a surprisingly high occurrence of members aged over fifty years of age’ (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:43). These findings contrasted with popular stereotypes of the time that depicted participants as relatively young and dependent on ‘the dole’ (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:53). Surprisingly, many participants of the researched communities, including the Evergreen, Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities, had a mean age in their fifties, with Thora Valley having a slightly younger mean age of forty-six.

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1 Metcalf and Vanclay argued that the age structure of rural participants reflected the sociological concept of a ‘career path’, whereby rural alternative lifestyle participants had spent time, in their formative years, in urban alternatives (Metcalf and Vanclay, 1987:42-43). These findings contrast sharply with this research. Although a relatively high proportion of participants in this research had experienced living on another intentional community before joining their community, they had chosen to live on rural intentional communities rather than progress from an urban alternative to a rural intentional community.

2 Participants on the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities potentially fall within the younger age bracket of Metcalf and Vanclay’s research in 1987, which would at the time of this research, result in participants on these communities being in their mid-fifties.
What is remarkable, however, is that older age ranges, those in the sixties and seventies, are not represented on these communities, with the exception of a non-resident member of the Evergreen community. In comparison, the CCI generally has a large spread of ages that includes elders, yet tending towards a younger population due to the trend toward high birth-rates (Metcalf 2004:58).

5.7.2.2 Gender and ethnicity

Metcalf and Vanclay (1987:41) found that for rural groups, males made up a small but clear majority of fifty-two percent of the alternative lifestyle population. They also found that the alternative lifestyle movement had a surplus of single males at sixty-five percent. They argue that large imbalances in the gender ratio could potentially lead to issues with respect to family formation, group stability and procreation (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:40). Of the twenty-eight participants in this research, fifteen were female (fifty-four percent), while thirteen were male (forty-six percent). Further, fifty percent of the research participants were single, with ten, or thirty-two percent single females and four participants, or fourteen percent, single males.1 Both the gender and single characteristics of participants in this research differ from Metcalf and Vanclay’s research in 1987.

Significantly, all participants in this research were Caucasian, with nearly all participants born in Australia, except for two participants who were born in New Zealand and another participant who was born in England. Members of Danthonia Bruderhof were also Caucasian, except for one member who was of Maori descent. However, all members of the Danthonia Bruderhof are immigrants to Australia from either the United States or New Zealand.

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1 It is anticipated that the Danthonia Bruderhof community would also have a significant number of singles, however they would potentially be younger singles who have not married, as opposed to single divorcees.
Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) did not discuss the ethnicity of alternative lifestyle participants; however Metcalf (1996, 1998) and Metcalf and Huf (2002) who undertook research on early intentional communities in Australia, found members were predominantly Caucasian.

5.7.2.3 Relationships

Eighty-four percent of alternative lifestyle participants were found to be living as a couple in Australia in 1987 (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:39, fnb). This certainly reflects the relationship status of participants from the Evergreen community, where nine of the eleven participants were either married or living in a de facto relationship. In comparison, all other communities differed markedly from these findings. As discussed above, six of the eight participants on the Thora Valley community were single, while two participants were living in a de facto relationship with each other; three participants on the Mountain Range community were also single, while two were living in a de facto relationship with other members on the community; and three participants on the Stoney Creek community were single, with one participant also living in a same-sex de facto relationship with a member of the community. It is conceivable that a high proportion of Bruderhof community members are coupled and living in a married relationship.

Though there were a high proportion of participants that were married on the Evergreen community, all communities had high numbers of participants who were divorced. Nine of the eleven participants on the Evergreen community were divorced, six of the eight participants on the Thora Valley community had been divorced, and four participants on both the Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities had been divorced. Due to their strong Christian background, members of the Danthonia Bruderhof presumably
have a relatively low divorce rate. Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) provide no comparable data on the number of divorced respondents in their research.

A relatively high proportion of participants in this research had children. Nine participants on the Evergreen community had eighteen children between them, six participants on the Thora Valley community had eleven children between them, five participants on the Mountain Range community had eight children between them and three participants on the Stoney Creek community had ten children between them. However, age ranges varied from as young as ten months old to thirty-two years of age. Many children of participants were now young adults and no longer lived on the community they had grown up on. For instance, only three of the eighteen children of participants on the Evergreen community aged ten months, eight and seventeen years of age live on the community. In comparison, six of the eleven children of participants on the Thora Valley community live on the community, with participants indicating that at any given time there has usually been a population ratio of about thirty-five percent children. The adult-child ratio on Bruderhof communities has been discussed above.

5.7.2.4 Education

Metcalf and Vanclay’s research found that forty percent of rural alternative lifestyle participants had tertiary degrees or postgraduate qualifications, although only twenty-two percent of participants in small towns were likely to hold a tertiary qualification (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:46). With the establishment of regional universities in rural areas, such as the University of New England in the New England Region in 1989 and Southern Cross University in Lismore in the Rainbow Region in 1994, it is anticipated that access to tertiary education would correlate with a higher incidence of tertiary qualifications amongst participants living on rural intentional communities.
In addition, the provision of e-learning and access to distance education through the use of computer technology and broadband would further increase the incidence of postgraduate qualifications. This is certainly true of the Evergreen and Mountain Range communities located in the Rainbow Region, which had the highest rate of tertiary qualifications. Nine of the eleven participants on the Evergreen community possessed tertiary qualifications, with a comparable four of the six participants on the Mountain Range community. In comparison, Thora Valley had the lowest rate of tertiary qualifications, with three of the eight participants having tertiary qualifications and only two of the four participants on the Stoney Creek community. Members of Danthonia Bruderhof had tertiary qualifications where needed by the community; however, the community’s broad support of educational achievement may suggest a relatively high rate of tertiary qualifications.

5.7.2.5 Employment

Mainstream perceptions\textsuperscript{1} of alternative lifestyle participants in 1987 reflected stereotypes that supported the view that participants were dependent on unemployment benefits\textsuperscript{2} \textsuperscript{3} (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:52). Compared to the stereotype, a relatively small percentage\textsuperscript{4} of the rural population were unemployed (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:59), dispelling the image of alternative lifestyle participants supposed dependence on benefits (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:52). Importantly, Metcalf and Vanclay had a number of difficulties in ascertaining an alternative lifestyle participant’s means of earning a living,

\textsuperscript{1} Which reflected the notion that intentional community participants were ‘dropping out’ of mainstream society.
\textsuperscript{2} At the time of Metcalf and Vanclay’s (1987) research, unemployment benefits were provided by the Department of Social Security, now known as Centrelink.
\textsuperscript{3} The Australian government makes a range of welfare payments to particular individuals in Australia who qualify for specific categories of payments. For example, Newstart payments provide funding for unemployed people, with conditions attached to its receipt.
\textsuperscript{4} Twenty-five to thirty percent (Metcalf and Vanclay 1987:59).
which further undermines the stereotypes at the time. Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) found that many participants were difficult to classify, with some working for intense periods, on an *ad hoc* basis and then supplementing their income with social security benefits. Further, confusion existed in relation to the type of social security benefits being received, such as the old age and disability pensions and unemployment benefits. Often these were lumped together as ‘the dole,’ that is, unemployment benefits. Further, the elusive concept of self-sufficiency in intentional communities at the time meant that public opinion was often very critical of participants who still engaged in the wider socio-economic system (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:53).

Although participants in this research were easier to classify into professional and non-professional occupations based on tertiary and trade qualifications, significant categorical issues continued. For instance, two participants in this research were full-time mothers, of which one had a professional occupation and offered her services free of charge to the community. A significant number of participants also engaged in part-time or full-time unpaid voluntary work in conjunction with receiving Centrelink payments while also working in casual or part-time paid work. Some of those volunteer hours were spent working on their community, while others spent a considerable amount of time working for local NGOs such as Neighbourhood Centres, local community pre-schools, on management committees of support services, or for the local council. Further, the Bruderhof community are a particular case in point. A number of members work in the community income-producing business, Danthonia Designs, with the remaining members working for the benefit of the community—yet no member receives a paid wage.1

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¹ This has resulted in significant issues for Danthonia Bruderhof members with regards to visa regulations in Australia, which in 2005 required individuals to earn a minimum of
Despite similar classification difficulties as those experienced by Metcalf and Vanclay (1987), there were a number of differences between the various communities in this study. Three participants on the Evergreen community received Centrelink benefits, which supplemented part-time work. Two participants were retired, one on a pension and the other on superannuation payments. Four participants worked part-time: in a self-employed capacity, at a local NGO and with the local university. And a further two participants worked in a full-time capacity. Many participants on this community chose to work part-time, enabling a greater work-life balance. In comparison, six of the eight participants on the Thora Valley community received Centrelink benefits, while two participants worked part-time at the local public school. Similarly, two participants from the Mountain Range and Stoney Creek community received Centrelink benefits, while two participants worked part-time in a self-employed capacity and one at the local university from the Mountain Range community. In addition, one participant was in receipt of a postgraduate stipend. A further two participants on the Stoney Creek community were self-employed as health therapists. There are thus significant differences between the Bruderhof and Evergreen communities and other communities in the context of Centrelink benefits. However, there are significant similarities with respect to the nature and diversity of employment arrangements and the use of part-time and voluntary work.

5.7.2.6 Religion and spirituality

Metcalf and Vanclay (1997) do not discuss the religion or spirituality of alternative lifestyle seekers, however as discussed in section 2.6.2, Metcalf identified twenty-five ‘philosophy categories’ in his research of alternative lifestyle seekers (Metcalf 1986:267, Table 7.2). In this research, all members of

$39,000 per year. As Franklin points out, this is an impossible proposition for members who have taken a vow of poverty (Franklin 2005:11).
Danthonia Bruderhof, as part of the larger CCI share a common religious foundation. In a similar way, eighty-two percent of participants on the Evergreen community were still influenced by Buddhist philosophy, though in a very eclectic manner. In comparison, members of Mountain Range, Thora Valley and Stony Creek shared eclectic paths, and it is arguable that, with the exception of Thora Valley, this is still consistent with the original intent of the communities. Seven of the eight participants on the Thora Valley community indicated they held spiritual inclinations and though these did not reflect the philosophy of Findhorn, they did reflect the community’s Articles of Association, which affirms the pursuit of diverse spiritual paths. Further, participants on the Mountain Range community were influenced by Aboriginal spirituality, which has developed from the close connection and respect paid to the local Aboriginal Bundjalung community over time.

5.8 Conclusion

This analysis has shown that there are similarities and marked differences between the picture of alternative lifestyle participants portrayed by Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) and the social characteristics of participants in this research. Consistent with Metcalf and Vanclay’s research, a significant number of research participants are aged in their late forties and early fifties, and if living on the Evergreen and Danthonia Bruderhof communities, live as a couple and possess tertiary qualifications. In comparison, and excluding the Danthonia Bruderhof community, a large number of participants were divorced and received Centrelink benefits – though these were used similarly to the alternative lifestyle participants in Metcalf and Vanclay’s research to supplement a diverse array of employment arrangements. In addition, participants from the Thora Valley, Mountain Range and Stony Creek communities tended to be single females in comparison to Metcalf and Vanclay’s research of alternative lifestyle participants who tended to be single.
males. All participants across the communities had a significant number of children between them and also tended to follow a spiritual path. In line with Metcalf (1996, 1998) and Metcalf and Huf’s (2002) research, participants continue to be Caucasian. This raises interesting questions about the nature of intentional communities, which will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

In comparison to Moisander and Pesonen (2002) who describe each of their eco-communes in an Appendix, this chapter provides the communal context for the participant responses that are discussed in Chapter Six. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, though participants in this research participate in mainstream society, they also live in intentional communities that provide different cultural, social and historical contexts that inform the findings discussed in Chapter Six. Secondly, this context is important when using a Foucauldian form of constructionism that examines the way in which subjects may be positioned, or position themselves, in discourses. This research now turns to an application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation to the empirical research derived from these communities in Chapter Six.
Chapter Six
AN APPLICATION OF FOUCAULT’S ETHICAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction
This chapter focuses on an application of Foucault’s ‘grid of ethical intelligibility’ (Davidson 1986:232) to the empirical research material gathered from the five intentional communities discussed in Chapter Five. Each element of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, discussed in section 3.6, is used to inform the structure of each section of this chapter, in addition to forming the basis of analysis of the empirical research. Significant texts, from both the intentional community literature in Chapter Two and Foucault’s Ethics in Chapter Three, are drawn upon to provide conceptual frameworks and commentary.

The first section of this chapter considers the ethical substance of participants in this research, and how it reflects the relevant domain for ethical judgment (Davidson 1986:228; Foucault 1984a:352-353). Three themes are explored in this section, including participant’s intentions with respect to communal living; ‘doing relatedness’ (Eräranta et al. 2009:362) within the framework of communal life; and identity as the ethical substance to be worked on through communal living. These themes also reflect key notions that have been discussed in the context of defining an intentional community in section 2.4.1, enabling similarities and differences to be discussed as part of the analysis.
The *mode of subjection* is examined in the second section, through a consideration of the way in which participants are incited to recognise their moral obligations (Foucault 1984a:353). As discussed in section 2.4.2, while there are many difficulties associated with classifying intentional communities, many of the typologies may focus on classifying a community on the basis of its ideology or foundational purpose. Each community’s philosophy is therefore discussed in this section, in addition to other conventions and social constructions that may form the basis of the mode of subjection.

The third section focuses on the *self-forming activities*—or teché—of participants in this research (Foucault 1984a:354-355). This is a significant section because it discusses the predominant *practices* participants choose to perform on their selves in order to achieve the type of transformation that is discussed in the *telos*. Both communal practices performed in the context of communal living and individual practices of participants are discussed in this section.

The fourth section focuses on participant’s *telos*, or goal of their ethical work (Foucault 1984a:355), which may include notions of the ethical self or the type of life one ought to lead. The concept of what I call ‘creating community’, the cultivation of diverse lifestyles and notions of freedom, are explored in this section. Resistance and transformation are also goals to which the self-forming activities are directed that form part of the telos. These concepts are also evaluated in the context of the conclusion in Chapter Seven.

In each section, participants’ responses are prefaced with a letter that corresponds with each community and a numerical value for each participant’s interview. The letter ‘E’ therefore represents participant responses from the Evergreen community; the letter ‘T’ for the Thora Valley
community; the letter ‘M’ for the Mountain Range community; and the letter ‘S’ for the Stoney Creek community. Further, E1 for instance, refers to the same participant throughout Chapter Six and Seven, E2 for the same participant, etc. As discussed in section 4.5.3, no interviews were conducted on the Danthonia Bruderhof community and therefore there are no individual responses represented from the community other than those that are drawn from public interviews (Franklin 2005) and former research (Zablocki 1971; Peters 1996; Rubin 1998; Tyldesley 2003; Metcalf 2004).

This chapter now turns to a consideration of the ethical substance.

6.2 Ethical substance

As has been discussed in section 3.6.1, the ethical substance concerns that part of oneself, or one’s behaviour that is the focus of ethical judgment (Foucault 1984a:352-353; Davidson 1986:228). Foucault argues that in our present culture it involves our feelings. However, it may also concern our intentions, our desires or some other aspect of our ‘self’ that we are seeking to transform (Foucault 1984a:352). Rajchman points out that the ethical substance may also refer to ‘an image of the right person’ or extend to an image of ‘the right life’ (Rajchman 1986:172). This section therefore focuses on ‘what participant’s are working on’ in the context of their selves and communal living.

Three themes are explored in the context of the ethical substance. As has been discussed in section 2.4.1, intentional communities are predicated on the notion that participants live communally on the basis of a shared purpose or ‘common ideal or vision’ (Metcalf 2004:9). The first theme therefore explores participant’s intentions regarding communal living, which leads into the second theme of doing relatedness (Eräranta et al 2009:362). While the third theme considers identity as an aspect of the ethical substance to be worked on in the context of communal living on particular communities.
6.2.1 Intentional living

The notion that intentional community living is *intentional* is a core characteristic of definitions surrounding intentional communities. For many participants in this research, a shared vision, goal or purpose formed the basis of their choice to live on an intentional community. These participants would be characterised similarly to Metcalf’s (1986:116) ‘alternative lifestyle participants’ who live ‘in order to’ achieve certain aims and objectives through communal living. For instance, participants who were founding members of the Evergreen community discussed their involvement in the establishment of a meditation retreat centre and their subsequent intention to remain as a group:

E1  Well, we decided—that group decided—we would like to stay together and we would look for land, and we had set criteria that would need to be met. And that happened within a short period of time—like a couple of months. And we shared the money, and we bought this place, and moved on.

For these participants, founding a community was a natural corollary of the work undertaken at the retreat centre, allowing those involved to further explore meditation and communal living. As E1 notes, as a group they decided to buy land and live together, reflecting a common purpose. Their vision was inspired by the Buddhist principles taught at the retreat centre and was also influenced by wanting to experience those principles as a group in a communal setting. The philosophy that reflects these participants’ intentions is discussed further in the mode of subjection in section 6.3.2.

The earlier meditation retreats were also a source of inspiration for participants who joined the community at a later stage. Additionally, many of
these participants had clear intentions around the desire to live a particular style of life:

E8  My intentions were to develop a creative lifestyle with low overheads and a high time availability to be able to, and a freedom to be able to, go wherever that took me.
E10 I wanted to get out of the city. I wanted to live with like-minded people in a place like this.
E7  I mean it was a lot to do with my history with the meditation retreats and all of that. And, I guess, partly because it was very simpatico with my values and ... aspirations, to support the Dharma, to support each other. Sort of a sense of the agrarian life.
E7  … if it’s not about making our lives as beautiful and as bold as they can be …
E2  I think I had the dreams, and idealism, of cooperating with a group of people.
E3  I’m very interested in living more communally.

These participants identify a very clear intention that is the ethical substance they are to work on. For some it is a creative lifestyle that serves to focus artistic pursuits or provide opportunities to discover or explore their life. For one participant it is an agrarian lifestyle that values the sharing of land and values associated with common ownership. For this participant, it is also about making one’s life as beautiful and bold as possible. For many, it is the ideal of living with like-minded people who share common values and a way of living together, which is discussed further in creating community. For others it reflects ideals of cooperating with a group of people around shared decision making. Having an intention about communal living clearly reflects the way intentional communities have been defined, as discussed in section 2.4.1. Similarly, these participants have decided to live together primarily for the sake of an ideological goal (Zablocki 1980:2) or to share significant aspects of their lives together in pursuing a common intention (Metcalf 2004:9).
Three participants from the Thora Valley community, and one participant from the land-sharing community of Stoney Creek, also discussed an intention to live a particular style of life:

T6  I’ve always liked community. I’ve always chased communities. And this one I particularly liked and stayed on.

T4  The location. The interaction with people. The freedom to live relatively pretty much our own lifestyle.

T1  And so arriving at Paradise\(^1\) in the middle of the night, and coming into this little cottage was all full of the smell of incense, and had quite a few symbolic things like that around, and mozzie nets, and things on the floor. I just loved it. I just thought, ‘Oh, I’ve got to live like this!’

S1  I’d been dreaming of a grassroots lifestyle.

The intention to live in community underpins T6’s decision to join the Thora Valley community. In comparison, it is the type of lifestyle communal living offers both T4 and T1 that underpins their intention to live communally. For T4 it is also the land, the engagement with others, and the autonomy to choose a particular lifestyle that underpins an intention to live communally. T1 describes a style of life they seek to emulate: it is small and inviting; it has a smell; it is protective; and it engenders warmth and a sense of home and security. Further, T1 finds symbolism in both the things in the house and also the ‘things on the floor’ that reflect an earthiness about this style of living.

The final participant, S1 from the land-sharing community Stoney Creek, expresses an intention to create a ‘grassroots lifestyle’ that emulates a back-to-the-land style of living and again, closeness to the earth that reflects an environmental ethos.

However, there were also participant’s who joined a community without having expressed an intention with respect to communal living, as characterised by the intentional community definitions discussed in section

\(^1\) This is a pseudonym for a community that did not participate in this research.
2.4.1. These participants would be characterised similarly to Metcalf’s (1986) ‘alternative lifestyle participants’ who joined an intentional community ‘because of’ certain economic conditions, of which communal living represented ‘the least undesirable of the limited options which the economic system offers’ (Metcalf 1986:116; Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:49). Or as Metcalf and Vanclay (1987:49) point out, as a means of coping with social and economic inequities.

Few participants from the Evergreen community indicated that they had joined this community ‘because of’ their economic or social situation, although one participant did allude to some members potentially remaining on the community because they were caught in a ‘poverty trap’. A number of participants from the Thora Valley, Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities pointed out that they joined their respective community because it offered a viable social and economic alternative:

T1 I came to community because I was on my own with my children, and I thought, ‘Well, I can’t do it on my own.’
M4 I was a single parent in Sydney. I was on really low wages and I could just see that I would never get my own home.
M2 I was a single mother. I was really poor. I was on my own. There was no intention in it whatsoever.
T5 I needed somewhere to live.
S4 I didn’t have anywhere else to live.
M3 It was cheap.
M1 So I arrived here with a dole cheque, with two suitcases on a bus... and an easel.
M5 We just liked the idea that it was a nice place.

Some participants were single mothers, homeless people and unemployed or low-income recipients who had few social support networks at the time of joining their respective community. These participants primarily joined their

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1 It is conceivable that some members of Danthonia Bruderhof may also be constrained by their ‘vow of poverty’ resulting in no alternative material means to leave the community, though there are support networks offered through the Keep In Touch (KIT) website.
community because land was cheap, it provided accommodation, and offered other forms of support to single mothers or those on a low income. As Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) argue, single mothers frequently found that living an alternative lifestyle was one way of avoiding abject poverty on limited social security benefits. Further, communal living offered other low wage earners a way to survive on limited unemployment benefits (Metcalf & Vanclay 1987:48). Some of these participants were still poor at the time of interview. However, while acknowledging that being poor had led to a communal lifestyle, participants also discussed a shift in the construction of ‘being poor’ due to communal living, which is considered in the context of the telos in section 6.5. For one participant, the consideration that a community was simply a ‘nice’ place was also a significant factor in living on a community, without any form of intention to pursue some sort of goal or purpose.

Metcalf (1986) argues that the distinction between those who live ‘in order to’ achieve a goal or vision, and those who live ‘because of’ certain economic conditions reflects a ‘critical division in ideology and commitment’ (Metcalf 1986:116) between alternative lifestyle participants. However, if taking into account Kanter’s (1972) commitment mechanisms discussed in section 2.5.1, of which one form involves the retention of members through continuance (Kanter 1972:67), no critical division in commitment arose between those who had joined the community in ‘order to’ as opposed to those participants who joined ‘because of’ their economic circumstances.

In contrast to the work of Eräranta et al. (2009:362) which found that living in a Finnish eco-commune did not necessarily involve a life-long commitment, a considerable number of participants in this research had lived a significant portion of their lives on their community. This represents one aspect of what Kanter (1972) and Zablocki (1980) refer to as ‘investment of the self’, which has been discussed in sections 2.5.1.1 and 2.5.1.2. Fifty percent of the
participants from the Evergreen community had been living on the community for twenty-seven years, with thirty-five percent of participants having lived on the community for twenty years. Only a few members were new to the community, though one new member had been a resident for seven years before joining the community. By comparison, sixty-three percent of the participants on the Thora Valley community had been living on the community for between thirteen and eighteen years, with the remaining thirty-five percent having lived on the community for between four and five years. Both the Mountain Range\textsuperscript{1} and Stoney Creek\textsuperscript{2} communities followed a similar trend, while as one member of the Danthonia Bruderhof explains, members may dedicate a significant proportion of their lives to living on their community:

\begin{quote}
We considered a lifelong commitment to join and that’s not to be taken lightly, and we don’t take it lightly. (Franklin 2005:10)
\end{quote}

Zablocki confirms with respect to the Bruderhof that: ‘he [sic] binds his entire life to the will of the community without qualification’ (Zablocki 1971:267). While visiting the Danthonia Bruderhof community, a number of members in their early thirties indicated that they had been born into the Bruderhof way of life, although those born Bruderhof are not automatically granted membership status (see Zablocki 1971).

Given the longevity of many participants’ membership on these communities, it is arguable that the ethical substance of participants does not just concern ‘this or that part of their lives’, as contended by Moore (1987:82). Nor is it

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1} Four participants on the Mountain Range community had been living on this community for between fourteen and twenty-six years, while only one participant had been living on the community for four years.
  \item \textsuperscript{2} Two participants on the Stoney Creek community had been living on this community for fifteen years, one participant for eight years while another participant had been living on the community for only twelve months.
\end{itemize}
limited to notions of behaviour or aspects of the self (Foucault 1984a:352-353). As Rajchman argues, it may extend to an image of ‘the right life’ (1986:172). The ethical substance of participants in this research may therefore concern significant portions of their lives that are dedicated to intentional communal living. It is a commitment to an entire style of existence or life. However, though this might be true for participants who join a community based on a clear intention, Metcalf and Vanclay (1987:48) found that participants of alternative lifestyle groups in the 1980s, who joined for ‘because of’ reasons, were also least likely to break out and return to the mainstream.

Irrespective of whether participants expressed an intention to live communally on the basis of a shared purpose or common ideal or vision, or not, a surprising number of participants on the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities indicated that they had joined their community ‘because of’ pre-existing friendships or familial relations:

E7  And I remember coming up here thinking I really wanted to sort of give my friends a hand with ... with creating this place, but I really didn’t think it was my trip.

E9  But my initial sort of ... you know, moving into the community was because of the dance connections.

E4  So my relationship with Evergreen was very much just going from one kind of tenuous relationship to ... to another where initially I was just here as a visitor for a week or so.

E3  Fundamentally because of Kara—and Kara ran into it because her sister happened to know about it—and she was looking for somewhere she could stay for a few weeks.

E6  I don’t think I would have done it if my partner hadn’t been really, really keen. And I pretty much just went along with it.

T4  I came to visit a friend before I went overseas. And I never ended up going overseas.

T3  Eventually my friends moved up here. And I’d known Eeva since I was six. And we’d both met Jussi when I was about seventeen. And they both moved here and I came to visit, and liked the place.

M3  I had a niece living on the community with a two year old—so I
Many of the participants indicated that they joined their community without any initial intention of doing so. As the interviews indicate, one participant visited the community to give a friend a hand and another because of pre-existing dance connections. Others visited friends already living on a community and decided to stay, while others stayed to help out family or followed relationships onto the community. Despite a number of participants expressing a strong intentional focus on the Evergreen community, five of the participants noted above are from the Evergreen community. For many of these participants, pre-existing friendships and familial connections have also formed the basis for pursuing a communal life. Notably, all five participants from the Mountain Range community were either enticed through friendship or familial relationships to live on the community. This trend however is not unusual. Barker in her research on intentional communities in Lismore, in the Rainbow Region also found that communities were formed through social networks (1985:8). In contrast, participants from the Stoney Creek land-sharing community had no friendship or familial relationships before joining their community.

Joining a community based on pre-existing relationships and ‘because of’ a participant’s socio-economic situation tends to negate the emphasis placed on intentional communities being intentional. That is, it undercuts the thesis that participants join these communities in the pursuit of a common ideal, vision or purpose. Although this may be the case for some participants¹, for other participants, as Eräranta et al. point out with respect to Finnish eco-communes, the choice to live in an intentional community may instead be

¹ This may include a common ideal or vision that concerns living with people for the purpose of living communally or to share a life with ‘like-minded’ people, as discussed above.
'triggered and facilitated by important crossroads and fateful moments’ (2009:347, 353). For these participants, notions of ‘intent’ are problematic at the personal level and do not necessarily define why a participant joins a community, or the ethical substance they inevitably work on by living communally. Therefore, the initial motivation to join a community may be for a variety of reasons that do not necessarily reflect notions of ‘intentional’ living that have been discussed in section 2.4.1 in the context of the intentional community literature.

However, the emphasis placed on pre-existing relationships by many participants raises the assertion that cultivating relationships, or ‘doing relatedness’ (Eräranta et al. 2009:362), is a central feature of the ethical substance that participant’s work on in the context of communal life. Eräranta et al. (2009:347) describe ‘relatedness’ as a way in which Finnish eco-communards construct new forms of intimacy within the context of communal life through the problematisation of personal relations to both the self and others. The following section considers the types of relations that are cultivated as different forms of relating in the communal context.

6.2.2 Cultivating relationships

For many participants in this research, the cultivation of relationships is a key aspect of communal life. Four themes evolved from the research: the development of co-operative relationships, which is discussed in section 6.3.6.1; relating to nature, which is discussed in section 6.4.1.6; the creation of interpersonal relations with others, including the development of extended family and friendship networks; and the intensification of interpersonal relations. The next section discusses the last two themes.
6.2.2.1 Interpersonal relation with others

6.2.2.1.1 Extended Family

E1 What makes a successful intentional community—and I use the yardstick as it being an extended family—is the social relationship. The social relationship is one of an extended family. So you’re looking at people as your brothers, sisters, uncles, fathers, and so on.

There are a number of indicators of the relative success of an intentional community.¹ For one founding member of the Evergreen community, who also had many years of experience in establishing other intentional communities, a successful intentional community is one that creates relationships that are akin to an extended family. Communities that were far more communal and had members who had lived together for a longer period of time, such as the Danthonia Bruderhof and Evergreen communities, tended to discuss the notion of an ‘extended family’, although two members who had lived on the Thora Valley community for a long period of time also shared this view.

For many of these participants, other members of the community are viewed as brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and so on. For the Danthonia Bruderhof community, their extended family is both biological and non-biological, while for the Evergreen community, their extended family is non-biological. For these communities an intergenerational extended family, whether biological or not, is also a reality. This certainly reflected the demographic structure of the Danthonia Bruderhof community discussed in section 5.2, and was noted as a contemporary reality by participants on the Evergreen community. For the Evergreen community the creation of ‘one family’ is further reflected in

¹ For instance, Love-Brown argues that a successful community is one that has a strong common interface between the community and the outside world (2002:174). In comparison, Kanter equated the ‘success’ of an intentional community with ‘longevity’, that is, of twenty-five years or more (one generation) (1972:245; see also Metcalf 1986:326).
the ‘Objectives of the Evergreen Church’, discussed further in section 6.3.3, indicating that this is a direct goal of communal living on this community.

Many of the participants on the Evergreen community were either founding members or had joined the community through close connections with founding members. Through nearly thirty years of living together, strong friendships have been forged by many acts of interrelating and activities that had been shared by communal members, such as building communal houses and infrastructure; regular meditation and sharing a common philosophy; raising children together and enjoying the challenges and successes of child rearing; and the additional layering of events, rituals and ongoing casual contact. There are therefore ‘layers of relating’ on the Evergreen community that have assisted in creating the notion of an extended family on this community. Further, sharing common values with other members on the community, as discussed in section 6.2.3.3, has created a life participants want to share together as an extended family:

E2  Most people that wander round doing this and that, they’re my friends and people I’ve known for a long time and there’s something very special about that—watching people go about their business that are a part of my extended family.

E1  I’m nourished by having a family—an extended family, not just a nuclear family—an extended family …

E7  I really saw the value in some sort of extended family life that I’d never known personally myself. And I think that certainly—at least unconsciously—really led me to wanting to share this life here.

For E2, there is something very ‘special’ about watching people that form part of his extended family – who are both friends and people he has know for a long time. This special quality rests in the way participants live together and make decisions together regarding their communal way of life, indicating a sense of empowerment that evolves from having an extended family. E1
indicates that having an extended family is ‘nourishing’ in the sense that it offers both a platform for healthy living and personal growth. E7 sees the ‘value’ of an extended family, indicating that an extended family has merit and is worthwhile. Many of the bonds that have been formed on this community are as strong as the bonds of family and, for many, are stronger than biological family ties. Some participants have never personally been a part of a biological extended family. Furthermore, E3, a newer member, commented that his biological family sometimes felt ‘left out’ due to the strong communal ties he had established on the community.

6.2.2.1.2 Friendship networks

Friendship networks were particularly strong on all the intentional communities. However, participants on communities that were less communal, such as the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities discussed ‘doing relatedness’ in the context of friendship networks as opposed to the notion of an extended family. These communities encourage a far less communal structure and tended to emphasise individual pursuits within a collective environment. Arguably, this supports the development of friendship networks, rather than the notion of an extended family. Further, the social geography of both these communities meant that dwellings were spread out over larger areas. This also tended to foster less communal engagement and potentially favour the development of friendship networks.

As discussed above, pre-existing friendships were a significant factor that contributed to participants choosing to join a particular community. It is therefore not surprising that these bonds have deepened to become significant sources of ‘relating’; being ‘connected’; sharing ‘resources’; and forming a basis for socialisation on these communities. Friendship networks were considered to be very important sources of support. Participants discussed
the way in which friendship networks had provided assistance to participants
during ill health, where another member may cook a meal or bring things.
Friendship networks enabled members to look after each other. A member of
the Danthonia Bruderhof community discusses the flipside of working hard
for a zero wage on his community:

Should I become an invalid and bedridden for the rest of my life, I also know
that I have a community that will be there for me. ... we're here for each
other, cradle to grave. (Franklin 2005:5)

In many cases, these networks also endure around the world. One participant
from the Mountain Range community commented that she could go
anywhere in the world where other members—or former residents—lived,
and still find those support networks available to her. For many participants,
living closely together meant that support networks were immediate and
available. There was also no need to look beyond the community for
assistance, because it came to you.

Yet, having support networks was also a process that took a long time to
learn. As M2 commented: ‘Most people have learned to isolate ... just because
you come to community doesn’t mean you haven’t unlearned that.’ Some
participants had to engage in a process of ‘unlearning’ ways of isolating
themselves that they had developed in suburban living so that they could
accept and engage in friendship and support networks. For some participants
on the Mountain Range community, friendship networks and the support
they offer are the very reason why they remain living on this community.

The following section considers the intensification of interpersonal relations
as a further different form of relating.
6.2.2.2 Intensification of interpersonal relations

For some communities, social geography played a significant role in intensifying interpersonal relations between members of the community and the ‘doing relatedness’. Residences on the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities are spread out and may fail to offer the opportunity for engagement on a regular basis that close spatial living may provide. A possible exception to this could be hamlet living on the Mountain Range community where residences are closer together and greater social engagement may occur due to their proximity.

A significant number of participants on the Evergreen community noted the impact that social geography had on intensifying interpersonal relations in their community. E4 likened this style of engagement to ‘Cloud Street’:

E4 It’s a bit like Cloud Street. In Cloud Street there’s barely a significant meaningful interaction that ever takes place.

Though Cloud St, for this participant, symbolised barely a significant meaningful interaction, ongoing casual contact had a layering effect that built a foundation for a stronger sense of being part of a coherent group. Nearly all participants on this community commented on the ongoing casual contact that they have with each other by virtue of the architecture of the community:

E3 You bump into people a lot just at the mailbox, and exchange a few words.
E9 You sort of bump into people. You see people go off to work, or you’ll see Michael and Helen walking along with the baby.
E3 Sometimes that’s just waving at somebody as they go past in the car; and sometimes that’s getting out of the car and having a chat for a bit before they head off to work or I head off to work.
E10 If I would, just now, take a walk to the community centre to get something and come back, it’s very likely that I’d meet somebody and have some sort of talk or chat or something like that.
These engagements for participants are meaningless in the sense that they are unplanned, unpredictable and are random events that occur on a regular basis. During my time on the Evergreen community I also experienced these ‘mundane engagements’ while walking around the community and interviewing people. Three interviews were interrupted due to casual encounters with other residents on the community. There is no planning around these engagements or purpose other than the mundane engagement of daily life.

However, the ongoing nature of these seemingly meaningless interactions over time creates meaning for participants. As E4 argues ‘Just the layering of those … casual contacts over time actually develops a really significant, substantial, something.’ It is more than just bumping into one another. Active relating occurs when members exchange a few words, or stop to have a chat whenever and wherever they meet. E3 commented on how someone could wave to a neighbour in a suburban area as they left for the day; however:

E3    it doesn’t feel the same. These are the people that I make decisions with in meetings, and do lots of other things together with.

Sargisson (2004a) argues that the architectural design of communities may promote what she refers to as ‘social sustainability’: so that ‘people will encounter each other as they come and go to and from work, school or other activities outside the eco-neighbourhood’ (P. 17).

Social sustainability produced through seemingly meaningless interactions that, over time, build a really significant, substantial, something, was a significant way of ‘doing relatedness’ on the Evergreen community. It is anticipated, that given the proximity of residences and communal buildings on the Danthonia Bruderhof community, this type of mundane engagement would also form the basis of ‘doing relatedness’ on this community. Sargisson
(2004a:17) also links ‘shared space’, such as communal infrastructure which will be discussed in section 6.4 to the development of social sustainability. An intensification of interpersonal relations also occurs through communal self-forming practices also discussed in section 6.4, including communal work, communal meetings and communal and shared meals.

So, although Metcalf contends there was a critical division in ideology of alternative lifestyle participants in the 1980s, between those who live in order to achieve a goal or vision, and those who live because of certain socio-economic conditions (1986:116), ‘doing relatedness’ transcends this dichotomy through participants’ very act of communal living and the type of interpersonal engagements communal living supports. Thus, despite the reasons for participants joining a community, there is something about communal or cooperative living rooted in relationships that form the basis of the ethical substance. Whether the focus is to cooperate with people, continue relationships or develop support networks, communal living offers something that is unavailable to these participants in mainstream life. This issue is discussed further in the context of Sargisson’s notion of a ‘vague commitment to community and co-operation’ (2004a:9) when discussing the mode of subjection in section 6.3.

The following section considers identity as an aspect of the ethical substance to be worked on in the Danthonia Bruderhof, Thora Valley and Evergreen communities.

6.2.3 Identity

Identity is recognised as a significant aspect that is to be worked on by members of intentional communities in the intentional community literature. For instance, Abrams et al. argue that ‘collective self-seeking is the primary reality of communes, [providing an] opportunity for individuals to grasp a
more or less enduring personal reality’ (1976:94-95). Similarly, Munro-Clark (1986:36) argues that commune seekers primarily seek to construct *authentic selves* through communal living. A distinguishing feature of intentional communities in the 1980s, according to Munro-Clark, reflected a ‘concern with the growth and enrichment of individual identity or selfhood’ (1986:33). Both these notions have been fully explored in section 2.6.1. Issues pertaining to identity were also discussed by Zablocki (1971) in the context of the Woodcrest Bruderhof community and were also raised by participants living on the Thora Valley and Evergreen communities.

**6.2.3.1 Identity issues and The Bruderhof**

Research presented by Zablocki (1971) on the Woodcrest Community indicates that a significant aspect of the initial socialisation process on Bruderhof communities concentrates on discarding identities formed in the mainstream world prior to joining the community. Zablocki discusses three significant stages that occur during the ‘novice’ stage, which result in the renunciation of one’s former self (Zablocki 1971:248). The practices that underpin these processes are discussed more fully in the self-forming activities in section 6.4. During the research visit to the Danthonia Bruderhof community, members confirmed the ongoing nature of the novice stage of socialisation in their community.

The ‘stripping process’ is the first stage of socialisation on Bruderhof communities and focuses on the destruction of the old self. During this process ‘the individual is stripped of the symbols of his [sic] identity’ (Zablocki 1971:249). The ethical substance to be worked on during this stage is pride—pride in one’s former identity, in addition to sinfulness, which is understood through guilt: ‘[b]ecause pride itself is the cardinal sin, whatever one takes most pride in is precisely, for that very reason the greatest obstacle
to progress’ (Zablocki 1971:252). Potentially this culminates in loss of the ego—or ‘ego chill’ (Zablocki 1971:253). Using Foucault’s ethical framework to discuss the social constructions of women’s subjectivities, St Pierre also found that the ethical substance to be worked on by the women of Milton concerned ‘the sinful part of a humanist self, that part of a unified, stable self that is flawed and unable to sustain the love and duty expected by one’s personal God’ (St Pierre 2004:342-343).

In comparison, the second stage, called ‘identification’, focuses on the creation of a ‘new self’ and is brought about through what Kanter refers to as mortification processes that aim to develop a new identity ‘based on the power and meaningfulness of group membership’ (Kanter 1972:103). During this stage, a distinction is made between the ‘good self’ and the ‘bad self’, with the novitiate being sensitised to the difference between these two selves. The ‘bad self’ is merely the natural self, in the absence of the Holy Spirit while the ‘good self’ comes to be defined as a member of the Brotherhood (Zablocki 1971:260-261). Interestingly, it is at this point that the novitiate starts to take responsibility for their transformation in deference to the collectivity (Zablocki 1971:257). One’s own transformation is now a personal responsibility of the novitiate.

The last stage involves the ‘death and rebirth’ of the self. Again the focus, or ethical substance, is the ego and the death of the self, with the requisite transcendence resulting in the internalisation of the new self to make it permanent (Zablocki 1971:262). This final stage serves to ‘fix’ a new personality based on ego loss and collective merging, resulting in great joy.

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1 It is this very element of ‘fixing’ a self and making it ‘permanent’—a self that is essential in nature—that Foucault criticizes as the antithesis of care of the self. Foucault argues that through Christian experience and its focus on the ‘essential self’, knowledge came to be a reifying experience of the self. In comparison, the Greek concept of ‘care of the self’ focused on the maxim ‘know thyself’, independently of reifying oneself through knowledge. The result: contemporary knowledges that essentialise ‘human nature.’ See Chapter Three.
Once these three stages have been passed, the novice is ready for baptism and membership within the group (Zablocki 1971:267).

### 6.2.3.2 Identity issues and Thora Valley

Although Thora Valley is a distinctly different community and far less communal to the Danthonia Bruderhof community, participants also discussed the way in which communal living encourages the discarding of former identities. Similar to the Bruderhof, this primarily occurs after membership with the community. For instance, T1, a female participant, had joined this community ‘because of’ her social and economic status as an unemployed single mother. However, the experimental and permissive nature of this community had enabled her to experiment with her sense of self. She contrasts her life before joining the community: ‘Then I was straight’ with what she has now become: ‘I would say I’m a hippy’. Her construction of what it is to be ‘straight’ and what it is to be ‘hippy’ are stark and show the fluidity of self-construction:

T1 You know, I’d been a person who had lived overseas a lot, and lived in apartments, and yeah, … high heels, and polished my nails, and all that sort of thing. Yeah, it was quite a change.

This participant’s former image of her ‘straight’ self is associated with travel and living overseas, living in apartments, wearing high heels and having polished nails. This imagery is later reinforced through her association with being educated for office work and stereotypical images associated with women employed in office environments as secretaries or administrative assistants. This participant’s former straight self is seemingly preoccupied with an outer image as opposed to any inner substance; a woman who chooses an appearance—high heels and polished nails—seems divorced from any inner nature.
This contrast is made more apparent when she comes across the initial ‘hippy’ image that she now associates with her contemporary self:

T1 ... arriving ... in the middle of the night at one time, and coming into this little cottage ... all full of the smell of incense, and had quite a few sort of symbolic things like that around, and mozzie nets, and things on the floor. [Laughs] It was ... simpler than this place. I mean—I just loved it. I just thought, ‘Oh, I’ve got to live like this!’ I think it was the whole closeness to the earth.

In contrast to her straight image, the hippy image is portrayed as quite exotic, with incense and mozzie nets indicating an Asian style of living and symbolic things that represent something different to her usual way of life. The hippy image is also associated with simplicity and closeness to the earth: the cottage is small and inviting; ‘things are on the floor’ denoting closeness to the earth. Interestingly, she arrives at this place ‘in the middle of the night’, invoking the metaphor of a transition from the dark night of the soul—emerging ‘in the middle of the night’—to an inviting ‘little cottage’ where her new self ‘arrives’ with pleasure and awe: ‘Oh, I’ve got to live like this!’ The contrast between being straight and being hippy is also made apparent by this participant’s realisation: ‘I think it was the whole closeness to the earth.’

The imagery associated with being straight for this participant reflects distance from the earth—living in apartments and wearing high heels—that raise a person above and off the earth. Further, wearing nail polish reflects an artificial barrier between the ‘straight’ wearer of nail polish and a more natural ‘earth’ image. In contrast, for the hippy the cottage is little and simple. It has a smell—the smell of incense; things are on the floor—and close to the earth. Further, for this participant, being straight is associated with twenty first century living and her former life. Being a hippy is a result of living on the community for sixteen years and is associated with her current life. The discarding of her former straight identity, associated with her former life, and
the transition to being hippy through communal living does not imply an ‘essential’ self. Rather, it points to her identity being a significant aspect of the ethical substance that is worked upon in the context of communal living. Shifts in identity construction facilitated through communal living also point to the ability to transform notions of the ‘self’ which is discussed further in section 6.5.

In a similar way to members of the Bruderhof community discarding former identities, this participant had also discarded her former identity. As a result of communal living, she has discarded a social construction of what it is to be straight for another socially constructed identity—one that is characterised as hippy. Other participants on this community also discussed discarding former aspects of their identity that had been formed in the outside world. T7 discussed the way in which he had changed from being a ‘technocrat’ to being environmentally aware through living on this community and with its close proximity to World Heritage listed National Parks. T4 discussed his transition from illness to health and how his exploration of natural remedies, growing herbs and having time on this community to relax, contributed to his transformation. T6 arrived on this community as a young woman with few productive skills. Through communal living she developed competency skills, including communication, bookkeeping and counselling skills that she now uses in paid employment.

6.2.3.3 Identity issues and Evergreen

Participants on the Evergreen community tended to focus on affirming and extending an existing identity. Thus, choosing to live on an intentional community provides an opportunity for participants to create an environment that corresponds with particular values that serve to validate and extend an

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1 See section 3.4 for a discussion on Foucault’s notion of the ethical self, and how it differs from the concept of an ‘essential’ self.
existing identity. Rather than discarding an identity associated with
mainstream culture and values, participants sought to affirm and enhance an
identity that did not reflect mainstream communal representations through
the notion of shared values. Community members articulated shared values
in different ways: as seeking out or living with ‘liked-minded’ people; being
affirmed by others in the community because they possess similar principles;
and having similar or shared values with other members of the community:

E10  I wanted to live with like-minded people, in a place like this. So,
     I counted myself as being incredibly lucky when I was able to
     move here.

E7   It was very simpatico with my values and aspirations—to
     support the Dharma—to support each other.

E10  ... my life’s become more an expression of my values. The
     person I am, and the values that I have, are validated by the
     people around me.

E4   So that feels like a very supportive thing, being part of a
     community of basically like-minded individuals, although we all
     have, you know, our own ways.

E5   ... having other people around me who appreciate a lot of the
     things that I appreciate … .

E2   I think having similar values is very important. And, it certainly
     contributes to the feeling of ‘We’re in this together and we’re
     doing something together.’

E5   There are a lot of shared values. So I’m not around my family
     where I feel very uncomfortable with the values and the
     assumptions that are made about society. I’m with people who
     share very similar values to me. And that’s nice to be around.

For these participants, shared values underpinned an intention to join this
community, while ongoing shared values serve the purpose of validating a
participant’s sense of self. These members acknowledge that similar values
are important and contribute to a feeling of ‘we’re in this together and we’re
doing something together’. In many ways this reflects what Metcalf (2004:9)
refers to as a ‘we-consciousness’ and the way in which communal living may
cultivate an inherent sense of identity associated with group living.
The origins of this community, founded in prior relationships and shared Buddhist philosophy and practice, have also enabled the development of shared values amongst community members. Kanter argues that these common experiences and the establishment of relationships prior to joining a community creates ‘the degree of homogenous identity functional for communion’ (Kanter 1972:94). Further, as discussed in section 5.3 all participants interviewed were Caucasian and of middle-class background, and many of the founding members were aged in their mid to late fifties. Community members also possessed a high level of education and employment—further underpinning a sense of homogeneity conducive to the development of communion. Kanter argues that homogeneity facilitates communion, enabling members to share ‘a fund of common experiences to ease mutual role-taking and identification with one another and the collectivity’ (Kanter 1972:93).

Arguably, members of the Danthonia Bruderhof community, once having discarded former identities associated with mainstream living, also focus on the construction of an identity and a particular style of life through shared values. This is discussed further in the context of the community’s philosophy in section 6.3. and the self-forming activities in section 6.4.

6.2.4 Summary

This section has considered the ethical substance that is to be worked on by intentional community participants in this research. For some participants, their ethical substance concerns their intentions. These participants join communities ‘in order’ to live out some form of intention associated with a communal way of life, such as the development of a creative or agrarian lifestyle; the ideal of living with like-minded people or of cooperating; living communally with a group of people; or an intention to live a particular style
of life. These participants embody the notion of ‘intentional living’ as discussed in section 2.4.1, leading to the conclusion that the ethical substance—or the aspect of the self—to be worked on by these participants is their intention.

However, a number of participants joined their intentional community ‘because of’ former socio-economic circumstances, including poverty or low income, homelessness or single parenthood. These findings continue to reflect and support the earlier work of Metcalf and Vanclay (1987) on Australian intentional communities. Arguably, these participants do not embody the notion of ‘intention’ that is characterised in the definition of an intentional community. This finding may also continue to support Metcalf’s argument that there is a critical division in ideology and commitment between those who live communally in order to achieve a particular goal, and those who live on an intentional community because of their limited socio-economic choices (1986:116). For these latter participants, it also raises uncertainties about whether there is any ethical substance they are choosing to work on in the context of a communal life.

However, if taking into account Kanter’s (1972:67) argument that commitment involves the retention of members, the findings suggest there is no critical division between participants in this research who joined ‘in order to’ and those who joined ‘because of’. The majority of participants had lived on their communities for significantly long periods of time. For members of Danthonia Bruderhof, a substantial period of their lives may be invested in their community, while for members of other communities a significant proportion of a participant’s life may be equally invested in their communities. This forms the basis of what Kanter refers to as ‘intangible investments of the self’ (1972:80), where investments of both time and energy integrate participants into the community.
Significant investment of the self also suggests that the ethical substance is not limited to aspects of the self, but rather extends to the entirety of a participant’s life. It is not just ‘this or that’ aspect of the self to be worked on; rather, it is every aspect of a participant’s life—the social, the economic, the spiritual, the political, and the personal. Although Moisander and Pesonen argue that the ethical substance of Finnish eco-communards considers ‘personal and spiritual growth’ (2002:340), this finding doesn’t go far enough in expressing the *totality* of the ethical substance that is to be worked on by participants in this research. Though this finding might be true for participants that join a community based on an intention, it still may not satisfy Metcalf and Vanclay’s (1987:48) point that participants of alternative lifestyle groups in the 1980s, who joined for ‘because of’ reasons, were also least likely to break out and return to the mainstream. Many participants in this research were still poor and had low levels of income and education, particularly on the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities, as discussed in Chapter Five.

An unexpected finding indicated that a significant number of participants, irrespective of whether they had joined the community ‘in order to’ live out an intention or ‘because of’ socio-economic circumstances, joined their community based on pre-existing friendships or familial relations. For many of these participants, different forms of relating were cultivated, including those akin to an extended family and what some participants referred to as friendship networks. Further, the intensification of interpersonal relations, through the spatial layout of a community and other self-forming activities discussed in section 6.3, also supported the development of these forms of relating. This finding tends to support the contention that ‘doing relatedness’ (Eräranta et al. 2009:362) is a central feature of the ethical substance that participant’s work on in the context of communal life, which also suggests
that any critical divide in ideology is transcended through participants very act of communal living and the type of interpersonal engagements communal living supports.

Moore suggests that it is collective engagement that ‘forms the nature of the member’s present identity’ (1987:90). Notions of ‘identity’ are also characterised in intentional community definitions in section 2.4.1 and have been discussed in the context of the work of Abrams et al. (1976) and Munro-Clark (1986) in section 2.6.1. It is therefore not surprising that aspects of identity also formed the basis of the ethical substance to be worked on by participants in this research. For instance, participants on the Danthonia Bruderhof and Thora Valley communities—though significantly different intentional communities in terms of their communality and the reasons participants joined their community—may work towards renouncing former identities associated with mainstream living, thereby creating new identities constructed through a shared communal life. In contrast, participants on the Evergreen community sought to affirm and extend existing identities that fail to resonate with mainstream constructions of the self through constructing a particular style of life that supports the sharing of common values with like-minded people. Both examples tend to affirm Abrams et al. (1976) findings on British commune members that they:

have at once rejected socially given recipes for self-construction and understood that selves are constructed socially. They turn to social relations at the same time that they turn away from society. (Abrams et al. 1976:96)

Overall, these findings highlight Infinito’s (2003b:166) argument that ethics is a social practice and that concrete others are necessary in the formation of ethical selves. Moore also supports this contention, arguing that ‘Foucault’s project … appears to deal with the life of a collective rather than the life of an individual’ (1987:89). In the case of these intentional communities, it is not just
others who are important in this context. Rather, it is significant others who have become part of a participant’s extended family or friendship network that may form the collective context for an ethics.

The following section explores the mode of subjection of participants in this research.

6.3 Mode of subjection

The mode of subjection concerns ‘the way in which people are invited or incited to recognise their moral obligation’ (Foucault 1984a:353). As has been discussed in section 3.6.2, Moisander and Pesonen (2002) argue that the mode of subjection of Finnish eco-communards relates to the way in which the individual establishes their relation to the rule and recognises an obligation to put it into practice. They further suggest a spiritual tradition or group membership and custom as examples (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:331).

This section first explores research participants’ mode of subjection, by considering communal living as a choice that involves participant’s self-regulation through philosophies and conventions that govern communal behaviour. The discussion then turns to each community’s philosophy, which has been constructed by participants as a significant mode of subjection that may also form the basis of participant’s communal intentions. As discussed in sections 2.4.1 and 2.4.2, intentional communities may draw on a broad range of philosophies or purposes. The final part of this section considers Moisander and Pesonen’s argument that ‘a mutual quest for ‘community’ both guides and constrains people in these communes’ (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340). Thus notions of cooperative living, communal pressure and communal by-laws may also play a significant role in ‘guiding or constraining’ participants in their ‘mutual quest for community’.
6.3.1 Ethics as personal choice

Foucault argues that ethics, for the ancient Greeks, was a matter of ‘personal choice’ (1984a:341). Clearly, ‘choice’ is one of the most significant aspects of communal living, because it requires participants to make an active choice about a mode of living that forms the basis for self-regulation. Though it can be said that all participants have made a choice to live a communal life, this choice is not unproblematic. As discussed in section 6.2, some participants choose an intentional way of living that would support a personal choice in ethics. For others, it may be a choice based on necessity that reflects socio-economic circumstances and therefore undermines a personal choice in an ethics.

However, Foucault (1984a) also argued that the Greek ‘problem’ was not necessarily techniques of the self, but the ‘techné of life’ that is, how to live? Greeks were most concerned about the proper techniques that needed to be used ‘in order to live as well as I ought to live’ (Foucault 1984a:348; see also O’Leary 2006). From a wider perspective, personal choice may simply reflect notions of a desire to live a better life. As has been discussed in section 2.3, Metcalf discusses four waves of communal experimentation in Australia, each of which is characterised by the common utopian notion of a desire for a better way of life (Metcalf 1995:15; Metcalf 1986:111). Irrespective of whether participants joined a community in order to achieve a particular goal, or because of their socio-economic circumstances, a desire to live a better way of life may instead represent a personal choice in ethics for both types of participants. This is particularly relevant when considering participant’s shifts in constructions of ‘being poor,’ which is discussed in section 6.5.

However, given many participants’ significant investment of resources in their community, there are also concerns that a personal choice in an ethics
may be irreversible. For instance, Zablocki (1971) argues that one of the most fundamental questions to be asked about the effect of the Bruderhof on the individual concerns a total loss of freedom. Zablocki notes that ‘one loses all vestiges of personal freedom in joining the Bruderhof’ (1971:280). Zablocki discusses two dimensions of freedom in relation to this community. The first concerns the decision to do something, such as making a decision to join the Bruderhof with the view to attaining a particular goal. The second reflects the ability to change one’s mind with respect to that goal and implement change accordingly. Zablocki argues that the Bruderhof incorporate much of the first, and very little of the second (1971:280-281).

However, it is important to return to Foucault’s concept of discursive power which has been discussed in section 3.4.2. In contrast to Zablocki’s notion of freedom, Foucault (1982b:221-222; 1984b/1988:13) views power as a relationship that considers the subject, if not in ‘a physical relationship of constraint,’ to be both free and able to resist. For free subjects, there are many available and possible forms of resistance; that is ‘strategies that reverse the situation’ (Foucault 1984b/1988:12). Though not a palatable choice, participants on Bruderhof communities can leave the community and return to a mainstream way of living. Further, despite significant investments of the self, participants on other communities have the same options. In other words, participants are not restrained from leaving and have many possibilities open to them to reverse the situation.

Kanter (1972) points out that it is important to remember the general features of communes:

- they are voluntary social orders, based on free entrance and exit; regardless of how much pressure the group may put on the individual to stay; their social practices tend to reflect the choices of the members themselves; they usually reject the use of physical violence; they frequently employ practices of mutual
criticism and feedback, in which whoever is playing the role of leader is also subject to the criticism of others; they often rotate positions and have frequent meetings in which to share information, so that all members are highly involved in the life and decision-making of the group; and whatever power there is, is highly visible … (P. 232)

All the intentional communities in this research, except the Stoney Creek community, share these general features noted by Kanter. For instance, they are all voluntary associations\(^1\). Though probationary periods are used, similarly to the Greek communities discussed by Foucault (1984h/1986) they are open to people to join.\(^2\) Further, the philosophies and rules that govern communal life, have either been co-created by members at the time of founding the community, or are in the process of constant co-creation through communal governance structures that permit members to amend or change the philosophies and conventions they choose to live by. As Metcalf (2004:57) points out in relation to the Bruderhof, though each collective is part of the multinational Bruderhof, individual communities such as Darvell Bruderhof have considerable autonomy. Governance structures are discussed in this section and then in the context of communal meetings in section 6.4.

Choosing to live on an intentional community is therefore a significant factor in determining what mode of subjection a participant will be subjected to and the type of self-forming activities a participant will engage in. These philosophies and conventions that govern participant’s lives, and act as a form of self-regulation, are discussed in the following sections.

\(^1\) Though ‘cults’ may also be voluntary associations they often share particular characteristics that generate absolute devotion. For instance Schonbeck discusses certain characteristics of Scientology that may be shared by other groups considered to be cults including: a spiritual hierarchy; a missionary zeal and an evangelizing approach to acquiring new members; the scorning of other spiritual practices and the idea that Scientology could answer all questions and all personal and planetary problems; absolute control by members in the hierarchy with the suppression of alternative opinion; and rigid processes (2000:33-34).

\(^2\) Though the communities discussed by Foucault were only ‘open’ to the elite members of Greek society and excluded women and slaves.
6.3.2 Danthonia Bruderhof

The establishment of the Danthonia Bruderhof community has been discussed in section 5.2. In that section it was noted that the communal philosophy of Bruderhof communities is inseparable from its Christian-based faith. Although CCI claim they are not ‘interested in religion per se’, Bruderhof theology works in tandem with the call to community. Eberhard Arnold (2002:5), the founder of Bruderhof communities, argued that life in community for the Bruderhof determines everything we do and think, including questions of faith; answering social-political questions, providing a basis for the history of the Bruderhof Church; living in the life of the Spirit; acting as a call to love and unity; requiring sacrifice; and providing a sign of the coming kingdom. Community is therefore an all-embracing way in which Bruderhof members are called to recognise their moral obligations. CCI states:

We are not interested in religion per se, but in the deeper community that results when people share the joys and struggles of daily life. And we have found that working together is the best means to this end. (Church Communities International 2009)

A member of the Australian Danthonia Bruderhof community argues that ‘community is the nitty-gritty of living every day together’ (Franklin 2005:2). Peters (1996), a member of the New Meadow Run Bruderhof in the United States, notes that members live communally, sharing everything except their spouses, with no concept of private property. He further points out that, ‘We live communally like the first Christians in Jerusalem’ (Peters 1996:183). Tyldesley, in his research on the Bruderhof, argues that ‘the Bruderhof’s alternative society is intentionally a total experience’ (2003:84). According to Zablocki’s (1971:268) investment of self, Bruderhof members invest both their resources and their self in communal life, resulting in ‘community’ that aims for a sense of unity between the group and the individual.
On joining the community, CCI members take a vow of poverty, which results in all their material possessions becoming the property of the Church forever (Zablocki 1971:267). For Bruderhof members, authority rests entirely in the Church, both guiding and constraining members’ behaviour. Drawing on the work of Zablocki, Tyldesley (2003) notes that from 1962 onwards the Bruderhof became a Church-Community with the Bruderhof thinking of itself as ‘a church among churches’ as opposed to an ‘intentional community (albeit Christian) among intentional communities’ (Tyldesley 2003:71). Tyldesley (2003) goes on to say:

Members do not join the Darvell Bruderhof (for instance); they join the Bruderhof as a church, and will live where the church decides. This is not to say members are pushed around willy-nilly. There is a degree of inter-movement between sites. (P. 84)

Though the Church has authority over its members, Metcalf (2004:57) also notes that some Bruderhof sites may exert a certain level of autonomy. This aspect is discussed further in section 6.4.1.2.1 with respect to participation in communal meetings. Theological similarities can be found in the mode of subjection of Christian communes researched by Zablocki.¹

The ideology of the Bruderhof movement, and the roots of Eberhard Arnold’s thought, is well discussed by Tyldesley (2003). While this section focuses on the communal nature of Bruderhof philosophy, its historical roots in other ideologies plays a significant part in contemporary Bruderhof life. For instance, Christian socialism founded in the German youth groups of the

¹ An analysis of Zablocki’s religious communes, using Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, found that the mode of subjection for Alabama Avenue residents was expressed as ‘an attitude of waiting upon the Holy Spirit’ (Zablocki 1980:215), while Christian Ranch reflected submission ‘to the will of the in-dwelling Holy Spirit’ (Zablocki 1980:216). Both these communes’ mode of subjection emphasized authority, so although Alabama Avenue recognised spiritual egalitarianism, in practice, it represented ‘a hierarchy of authority’ (Zablocki 1980:215), while at Christian Ranch ‘great emphasis was placed upon developing a willingness to accept authority unquestioningly’ (Zablocki 1980:216).
1920s (Tyldesley 2003:61) and its former membership with the Hutterian Brethren has, according to Tyldesley, ‘marked the movement’s history ever since’ (2003:63). Significantly, the practices of early Christians and the importance of Jesus are fundamental to communal faith and dialogue. Eberhard Arnold (see Arnold 2002) sought to reinvigorate the meaning and life of Jesus, with the command, ‘Love thy neighbour as yourself’, his teachings from the Sermon on the Mount and elsewhere on non-violence, marriage and compassion for others. These teachings form the basis of Bruderhof faith. Despite these strong theological foundations, Zablocki argues that ‘The Bruderhof asks to be evaluated not on the basis of its theology, but on the basis of its actions and its style of life’ (1971:243). Self-forming activities, or practices that exemplify the Bruderhof way of life, are discussed further in section 6.4 below.

6.3.3 Evergreen

The communal foundations of the Evergreen community have been discussed in section 5.2. Though one community member argued that, ‘[T]he religious identity is less obvious now’, nearly all members of this community are still influenced by variants of Buddhist philosophy. Hamilton, a founding member of the community, describes the community as ‘a spiritually based, non-denominational, leaderless intentional community’ (1998:2). ‘Spiritually based’ refers to community members possessing a spiritual understanding or orientation, and an acceptance of those aspects in the objectives of the Evergreen\textsuperscript{1} Church; ‘non-denominational’ means that the community is not confined to any one particular spiritual discipline or practice, acknowledging the influence of the early Buddhist philosophy yet affirming a diversity of spiritual pathways that may be practiced on the community; while

\textsuperscript{1} This is the pseudonym for the community, which is also used here in relation to the Objectives of the Community’s Church.
'leaderless' indicates that there is no collective acceptance of a particular guru, director or manager. Communal business meetings therefore govern day-to-day decision making with decisions made in accordance with consent or on the basis of the 'absence of dissent'. Members also agreed to abide by the *Objectives of the Evergreen Church* (Hamilton 1998:1).

Further objectives of the community reflect many of Kanter’s (1972) commitment mechanisms. For instance, the community’s first objective: ‘to be a community of friends’; and its last objective: ‘to be responsible to each other … for all our lives as one family’ reflect the commitment mechanism of renunciation and processes aimed at undermining exclusive relationships (Kanter 1972:89). Although many of the members of this community still adhere to a nuclear family structure, the emphasis placed on participation in the community, and the intensification of interpersonal relations that occurs by virtue of participation in communal life, affects a reduction in the importance of the nuclear family ‘by a diffusion of intimacy, emotion, and family functions throughout the community’ (Kanter 1972:90-91). As discussed in section 6.2. with respect to the ethical substance, ‘doing relatedness’ means members form different relations that view other members as their extended family, with older members taking on the role of elders within the community. In addition, shared communal infrastructure, which will be discussed in section 6.4.1.2.5, also undermines the importance of the nuclear family in favour of communal relations. This is particularly so in ‘expanded houses’ where one or more units may share common resources, ‘such as a kitchen, living-room, bath-room or laundry … where the building components are not necessarily under the one roof’ (Hamilton 1998:1).
Eight objectives\(^1\) of the Evergreen Church reflect eight of the ten virtuous acts of Buddhist philosophy,\(^2\) and aim to encourage the flow of spiritual understanding and freedom. Other objectives ask community members to agree to individually and collectively abstain from killing living beings, taking what is not freely given, false speech, sexual misconduct and substances which intoxicate and confuse the mind (Hamilton 1998:4). These last two objectives are good examples of Kanter’s (1972:78) commitment mechanism of sacrifice, with abstinence encouraging members to give up worldly pleasures. As one participant commented:

> We’re really lucky … lucky that we have had that spiritual approach where we’re so idealistic and up ourselves that we thought ‘no drugs, no alcohol’ you know, and that filtered out a whole lot of people who would have been destructive in the early days.

Certainly during the formative years of the community, these objectives were adhered to. However, there have been varying degrees of adherence and over time their emphasis has changed. For instance, one participant commented on the problem of ‘stolen lovers’ in the community and its effects on communal relations. In addition, community members now consume alcohol and are no longer vegetarian. However, this participant highlights the important role the ‘no drugs, no alcohol’ policy played in enabling the community to filter out other people who may have been destructive to the community in the early days. As Kanter (1972:76) argues, forms of abstinence enable a greater focus to

\(^1\) These are: right understanding, thought, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness and concentration.

\(^2\) The Dalai Lama explains the ten virtuous acts. Three concern the body: one must not kill, steal, or engage in sexual misconduct. Four others are verbal: do not lie, defame others, speak offensive words, or engage in frivolous conversation, which relates to everything that might be said under the influence of afflicting emotions. Finally, the last three virtuous acts are of a mental nature: do not develop covetousness or malice and, finally, do not hold false or perverted views, such as the extreme view, close to nihilism, which totally denies spiritual perfection.’ See ‘Christianity and Buddhism’ (retrieved 24 March 2008) at [http://hhdl.dharma kara.net/hhdlquotes2.html#10](http://hhdl.dharma kara.net/hhdlquotes2.html#10)
be placed on group endeavours, increase motivation for members to remain participants and also enhance the value and meaning of membership.

Participant’s investment of the self and the process of communal sharing also support the objectives of the Evergreen Church, reflecting Kanter’s commitment mechanisms of sacrifice and communion (1972:76, 93). Both of these processes are interwoven into the fabric of the community and are replicated in the self-forming activities discussed in section 6.4. In the context of the mode of subjection, various rules around ownership underpin these processes. Kanter argues that ‘through investment, individuals are integrated with the system, since their time and resources have become part of its economy’ (1972:81). Investment can therefore involve tangible resources, such as the provision of financial donations at the time of membership; buying shares in the stock of the company; assignment or transferral of members’ property for the benefit of the community; or ‘intangibles like time and energy’ (Kanter 1972:80-81).

On this community, title to the land is held by a proprietary limited company whose six shareholders hold their shares on behalf of the community’s Church. The Church is a voluntary non-incorporated association that maintains the day-to-day running of the land and the community. Initial investment in the community required a non-refundable investment of one thousand dollars, which has subsequently risen to six thousand dollars. The company, on behalf of all community members, therefore owns all community structures and buildings. This form of ownership highlights the irreversibility of investment by communal participants. While Kanter (1972:81) argues that successful communities tended not to reimburse

1 The final objective of the community is: ‘To experience ourselves and each other in wholeness and community: through birthing and dying, learning and growing, sheltering and providing, celebrating and sorrowing’ (Hamilton 1998:4).
members seeking to leave the community, this community does provide a nominal fee to community members on leaving, which is not reflective of market prices. Irreversibility of significant tangible investments therefore aids continued participation in the group and the maintenance of their investment or ‘profit’ in the group (Kanter 1972:80). Although there is a communal ‘kitty’ that is used to buy organic fruit and vegetables, finances are predominantly the responsibility of each individual household. All other personal effects are also held privately. That there is a significant investment of material resources in the community by each member provides each member with ‘a stake in the fate of the community’ (Kanter 1972:80). As Kanter (1972) points out:

shared ownership or property helped to create a we-feeling ... whereas privately and individually owned property contributes nothing to a person’s identification with a group ... (P. 94)

6.3.4 Thora Valley

Thora Valley regards itself as a diverse community, originating in the various philosophical New Age ideals and the ‘wonder of Findhorn’. However, as discussed in section 5.4, the initial community folded within five years of its establishment, with the original foundation incorporated as the Thora Valley Community Limited and with the property transferred to the company in 1988. Between 1983 and 1988 many of the founding members left the community. Newer members, some of whom participated in this research, joined the community from 1986 onwards.

Contemporarily, the community describes itself as a ‘unique eco-village and an alternative lifestyle workshop’ that advocates the use of natural

1 A number of participants expressed their disappointment that the community no longer followed the Findhorn philosophy, or any one particular philosophy that might encourage greater communion amongst members.
approaches to the land, including an alternative water system,\textsuperscript{1} permaculture, bio-dynamics, the use of renewable resources and natural energy systems—in particular, solar power. Aims and objectives of the community are enshrined in the community’s \textit{Memorandum of Association}, which focuses on environmental, spiritual, social, personal and educational goals, while the \textit{Articles of Association} establish protocols around membership, meetings, company administration and prohibited activities.\textsuperscript{2} The land is owned by the company, on trust for the shareholders of the community, with no one member holding title to the land. However, each member has title to their individual buildings on their site. This enables members of this community to recoup at least the cost of their houses should they decide to leave the community.

The Constitution outlines two predominant focuses of the community. The first gives prominence to development of the self by ‘maintaining the environment for all people to explore and share their spiritual, religious, social and personal values’.\textsuperscript{3} Examples of this are outlined in section 5.4.2.4, with members following quite eclectic religious and spiritual pursuits. The second focuses on the development of an eco-village by ‘promoting by example and in other ways’ the principles of permaculture and biodynamics; the use of renewable resources and natural energy systems, self-sufficiency; rural re-settlement by hamlet or village cluster; and rural employment in socially and environmentally useful work.\textsuperscript{4} Both these elements are discussed more fully in the self-forming activities relevant to this community in section 6.4.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} The ‘Grander Water System,’ based on homeopathic principles, provides high quality water to the entire community.
\item \textsuperscript{2} Many of which relate to environmental concerns—see section 6.3.7.3.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Section 2 (b) (i) Thora Valley Community Ltd Memorandum of Association (current as at 11/09/06.)
\item \textsuperscript{4} Section 2 (d) Thora Valley Community Ltd Memorandum of Association (current as at 11/09/06.).
\end{itemize}
6.3.5 Mountain Range

As discussed in section 5.5, Mountain Range was established in the after-glow of the Aquarius Festival held in Nimbin in May 1973, with the community as a whole considered a ‘tribe’. It’s philosophy was founded loosely on an alternative lifestyle based on self-sufficiency, living in harmony with nature and as an experiment in a new way of life (Munro-Clark 1986:126-127). The community was also the first cooperative of its type in Australia, registered with the former Registrar of Cooperatives as a Community Settlement Society, pursuant to the Cooperatives Act 1953 with formal rules (Lockland 1998:8). The objectives of those rules specify that the community be established to:

help, set up and co-ordinate a new community of persons living and working together on common property and is a total creation environment of discovering, learning, and perfecting modes of living, works of art, forms of communication, methods of awareness and skills or cultivation, craft and construction and sharing responsibility for the quality of all life. (School of Arts & Social Sciences, SCU 2004)

6.3.5.1 Shared understanding

Although no one ideology forms the basis of this community, attitudes towards the environment and acting as caretakers of the land create a shared understanding between participants:

M3 We don’t have any ideology at all on Mountain Range, except for the environment. That’s the only thing that unites us. You know, we have no dogs and cats. We have a forest up there that we’re caretakers of and we manage. Lots of us have solar power and all those sort of things. I guess because it is the one uniting thing—that extends to our relationships with other people as a common language. Or understood. Things that are understood that don’t have to be said.
Lockland (1998) also acknowledges this shared understanding by participants in her research on cultural significance on this community. Although members with issued share capital privately own the community, the ‘tribe’ makes decisions at tribal meetings with respect to permissible uses of land, siting of buildings, rates, membership, and rules that the community agrees to be bound by (Munro-Clark 1986:127). The nature of tribal meetings on this community is discussed further in section 6.4.1.2.1.

Although Mountain Range is a very large community, Munro-Clark describes it as ‘a collection of rural survival communities within a broader social entity’ (1986:126). For many members, the social unit is the ‘hamlet’ of which there are many scattered throughout the community (Munro-Clark 1986:127). The following section explores how hamlets provide an additional way in which participants recognise their moral obligations.

6.3.5.2 Hamlets

Hamlets are unique to some very large intentional communities in Australia, and often form a community within a community. Metcalf (1986:125) discusses the way in which very large communities may move from an original communal foundation to a cooperative model, which includes a hybrid of communal and non-communal hamlets and individuals not associated with any hamlet. In this context, hamlets, rather than the larger community, may ‘guide and constrain’ participants’ behaviour (Moisander & Pesonen 2002). In this sense, Kanter’s (1972:83) notion of the ‘outside world’ may be equivalent to member’s constructing the larger community as the ‘outside society’, while the hamlet becomes the ‘inner society’, therefore providing insulating boundaries, rules and structural arrangements that benefit hamlet members. Renunciation then operates with the aim of
relinquishing the importance of external principles of the larger community, thereby intensifying the relationships within the hamlet.

Due to the very large size of this community, hamlets initially developed on the basis of groups of like-minded people. As one participant noted:

M1 … this hamlet was sort of the university-guys-with-degrees hamlet.

Munro-Clark acknowledges that neighbours may be ‘chosen on the basis of affinities or emotional attachments’ (1986:127-128). An original founder of Mountain Range, who was not interviewed as part of this research yet has expressed his views elsewhere1 (Metcalf 1986), describes the lifestyle of hamlets on his community:

Lifestyle in the decentralised hamlets varies widely, yet there is much tolerance and little treading on each other’s toes. Some hamlets are vegetarian; others kill their own beasts. Some hamlets are into hard work to establish a food supply, for others contemplation is the priority. Some hamlets work as a team, pooling resources and facilities with each member giving as inspired and taking equally, or according to need. Other hamlets are collections of independent, even antipathetic, individuals, with an undeveloped no-man’s land in-between. Some hamlets are particularly intellectual, musical, agricultural, religious or atheistic. Such diversity makes for a scintillating and stimulating diversity of talent and ability, drawn widely from the professions, the arts and the artisan trades. Not a few [sic] have degrees, diplomas and skilled experience, but there is a strong sense of equality between all, each being able to learn from the other. By and large the community (the collective of resident shareholders) interferes little in the affairs of the hamlets. These are treated as entrusted with development of that territory which they have annexed, and are virtually independent provided they do not infringe the rules. There are fairly definite guidelines about what will be tolerated, and interference is likely should these norms be

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1 Including private emails as part of this research.
transgressed. Any co-operation which exists within the community is at present largely within the hamlets. Little common enterprise is entered into by the Co-operative as a whole, or by consortiums between hamlets, but scattered individuals throughout the valley may well link up, in particular instances, to act in unison. The strong trend at present is for settlers, and hamlets to identify with the collective whole. (reproduced in Metcalf 1986:125-126)

Participants in this research strongly identified with their own hamlet—a point that has been discussed in the context of friendship networks in section 6.2. and reinforces Munro-Clark’s (1986:127) claim that hamlets form the basis of the social unit. Some hamlets also had strong affinities with other neighbouring hamlets, often due to their corresponding geographic proximity. Although hamlets were originally developed on the basis of like-minded individuals, in some instances extreme differences between newer hamlet members may be managed through ad hoc arrangements. For example, M1 who resides on the ‘university-guys-with-degrees’ hamlet, was keen to point out: ‘You’ve got a lawyer there and a junkie there’, affirming that he was quite happy with that arrangement. However, limits were placed on the junkie’s behaviour by the hamlet:

M1 We let him live there ... well ... they let him live there. He’s a lovely fellow ... he just hasn’t got over the dope. But he’s not allowed to bring anyone home from town, because you don’t trust his sense of judgment on people. They’ll use him and they’ll be addicts as well. Not that I’ve got anything against addicts ... there’s addicts and there’s addicts.

M1’s membership on his hamlet had also been subjected to local hamlet arrangements that both guided and constrained membership requirements that had been laid down by the larger community. M1 discusses an unexpected situation that arose just prior to the tribal meeting that would determine his membership on the community:
Damien arrived down there about an hour before the meeting with this contract—and Linda, she nearly flew at him, saying, ‘Damien, no-one’s ever done that. You can’t do that’. And I told her ‘Go off, Linda, and make a coffee. I’ll do it and negotiate with Damien’. So I did. We went through the contract .... a couple of clauses I changed. He’d had a bad run of people here for years. He was settled in ... got the size of a nine-hole golf course that he tends with his own hands—he grows all his own vegies. Really, he’s a marvel. ... Anyway, I signed the contract and the moment I signed he put his hand out and said, ‘Michael, I’m going to give you two forty volt power’. And he ran the two forty volt over here. And ... it just changed my life. It meant I could use power-tools and work on the house. So, from a scary situation—the moment I signed it, he just said, ‘Neighbour. We’re neighbours now.’ And he embraced me.

Formal contractual agreements between neighbours on the same hamlet in this community are rare. Yet, an interesting aspect of the agreement was the final outcome. M1 notes that initially, this was a scary situation. He had complied with all the community’s requirements, including living on the community for a probationary period of twelve months. He had worked hard to learn about the community, engaging in workdays and helping other community members with his carpentry skills. He had even bought a house and had proceeded to renovate it with a view to staying on the community for a long period of time. He had also fostered friendships and connections so that he would have the requisite support needed at the communal tribal meeting to affirm his membership. Yet, on the day of the tribal meeting to decide his membership, his neighbour from the same hamlet appeared with a contract—beyond the requirements of the larger community—that necessitated his compliance with requirements of the hamlet. Interestingly, this participant accepted the challenge and was rewarded with two forty-volt power and the right to be called ‘neighbour’.

One of the strengths of this community is its hamlet structure and the way in which hamlet requirements may foster strong inter-personal relations.
between members of the same hamlet. However, in contrast with the positive form of ‘we-consciousness’ discussed in the context of the Evergreen community in section 6.2.3.3, hamlets on this community may also create an inverse form of ‘we-consciousness’ that excludes the broader community in which the hamlets are based, with hamlets acting as the mode of subjection on some occasions, rather than the broader community in which participant’s live.

6.3.6 Stoney Creek

As discussed in section 5.5, Stoney Creek is a land-sharing community that has no underlying commitment towards a communal way of life. Nor is there any fundamental philosophical intention that would provide a connection to a moral code. Participant S1, who bought into the community during its formative years, notes that the community had been established primarily for financial gain, so ‘it was never set up as an idea, as a sense of people coming together, or a sense of community’. Shares in the land were therefore attractive to people on low incomes looking for cheap land in the Nimbin area. It is here that definitions of intentional community are particularly pertinent. Beyond ‘a mutual quest for community which guides and constrains people in these communes’ (Moisand & Pesonen 2002:340), a shared intention, no matter what that might be, provides a reason for sharing and acting in a communal way (Metcalf 2004:9). Without any intention there is no foundation that would otherwise provide a reason for a communal way of life or act as a mode of subjection.

6.3.7 A Mutual quest for community

6.3.7.1 Cooperative living

The intent to live cooperatively is an important factor when considering a mutual quest for community. Such intent serves to guide participants in their
day-to-day lives. As discussed above, all the intentional communities in this research possess some sort of philosophy, however loosely defined, that may incite participants to recognise their moral obligations. However, a corresponding intent to live cooperatively may be the substantial ‘glue’ that ensures a community’s philosophy is realised in the context of communal life. This section briefly discusses additional factors noted in the ethical substance concerning the notion of intentionality. It also draws on the work of Sargisson and her discussion on cooperation through her research into five intentional communities in New Zealand (Sargisson 2004a).

The issue of ‘intentionality’ has been discussed as problematic at the personal level for some participants in this research. Further, notions of ‘intentionality’ in the intentional community literature tend to reflect the ideal that members of intentional communities share a common goal or vision, such as an environmental or spiritual ethos, as discussed above. However, this research also found that what Sargisson refers to as ‘a somewhat vague commitment to community and co-operation’ (2004a:9) may also reflect what Moisander and Pesonen refer to as ‘a mutual quest for community’ (2002:341) that guides participants’ behaviour. In this sense, notions of cooperative living play an important role as the mode of subjection. For instance, the notion of prior relationships discussed in section 6.2.1 seems to undermine the notion of intentionality portrayed in the intentional community literature if the focus is on a shared ethos rooted in a particular philosophy. However, if intentionality instead reflects a commitment to community and cooperation, prior relationships seem to facilitate a movement into this type of commitment.

A number of communities emphasised this latter aspect of ‘intention’. As discussed in section 6.2.3.3, members of the Evergreen community discussed notions of ‘shared values’, which, though serving to affirm an existing identity, also provide a basis for cooperative living (Sargisson 2004a:19).
Despite a sound philosophy, at the time of research participants on the Thora Valley community were ‘aware that they were in a recovery period’ where cooperation had been undermined by significant conflict on the community, reflecting a similar situation to the Chippendale community in Sargisson’s (2004a:11) research. A commitment to community and cooperation, although an enduring quality reflected in the length of time participants had lived on this community, were therefore presented as problematic and in a current state of flux. Further, cooperative living was perceived as endemic to hamlet living on the Mountain Range community, although a commitment to cooperative living was problematic in the context of sharing resources with the wider community. In comparison, significant conflict on the Stoney Creek community had served to undermine any notion of cooperative living on this community.

In many ways a commitment to community and cooperation may reflect a significant historical shift among current intentional communities. Where communities of the 1970s in Australia focused on a shared vision that may have reflected a particular philosophy, contemporary communities may have shifted to the primary notions of ‘community and cooperation’ as the main intentional focus. Further notions of community are discussed in the context of the telos in section 6.4. Ideals of cooperation are also reflected in the ambiguous nature of communal pressure, discussed in the next section.

6.3.7.2 Communal pressure

Although all participants on the intentional communities are required to invest varying levels of tangible resources, intangible investment of the self is far more problematic. Excluding the Danthonia Bruderhof community, where investment of the self is an integral component of daily life, participants on the remaining intentional communities discussed a mutual quest for
community in the context of communal pressure. For many participants, the requirement to participate in communal activities, or the life of the community, had an ambiguous quality. For instance, participants contested the idea that communal engagement was ‘required’:

E10 The word required sort of jumps out. And I suppose in a way it is required, but at the same time, there’s very little overt compulsion for people to do anything.
E1 They’re required, but they’re voluntary—the response is voluntary. If you see a need, and you’re not otherwise committed, then you take it on.
E6 There’s no formal sort of agreement to participate. But there are informal expectations about community meals, and special events, and all of those things, which are really important to feel good in the community.
T5 No. No. You don’t have to. It certainly helps. [Laughs]
T2 You don’t have to do it. But things get over-run.
T6 But even those, even though you’re required, you don’t have to.
T3 So, there is no compulsory, ‘You must come to workdays; you must come to every meeting.’ But it’s just a general sense, a general feeling that whether someone has done that, or not, or is there making a contribution.
T3 We don’t have compulsory things. We don’t have any rituals or ceremonies or anything that people have to attend.
T5 For me, [it’s] not the ‘have-to’s but the ‘need-to’s [that] create some sort of sense of community harmony. There’s certain things just need to be done. And so, when I lived here, I encouraged people to be involved in these things, and try to make them a celebration.

On the one hand, participants from the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities contested the notion that they were required to participate in communal life because they were community members. On the other hand, participants also acknowledged the need to participate in communal activities for a variety of reasons: to feel good about the community; to build community; and to have a sense of wellbeing in the community. Participants were also quick to point out that there were no formal agreements around participating in communal activities. Many of these factors represent the
notion of ‘creating community’, which is discussed further in section 6.5.1. There is therefore a tension in communal living for these participants between activities that are both ‘required’ because a participant is a member of the community, and ‘voluntary’ because as E10 notes, there’s very little overt compulsion for people to do anything.

McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:69) contend that the ‘mandatory vs. voluntary activities’ is one of the basic polarities in community. While both these communities require probationary members to contribute to the life of the community through the investment of the self, sanctions play a small role in the enforcement of participation by members. Kanter (1972:103) argues that sanctions play a role in the commitment mechanism of mortification, which aims to replace individual self-esteem with a communal sense of self-worth that is dependent on group norms. Sanctions therefore aim to deter deviance from those norms by embarrassing the member in front of the community, indicating that their membership is always in question and thus sanctions serve as an example to the rest of the group (Kanter 1972:107). However, neither of these communities impose sanctions against members who fail to participate. In a similar way, participation in working bees at The Wolery, Western Australia (WA), is an obligation with penalties for non-compliance. However, as Conochie (1995:179) points out, they have never been enforced.

Although there are no formal sanctions to enforce participation in the group, participants expressed informal expectations around participation in communal life:

T3 But it’s just a general sense, a general feeling that whether someone has done that, or not, or is there making a contribution.

Similarly, McLaughlin and Davidson argue that minimum standards are often supported by peer pressure or the ‘feeling of ‘bad vibes’ from other
members who may even confront people directly’ (1986:70). Participant T5 transcend the required/voluntary dichotomy by arguing that participation was needed, rather than required, ‘to create some sort of sense of community harmony’. Informal expectations potentially act as a form of mutual criticism, another mortification mechanism. Kanter contends that mutual criticism enables members to reveal ‘to each other their strengths and weaknesses or areas that need improvement’ (1972:106). In non-coercive groups, such as these communities, mortification is then ‘a sign of trust in the group’ (Kanter 1972:105).

Community meetings are good examples of the way in which members of the group may ensure that group norms are communicated and understood by all members of the group. They may also act as a source of community pressure to encourage certain behaviour in other members of the group. E2 from the Evergreen community indicated that monthly meetings provided an avenue for him to state ‘where I stand’:

E2 I was on the side of putting pressure on people—having expectations of others that they would join in. So, I’ve never done that one-to-one, ‘You should work more’ or anything like that. I’ve often thought it, but I’ve certainly said where I stand in the meetings about, oh you know, ‘Isn’t this about us all working together and putting in the effort and turning up and …’ So that puts pressure on people.

T1 of the Thora Valley community discussed the nature of an interaction she experienced because of her failure to turn up to a communal meeting:

T1 [Short pause.] I don’t suppose I have to, but people get a bit snaky if you don’t go to meetings all the time. I mean, if you don’t go at all sort of thing. I’ve had periods over sixteen years where I haven’t gone to meetings and I’ve been in a real huff about them or not wanting to go, or people have come down and said, ‘Rah-rah-rah,’ to me, and I’ve gone, ‘Rah-rah-rah,’ to them. I’m going through a period where I go to meetings now. [Laughs]
Despite the tension between whether participation is required or voluntary, and the way communal pressure guides behaviour on these communities, members were very quick to point out the importance of participating in communal activities. For E6, participating in communal life was important to feel good in the community, indicating a sense of harmony and wellbeing. For E10 communal participation represented a form of community development that enriched the capacity of the community. For E5 it enabled him to transcend his ‘solo streak’ because communal participation created a sense of communal cohesion—invoking a ‘we-consciousness’ that has been discussed elsewhere. So although informal pressure may operate to encourage participation in communal activities, when members do participate they find the nature of these interactions to be both positive and reflective of a sense of well-being in the community. As T5 pointed out, participation also plays a significant role in creating community harmony. In the context of communal sharing and communal work, Kanter (1972) argues:

[They] develop equality, fellowship and group consciousness, which leads to the formation of a cohesive, emotionally involving and affectively satisfying community. (P. 93)

Communal pressure is a form of group normalisation, and could be construed as an example of passive subject constitution developed as a result of coercion, as discussed in the context of Foucault’s work in section 3.4. However, as discussed above, the general features of an intentional community reflect the accepted premise that they are voluntary social orders, based on free entrance and exit regardless of the amount of communal pressure that is placed on individual participants to engage in the life of the community (Kanter 1972:232).
6.3.7.3 Communal by-laws

Communal by-laws also play a significant role in both guiding and constraining members of intentional communities. Moisander and Pesonen (2002) could be criticised for their failure to identify any communal by-laws or covenants that may have formed part of Finnish eco-communes communal title. They argue instead that ‘not a single rule or a specific set of clearly stated rules’ are recognised by communards (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340). In contrast, communal by-laws or covenants played a significant role in what is construed to be members’ ‘mutual quest for community’ on intentional communities in this research. For members of the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities, communal by-laws were presented as unproblematic. This didn’t necessarily mean that participants complied with by-laws and restrictive covenants all of the time. However, there was an expectation around compliance, with by-laws playing a significant role in participants’ communal lives. As discussed above, communal pressure instead played a greater role in generating a mutual quest for community on these communities.

In contrast, participants from the Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities did not discuss communal pressure. For participants on these communities, any form of communal engagement is entirely voluntary. As M2 from Mountain Range stated: ‘Well I guess you could actually live here and not engage with the community at all really.’ Instead, abiding by communal by-laws and covenants were recognised as both guiding and constraining behaviour on this community, although it was readily acknowledged that nearly every by-law had been broken. At a bare

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1 Participants on the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities also noted the important effect of communal by-laws and covenants and the role they played in participant’s ‘mutual quest for community’. However, for these communities, communal pressure seemed to play a more significant and ambiguous role in that quest, while abiding by communal by-laws and covenants was seen as an integral part of membership.
minimum, participants acknowledged the requirement to pay rates. However, the communal rules also enabled participants to undertake a work levy in lieu of paying rates, which all participants in this research had elected to do over time:

M2  As long as you keep your financial responsibilities up, you could still be here.
M2  You’re required to pay your rates every year, and to either do forty hours of work levies, or if not, a financial contribution in that way.
M1  The only thing you’re required to do is pay your rates. And, you pay your levies, but your rates are four hundred dollars a year, and you can work it off.
M3  You’re required to pay your rates. However I’ve never paid money, preferring to work. Last year I worked in the office redoing the filing system—the ‘master’ filing system. I’ve also helped out new board members and created induction processes with new instructions for new members.
M5  The real main requirement is putting in forty hours a year of community work.
M4  We’re not allowed to have dogs and cats. No noise on Sunday. No motor noise. You can have cars, but not chainsaws.

Although there is a clear acknowledgment by participants that they must pay their rates, participants in this research tended to undertake the work levy. In comparison to Stoney Creek, discussed below, participants also acknowledged that living on this community involved more than paying rates, which is discussed further in the context of communal work. Many participants noted a number of environmental by-laws that members were required to comply with. For instance, no member is permitted to keep a cat or dog on the community; there is no noise on Sunday (including the use of power tools) or after sunset; no soap in the creek;¹ no overhead power or phone lines; minimum use of mains power; no building, bulldozing, earthworks or chopping down trees without tribal permission; no use of toxic

¹ The Local Council now enforces this by-law through requiring each household to install a grey water system.
Environmental by-laws are discussed further as self-forming activities in section 6.4.

Remarkably, participants on the Mountain Range community also acknowledged the communal power to enforce by-laws by the larger community. M4 discussed a recent situation where a member’s share was withdrawn because he owned a dog in contravention of the ‘no cat, no dog’ by-law. As this M4 argued, when people join the community they also agree to abide by the by-laws and adhere to them. As M5 states, ‘If you choose not to adhere to them—especially on the long-term—well I think, “Why do you live here?”’ For M4, communal ownership of the land provided a good basis for enforcing harmony on the community:

M4 What that gives us is that if we have someone who isn’t living in harmony with the community, we have a constitutional right to kick them off. And I really like that ... even though it’s really difficult. ... there’s a balance there between voting for what’s best for the overall community and about voting for what’s best for the individual. ... And we wouldn’t actually have that constitutional right if we did own our own land.

For both these participants, there is a sense of comfort found in the community’s ability to enforce the communal by-laws and thereby constrain other members’ behaviour. Both affirmed the right of the community to remove a member who is not abiding by the by-laws or, as M4 states: ‘who isn’t living in harmony with the community.’ The enforcement of communal by-laws represents the way in which members are constrained in their pursuit

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1 Participants on this community also discussed the way in which the ‘no driving on the community unless you have a load’ by-law is now commonly flouted. One participant argued that breakers of this by-law failed to ‘consciously think of the environment, except maybe they think they live in a nice place’. However, the change in this law also reflected changes in communal practice on other communities such as the Evergreen community, where a car pooling system used to operate and people were required to keep driving on the community to a minimum. This transition was often reflective of changing needs—such as an ageing population, changing work practices including longer hours and shift work and the expectations of the wider culture regarding car use becoming part of the communal culture.
of a mutual quest for community. However, the result of that enforcement,\(^1\) which aimed to assist members to live in harmony with the community, reflected the telos of Finnish eco-communards in the research of Moisander and Pesonen (2002:340).

In comparison, participants from the Stoney Creek community clearly noted that the failure to enforce by-laws and covenants was a significant issue in any quest for community. Participants on this community also noted the expectation to pay rates:

\begin{itemize}
  \item S1 There’s no requirement to do anything. Except pay your rates.
  \item S4 You just pay your levies, go and do that at the Summerland Credit Union, and that’s about all you’ve got to have to do with the place really.
\end{itemize}

However, participants indicated that for many members on this land-sharing community, paying rates is the only perception some members have of their responsibilities to the community. Rates are four hundred dollars a year, which one participant noted works out to be approximately thirty dollars a month, or only a dollar a day. Yet participants noted that for some members, even this obligation was difficult to meet. At the time of research some shareholders had thousands of dollars of unpaid rates and a total of almost twelve thousand dollars in rates was owed to the company. For some participants this created a sense of ‘the unknown’, as they were uncertain as to whether Council would take action against the entire community, which would inevitably affect their own shareholding.

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\(^1\) There is a tension in the enforcement of communal by-laws against others. On the one hand, choosing to observe communal by-laws is a form of self-regulation, irrespective of whether the rules are created by a community member or originate in a philosophy developed by another. On the other hand, the enforcement of communal by-laws against other members is also a form of self-regulation because it is expected that members participate in the creation of these rules by virtue of being a member of the community. However, the latter notion might be more clearly associated with Foucault’s notion of disciplinary power, while the former may instead represent a discursive form of power. This tension, particularly in the context of intentional communities, could be explored in further research.
On the other hand, two participants talked of the possibility of the community taking action through the community’s by-laws, which do enable the community to sell up a share once unpaid rates reach a certain dollar value. However, participants expressed further uncertainty around whether the company would take any action at all. In the meantime, participants noted the general disrepair that resulted from unpaid rates, such as the lack of communal water; only a few households having access to mains electricity due to the cost of connecting electricity to the lower part of the community; and the ongoing problem of unsealed and ungraded roads which had resulted in an ongoing dust problem to some houses close to the road, and general wear and tear on vehicles. For example, S2 could only access her landholding by using a four-wheel drive.

Some participants noted that community members were required to adhere to company by-laws attached to the lease of all shareholders when purchasing a share:

S4  It says something about retaining the lifestyle of alternative communities—and that’s a very broad statement. Get along with your neighbours. Not throw poisons around. Look after your cats and dogs … not have livestock going crazy. Keep the weeds at bay; keep the feral Camphor Laurel and Madeira Vines at bay. That’s really what we ask of people, and the four hundred dollars. It’s very minimal.

S1 and S3 acknowledged the need to observe the by-laws and pointed out that the community required very little of its shareholders in the observance of them. However, the property developers who created the original company to oversee the Stoney Creek community had drafted the by-laws for this community. Although the by-laws form a covenant to the lease, contemporary members had not participated in their creation. Amendments to the rules could only be changed once all shares had been purchased in the
company. As the developers created the by-laws on this land-sharing community, community members tended to have very little investment or ‘ownership’ in the observance of the by-laws. In comparison, the by-laws on the intentional communities had been created by the founding members and could be changed by current community members through accepted communal governance processes. Members on these communities therefore had some form of investment in observing the communities’ by-laws.

All communities in this research have some form of by-laws, covenants or rules, which direct communal participants’ behaviour and responsibilities towards one another and the community. In some communities these rules are enforced through strong communal cohesion that encourages conformity and respect of the relevant rules. For instance, on Bruderhof communities there is a clear expectation that participants live a communal life. In contrast, communal pressure plays a significant role on the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities, while the acknowledgment of communal by-laws and the recognition of their enforcement plays a significant role on the Mountain Range community.

Kanter (1972) argues that the learning of new rules and community doctrines forms a part of a community’s socialisation process (see also Metcalf 1986) and distinguishes members on the basis of ‘achievement in living up to group standards and taking on the community identity’ (Kanter, 1972: 108). Members thereby transcend old identities in the creation of new identities that clearly align with the communal identity. Yet communal rules or by-laws are only enforceable if there is strong communal cohesion within the group to make these rules effective. As S1 from Stoney Creek argues:

S1 There are no laws we can actually uphold here, even though they are on our constitution. Like there are people at the moment cutting down trees and there’s nothing we can do about it—even
though our constitution says that over a certain girth they have to take it to a meeting. But they don’t. And what can we do? We can’t police anything. Our by-laws are actually useless.

Generally, participants from the Stoney Creek community noted the ineffective nature of their by-laws due to the lack of communal cohesion to enforce them. For participants on this community, a mutual quest for community was seen to be non-existent and played a relatively insignificant role in guiding or constraining members of the community. For some of these participants, it also created a sense of powerlessness in their ability to affect change in their own circumstances and the circumstances of the community.

6.3.8 Summary

This section has considered various modes of subjection that invite participants to recognise their moral obligations. Davidson argues that the mode ‘provides the linkage between the moral code and the self, determining how this code is to get a hold on our selves’ (1986:229). Three themes relevant to the mode of subjection have been discussed. Firstly, intentional community living has been explored as a personal choice in ethics that may simply reflect the desire to live a better life. Intentional communities, as voluntary organisations, enable participants to choose a mode of subjection that forms the foundation for self-regulation. Through communal governance structures, participants are co-creators of the rules and conventions that govern communal life. Secondly, each intentional community’s philosophy has been explored as a mode that both ‘guides and constrains’ participants as a form of self-regulation on these communities. Three intentional communities—Danthonia Bruderhof, Evergreen and Thora Valley—have quite distinct philosophical intentions, while Mountain Range has a loose philosophical approach. In comparison, the land-sharing community Stoney Creek has no shared philosophy and therefore no mode of subjection. In this sense, participants
cannot refer to a philosophical ideal created through communal engagement that may ‘invite’ them to observe their moral obligations, although participants may recognise the need to observe communal by-laws, as discussed in section 6.3.7.3, and do observe moral obligations extrinsic to the community.

The third theme explored the way in which participants may also be ‘incited’ to recognise their moral obligations simply through ‘a mutual quest for community’ (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340). This mutual quest was reflected in notions of cooperative living, communal pressure and the observation of communal by-laws that reflect a community’s philosophy and play a significant role in inviting participants on the intentional communities to recognise their moral obligations. By contrast, although the constitution and by-laws of the Stoney Creek community contain similar covenants, they are ineffectual due to a lack of communal cohesion. Participants indicated that there was no underlying commitment towards a communal way of life, nor any fundamental philosophical intention that would provide a connection to a moral code. Notions of cooperative living and communal pressure therefore play a significant role in ensuring communal philosophies and by-laws are effective modes of subjection.

Although notions of cooperative living are well recognised in the intentional community literature as serving some common functions that are important to communal life, there is little research to indicate that they may also serve an ethical purpose. The mode of subjection therefore extends beyond a philosophical ideal to include social constructions of communal well-being and practical measures that may guide and constrain participants on these communities (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:340). The authority which incites (Rajchman, 1986:172) participants on these communities may simply reflect
the very act of communal living, while each communal philosophy tends to flavour that particular *mode of subjection*.

This section has also served to highlight the way in which communal living on intentional communities is the fundamental mode of subjection. As Munro-Clark (1986:83) argues, community is a necessary condition for each member’s fulfilment, highlighting the *primary* way in which those living on a community will recognise their moral obligations. Although this is problematic in some cases, given the various degrees of commitment participants displayed towards their communal obligations on some communities, participants still acknowledged particular requirements instilled through communal living that they were required to observe. Therefore, both the form of communal living and each community’s philosophy play an ongoing role in the way participants are called to recognise their moral obligations.

The mode of subjection is also instilled through the self-forming activities that participants perform on their selves, and these are considered in the next section.

**6.4 Self-forming activities**

As discussed in section 3.6.3, the self-forming activities\(^1\) concern the practices or techniques that are performed on the self to bring about a desired transformation (Foucault 1984a:354). Foucault asks:

> What are we to do, either to moderate our acts, or to decipher what we are, or to eradicate our desires …..all this elaboration of ourselves in order to behave ethically? (1984a:354)

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\(^1\) Also referred to as ‘techné’ or ‘technologies of the self’. See section 3.6.3.
The research of Moisander and Pesonen (2002) identifies two ways in which Finnish eco-communards engage in self-forming activities. Firstly, they identify what I call ‘personal practices’ that aim to transform the self and support a communal way of living, such as self-reflection, self-education and conscious consumption. Secondly, the very idea and act of moving into a commune and exposing oneself to communal living (Moisander & Pesonen 2002) raises what I refer to as ‘communal practices.’ For example, Kanter argues that ‘mingling of the self in the group’ (amongst other elements) forms the basis of communion which enables the development of a strong ‘we-feeling’ (1972:92-93). Thus communal work, regularised group contact and ritual are ways in which collective unity may be achieved (Kanter 1972:93-98).

Building on the research of Moisander and Pesonen (2002) and Kanter (1972), this section is divided into two parts. The first part considers communal practices as self-forming activities, such as communal work and meetings, shared meals and environmental practices. Conflict is also discussed as a practice in the framework of communal meetings, as it is considered a significant change mechanism in intentional communities (Metcalf 2004:89; Sargisson 2004a). Conflict is discussed further in the context of the telos in section 6.5. The second part of this section explores individual practices of participants that form the basis for transforming the self, such as meditation and critical self-reflection. This part also seeks to highlight significant differences between communities in their techné.

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1 Kanter argues that ‘Connectedness, belonging, participation in a whole, mingling of the self in the group, equal opportunity to contribute and to benefit—all are part of communion,’ (1972:93).
6.4.1 Communal practices

6.4.1.1 Communal work

Communal work is both a central feature and a point of discontent on many intentional communities. Some issues relating to communal participation have already been discussed in section 6.3 with respect to whether participation in communal life is required or voluntary, and the role communal pressure plays in the communal life of the Evergreen community. Although issues relating to participation in communal work are well documented in the literature (see McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:69-72) and participants in this research also raised issues relating to members’ participation in communal activities, this section primarily considers the nature of communal work undertaken by participants on their communities.

Communal work is an integral part of day-to-day life on all Bruderhof communities. Each Bruderhof community supports itself through a communal business. For instance, Danthonia Bruderhof has a business called Danthonia Designs, which produces colourful handcrafted and gilded signs for sale both within Australia and for export to American. An example is reproduced in Appendix B. The workshop is located on the community, with members using carving skills developed in Bruderhof communities over generations. New technologies are also embraced (Franklin 2005:5). Beyond working in the business and promoting it, all members are employed in some form of communal work: teaching in the schools; working in the vast vegetable gardens and in the communal facilities; washing clothes; preparing meals for the community; raising children; undertaking the accounts for the community; caring for the sick or elderly; and working in the health clinic. Work may also be undertaken in the evening. While making doughnuts with a number of young women for the communal afternoon tea, the women
discussed evening activities, which included writing up post-cards to send out into the wider community to promote the Danthonia Designs business.

Young Bruderhof members are formally educated in universities to enable them to take part in communal life and in the work of the community and, in some cases, offer services to non CCI members located nearby\(^1\). Elderly Bruderhof members, as Peters points out, ‘work as long and as much as their strength permits … Grandmas operate computers, while others fold laundry or help set our communal dining tables’ (1996:184). All work is seen to be of equal value, with no less or more importance attached to any particular task. CCI states:

> We believe that it is important that every individual find purpose in his or her work, regardless of age, education, or ability. When performed with love and in service of others, the most menial task can be fulfilling. Thus someone who mops floors is no less important than someone who practices medicine. (Church Communities International 2009)

In contrast, on the Evergreen and Thora Valley intentional communities communal work is more aptly reflected in the notion of ‘workdays’. Participants on the Evergreen community may participate in workdays on three Saturday mornings in the month, which often involves quite intense manual work maintaining the property. For instance, at the time of research, the community had been trimming back trees from the community centre. Tree limbs were subsequently dragged to another location for a bonfire to dispose of the waste. Community members also maintain fire trails and roads. Less intensive work may include working in the communal gardens. Participants also discussed a roster system that allocates particular jobs to community members. For instance, preparing and cleaning up after the

\(^1\) For instance, a trained medical practitioner on the Danthonia Bruderhof community offers their medical skills to local residents who are not members of the community.
weekly communal meal and morning tea during workdays, cleaning the communal amenities, starting the water-powered generator that provides electricity to the community, and maintaining the kitty system to bulk-buy organic food for all community members. Members at different times also play a significant role in the administration of the community.

Similarly, participants on the Thora Valley community undertake five hours of communal work per week, which may arise through participation in workdays. Again, this often involves intense manual work maintaining the property, or it may involve cleaning the communal amenities. However, it may also involve smaller groups initiating spontaneous work to clear lantana by hand or work in the orchard or communal gardens for longer or shorter periods of time. Some members may also play a significant role in the administration of the community. For instance work areas on the community are organised into different groups. The community secretary and company members handle administration, while the finance group consists of the bookkeeper and the treasurer. There are also ‘focalisers’ who focus on particular work that needs to be undertaken on the community. These include the amenities, community house, water and road focalisers. There are also the tractor and machinery groups, the festival committee, the guest group that looks after guest accommodation, the constitution reform committee and the rubbish removal group. In addition, two participants also use their computer skills to assist the community in producing the *Thora Valley Newsletter* and in maintaining the community’s internet site. Thora Valley is also known for its ‘Thora Valley Tofu’, which is produced on the community and sold in local outlets.

Participants on the Mountain Range community are not required to participate in communal workdays on a regular basis. As M2, who has been living on the community for eighteen years, noted:
M2  You’re not expected to do a workday every week or go to meetings and do all that stuff. I mean it’s difficult … we probably should share the responsibilities much greater. I went a couple of years ago, but that was the first time I’d done it [sic].

However, participants in this research elected to undertake forty hours of work levies per year in lieu of paying rates. One participant had elected to work in the office to renew the filing system and had previously worked with board members to create an induction process for new members. Another participant had worked in the local community store, in addition to undertaking tractor work slashing common areas, working as a bookkeeper at the community school, and acting as treasurer on the local board. Some members of the community work as elected board members, while there were also paid administrative positions on the community to ensure ongoing compliance with its obligations as a co-operative. In contrast, communal workdays on hamlets were much more likely to attract participants. Hamlet workdays used to be a weekly occurrence, with members of two connected hamlets visiting one person’s house a week. Though workdays were not a regular feature anymore at the time of research, they were still held if maintenance work needed to be undertaken on the hamlets, such as cutting up the track at the dam to look after the waterlines.

During the formative years of building on the Stoney Creek community, members had individual workdays, assisting each other in building their houses. S2 discussed how she would stay up late cooking the night before the workday to ensure everyone was well fed during the day. However, she noted that these were ‘private’ workdays and therefore did not necessarily involve all shareholders. In addition, a community-based activity known as ‘groundsel day’ used to draw half a dozen participants, yet this participant also acknowledged that the same few people would turn up—or members

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1 A day designated for clearing up Lantana and Madeira Vine etc, on the community.
would only work a few hours—leaving others to continue working ‘and you get jack of that after a while’. As early communal meetings were marred by significant interpersonal violence, it was pointed out that communal work rarely occurs now on this community. The problems associated with this are discussed in section 6.3.5.

6.4.1.2 Regularised group contact

Regularised group contact is a significant aspect of communal life. In a similar way to communal work, it may also form the basis of much discontent. The problem of regularised group contact is also well documented in the literature (McLaughlin & Davidson 1986:62-68). Participants from both the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities expressed a desire for greater interaction with their fellow communal members. However, this section aims to discuss particular examples of regularised group contact as specific self-forming activities that occur on these communities, including communal meetings, communal and shared meals, social engagement and ritual.

6.4.1.2.1 Meetings

All communities that participated in this research have meetings. However, the nature and the regularity of those meetings may depend on the religious or legal structures underpinning those communities. Fisher (2002) and Irvine (2003) have discussed the impact of legal structures on intentional communities in northern NSW. This section therefore aims to provide a brief description of meetings that take place on each community with some discussion of participants’ experience of consensus decision-making, which is a method of making decisions on many of these communities. It also considers the role of conflict in the context of communal meetings and its wider implications as a self-forming activity.
Communal living on Bruderhof communities is marked by a significant number of informal and formal meetings. While visiting the Danthonia Bruderhof community the researcher participated in an informal meeting held during morning tea, which enabled information to be shared and further work directions to be imparted to the group. A meeting for sharing, decision-making, singing and prayer may also follow dinner (Church Communities International 2009). More formal meetings occur during the week, with all Bruderhof communities linked together by satellite to participate in a whole of community meeting at least twice a week. Metcalf (2004) notes that adults on the Darvell community meet regularly to discuss community issues, with any member able to block a decision. An administrative committee is responsible for day-to-day decisions, while consensus-based decision-making may be utilised for major issues affecting all Bruderhof. As Metcalf notes, ‘Members are expected to speak out if she or he feels that a decision does not reflect the mission of the church, or is opposed on conscientious grounds’ (2004:57).

Communal meetings on the Evergreen community occur once a month on Saturday mornings, with decisions reached on the basis of consensus. Meetings are often long, intense and emotional and form a further basis for intense interpersonal engagement with other communal residents. An Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held at the beach for a week in October, which is attended by both resident and non-resident members and children. The AGM also serves to fulfil both communal and legal requirements. Similarly, the Thora Valley community holds meetings once a month on a Saturday morning. Decisions are based on a split percentage vote. Issues relating to changing the constitution, membership, home sites, house plans and loans require a ninety percent vote. Membership requires a ninety percent vote of all members of the community—not just those who turn up to meetings—
while decisions concerning the general running of the community require a seventy-five percent vote. One participant was keen to point out, however, that the community still tries to aim for consensus, particularly where a ninety percent vote is required. An AGM is also held once a year to ensure the community abides by its legislative requirements; however, like Evergreen, the AGM also forms the basis for further interpersonal engagement.

Mountain Range has an active board (Lockland 1998:8) which meets following tribal meetings. Tribal meetings may consider general matters relating to the permissible use of land, siting of buildings, rates, levies, admission of members and the framing of new rules (Munro-Clark 1986:127). Additional matters may also be discussed. During the tribal meeting I attended at Mountain Range, a representative for youth on the community presented to the meeting a request for a youth space, resulting in rigorous discussion and heated debate. The request was voted on by a show of hands by members present, resulting in a denial of that request.1 As one participant pointed out, not too many members attend tribal meetings, although there is a core group who do attend. New shareholders must attend six meetings as part of the membership requirement. Board meetings closely follow tribal meetings so that what has been approved at a tribal meeting can be approved at a board meeting. Although bylaws can be changed at a tribal meeting, they are generally only changed at the AGM. Members of the Board also meet regularly on the Stoney Creek community; however, participants rarely attend those meetings. Many members vote by proxy, with usual company rules around quorums and majority voting being applied at meetings on this community.

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1 The denial predominantly related to the space youth wished to use because of its ‘public’ location on the community rather than the provision of a youth space per se.
The Bruderhof, Evergreen and Thora Valley communities all use consensus based decision-making during communal meetings. Significant attention is given to this method of making decisions in the intentional community literature (Christian 2003c; Didcoct & Delapa 2000; Metcalf 2004). E2 from the Evergreen community made similar comments to those found in the literature relating to both the process and the issues that arise with respect to this governance model:

E2 We’ve set this up in what I’ve found to be a fairly unique way of community. We just have straight consensus where everyone has to agree—or agree to agree—even if they agree reluctantly or say, ‘Look, if you want it I’ll go with it but I don’t really want it.’ They have to sort of agree. It’s very different from voting. It creates a very different dynamic. I like it a lot better than voting. However, it also means that decisions can take a really long time. It can be really frustrating. So for example, that flat area that you see in front of the community used to be split-level. And four years ago I started saying, ‘Let’s make that into one level. Let’s have a bigger playing field.’ I can do even bigger things, just encourage people to play games together more ... like it’s conducive to events ... we’ve had weddings out there and all sorts of stuff. And it took about three years of me just bringing it up and gradually bringing people onside and now of course, I can be arrogant and get on my high horse, and now of course everyone says, ‘What was the fuss? It’s great!’ But that’s just how it is.

Although this participant discussed consensus decision-making as a unique way of establishing community, Metcalf (2004:95) notes that many readers of his book, *Community Living*, would probably assume that all intentional communities aspire to this model of governance. T5 from the Thora Valley community similarly discussed the process of consensus-based decision-making and her positive view of that process:

T5 That whilst I can be an individual, and express my own point of view, I give over to the group for consensus, even if I don’t think it’s the right thing. Because we’re all learning together. [Laughs]
We’re all sort of going somewhere. And I think it’s even better if you don’t know where you’re going. [Laughs] If you have a positive intention, then hopefully something good comes out of even wrong decisions. So that’s been an extraordinary thing for me.

Issues relating to the process, the time it can take to make a decision, the way in which an agreed decision will be quickly implemented, the way it differs from ordinary voting and the positive effects of this method are further discussed in Metcalf (2004:97). Both these participants make very similar comments with respect to this method of decision-making and the way in which members may ‘agree to agree’ even if they do not agree with the decision being made. The participant from the Thora Valley community indicates that she is empowered to express her point of view, though she may give up her individual opinion in deference to the group—even if she doesn’t think it is the right decision. The participant from the Evergreen community notes how this method of decision-making is different to voting and creates a very different dynamic. Metcalf (2004:95) confirms that this style of governance encourages people to work diligently towards agreement on an issue or, failing that, enables members to ‘stand aside’ in deference to the group. As Christian (2003c) argues:

Consensus is designed to empower a group as a group, because the facilitator draws out the ideas and concerns of each member and doesn’t let the more articulate or energetic members dominate. (P. 696)

As participant E2 from the Evergreen community points out, decisions may take a very long time; however, once made, receive the full support of the community. Participant T5 from the Thora Valley community considers this process of decision making to be a learning process for both herself and the community. Further, she is not concerned with the direction the group decision takes her—or the community—provided there is a positive intention
behind making that decision. As this participant notes, even wrong decisions may result in good outcomes, indicating that the process is far more important than the outcome.

Although participants on these communities were positive about consensus-based decision making as a process, many of them suffered significant emotional and physical effects as a result of attending this style of meeting. Participants discussed getting frustrated at the process or becoming emotionally upset at the content of meetings. They also discussed physiological effects, such as getting headaches due to the length and intensity of some meetings. A participant from the Thora Valley community noted the need to take more breaks and suggested that providing food during the meeting may lessen the impact of their sometimes volatile and emotional nature. I have discussed my own experience of attending communal meetings in section 4.5.2. Although meetings may produce significant emotional and physical effects, Didcoct and Delapa (2000:52) point out that consensus is a decision-making process that is learned, takes practice, and often involves replacing old behaviour patterns with patterns of thinking that consider both the individual and the group.

Though there are variances between what might be viewed as healthy and unhealthy conflict, Sargisson (2004a:7) notes that in her experience of visiting over sixty intentional communities, she is yet to visit one that has not experienced conflict at some time. Metcalf (2004:98) also points out that conflict occurs in all social groups, including intentional communities. McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:Chp 3) dedicate a whole chapter to dealing with ‘problems and conflict’ that may arise on intentional communities, while Stevenson (1999) and Christian (2005a; 2005b) discuss common sources of conflict in communities. The nature of conflict on intentional communities has also been discussed in section 2.6. Sargisson (2004a) argues that:
conflict has been undertheorised in the literature on intentional communities and that we can learn something useful about its function and management of conflict by closely studying them. (P. 7)

Given the longevity of the intentional communities that participated in this research, and the conflict that I witnessed when attending communal meetings, it is apparent that conflict plays an important role on these communities.

The experience of conflict on intentional communities has led to the development of particular techniques that are used to manage it, in addition to the development of interpersonal skills aimed at resolving conflict both within and outside a community. For instance, one member of the Evergreen community embarked on a life-long journey to develop group skills, including conflict management, after participating in an unsuccessful environmental protest that involved significant levels of conflict. All the intentional communities in this research have both communal and individual techniques for dealing with conflict. For example, Danthonia Bruderhof has a variety of conflict measures that range from interpersonal conflict management techniques to institutional methods that involve elders in the Church. Some communities entrench conflict management methods within their constitutions, articles of association or by-laws, depending on the legal structure of the community. As discussed in section 2.6, Schehr (1997:96-97) argues that intentional communities may create and practise sophisticated methods of non-violent conflict resolution and personal growth, which designates them as contemporary NSM actors.

6.4.1.2.2 Communal and shared meals

Communal meals are often an integral part of communal life and result in the further intensification of inter-personal engagement. All Bruderhof
communities share a similar culture around communal meals, with all meals except breakfast eaten communally. A number of communal morning and afternoon teas may also occur across communities and may be located near members’ places of work. The nature of communal meals on this community has been discussed in section 5.2.

The Evergreen community has a communal dinner once a week on a Sunday night. Members, non-resident members and former members of the community may attend these dinners, in addition to biological family members and friends of community members. Children of members also attend this communal meal. A roster system allocates cooking and clean-up roles to community members, which all members adhere to. A communal morning tea is also held every Saturday during the communal workday. In addition to communal meals, shared meals among members of the community also occur on a regular basis. Although not planned in the same way as the weekly communal meal, shared meals are significant events that occur amongst participants on this community.

The Thora Valley community had previously had communal meals, however this was not the practice at the time of research. In comparison, shared meals occurred often between friends on the community. A number of participants discussed a communal café that used to be run by members of the community. The café had been open to both members of the community and neighbours living in the area and was managed by two members of the community who had catering skills. Meals could be purchased for between four to five dollars, with a donation made back to the community for the use of the community hall and the remaining proceeds taken as profit by the

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1 Shared meals occur where two or more members from different households in the community eat together. In comparison, communal meals occur where all members of the community share a meal together. Both shared and communal meals may include non-members of the community.
cooks. Although few people frequented the café, those who did could purchase a ‘good restaurant quality meal’ for a very cheap price.

Communal meals on the Mountain Range community rarely occur. However, shared meals between members of hamlets and between friends in the wider community occur on a regular basis. During the formative years of this community, communal meals occurred on a regular basis. However, with the development of hamlets, larger community-based meals shifted to hamlet-based shared meals, which were easier to accommodate in such a large community.

In comparison, communal meals are not a feature of living on the Stoney Creek community and participants indicated that they rarely had shared meals with other members of the community. Although some shared meals had occurred during the formative years of building on this community, they quickly ceased due to interpersonal conflict. Of course shared meals occur with family and friends who live off the community and were a greater feature of participants’ lives on this community.

The intensity of communal meals varies from one community to another. While nearly all meals on Danthonia Bruderhof are communal, participants attend one communal meal and morning tea a week on the Evergreen community, in addition to engaging in shared meals with other members of the community. In comparison, shared meals are a greater feature on the Thora Valley community and within hamlets on the Mountain Range community. No communal or shared meals occur on the Stoney Creek community. Despite their intensity, communal and shared meals play an important role on these communities and, for many participants, are significant self-forming activities. The effect of this engagement is discussed more fully in the context of community in section 6.5.
6.4.1.2.3 Social engagement and ritual

Social engagement and ritual, like communal and shared meals, are often significant aspects of communal living. Christian (2000) argues that celebrations and rituals are two elements among a number of factors that give rise to community spirit. She defines ritual as ‘repeated, focused activity [that] almost always involves music, movement and song’ (Christian 2000:30) and may combine spiritual, and psychological practices, in addition to physical movement (Christian 2000:31). She also notes that celebration and ritual have a number of purposes, including deepening members’ understanding of nature, facilitating relationships with each other and serving a number of social, physical, emotional and spiritual functions (Christian 2000:30-31).

Celebration is a significant aspect of Bruderhof life and forms the basis of ongoing ritual, including birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, funerals, and holidays such as Easter and Christmas (Church Communities International 2009). Singing is also an interwoven part of communal life occurring both spontaneously, as part of schooling, during lunch or dinner, or through established choirs. Celebration may also be used as a way of alleviating intense work periods on the community. Peters (1996), who is a member of New Meadow Run Bruderhof in the USA, explains:

we find excuses for fun. A few days ago there was so much work to do in the factory that we closed it down and played softball for an hour. What a great way to pump new enthusiasm into our work! Another time the bell that rings to call us to meals suddenly began to ring in the middle of the morning. Everyone dropped what they were doing and rushed to the dining hall. A busload of people had just arrived from one of our other Bruderhofs to surprise us. A joyful hubbub ensued as each person was welcomed and we found someone to invite home to our apartment. (P. 185)
An emphasis on fun was also a significant element of communal life on the Evergreen community. Participants discussed the way in which they conspired with each other to create as much fun as possible during communal social events and celebrations. Social engagement and ritual were significant aspects of communal life on this community and were woven into the fabric of interpersonal engagement for all participants:

E5 The social networks we have are just fantastic here ... when we put on a little cabaret or ... or we have a party.
E7 Celebration has been a strong thing here. I think that's really important to me that we keep that alive, and that we encourage that kind of performance and capacity to express themselves.
E6 we always have a big Christmas ... [and] ... most years we have a cabaret, where we all perform in some way ... This year we had our own 'lympics.
E5 The social events that we have ... they’re the moments when I have the strongest sense of how wonderful it is to live in a community.

Parties, performances, a big Christmas and other social events are significant celebrations. An inaugural 'lympics’—an all day event held on a weekend—involved resident members participating in their own form of the Olympics on the community. Ongoing events such as cabarets are held where members may play different roles, forming the basis for ongoing communal significance and cultural story telling.

Ritual also forms an important basis for intensifying interpersonal relations. Ritual surrounded the first death on the community, which occurred while planning for a significant birthday of another member. The unexpected death brought residents, relatives and friends together in both a celebration of life and death in a significant environmental area on the community called ‘The Glade’. Circle dancing and other ritual dancing forms the basis of both a celebration of one person’s life and a dedication to the memory of another.
Similar celebrations and rituals are held on the Thora Valley community although the intensity of these events had lessened in contemporary times. A recent clean-up of bamboo near the creek that resulted in a bonfire in the evening was referred to as a ‘Beltane’ fire by participants and involved members of the community celebrating, dancing and eating together. Other pagan festivals are also held, including celebrations of Solstice and Equinox, with other seasonal celebrations such as picnics and sleep-outs for kids by the river in summer. This community also stages plays on an annual basis with members of the community and friends of members participating, in addition to art exhibitions, music and singing nights. Significantly, this community had also organised some very large annual music festivals on the flats near the river that formed part of the community, which attracted large crowds over a number of days.1

Celebration, rather than ritual, is an integral part of the life of hamlets on Mountain Range. M2 was crowned the ‘community idol’ following a neighbour’s party a few weeks before my visit:

M2 Well, my neighbour had a party a few weeks ago, with a karaoke machine and we all had to come with a performance. Three of us got together. Have you seen the movie Priscilla Queen of the Desert? And when their bus breaks down in the desert … and they do ‘I Will Survive’? Well, we did that dance. [Laughs] We had the big wigs, and the glitter all over us and big eyelashes. It was a lot of fun. Someone took a video. We’re still waiting on our contract!

Social engagement and ritual are significant activities on the Danthonia Bruderhof and Evergreen communities and have varied in significance over time on the Thora Valley community. Social engagement rather than ritual forms the basis of hamlet living on the Mountain Range community, while

1 These were very successful events and only ceased with the introduction of higher insurance premiums following the worldwide collapse of insurance companies such as HIH.
participants on the Stoney Creek community do not engage socially or participate in ritual with each other.¹

6.4.1.2.5 Communal infrastructure

Although Kanter argues that communal infrastructure failed ‘to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful communities, because it was a minimum requirement for establishing most communities’ (1972:111), communal infrastructure on the intentional communities in this research has formed the basis for regularised group contact and provided what Sargisson refers to as ‘social sustainability’ (2004a:17). It is therefore included here for a number of reasons:² the symbolic importance placed on communal infrastructure by community members; the variance between communities in the use of communal structures; the way in which communal infrastructure facilitates other self-forming activities of the group such as communal work and group ritual; and the fact that it distinguishes an intentional community from other communities, such as land sharing communities.

All participants from the intentional communities in this research discussed the use of communal facilities located on their community, either directly or through stories. For instance, the communal facilities available to members on the Evergreen community included a community hall, guest room, agricultural sheds, communal gardens, public toilet, roads, water and power systems, meditation hall, special communal places in the forest such as ‘The Glade’ and expanded households that enabled the sharing of facilities.

¹ Though one participant noted that shareholders had developed a ‘phone-tree’ that enabled some members to call on each other at least once a week. Again, social engagement and ritual were factors in participants’ lives, however these activities were undertaken with people who did not live on the community.
² I support Kanter’s view that communal infrastructure may not distinguish between successful and unsuccessful intentional communities. However communal infrastructure plays a significant part in distinguishing intentional communities from other types of communities, such as land-sharing communities.
Further reference to communal infrastructure has also been made in the context of communal work, in section 6.4.1.1 and communal and shared meals in section 6.4.1.2.2. Various stories of interpersonal engagement with other members of the community were also interwoven around the use of these facilities, such as the unexpected death of a resident on the Evergreen community, which has been discussed in section 6.4.1.2.3. Writing in the context of cohousing, Meltzer argues that members ‘utilise their shared facilities to establish a rich community life of social, recreational, cultural and work activities’ (2005:3).

Strikingly, participants on the Stoney Creek community expressed a desire for communal facilities as the potential starting point for the creation of a sense of community:

S4 Oh, there’s been a move to put in a hall. ... We need a meeting place. We sit among the jumping ants at the noticeboard.

S3 I think if we had a community hall where we could get together and have community concerts. Fundraising concerts or something like that. Then the people that did want to come together maybe they would. I don’t know. We don’t have anything like that.

S2 And it would be lovely one day to have a communal hut or a dwelling to have meetings in. And perhaps the people who are here could go and say, ‘We’ll have a yoga morning, or a mediation morning.’ But you could always do that round at each other’s shares. But I think that’s the one thing that’s probably the saddest thing about this place—is the lack of that.

S4 We need a nice place to sit down, and get together, and chat. That would be really good. It’s a thing to help the community ... Cookhouses and wells ... they’ve been the centre of communication for ages you know ...

Although participants suggested the community was moving towards building a communal hall, its development had primarily been delayed by the
legal structure of the community. Participants on this community articulated a connection between having a community hall and the development of a sense of community through engagement. Participants desire for a communal hall or dwelling is interesting in the context of Kanter’s work. Kanter argues that for successful communities, communal ownership of buildings in addition to land, furniture, tools and equipment, can aid a sense of communion and thus community (1972:91, 95). Further, bringing members together through building communal infrastructure represents the types of struggles and austerity involved in developing a community, building commitment and producing physical symbols of communal effort (Kanter 1972:79).

6.4.1.4 Abstinence and austerity

Abstinence and austerity (Kanter 1972) are a significant techné in Bruderhof communities and formed part of the founding philosophy of the Evergreen community, as discussed in section 6.3.2. Metcalf (1995), notes that abstinence and austerity also formed the basis of many early Australian intentional communities. Kanter (1972) argues that abstinence and austerity reflects the commitment mechanism of sacrifice. Abstinence may involve giving up ‘alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, rich foods, or meat or today’s parallel—drugs’ (Kanter 1972:79); while austerity practices may involve members taking a vow of poverty, as members of CCI communities do, or requiring members to ‘deliberately return to a struggling, subsistence level of existence in the midst of an affluent society’ (Kanter 1972:79).

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1 Until all forty shares had been sold in the property, the proprietary owners of the land-holding community remain the developers—Company Pty Ltd. However, all forty shares in the property had recently been sold, resulting in the transfer of the property title of the community to the company ‘Stoney Creek’ which consists of all shareholders in the community. With this change, shareholders may be empowered to initiate the development of new buildings, including a communal hall.
The Danthonia Bruderhof community continue to practice contemporary methods of abstinence and austerity. For example, as discussed in section 5.2., women wear a peasant-style dress with long sleeved shirt and headdress, based on the German Tyrolean tradition (Franklin 2006:2) while men in Australia wear jeans or slacks and shirts. As Noranne Voll of the Danthonia Bruderhof states:

> We could put the guys in suspenders and overalls if we wanted to. It’s not dress for its own sake. And the certain cut or style is meaningless to us except that we’ve chosen something that says that it’s unified, so that there’s no worry about hairstyles or who’s wearing what, but that it’s simple and straightforward and modest, and frankly, I love it. (Franklin 2005:7)

Both men and women give up personal adornment in favour of a unified dress code. As Noranne points out, it lessens the worry over hairstyles or ‘who’s wearing what’ in favour of a dress code that is simple and modest. Noranne also points out that the chosen style of dress serves a purpose, which aims to bring about uniformity. She states that: ‘we’ve chosen something that says that it’s unified’. For Kanter, communal dress on communes also forms the basis of de-individuating mechanisms, which serve to lessen distinctions between individuals and remove their ‘sense of isolation, privacy, and uniqueness’ (Kanter 1972:110). Self-sustainability and simplicity may also form the basis of abstinence and austerity and are discussed further below in this section.

6.4.1.5 Environmental practices

Although eco-villages may implement significant communal practices such as permaculture or bio-dynamic principles as an integral part of communal life (Jackson & Svensson 2002), many other intentional communities with quite different philosophies often require members to observe some form of community-based environmental regulation that serves as a form of self-
regulation in communal life. For some communities, principles of environmental protection are interwoven into their philosophy, such as on the Evergreen community, or their Articles of Association on the Thora Valley community, or their by-laws or general ethos, as is the case with the Mountain Range community. While for others it has evolved over time as a shared ethos among members of that community, resulting in significant practices that benefit the environment. This section identifies environmental practices that are utilised by communities in this research, including variants of self-sustainability, common environmental practices, the observation of restrictive covenants, and communal declarations of native flora and fauna sanctuaries and water practices.

6.4.1.5.1 Self-sustainability

Self-sustainability is practised by the Danthonia Bruderhof and Evergreen communities and represents what Jackson and Svensson would refer to as a practice that benefits the environment (Jackson & Svensson, 2002:131).¹ Danthonia Bruderhof is predominantly self-sufficient and, while not a struggling, subsistence level of existence, simplicity is a cornerstone of Bruderhof life (Church Communities International 2009) as it is for the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities. These aspects are discussed further when considering a simple and quality lifestyle in section 6.5.4.1.

Both the Danthonia Bruderhof and Evergreen communities grow their own food. Danthonia Bruderhof devote very large areas of their agricultural holding to growing food in addition to raising their own cows and sheep, and chickens for both eggs and meat. Members of this community expressed

¹ Though Metcalf argues with respect to the Bruderhof that despite ‘being environmentally responsible and frugal in many ways’ their refusal to curb their population undermines ‘their recognition as responsible global citizens’ (2004:58).
concern with the practice of using antibiotics in raising livestock and the use of pesticides in growing fruit and vegetables. This had led to a decision to be as self-sufficient as possible, using natural methods to create their own food sources. While largely self-sufficient, the community bought grains and other produce such as oil, which could not be produced on the community.

Similarly, the Evergreen community has a large communal garden devoted to seasonal fruit and vegetables. The community supplements their own produce with organic vegetables purchased through a common purse or ‘kitty’. One member on this community expressed concern at the cost of this practice, feeling that there was potentially little difference in the nutritional value of food grown organically and food grown non-organically. Similar to Danthonia Bruderhof, the community bought grains and produce not able to be produced on the community.

Although the Thora Valley community has a communal vegetable garden, very little produce is grown in it, with a number of participants indicating that more effort could be put into setting up and maintaining the communal garden. Established fruit trees provide seasonal fruit, with two participants discussing the way children of the community could ‘forage’ at different times during the year. The community also has organic certification for mandarins and garlic. One participant indicated that she aimed to grow organic garlic to sell locally in the near future.

Though self-sufficiency on the Mountain Range community is not a communal practice, some participants on the community are self-sufficient. M1 commented on one of his neighbours in his hamlet:

    M1  Neil has probably got the size of a nine-hole golf course out there that he just tends with his hands. You’ve got to hand it to the guy—he grows all his own vegies and shit. Really, he’s a marvel.
The community also has communal gardens and orchards. Produce is sold at the local markets, with proceeds directed back into maintaining the orchards.

### 6.4.1.5.2 Common Practices

There are a number of practices that are common to all communities. For instance, the use of solar power, composting toilets and gas fridges are more often the norm and have been used by many communities either since their inception or for relatively long periods of time. Other practices, such as the use of grey water systems\(^1\), are now required by local Councils, with communities being regularly checked to ensure compliance. Many communities have used the natural resources on their landholdings to build their residences and communal buildings. From river rock, to timber and bamboo, many founding stories revolved around the hardship experienced by earlier members and the efforts they put into building the community using natural resources (Metcalf 1995). Experimentation with building materials has also been a feature of these communities, with members of the Thora Valley community having incorporated river bamboo into their building styles.

### 6.4.1.5.3 Observation of restrictive covenants

Many communities impose a significant number of restrictive covenants on members. These require abstinence from certain activities, in addition to maintaining the peace and quiet and aesthetics of the natural surrounds. For instance, restrictive covenants on the Mountain Range community include restrictions on: the use of pesticides and herbicides unless participants have communal permission; building or bulldozing without tribal permission; installing overhead power lines; the use of mains power; making noise after sunset; using power tools or making loud noise on Sunday; and the famous

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\(^1\) Grey water systems were utilised by a number of communities before they became a requirement by Council so are considered ‘practices’ that have subsequently become mandated and regulated by law.
‘no soap in the creek’ rule which, has been the best kept covenant by members on this community (Lockland 1998:24).

Although there are significant issues around members’ compliance with restrictive covenants on larger communities such as Mountain Range, both the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities have similar restrictive covenants that are mostly maintained by participants living on these communities. On the Thora Valley community, nearly all prohibited activities relate to environmental concerns and include not knowingly lending money to, or take part in or support any business or activity which unnecessarily: (a) pollutes the air, soil or water; (b) creates products or services which will have harmful effects on humans, animals or the environment; (c) damages the health of humans, animals or the environment; and (d) excessively destroys or wastes non-recurring resources.¹ Stoney Creek also has a number of restrictive covenants attached to members’ perpetual leases; however, many of these restrictions are ineffective due to the issues that have been discussed in section 6.3.6.3.

Another restrictive covenant, the ‘no cat, no dog’, rule is infamous on many Australian intentional communities. The Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities all require participants to abstain from owning cats or dogs, and although it is a point of contention and is sometimes disregarded, all participants acknowledged its usefulness in protecting native wildlife. In some cases member’s shares were withdrawn for contravening this rule, as discussed in the context of communal by-laws. As one participant in Lockland’s study argues, ‘[n]o dogs and cats is really primarily a major thing that has happened here—because it has given many people the chance to observe the wildlife very closely’ (1998:24).

¹ Section 66 of the Thora Valley Ltd Memorandum of Association (current as at 11/09/06).
6.4.1.5.4 Native flora and fauna sanctuaries

There is an abundance of wildlife on these communities. Where interviews occurred outside, participants such as those on the Thora Valley community were quick to point out local native inhabitants, such as a kingfisher or a local bowerbird nest with its many blue objects. Lockland (1998) notes the wide range of wildlife, including birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians that were located on this community due its close proximity with a National Park. The Evergreen and Thora Valley communities have turned parts of their communal land into dedicated native flora and fauna sanctuaries, while participants on the Mountain Range community have a common ethos that view members of the community as protectors of the forest:

>Custodianship, caretakers and a responsibility to protect, preserve and maintain the environment is how the people of this community feel towards this rich and fertile valley. (Lockland 1998:46)

In comparison, children of Danthonia Bruderhof are encouraged to keep animals and insects, which are used to teach children about the precious nature of life and the rewarding virtue of kindness.

6.4.1.5.5 Recycling

Recycling is also a significant environmental practice on these communities. When repairing buildings many participants noted the use of recycled materials. One participant from the Evergreen community had bought his roof for twenty-five dollars twenty years ago and, despite a few leaks, it was considered a very good investment. However, other participants noted that they would now use new roofing materials due to the time spent in labour in transforming old roofing materials into a quality roof. Recycling of waste products was a common theme across communities, with T4 on the Thora Valley community proudly noting: ‘I got my rubbish down one year to two
garbage bins full of bottles, and a garbage bag full of plastic.’ This participant also argued that instead of a baby bonus\footnote{Between 1 July 2001 and 1 July 2004, the Australian government offered families a ‘baby bonus’, which was a refundable tax offset offered to mothers who gave birth during this period. See the Australian Taxation Office website at \url{http://www.ato.gov.au/}}\footnote{See ‘Welcome to Grander Technology’ website (accessed 1 July 2009) \url{http://www.grander.com.au/}}, Australian citizens who reduce their recycling should get an environmental bonus similar to carbon credits.

\textbf{6.4.1.5.6 Water Practices}

Two communities have significant practices with respect to water collection. The Evergreen community draws water from their adjacent watercourse using a water-powered generator, which provides electricity for the community. While producing electricity for the community was viewed in a positive light, one participant questioned the environmental impact of using diesel and its potentially poisonous effect on both the environment and members of the community. In contrast, all participants on the Thora Valley community mentioned the ‘Grander Water’ system that the community uses to filter their water. Based on homeopathic principles, the system runs drawn water around a vial of magnetic Austrian water with certain positive vibrational qualities to revitalise the water.\footnote{See ‘Welcome to Grander Technology’ website (accessed 1 July 2009) \url{http://www.grander.com.au/}} As T3 noted when the system was first installed:

\begin{quote}
T3 When we first put it on ... they said this would happen ... all of the pipes cleaned out. All this gunk came out of our pipes. For about a week or a bit longer. And then over the next six to eight weeks, the count [of amoebics] slowly went down to zero.
\end{quote}

Although Council and some participants had initially been sceptical of its use, ongoing testing of the water by the Council has consistently shown the water quality to be far superior to the quality of mains water in town.
6.4.1.6 Relating to nature

Environmental practices on many of these communities have also led to participants developing distinct relationships with nature and the land. For some participants this involved reconnecting with a sense of nature that had been lost while living in cities or apartments. While interviewing T6 on the Thora Valley community, she drew my attention to the moon: ‘Oh look, look, look, the moon. Oh it must be full. Look at it!’ Similarly, T1 commented on her relationship with the moon:

T1 Just the moon, I think that has been one of the big things too in my life, because all of the years that I lived in cities and in apartments, you know, I just totally lost connection with the moon. And it’s been a big thing for me to get a reconnection with the actual physical moon, rising and setting, and doing all its things, and to understand its nature with me, and with biodynamic gardening and, you know, all sorts of things.

For T1, living on the community had enabled her to reconnect with the moon, its rhythms, and its connection to her as a woman, and to other practices such as biodynamic gardening. In comparison, E4 on the Evergreen community, who had recently become a mother, envisaged creating mini-rituals with her child to encourage engagement with the environment:

E4 I want her to grow up feeling like she has a relationship with the land that’s not just about watching it, but that there’s actually a culture around relating to it. So like creating little festivals of catching the leaves as they fall, or just little mini-rituals that are about engaging in a human way with the environment.

E4 envisaged an active engagement with nature that involved the development of mini-rituals that encourage her child to relate to the land. For a number of long-term members on the Evergreen community, a sense of identity extended into the natural surroundings of their community, as summed up by E10:
To think of the environment as one thing, and the people as another, I believe is in some ways, possibly missing something. If you think of Indigenous cultures, I imagine they didn’t have an idea of these two things, these two separate spheres. And I think that building an identification with the land is very much tied up with the things you do in the land. And building houses and a water system and roads and all that, on this land with the people that live here and also doing the same things, I think all those things are tied up—they develop a sense of identification through all that interaction ... the identification of just myself as being enclosed in the skin is lessened by being in this place and caring for it.

Building houses using natural resources and installing water and solar systems has encouraged a sense of connection with participant’s natural surroundings. In addition, special places on the community, such as ‘The Glade’ on the Evergreen community, were interwoven into stories of celebration, ritual and death. These various interactions with the land serve as a basis to build a sense of identity with the land and its surroundings, to the point that identity, for some participants, extends beyond the boundaries of their skin to include the land and its natural surroundings.

Participants on the Mountain Range community expressed a significant interest in Aboriginal spirituality, which Lockland associates with members’ spiritual and sacred view of the natural world (1998:45). Relationships with nature were also established in other ways. For instance, O’Connor (1998:37) discusses the concept of ‘exploded houses’ on the Thora Valley community which permits ‘open living’, effectively minimising the boundaries we often place between our ‘self’ and nature. A number of participants across the intentional communities lived in houses that permitted a sense of openness to nature with large open windows, double sliding doors and in some cases missing fourth walls that enabled nature to come in and participants to engage more closely with nature without. Lockland (1998:42) also discusses
the way in which the ‘visual enjoyment of nature’ is an aesthetic quality that attracts and retains many participants on the Mountain Range community.

6.4.1.7 Tithing

Both the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities engage in the practice of tithing, with ten percent of the community’s income tithed to various charitable causes. In line with their Buddhist foundations, the Evergreen community sponsor a Buddhist nun in Tibet. The Thora Valley community tithes ten percent of its income to various people with local people or issues taking priority. Through tithing, the community has supported the local bushfire brigade, the preschool, the community hall, people who have lost their houses and a man who lost his car in floods. They have also supported various environmental organisations and causes such as the Australian Bush Heritage Society, the Wilderness Society, Greenpeace, and people who buy land for fauna and habitat reserves. Other charitable organisations such as the Red Cross have also been supported. The community also fosters a child in a third world country.

6.4.1.8 Activism

Activism in the early days of communal formation played a significant role in participants’ lives. For instance, participants on the Evergreen and Mountain Range communities were active in the Terania Creek protests, in northern NSW, which led to fifty kilometres of Nightcap National Park being listed on the World Heritage Register in 1986. Four members of the Evergreen community sailed with the Pacific Peacemaker for four years, protesting against nuclear war. Another participant from the Evergreen community discussed his participation in the Queensland Daintree protests, which aimed to stop a road from going through the forest. The unsuccessful nature of those protests led this participant on a journey to discover how to work effectively
with groups. A participant from the Evergreen community continues to work in the Rainforest Information Centre in Lismore. Another participant actively works with intentional communities and people seeking to establish intentional communities. A significant number of participants from the Evergreen community had also participated in Joanna Macy’s workshops, which align with the philosophy of this community, which focus on issues around nuclear disarmament, engaged Buddhism, living systems and deep ecology.\(^1\) Four members of this community had also undertaken a Masters in Social Ecology, although at different times from each other.

Bruderhof communities also have a significant history of pacifist activism and have been involved in many social movements concerned with education, justice and peace. A public charity established through the CCI Foundation provides funding for jail and prison inmate rehabilitation programs, support for the abolition of the death penalty in the United States and urban renewal programs in urban areas, and it has also initiated humanitarian aid missions to a variety of Third World countries. CCI also partners with other humanitarian organisations to support outreach and service activities, with each community involved in its surrounding community. Danthonia Bruderhof, for instance, receives visits from local schools in Inverell, in addition to visiting schools in the local region. Members may also volunteer at hospitals, help local charities and assist services to provide food and shelter to those in need (Church Communities International 2009).

### 6.4.1.9 Publications

The extensive nature of publications produced by intentional communities has been discussed in section 2.5.4. Both CCI and the Thora Valley community produce publications. CCI publishes through its own publishing

\(^1\) See ‘Joanna Macey and her work’ (accessed 31 August 2009) http://www.joannamacy.net/
house, Plough Publishing, producing spiritual classics, inspirational books, children’s books and books on a variety of topics, including living in community. They also have free e-books. ¹ The Thora Valley community produces *Thora Valley News*, which is produced by a member of the community on a laptop powered by solar panels. How regularly the publication is produced is therefore dependent on how often the solar panels are charged by sunlight. The publication is mainly distributed to members of the Thora Valley community.

This section has focused on communal self-forming activities. The next section turns to a consideration of individual practices that are performed on the self in the context of communal living.

### 6.4.2 Individual practices

Though probationary practices on communities are communal practices per se, they are discussed here as a precursor to socialisation practices. Further individual practices, such as meditation, spiritual paths and critical self-reflection are also considered.

#### 6.4.2.1 Probationary periods

All the intentional communities in this research require prospective members to undertake a probationary period of between six to twelve months, which also serves to socialise members into a new style of life. Kanter argues that probationary periods provide prospective members sufficient time in which to effect a gradual identity change that would be acceptable to the larger group (1972:110). Socialisation processes therefore play a significant role in intentional communities in shaping participants’ perspectives and subsequent intentions around communal living. Metcalf argues that socialisation processes, particularly in rural spiritual groups, provides an ideological base...
which ‘specifies not only what is true, but also how one ought to live in order to recognise [that truth]’ (1986:277).

6.4.2.1 Socialisation

Socialisation on many communities plays a significant role in the selection of members and provides the participant with an understanding of communal life prior to membership. Metcalf (1986) argues that socialisation within alternative lifestyle groups takes different forms. He argues that communal groups, as primary groups, require more comprehensive socialisation processes, while co-operatives and other less communal groups, as secondary groups because they are less communal, tolerate less intensive socialisation processes (Metcalf 1986:277). This is certainly the case in Bruderhof communities, which are strongly communal. Socialisation prior to membership is therefore significant compared to the other communities in this research, and plays a critical role as a self-forming activity, with its effect continuing beyond membership. Although socialisation occurs within a communal context, I have categorised the Bruderhof socialisation process as an individual process due its focus on self-examination and the renunciation of a participant’s former identity prior to membership. In this context, particular practices are performed on the individual self, although the community assists the participant in this focus. In discussing this process, this section draws on the work of Zablocki (1971) in examining the socialisation practices of Bruderhof communities. Although Zablocki’s work is dated, during my visit to the Danthonia Bruderhof community, a member confirmed that the novice stage is still practised on this community.

As discussed in the context of the ethical substance in section 6.1, socialisation into the Bruderhof way of life involves three stages: the stripping process, the identification stage and the death and rebirth of the self (Zablocki 1971:254-
Each of these stages involves particular practices that enable these shifts to occur. For instance, the stripping process involves four elements: an assault upon identity; the establishment of guilt; self-betrayal; and the breaking point. All these elements involve interplay between the community and the individual. For instance, an assault upon identity may result in community members criticising any aspect that the novice takes pride in that would still link their identity to the outside world—such as singing or using psychological terms to understand ways people relate to each other. Although Zablocki argues that many Bruderhof candidates ‘generally come already equipped with an ample supply of guilt’ (1971:25), mechanisms still exist that enable the novice to think about guilt. For instance:

> Bruderhof novices are encouraged to scrutinize their feeling states often and deeply. The novice is told that ‘something is going to start changing within you’ and is urged to watch for it carefully. (Zablocki, 1971:251)

Self-betrayal encourages the novice to become a willing partner in this process. Denial of the former self is an intricate part of this progression. The psychologist, for instance, ‘had to concentrate specifically on her ‘problem’ of viewing interpersonal relations psychologically’ (Zablocki 1971:252). Renunciation of the former self enables novices to distance themselves from their former lives. Zablocki describes the breaking point as ‘a situation of impasse’. The individual is brought to a point of conflict from which there seems little escape: ‘[t]he mood suddenly changes from one of love and helpful (though firm) guidance, to one of sharp impatience and impossible expectation’ (Zablocki 1971:252). Zablocki (1971:253) acknowledges that the severity of this process sometimes results in mental breakdowns, anger and bewilderment and—for those who leave at this point—bitterness at the process. However, it is at this point that the novice is ready to move to the next stage.
The identification stage also involves four elements: leniency and opportunity; the compulsion to confess; the channelling of guilt; re-education through logical dishonouring; and progress and harmony (Zablocki 1971:248). Leniency and opportunity have been discussed in section 6.2. This identification stage aims to bolster novices by assuring them that their struggle is irrelevant and that only by depending on God’s strength will victory ensue (Zablocki 1971:255). Up to this point, many of these processes have guided the novice to the compulsion to confess. Confession, though a significant part of the socialisation process, is a very specific practice that continues throughout a Bruderhof member’s life:

Bruderhof confession is a ritualised procedure which almost always triggers a glow of joy; and joy, of course, is the major payoff of the life and the chief symptom of being in a state of grace. (Zablocki 1971:258)

The channelling of guilt is undertaken through the community’s ritualised form of expression, or what Zablocki refers to as ‘jargon’ (1971:258) which permits only legitimate feeling states to be recognised by both the novice and the community (1971:258-259). Re-education, through logical dishonouring, has also been discussed in section 6.2.3.1 resulting in the novice differentiating between the good and bad self. The community uses disparagement of the novice’s positive identity as part of the logical dishonouring process. Lastly, the community provides emotional support during progress and harmony to ensure that the novice’s new conception of the self survives (Zablocki 1971:261).

The final stage, death and rebirth, incorporates two processes: final confession and rebirth (Zablocki 1971:248). This stage is ‘least understood’ and is therefore difficult to analyse or describe, according to Zablocki (1971:262). What Zablocki does say however, is that this stage involves a loosening of the effect of the ego while inner work of self-purification is undertaken by the
novice to eradicate those aspects of the self that are not to be kept permanently. Zablocki comments that ‘[a]ll this preparation leads to the point where it is time for the old personality to die or be killed’ (1971:263-264). At this point, the final confession is made. The main focus of this stage is conversion, or what Kanter (1972:122) refers to as the commitment processes of transcendence and ideological conversion. As Kanter (1972) argues, this can be implemented in many ways:

requiring vows to change behaviour on the part of recruits, instituting a formal procedure for selecting recruits, requiring a probationary period, rejecting potential members as unacceptable, and requiring some sort of ‘test of faith’ for community children before accepting them into full adult membership. (P. 122)

The Bruderhof integrate all of these structural processes during the socialisation process of the novice. Finally, adult baptism occurs, marking the end of the socialisation period and the novitiate’s former identity, and the start of membership within the community with the birth of a new identity. Although ‘periodic collective deaths and rebirths will punctuate the career of the Bruderhof member for the rest of his life [sic]’ (Zablocki, 1971:265), in addition to ongoing confession as a very specific self-forming practice, it is at this point that day-to-day activities of communal life form the basis of the self-forming activities, as discussed in section 6.4.1.2.

6.4.2.2 Meditation

Though the Evergreen community is far less communal than when it was established, and its focus on Buddhist philosophy as a communal practice has shifted in favour of a non-denominational focus, nearly all members on this community meditate. One participant had an orthodox Mahayana Buddhist meditation practice and although her practice was less rigorous than she thought it should be, she was preparing for a three-year retreat where
meditation would form the basis of everyday practice at the time of interview. Other participants were quick to point out that their style of meditation did not conform to the more orthodox or traditional approaches towards meditation.

Nevertheless, many participants had an active practice. One participant described her twenty-minute meditation practice in the morning as ‘a real anchor’, while another described his hourly meditation practice at the communal Meditation Hut as ‘a great start to the day’. Another participant practised ‘stepping outside and engaging with the night sky and trees’ as a way of ‘letting go of the day’ and ‘as a very simple Western sense of just relaxing’. Another member meditated in ‘short bursts’ after having undertaken a three-month meditation retreat. His current practice focused on ‘being present as I go to sleep.’ A further member described her Feldenkrais practice\(^1\) as ‘doing awareness through movement’. Feldenkrais is discussed further in the following section. One participant on the Thora Valley community and another participant from the Stoney Creek community also practised meditation as part of their spiritual practice.

**6.4.2.3 Other disciplines**

Many of the participants on the Evergreen community also engage in other practices that reflect a range of different disciplines, though many of these disciplines have a close alignment with core Buddhist concepts. For example, one female participant was studying Hakomi Therapy, a system of body-centred psychotherapy that interlaces the principles of mindfulness, non-violence and the unity of mind and body.\(^2\) Another female participant was

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\(^1\) The Feldenkrais method focuses on mindful action. Various methods are used to facilitate learning about movement, posture and breathing and to increase the ease and range of movement to improve flexibility and co-ordination. Moshe Feldenkrais developed the method. See ‘Feldenkrais’ (accessed 31 August 2009), http://www.feldenkrais.org.au/method/

both a practitioner and teacher of the Feldenkrais method, which focuses on ‘mindful action.’ Further, another male participant utilised narrative therapy in his work in a Men’s Resource Centre. Narrative therapy has similarities with social constructionist thought and Foucauldian views of the subject, of which the latter has been discussed in section 3.4. Narrative therapy refers to a particular way of understanding people’s identities. As Morgan states:

Part of narrative technique is to use language in such a way that those states of mind, those ways of being, those ideas about ourselves, are out there to have a look at, rather than in here. (2009:1)

Narrative therapy may therefore involve ‘re-authoring’ or ‘re-storying’ conversations that result in new ways of viewing our subjectivity.

Close correlations between all these practices are found in Buddhist philosophy, which includes practices that focus on the mind and awareness in daily life and meditation. It is also a pacifist philosophy that focuses on loving kindness and non-violence. Further, the concept of emptiness is based on a belief of dependent origination, which views all nominal things as empty of any independent self-existence. This essentially means that all ‘things’ have no intrinsic quality of their own, other than the meaning that we culturally and socially ascribe to them. Similar to Foucault’s argument that the subject has no ‘essential’ nature, as discussed in section 3.5, Buddhist philosophy also argues that all things have no essential nature of their own. Identity, or the ‘self,’ is therefore constructed and if constructed, can therefore be transformed. Although Buddhist practices may differ from narrative therapy, many of the core principles of Feldenkrais and Hakomi therapy are strikingly similar.

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1 In Buddhist philosophy it is a perception that is created by one’s own karma.
6.4.2.4 Spiritual paths

While meditation is a significant individual practice on the Evergreen community, following ‘spiritual paths’ is a distinctive individual practice on the Thora Valley community. Although the objectives of the Thora Valley community are very broad, as discussed in section 6.3.3, the Constitution notes that the community is open to all people to explore their own spiritual paths. This generally resulted in some spiritual paths being shared between members, although a communal interest in any one particular path waxed and waned. For instance, a number of participants expressed a current interest in astrology, and used the maxim ‘as above, so below’ to discuss the way in which the outside world influenced behaviour and activities on the community:

T6 We can sit here and watch the world news at night and see the macrocosm being reflected in the microcosm. I remember when the war started—remember? And there were all kinds of really weird shit going on internally in the community.

Some participants also had an interest in the Jewish Kabbalah, with a group meeting once a month on the community to explore this path.

A former shared interest in Aleister Crowley and the Order of the Eastern Templars has been abandoned, although one male participant continued to follow this path as an individual practice at the time of research. Practitioners generally adhere to the *The Book of the Law* (Liber Al vel Legis), which believers consider to have been channelled by Aleister Crowley, and engage in elaborate rituals, which reflect the teachings of the path of Thelema. The core belief practised by those who follow the path of Thelema is summed up
Some participants also had personal practices that were seldom shared with other members of the community. For example, one male participant followed Tibetan Buddhism, which included a range of practices such as the reading of Dharma texts, chanting, attending Dharma teachings and observing the ten virtues that concern the body, speech and mind. This participant also studied and interacted with a Yahoo internet group on Buddhist practice known as the Kalachakra and had recently participated in a worldwide prayer (sadhana) which was held at the same time all over the world.

Another female participant was a Sannyasin who followed the teachings of the Indian mystic and Guru, Osho. Formerly known as the ‘Orange People’ because of the orange clothes they wore during the 1970s, they followed the teachings of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, who is now known as Osho. This participant’s practices included an hour of meditation daily, reading the works of Osho, undertaking group work with other Sannyasin, taking a pilgrimage to Osho’s birthplace in Poona, India and celebrating life in the Sannyasin way.

Following spiritual paths is also an individual practice, although to a far lesser extent, on the Evergreen, Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities. One participant from the Evergreen community and one participant from the Stoney Creek community followed the path of Mahayana Tibetan Buddhism. Both engaged in very similar practices to the participant from the Thora Valley community; however, a greater emphasis was placed on meditation and sadhana practice. As discussed above, the participant from

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the Evergreen community was about to embark on a three-year retreat at a nearby meditation centre. Also noted above, a number of participants on the Mountain Range community were influenced by Aboriginal spirituality, which Lockland (1998:45) associates with members’ spiritual and sacred views of the natural world. One member from the Stoney Creek community was also a practising Green Witch who followed occult practises in paganism and was studying ‘The Children of the Law of One’, based on the lost teachings of Atlantis.¹

6.4.2.5 Self–help and critical self-reflection

Popular self-help books and techniques also form the basis of critical self-reflection as an individual practice. Younger participants, mainly on the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Stoney Creek communities, read popular self-help and alternative literature that supports their way of living. For instance, E4 on the Evergreen community was reading Passionate Marriage, which she described as ‘a fantastic personal development manual’, which served a critical reflective purpose in her communal life:

E4 That extends even to reading books like Passionate Marriage. If you’re going to live in relatively close relationship with other people then obviously ongoing insight into your own self and how relationships work is a valuable thing.

T8 on the Thora Valley community described the way in which she had started reading self-help books in the eighties. She stated that the book that ‘supports me through my day’ is Eckhart Tolle’s The Power of Now:

T8 I love it. But the principles of that book are stuff we all know. And he puts it in a format that, for me, is really simple and straight in your face with no bullshit. So he’s fantastic comfort.

¹ See ‘The Lost Teachings of Atlantis’ (accessed 31 August 2009) http://www.atlantis.to/
Critical self-reflection, as an exercise in itself, was also practised by a number of participants. E3 on the Evergreen community discussed the way in which he actively strove to ‘reduce stress’ in his life by introducing a program he had devised. During work holidays he took himself off on retreats for a few days:

E3 And the first ever one of those, I had all these big bits of paper and I was just trying to figure out, ‘What are all the things in my life, and what am I trying to do with them, which ones do I need? What do I need to have in my life so I feel okay?’ And, at first I was really trying to really diarise it all out. And now I don’t use that list any more. I’ve got a piece of paper but it’s ... it’s in my head.

This participant also used a journal as a reflective process to focus on ‘What I kind of did today’, which served to ask questions of himself such as ‘How am I doing? How am I feeling?’ This participant’s practice strongly reflects the type of self-forming activities contemplated by Foucault that have been discussed in section 3.6.3.

6.4.3 Summary

The self-forming activities, or techné, are the means by which we can change ourselves in order to become ethical subjects (Foucault 1984a:354). This section has considered two themes with respect to the self-forming activities of participants in this research. Firstly, communal practices that are performed on the self in a communal context which reflect the very ‘idea and act’ of moving into a community have been explored. These may include communal work, regularised group contact facilitated through meetings, communal or shared meals, social engagement and ritual, and the sharing of communal infrastructure. Additional practices may also include abstinence and austerity, environmental practices, relating to nature, tithing, activism and the production of communal publications.
Secondly, *individual practices* that are supported by the communal mode of subjection have also been discussed. For CCI, the socialisation process and its various practices serve to prepare the novice for communal life within that community. This process also ensures that the participant has a foundation for self-forming activities that focus on the development of communal unity. On the Evergreen community, meditation and the pursuit of other disciplines and spiritual paths is a unifying thread amongst participants. While, engagement in individual practices on the remaining communities permits participants to differentiate themselves from the group through activities that are not necessarily shared with each other or as a communal group, they are nevertheless affirmed by their respective communities’ predominant philosophy or conventions.

Participants from the Stoney Creek community do not engage in communal practices—even though many participants expressed a desire for some communal engagement. Although a range of individual practices are performed on the self, they are not attributable to communal life. Participants on this community articulated strong beliefs that the provision of a communal hall on the community might facilitate communal engagement, thereby fostering some sense of community. The way in which communal infrastructure facilitates a whole range of communal and individual practices on the intentional communities discussed in this research, would tend to support that view. This marks a distinct contrast to the work of Kanter (1972) who assumed that, beyond building communal infrastructure as a way of developing communion, it failed ‘to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful communities, because it was a minimum requirement for establishing most communities’ (Kanter 1972:111).

Self-forming activities also serve to ground the communal philosophies discussed in section 6.3 in day-to-day practice, indicating a strong link
between the *mode of subjection* and the *self-forming activities*. For instance, the intensity of communal engagement on the Danthonia Bruderhof community is represented in their religious and communal philosophy, which promotes community in all things. Members of this community perform communal, rather than individual practices, with individual practices only practised for the benefit of the group. In contrast, participants’ practices on the Evergreen community are influenced by original Buddhist philosophy, with individual meditation practices performed by members of the community and Buddhist notions infusing other individual disciplines that reflect awareness, pacifism and non-violence. So although E10 indicated that Buddhist philosophy is less obvious now, contemporary practice on this community is still influenced by Buddhist concepts.

Participants are also encouraged to pursue individual paths while retaining their membership on the Evergreen community. Spiritual differentiation also forms the cornerstone of Thora Valley’s philosophy and is actively practiced by many participants on this community, through both fluctuating communal practices and longer-term individual practices that are affirmed by the communal philosophy. While on the Mountain Range community, an environmental ethos is practiced that correlates with a loose philosophy of being ‘caretakers’ of the land and Aboriginal spirituality.

The following section considers the *telos*, or goal of communal living of participants in this research.

6.5 Telos

As discussed in section 3.6.4, the *telos* concerns the kind of being we aspire to be when we behave in a moral way. In the constitution of an ethical self, we may aspire ‘to become pure, or immortal, or free, or masters of ourselves’ (Foucault 1984a:355). The telos therefore concerns the goal towards which our
self-forming activity is directed (Davidson 1986:229). Moisander and Pesonen (2002:340) found that Finnish eco-communards aspired to be beings who are in harmony with themselves, while the goal of eco-communards within communal life focused on the creation of harmony with other people.

Moisander and Pesonen’s (2002) findings are reflected in the telos of participants in this research. For instance, cultivating different relationships through ‘doing relatedness’ (Eräranta et al. 2009:362) has been discussed in section 6.2.2 and is a significant feature of the ethical substance that participants work on in the context of communal life. Cultivating relationships led participants to an intention to live co-operatively, which guided their ‘mutual quest for community’ and this was a significant mode of subjection, which has been discussed in section 6.3.6.1. Cultivating relationships also led to what Moisander and Pesonen (2002) refer to as a communal life focused on the creation of harmony with other people, or what I refer to in this research as ‘creating community.’

However, significant aspects of communal living are also aimed at resisting mainstream discourses. For instance, for some participants, discursive representations of ‘suburbia’ are contested through the conscious construction of communal life. Representations of suburbia extended to the institution of the nuclear family; isolation; mobility and transience; limited working arrangements; being globally rather than locally focused; possessing a

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1 For example, many participants had lived on their communities for significantly long periods of time, as discussed in section 6.2.1 which undermines contemporary discourses surrounding the ideals of mobility and transience in contemporary life. In comparison, Eräranta et al. (2009:362) found that Finnish eco-communards did not view communal living as a life-long commitment.

2 Many participants in this research actively resisted working a typical Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm workday through the active refusal to work full-time or the refusal on occasions to work on casual rostered days if they conflicted with scheduled communal workdays. Further, participants predominantly worked in part-time and voluntary positions in non-government organisations; in some cases received Centrelink benefits that enabled them to work for the
consumer ethic; being driven by individualistic values; concerned with private ownership of property; and unable to provide a quality lifestyle. Thus transforming the self through the construction of different identities in resistance to mainstream values such as suburbia was also found to be a goal of communal living, while a desire to live a better life resulted in the construction of diverse lifestyles.

The first part of this section discusses ‘creating community’ and the sense of community that is shared by some participants in this research. It also discusses aspects of community that are unique to the Bruderhof and Evergreen communities. The second part focuses on ‘resisting suburbia’ and considers four themes: the nuclear family, isolation, a quality life, individualism and a consumer ethic. The third part considers transformation of both the self and one’s style of life, while the fourth part explores three styles of life that characterise the construction of a better way of life: a simple lifestyle; a quality lifestyle; and an experimental lifestyle. The final part considers freedom, in the context of choosing a lifestyle and the freedom to be one’s self, as further goals of communal living by participants in this research.

6.5.1 Creating community

A strong community provides a sense of belonging, where people feel connected to others and to the community. A strong community may also be

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1 For many participants, communal living offers an opportunity to focus locally rather than globally. As discussed in section 6.4.1, many social activities occur on the community without any need to look for entertainment elsewhere; forms of social sustainability mean that for some communities, produce is also available locally, while an environmental ethos can be practiced in their own backyards as many communities had declared parts of their land to be Flora and Fauna sanctuaries.

2 As discussed in Chapter Five and section 6.3 (mode of subjection) participants living on the intentional communities in this research actively engaged in variants of communal forms of ownership as opposed to the private ownership of property that signifies many suburban titles to land and ownership.
respectful, participatory, and resourceful, and create a sense of trust between its members (Community Services 2009:7). When participants on the four intentional communities discussed living in community, they invariably chose words that described their way of being in the group. They spoke of relating to the group and enjoying being connected to a wider group. They spoke of being supported and the positive nature of sharing aspects of communal life with other members. They noted the wonderful social side of living in community and how they had a sense of belonging to a larger and coherent group. They spoke of participation with the group and learning from the group. They also spoke of conflict and the way in which it created turmoil for the group. They further spoke of safety and freedom and the way in which a sense of community has changed over time. As M4 from the Mountain Range community summed up:

M4  I enjoy the connection. Even though we’ve got our own houses in the hamlet—we eat communally at different times. We have hamlet dinners. We look after each other—share things—like cars at different times. Sometimes money at different times. It’s safe. I really enjoy that it’s safe. We don’t lock our houses. I can go over to Simon’s house and if he’s not home I can make myself a cup of tea. We’ve got that sort of freedom. I can go to the next-door neighbour’s when they’re not there and borrow milk [laughs] and they can do the same to me … If I’m at work my child can come home and go to anyone in the hamlet, and just go to their house.

Similarly, McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:10-11) discuss community in the context of unity, connectedness, being part of a larger whole, and in the way in which it unfolds over time, as a way of co-operating and participating with others and as a way of sharing that experience with others. Further, as M4 notes, ‘being safe’ was also a significant aspect of communal living for both adults and children. In the same way to M4, E1 noted that ‘there are no locks on the doors’ on his house in the Evergreen community. It is not that
participants did not lock their doors; their doors actually had no locks. Children could also roam freely on the community between houses on the community, with adults knowing that other members of the community would look after their children. Eräranta et al. (2009) found similar findings with respect to Finnish eco-communes.

Community also has a unique meaning for participants who live on the Bruderhof and Evergreen communities. Both these communities are far more communal than the intentional communities of Thora Valley and Mountain Range, or the land-sharing Stoney Creek community. ‘Communal’ is an elastic concept where communities may be far more or far less communal in nature (Metcalf 2004). This has a significant effect on participants who live on these communities. Boundaries between the ‘self’ and ‘other’ may be far more mutable and may be represented in participants’ acknowledgment of unity or being part of a coherent group. Participants on these communities tend to perceive a ‘communal self’ represented by Metcalf’s notion of a ‘we-consciousness’ (2004:9), which has been discussed in section 2.4.1.

For instance, the central aim of living communally on Bruderhof communities is to produce unity. In *Why We Live in Community*, Arnold discusses ‘unity of consciousness’ and comments that a calling to service in community is one of sacrifice: ‘They will be ready to sacrifice life itself for the sake of unity’ (2002:27). Further, it is unity in daily life and living as the Church that will give life to ‘the future unity of humankind’ (Arnold 2002:27). As Zablocki points out ‘the final stage of Bruderhof socialisation is also the Bruderhof member’s first lesson in ego loss and collective merging’ (1971:265). McLaughlin and Davidson (1986:10) note that the experience of community is reflected in a human yearning for unity with others, and therefore community is the experience of unity with other people. For the Bruderhof, unity is the most significant aim of communal living, producing a very strong collective
‘we-consciousness’. Participants on the Danthonia Bruderhof community inevitably spoke in the plural, not the singular. A member from the Danthonia Bruderhof community, interviewed as part of a Radio National series, illustrates the way members talk of ‘we’ and ‘us’ and ‘our’ and ‘together’ and ‘each other’:

for us community is the nitty-gritty of living every day together. It goes through its ups and downs, we rub each other the wrong way, we have our disagreements, but we have this faith and this belief that together we have a purpose, and we want to take care of each other, and we want to fulfil that purpose. (Franklin 2005:2, emphasis added)

In a similar, yet different, way participants on the Evergreen community spoke of being part of a coherent group. Participants were looking in the same direction, with the layering of casual contacts creating the fabric for a communal life together:

E2 I really like being part of that. Part of a group of people with whom I have varying levels of intimacy, but that overall it feels like a group—a coherent group.

E10 ...just having contact with people on a regular basis, in a way which feels like you’re looking in the same direction as them.

E4 ...all the little relating ... in some ways the sense of this being a community is that we all ... we all relate to each other, and that is actually what makes a community.

E5 I think we do [social activities] well because we’re a community, and... we’re fairly cohesive as a group.

E6 ...part of being part of this community is ... to be able to find time within one’s life to be a community participant.

For E4, all the little relating enables her to feel reciprocally connected with other members of the community, which is turn builds a sense of community and the construction of what it is to be a community. As discussed in section 6.4.1.2.4, ‘seemingly meaningless interactions’ have, over time, built up what E4 refers to as a ‘significant, substantial something’ on the community.
Further, participants’ engagement in self-forming activities, as discussed in section 6.4, has built a sense of cohesion and belonging to the group, which enables participants to feel ‘part’ of a whole, and to feel coherent or cohesive as a group. Regularity of contact has also produced the feeling that members of the group are all looking in the same direction, reflecting a common purpose or intent shared by community members. Metcalf (2004:104) argues that holding some sort of shared vision is an important aspect of maintaining a collective group and that the clearer the vision, the more communal the group. However, as discussed in section 6.3.5.1 a shared vision, for some participants in this research, may simply reflect an ideal that is focused on co-operative living.

In comparison, participants from the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities spoke more significantly of friendship networks, as discussed in section 6.2.2.1, in deference to a we-consciousness. On the other hand, participants from the Stoney Creek community had no sense of community for many of the reasons already discussed in section 6.4.1.2.5.

The following section considers resistance to mainstream constructions of ‘suburbia’ as another goal of communal living.

**6.5.2 Resisting suburbia**

T6  It’s very sterile in mainstream society. It’s dull. It’s dull. [Laughs]
    That’s what I find. That’s how I always found it—^incredibly dull.

Resistance to mainstream values continues to be a critical goal of communal living. Resistance has been discussed in the context of the intentional community literature in section 2.6. Although it is generally acknowledged that many contemporary intentional communities are far less radical than the communities of the seventies (Metcalf 2004:48), significant aspects of mainstream living continued to be contested by participants in this research.
For participants on the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities, ‘suburbia’ was found to be a highly contested notion that participants sought to resist through communal living. Members of the Danthonia Bruderhof community also contested key elements of suburban living. Further, the inability to create a sense of community on some communities was also blamed on suburbia for having instilled in current members the kind of values that militate against a sense of community. Some participants on the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities also discussed how they, and others, felt unqualified for communal life. Five themes are discussed in this section in relation to participant’s construction of ‘suburbia’, including the nuclear family, isolation, a quality life, individualism and a consumer ethic.

6.5.2.1 The nuclear family

The central role of the nuclear family is clearly challenged by the value participants place on different forms of relating that form part of communal life. Constructions of the extended family and friendship networks have been discussed in section 6.2.1. Further, all the little relating and seemingly meaningless interactions that builds a sense of community or a we-consciousness has been explored above. Thus ‘doing relatedness’ as the ethical substance to be worked on by participants in this research, was aided by an intensification of interpersonal relations and a variety of self-forming activities, with each community’s mode of subjection guiding participants, ways of relating. For instance, CCI communities’ emphasis on unity and the Evergreen community’s focus on experiencing life as one family resulted in more communally orientated self-forming activities in comparison to the other intentional communities effecting the production of a we-consciousness.
While participants in this research emphasised the importance of different ways of relating, that contested discursive representations of the nuclear family within the context of suburbia, Eräranta et al. (2009) found that Finnish eco-communes provided a way for participants on those communities to re-think ‘family’ as a site of exclusive intimate relationships. Participants in their research also talked about other members of their commune as an extended family or as an alternative to the exclusionary couple or the isolated conjugal unit that the institution of the nuclear family sanctions (Eräranta et al. 2009:356). Finnish eco-communards therefore articulated communes as sites that supported the construction of alternative narratives concerning family and intimate relationships (Eräranta et al. 2009:358).

6.5.2.2 Isolation

Isolation is a further significant factor related to contesting suburbia and representations of the nuclear family. One of the strongest reasons for participants to resist a nuclear family structure related to parental concerns that their children would grow up in the isolation of the nuclear family:

E7 But I also felt like I really didn’t want to bring her up in the isolation of a nuclear family—especially if you don’t have more than one child. In lots of ways I think that’s a particularly limiting context for a kid.

Participants constructed suburban living as isolated and an isolating experience that was seemingly imposed upon residents who lived this style of life. It was perceived to offer little engagement or interaction; to foster isolation from other residents, as neighbours would rarely know each other; and although some participant’s acknowledged that suburban living could offer other pathways to create a sense of community, such as participating in
communal gardens or engaging in environmental work\(^1\), such pathways might only draw people together who are already community minded, rather than transcending an enduring sense of isolation between neighbours. As Chris Voll of the Danthonia Bruderhof community points out:

Human beings can be very, very lonely, and unfortunately society, the way it is structured nowadays, very individualistic. I think there is a big problem with loneliness. (Franklin 2005:3)

In comparison to the constructions of suburban living, participants drew upon a whole range of imagery to contrast their own style of living with what they perceived as the style of living offered by a suburban lifestyle:

E3 it’s so different from living in a suburb where you don’t know the people around you. [Emphasis added]

E10 I’d say, there’s probably more interaction here than I would experience if I was just living in a house in the suburbs. [Emphasis added]

E1 a really high quality of life in comparison to the alternative. Because I’ve lived as a citizen isolate in a suburban area of metropolitan Sydney. In comparison to that, it’s just far more attractive, meaningful and satisfying. [Emphasis added]

E3 I get so much joy out of going for a little walk at the time that people happen to be heading off for work or school. We see them all, and we wave. I mean, you could wave to neighbours as they go by, on the street, and it doesn’t feel the same. These are the people that I make decisions with in meetings, and do lots of other things together with. [Emphasis added]

E2 there’s no locks on the doors, but that symbolises a sort of easy-goingness. Most people that wander round doing this and that, they’re my friends and people I’ve known for a long time and there’s something very special about that. [Emphasis added]

\(^1\) For example, Landcare Australia is a partnership between the Australian government, businesses and local communities that aims to protect and regenerate the environment through practical land care initiatives. Under this partnership, local volunteer groups may implement a variety of land care initiatives. See Landcare Australia (accessed 6 September 2009) [http://www.landcareonline.com/index.asp](http://www.landcareonline.com/index.asp)
For these participants, communal living is significantly different from living an isolated life in suburbia. There is more interaction; people wandering around are friends and people participants have known for a long time. They are also people who they make decisions with about a whole range of issues that affect each other’s lives. Further, as E3 points out, they ‘do lots of things together’, again re-emphasizing the importance of an intensification of interpersonal relations on the intentional communities. As has been discussed above, there are no locks on the doors indicating a sense of safety, even though there are people wandering around doing this and that.

In addition to a sense of community, discussed in section 6.5.1, that lessens a sense of isolation, participants also expressed a sense of empowerment derived through many of the participatory activities discussed in regularised group contact in section 6.4.1.2. In particular, the style of decision-making on these communities builds a sense of empowerment and further enhances the difference between communal and suburban living. As E2 points out, ‘These are the people that I make decisions with in meetings’, which makes them significantly different to ordinary neighbours in suburban allotments.

6.5.2.3 Quality of life

When compared to suburban living, participants constructed communal living as providing a better quality of life. Participant’s representations of suburban living were therefore focused on negative imagery, while communal living was constructed positively. For instance, suburbia was associated with mortgages and the burden of home ownership; money pressures; no spare money; no spare time; a cycle of paying rent; and being tied to a nine-to-five work week. The representation of suburban living offering ‘little quality of life’ was therefore construed as something heavy and burdensome and quite fixed, which tied people down to an ongoing cycle
of financial stress. Further, despite conveying a sense of material fullness, suburban living was indicative of a sense of lack.

In comparison, communal living as a ‘better quality of life’ was constructed as providing a satisfying and creative life, the possibility of spare money, the ability to support diverse working options, and a style of life that is far more attractive, meaningful and satisfying. This meant that participants had time to do other things beyond a mainstream work ethic, such as participating in activist work or studying ecology. As has been discussed above, the provision of a better quality of life, according to participants, also meant that community living was an extremely safe place for children, who could wander from one home to another on the community with participants knowing that extended family members would look after them. A better quality of life was therefore construed as being flexible, providing opportunities for exploration, and offering a sense of freedom for both adults and children, and the possibility of a satiated life.

6.5.2.4 Individualism

Participants also constructed suburbia as promoting a form of individualism that undermines the development of group cohesion and a sense of community. Particularly for the members of the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities, the ‘urban nature’ of individuals living on these communities was often blamed for the failure to produce any form of communal cohesion. For instance, on workdays on the Thora Valley community one might find some participants using noisy brush cutters, chain saws or lawn mowers and, as such, working individually to maintain the community, while pockets of other residents would work alongside each other without noise so that they could talk, socialise and laugh as they worked. Participants would comment on the noise of the machines as
isolating and dispersive of group interaction, while working without power tools offered participants a way of engaging, relating and slowing down, and so enabling participants to converse with each other.

Many participants on the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities had left the city or urban areas to join their respective community and were therefore perceived as ill equipped for a communal life. As Metcalf (2004) argues:

> Ours is a culture in which individualism is commonly understood as suggesting collective action is likely to be personally inhibiting and against one’s own best interests. A vague and naïve notion of ‘individual freedom’ is often relied upon as an excuse to avoid collective action even when such action might benefit everyone. (P. 89)

In section 6.2.2.1 it has been discussed how some participants on the Mountain Range community had to ‘un-learn’ isolating themselves in the context of friendship networks. Further, participants on the Thora Valley community significantly blamed the ‘urban quality of the community’ on the failure to consistently engage communal members in regularised group contact, though participants had engaged in a variety of activities over time and constructed a sense of community, as discussed in section 6.5.1. Participants on these communities also acknowledged the active ways in which they were seeking to resist and change this suburban quality of individualism, either within themselves or by simply living communally.

6.5.2.5 Consumer ethic

In comparison to the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities, Danthonia Bruderhof is appreciably countercultural due to its communal nature, spiritual orientation and distinctly alternative way of living. As Chris Voll of Danthonia Bruderhof discusses:
We’re actually committed to a way of life that is in essence very counter-cultural, and our nature may be to go after things, or whatever it might be, but we have made that commitment, and intentional decision to live out something different, and then we can help each other to that ... by realising that hey, I don’t really need this dependency on all the mechanisms in the world which say that I’m not part of the ‘in set’, unless I’m earning X-amount, unless my mortgage is so big, unless I’m spending this, this and this, at these designated times. (Franklin 2005:10)

For Chris, resistance takes the form of significantly questioning the consumer ethic of mainstream culture. He reiterates some of the themes that have been discussed by participants on other communities, such as financial and mortgage issues that negatively construct suburban life. However, he takes the construction of a consumer ethic further by representing it as a form of dependency as follows: on the ‘mechanisms’ that make mainstream participants part of the ‘in set’; on the wage one earns to ensure the mortgage is just as big; and on the consumption of goods that occur at designated periods that are marked by others throughout mainstream life.

Chris visibly resists representations of a type of ‘human nature’ that is constructed through mainstream living, to which his form of intentional living directly opposes. Members of Danthonia Bruderhof have decided to live out something entirely different to that mainstream ethic, and in doing so they help each other to realise that goal. As has been discussed above, members take a vow of poverty by relinquishing all their assets to the Church when they become members and continue with that vow throughout their communal life. As Chris stated earlier: ‘So no matter how hard I work, I still earn the same wage, which is zero’ (Franklin 2005:5). Though members of the community are provided with all their needs, individual needs are always subordinate to the needs of the church and the community. Further, the simplicity of their lifestyle and their modesty of dress significantly undercuts
a consumer ethic that values ‘spending this, this and this, at these designated times’ (Franklin 2005:10). As one participant commented during my visit, a member may ‘own’ a book; however ownership of any ‘thing’ is not encouraged.

Resistance to the consumer ethic of mainstream culture was also echoed on other communities and is predominantly reflected in participants choosing to live a simple lifestyle, which will be discussed below. However, given Danthonia Bruderhof’s focus on discarding forming identities associated with members’ former lives in the mainstream, its highly intentional nature that reflects a strong communal focus, and the sheer variety of the communities’ self-forming activities, resistance to mainstream values is arguably far more comprehensive on this community when compared with the forms of resistance practised by other communities that participated in this research.

On the flip side, there are intentional communities that may be insignificantly different to suburban allotments. However, participants from the intentional communities in this research, including the Evergreen, Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities maintained a certain ethos and resistance to a suburban way of life and actively pursued alternative constructions through communal living.

The following section considers transformation as another goal of communal life.

6.5.3 Transformation

Transforming one’s self through the construction of alternative identities, and one’s life through diverse lifestyles was an evident aim of communal life. Transformation on these communities is represented in three very different ways: through subtle shifts in character traits; through significant
transformation in identities; or through transforming the external environment to affirm and extend existing aspects of identity.

However, for many participants transformation was difficult to evaluate. As discussed in section 6.2, many participants had been living on their community for very long periods of time. They had also experienced significant events in their lives that may have occurred independently of communal living. Nevertheless, participants correlated shifts in character traits of the self with particular communal practices. For some participants, these transformations were subtle in nature, while for others they involved considerable changes in identity. For others, choosing to live communally effected a transformation in their external environment, which was designed to validate personal values that constituted an existing identity.

For many participants, subtle shifts in personality traits have occurred through communal living. For these participants, significant communal practices that focused on the intensification of interpersonal relations, such as regularised group contact, discussed in section 6.4.1.2, had effected the most significant changes. For example, communal meetings, particularly those that used consensus decision-making, resulted not only in the development of skill sets, such as facilitation and effective communication, but also in the development of particular virtues, such as compassion, patience, mindfulness, tolerance, respect, understanding, acceptance and providing support for others. One participant described a sense of ‘spaciousness’ and not being so ‘fixed’ about anything anymore, that enabled her to let go of things when participating in meetings. Another participant indicated that through relating and engaging with other members of the community he had shifted from being aggressive and powerless in his former life, to a sense of being empowered through the experience of communal meetings on his community. Other participants discussed the development of trust in the
process and how they needed to accord respect and have faith in decisions that were made in the best interests of the group.

Given the difficulties many participants experienced at communal meetings, these subtle transitions represent valuable shifts recognised by Caplan (2000) and Cock (1995). Caplan (2000:54) argues that a less recognised value of community is the transformational possibility the stress of communal living provides, and she likens the process of community, particularly the ‘clashing of personalities’ and the ‘struggles’ of communal life, to an alchemical process. Caplan quotes Jakusho Kwong Roshi, founder of the Sonoma Mountain Zen Centre:

You put all the rocks together, you shake the bucket, and the rocks rub each other and become smooth. You won’t become smooth without being rubbed.

(Caplan 2000:55)

Similarly, Cock, a member of the Moora Moora community near Healesville, Victoria, argues that ‘rubbing up against each other has helped me to become more rounded’ (1995:168). Members of Danthonia Bruderhof also acknowledged the way in which the community goes through its ups and downs and that members rub each other the wrong way and have their disagreements (Franklin 2005:2). However, their faith and belief in their purpose in community provides an avenue for these challenges to have a transformative effect.

In contrast, some participants identified transformations that involved a total shift in identity associated with communal living. For instance, the novice stage of socialisation on Bruderhof communities involves renunciation of the former self associated with one’s former life and the adoption of an entirely new identity conducive to communal life. Equally, participants on the Thora Valley community discussed the way in which self-experimentation through
communal living affected significant transformations in identity. As discussed in section 6.2.3.2, T1 discussed the way in which she had transformed from being ‘straight’ to ‘hippy’ through living on this community. She depicted her former straight self as becoming less capable over time and an ‘ignoramus’ when juxtaposed with the competence of her contemporary hippy self. Through a variety of self-forming activities, discussed in section 6.4, she transforms her hippy self into a person she perceives as competent, knowledgeable and possessing real down-to-earth practical skills for life.

In contrast, many participants on the Evergreen community sought communal living to affirm values that constituted existing identities, which they felt did not meet mainstream representations. They achieved this by changing their external environment, which enabled their new lifestyle to mirror the principles they valued. As E10 noted:

E10 I’d say I like myself better. The reason that I like myself better is that my life’s become more an expression of my values. The person I am, and the values that I have, are validated by the people around me.

Many participants on this community discussed how living with like-minded people served to validate a particular world view. For this participant, his life had become more of an expression of his values, reflecting a life created according to those values. This participant’s response mirrors Abrams et al. (1976:96) findings on British communes that while members rejected socially given recipes for self-construction, they in turn, focused on social relations as they understood that selves were constructed socially. This participant’s affirmation of his life and his self also reflects Foucault’s notion of an individualising subject which constructs itself and gives itself an identity that it alone affirms or creates (Foucault 1971/1984:92). These points are taken up further in Chapter Seven. Additionally, both the significant degree of
homogeneity on the Evergreen community, discussed in Chapter Five, and the focus on shared values, discussed in section 6.2.3.3, aided other participant’s affirmation of their identities.

The following section discusses the cultivation of diverse lifestyles as a goal of communal living.

6.5.4 Lifestyle

The ability to choose a lifestyle is a significant goal of communal living. Irrespective of whether participants initially choose to live on a community ‘because of’ or ‘in order to,’ as discussed in section 6.2, all participants indicated that the lifestyle offered by communal living is now an ongoing choice they continue to make and may therefore be better represented as a desire for a better way of life. On these communities, a desire for a better life was represented in a variety of lifestyles offered through communal living, including a simple lifestyle, a quality lifestyle and an experimental lifestyle.

Though diverse lifestyles were not identified as a goal of communal living in Moisander and Pesonen’s work, they do identify similar themes that resonate with the results of this research. For instance, Moisander and Pesonen (2002:335) found that voluntary simplicity was founded in eco-communards’ commitment to a modest way of living, which was referred to by participants in this research as a ‘simple lifestyle’. In contrast to Moisander and Pesonen’s research however, participants in this research also discussed other lifestyle forms. Significantly, some participants indicated that all of these lifestyles were relevant to their choice to live communally. However, participants on the Thora Valley community predominantly discussed the way their community offered an experimental lifestyle for participants. Each type of lifestyle is discussed in turn.
6.5.4.1 Simple lifestyle

E8 I just want to live a simple, uncomplicated life that doesn’t do any harm.
E3 I really want to minimise my environmental footprint in my life. And being somewhere with other people trying to do that makes a huge difference. It is very hard in the modern day to just do that on your own.

A simple lifestyle is reflected in two notions: simple living and the ideal of leaving a small environmental footprint. Both these notions were echoed across all communities, including the Stoney Creek community. However, these ideals are primarily represented by participants’ environmental concerns and the way in which they aim to minimise their environmental impact as a collective group. As E3 noted, being with others that are trying to achieve the same goal makes a huge difference. Other members therefore provide a locus of support within these communities. Further, the significant number of environmental self-forming activities, discussed in section 6.4.1.5, also contributes to participants’ endeavours to minimise their environmental footprint in their life. A simple lifestyle is therefore predominantly linked to practices of self-sufficiency, the use of environmental technology\(^1\), abiding by restrictive environmental covenants, recycling and developing a relationship with nature that also reflects an appreciation of its aesthetic quality. Further, pooling resources or having a communal purse for bulk buying of food on the Danthonia and Evergreen communities respectively also contributed to a simple lifestyle and leaving a small carbon imprint.

Interestingly, nearly all the participants on the Mountain Range community had joined the community ‘because of’ their socio-economic status as discussed in section 6.2:

\(^1\) Also known as ‘green technology’ and includes the use of clean technology such as composting toilets, solar power and energy conservation.
So I arrived here with a dole cheque with two suitcases on a bus... and an easel... with a painting

This participant’s sense of arriving is similar to the stories of migrant families who arrived in Australia with little more than a suitcase between them, their clothes on their back and some change in their pockets. Some of these migrants were also utopian seekers who travelled to Australia to live on early intentional communities that are discussed by Metcalf (1995; 2002). This participant’s story is also a story of leaving a poor lifestyle behind for the opportunity communal living offered him. Participants on both the Mountain Range and Stoney Creek communities noted that living on their chosen community offered them the only opportunity to ‘buy a shack, and have my own space and not be renting’. Yet for many, a poor lifestyle was now conceptualised as a choice that, as for the participants above, represents both simplicity and the ideal of minimising their environment impact on the earth:

I live ‘poor’—but choose to live like this. It’s healthier for myself and for the world. I’m not using a lot of resources; I’m not taking up more space on the Earth. I can live with integrity at Mountain Range. It’s good for the environment.

For M4, ‘being poor’ is now an ongoing, active choice. She considers this lifestyle choice to be a healthy one—for both herself and the world. She uses fewer resources by being poor and she takes up less space because of this choice. It is also a choice that is good for the environment. Interestingly, it is also an ethical choice. She can live with integrity on this community because it supports her lifestyle choice. Many participants in this research shared this sentiment.

Eräranta et al. (2009:360) argue that Finnish eco-communes are sites that can offer new and different forms of subjectivity to their members. For instance, single mothers, who Eränanta et al. (2009:359-360) argue are generally represented as a failure within a normative nuclear family framework, may
subvert this representation through alternative constructions of caring relationships that are made possible through communal living. Similarly, Sargisson (2001:140-141) argues that critical utopias facilitate a transformative function that permits participants ‘to break significantly with confining traditions of thought and behaviour’ in addition to offering a space for transgression that enables people to be different.

6.5.4.2 Quality lifestyle

Living a quality lifestyle is also an important aim of communal living. There are many components that contribute to such a lifestyle. Some of these have been discussed above, including the characteristics of a simple life, cultivating relationships and the development of a sense of community. Further components are also represented in the comparison participants drew between an intentional community lifestyle and a suburban lifestyle, discussed in the context of resistance above. The following section considers further components of a quality lifestyle.

A quality lifestyle for many participants was equivalent to meeting basic human needs that are of a ‘superior’ quality:

T7 We have a quality of lifestyle. I’ve got fresh air, fresh water and fresh food.

‘Fresh’ represented the superior quality of these essential human needs, which resulted from two aspects of communal living. Firstly, fresh air, water and food were perceived as superior in quality because the communities were located close to natural reserves. As has been discussed in Chapter Five and section 6.4.1.5, communities in this research share proximity with significant natural features, such as World Heritage National Parks, State Forests and natural waterways. Some communities, such as the Evergreen and Thora Valley communities, are designated wildlife sanctuaries. For some
participants, the community’s proximity to natural resources was a significant factor in choosing to live a communal lifestyle:

T7 One of the things that drew me to this valley was the fact that, that escarpment right through to Point Lookout is all World Heritage listed National Park. So all the water catchment for the river can’t be tampered with without a UN sanction now—even ever. So it will always remain a reserve. For me that was really an important thing I know is going to be an issue—water, and clear water supply and clean air.

Secondly, as a result of environmental and self-sufficiency practices discussed in section 6.4.1.5, there was a perception that food and water were superior in quality as participants knew where it came from and what had been done to it. As has been discussed in section 6.4.1.5, communities such as Thora Valley use the ‘Grander Water System’ to ensure the quality of their water. Other communities use collected rainwater, spring water, or pumped water from adjacent waterways. Further, the Danthonia Bruderhof community raise their own cattle and sheep, thereby eliminating concerns about mainstream practices and ensuring the quality of their meat products. In addition, communities such as the Danthonia Bruderhof and the Evergreen community and, to a lesser extent, the Thora Valley community produce their own fruit and vegetables, using their own biodynamic or organic methods of cultivation.

The construction of these resources as superior in quality also meant that participants thought they had a healthier lifestyle, which they attributed to communal living. A number of participants indicated that prior to joining their community they had been unhealthy and that community life had enabled them to transition into being healthier people\(^1\). Further factors such as a reduction in stress, attributed to having more time, were also related to an

\(^1\) Though a few participants also noted that some members were unhealthy because of their lifestyle.
improvement in health. A number of participants noted that they had reduced their work commitments because a simpler way of life meant that they had fewer overheads and financial commitments, such as mortgages. With more time, participants could focus on other lifestyle pursuits, such as recreation, socialising, engaging in personal hobbies, educational activities or the types of communal self-forming activities that have been discussed in section 6.3. More time also meant that participants could exchange skills and learn from others on the community.

An increase in available time is also related to the way in which the group could ‘harness resources’. For instance, the ‘kitty system’\(^1\) on the Evergreen community, discussed in section 6.3.2, meant that the community could bulk buy organic fruit and vegetables that were mostly perceived to be of a better quality than ordinary fruit and vegetables\(^2\). Given that organic fruit and vegetables are usually quite expensive, harnessing resources in this way meant that the community could buy produce at a much cheaper cost to the individual.

A quality lifestyle is also associated with a number of other aspects attributable to communal living. For many participants, there were relatively few costs associated with socialisation, because as one participant on Mountain Range stated ‘the world comes to you’. In this sense, close proximity to other members of the community reduced costs associated with socialisation. Further, for another participant on the Evergreen Community, a steady ‘flow of guests’ meant that a variety of colourful characters are often on hand to socialise with. Many communities have Willing Workers on

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\(^1\) May also be referred to as a ‘common purse’ on other communities (see Metcalf 1995:149).

\(^2\) Though as discussed in that section, one participant questioned the value of this practice and whether in fact organic fruit and vegetables were superior in quality. However, the community as a whole continued to buy organic fruit and vegetables.
Organic Farms in Australia (WWOOF)\footnote{See http://www.wwoof.com.au/ (accessed 12 January 2009).} or other guest programs, which permit members of the public to stay on the community for certain lengths of time. This provides guests with some experience in communal living, in addition to having new people on the community to socialise with. Some communities invite guests to stay for workshops, while members, through their external friendship networks, also invite friends to visit which further increases the available pool of people to socialise with.

6.5.4.3 Experimental lifestyle

An experimental lifestyle is a significant factor underpinning communal life on the Thora Valley community. It also reflects an important aspect of their mode of subjection, discussed in section 6.3.3, in which their Constitution affirms the right of all members to explore their own values. For many participants, experimentation is predominantly an individual pursuit. However, nearly all participants attributed their ability to experiment to the support provided by the community. For instance, as discussed in section 6.2.3.2, T1 on the Thora Valley community had transformed her entire identity through communal living. This transformation was attributable to a variety of experimental pursuits associated with living on the community and her commitment to self-enquiry:

\begin{quote}
T1 I could sort of play around with tepees, or this or that, and yurts, which fell down. And we’d just abandon ship and the whole idea was that we were having this adventure …
I deliberately stopped having a tape-deck … because I wanted to find my own voice … Find out that there’s such a thing as rhythm, and oh, what is rhythm, and ‘Do I have any?’ …
I didn’t know how to make bread, I didn’t know how to make jam, I didn’t know how to make conserves, you know, things that country women know about. So I went about learning about these things …
I stopped having anything to do with allopathic medicine … I
\end{quote}
started to just want to garden, and grow herbs, and study their relationship to me, and things.

During her early years on the community, this participant experimented with building structures. However, when they failed, as many invariably did, she could accommodate herself in the communal hall. Other aspects of her self-experimentation—such as finding her voice and discovering whether she had rhythm; learning skills associated with country women; and studying the relationship of herbs to herself in lieu of allopathic medicine—were predominantly attributable to having a quality lifestyle, as discussed in section 6.5.4.2. For instance, more available time, ‘harnessing resources’ and developing a healthier lifestyle. They were also attributable to the way in which communal living offers relatively cheap access to land through shared ownership in addition to support networks, which have been discussed in section 6.2.

For participants on the Evergreen community, experimentation was predominantly associated with self-enquiry as a group. As E1 indicated: ‘We’re committed to experiencing things positively as a group.’ Again, this was primarily associated with communal self-forming activities, discussed in section 6.3. Participants from the Evergreen and Mountain Range communities spoke of their intentions to develop a creative lifestyle also associated with low overheads and a high time availability. Some participants were highly artistic and followed a variety of artistic endeavours such as sculpture and painting.

6.5.5 Freedom

Freedom is also perceived as a key goal for intentional community participants. I have discussed Foucault’s notion of freedom as ‘practices of freedom’ in section 3.4.1. Thus self-forming activities are the practices of freedom that participants utilise for the purposes of achieving many of the
goals of communal living that have been discussed in this section and elsewhere. For participants in this research, choosing a particular lifestyle—a particular *techné* of life—reflects a form of freedom. The goal to which that freedom is directed concerns resistance to notions like suburbia, in addition to transforming aspects of one’s self and creating community as has been discussed above.

Participants are therefore engaged in the authorship of their lives. It is a very real consideration of what O’Leary (2006:1) argues is the cornerstone of Foucault’s ethics, which poses the question: How is one to live? Communal living provides the tools by which an alternative form of existence can be manifested. Through self-forming activities, participants bring about a whole range of transformations. Some of these transformations are concerned with the active construction of particular lifestyles, while others specifically focus on the construction of identities that resonate with their chosen communal style of life.

In this way, many participants noted the way in which they had come to a better account of both their lives and their identities. As E10 remarked: ‘I like myself better now’, reflecting a positive construction of his ‘self’. Participants on the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities also argued that they were free to be themselves on these communities. Lockland, in her research on the Mountain Range community¹, confirms it is a place ‘where the individual is free to be themselves’ (1998:39). She also found that notions of freedom, including the freedom to be one’s self, were further underpinned by participants’ choice of lifestyle as discussed above, and participation in environmental self-forming practices as discussed in section 6.4.1.5 (Lockland

¹ Lockland’s (1998) research focuses on the same community that is discussed in this research.
The freedom to be one’s self is taken up further in Chapter Seven when considering Foucault’s ethical or individualising subject.

6.5.6 Summary

This section has discussed participant’s telos, or goal, of communal living. The cultivation of different forms of relating through the intensification of interpersonal relations and the focus on community as the main mode of subjection means that for many participants ‘creating community’ is a significant goal of communal life. This finding tends to mirror Moisander and Pesonen’s (2002) eco-communards’ goal of living in harmony with other people.

However, resistance to mainstream discourses continues to be a critical goal of communal life. Though intentional communities are less radical than their counter-cultural counterparts of the 1960s and 1970s (Metcalf 2004:48), participants may subvert normalising discourses through living on an intentional community (Eraranta et al. 2009:359). For participants in this research, suburbia was constructed as representing a number of interlocking discourses that included the nuclear family, isolation, failure to offer a quality of life, individualism and a consumer ethic. Through communal living, participants could challenge normalising discourses around the nuclear family, individualism and the consumer ethic through the creation of a quality of life that participants positively constructed as being flexible, exploratory, and offered the real possibility of a satisfying and meaningful life.

Another purpose of communal living reflected a desire to live a better way of life. Particularly for participants that were poor, or on low incomes, this desire didn’t necessarily reflect a goal or vision as depicted in the definitions of an intentional community, as discussed in section 2.4.1. Rather, it reflected the
ability to construct different styles of life that may be creative or simple or permit experimentation. Those participants who joined intentional communities ‘because of’ socio-economic contexts, re-constructed their circumstances very differently in the communal context. For instance, M4 constructed ‘being poor’ as reflecting a smaller ecological footprint and as a ‘simple lifestyle’ that represented a sustainable form of living. While for Chris Voll of the Danthonia Bruderhof community, having a ‘zero wage’ played a significant part in subverting dominant discourses around a consumer ethic. Participants also discussed notions of freedom as goals of community living, chiefly in the ability to choose a particular lifestyle, in addition to the freedom to be one’s self by living on an intentional community.

Transformations of both the self and of one’s life were also goals of intentional community living. Though transformation was difficult to evaluate, participants indicated that transformations had occurred through subtle shifts in personality; through the construction of new identities associated with communal living; and through the transformation of their styles of life. As Eräranta et al. (2009:360) argue, Finnish eco-communes are sites that can offer new and different forms of subjectivity to their members. Similarly, Sargisson (2001:140-141) argues that critical utopias facilitate a transformative function that permits participants ‘to break significantly with confining traditions of thought and behaviour’ in addition to offering a space for transgression that enables people to be different.

This section has discussed the telos of participants in this research. The final chapter returns to a consideration of whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics as *praxis.*

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1 This contrasts significantly with ‘being poor’ as the ‘because of’ reasons for joining a community, as discussed in section 6.2.1.
Chapter Seven
CONCLUSION: Ethics as Praxis

7.1 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the findings presented in Chapter Six, highlighting the dominant form of ethics that participants practise through intentional community living. It also considers the research issue of whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics as praxis. It then focuses on the discursive representations that arise through a practice of ethics on these communities, including resisting representations of suburbia and the construction of difference through intentional community living. The sections following on from this discuss the implications of the research for theory in relation to intentional community living and the intentional community literature; Foucault’s ethics; and the methodology of this research. Limitations of the research and future research directions are then considered, before a final section concludes the research.

7.2 Conclusions about the research question

As discussed in section 4.2, Foucault’s ethical analysis provides a way in which to identify the how of Foucault’s ethics; that is, how participants construct their selves and their lives through communal living. An application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation as the organising principle for analysis to the empirical research therefore serves to identify each ethical aspect participants may work on through communal living. These findings are contextualised against the intentional community literature discussed in
Chapter Two and the case studies of the communities discussed in Chapter Five. The ethical analysis also serves to evaluate whether intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics, for as discussed in section 3.6 both O’Leary (2006) and McHoul and Grace (1993) consider that Foucault’s four aspects of ethics constitute any system of ethics.

The findings in Chapter Six suggest that some participant’s work on an ethical substance that has an intentional focus, representing a vision or goal. Many participants may also work on aspects of their identity through communal living. Further, the ethical substance may extend beyond notions of the self to include all facets of a participant’s life through significant investment of the self, such that the ethical substance extends to a notion of the ‘right life’ (Rajchman 1986). However, irrespective of an intentional focus, for many participants ‘doing relatedness’ (Eräranta et al. 2009) is a key aspect of the ethical substance that is to be worked on within a communal context. Doing relatedness therefore bridges the ‘critical division in ideology’ identified by Metcalf (1986:116) between those who joined an intentional community in order to live out some purpose or vision, and those who joined an intentional community because of their socio-economic circumstances.

As a form of self-regulation, the mode of subjection represents a personal and voluntary choice in ethics that may simply reflect a desire by participants to live a better life. The mode is further implemented through an extremely

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1 This finding may represent a shift in perspective in the way an intentional community is defined, which tends to reflect the inspirations of an original founding group, rather than participants who join a community because of their socio-economic circumstances or participants who join after its inception. It may also represent a shift in ideology over time, whereby both founding and non-founding members move away from a purpose or vision to ways of relating as the cornerstone of communal life. This certainly reflects the findings in this research as both founding and non-founding members indicated that ‘doing relatedness’ was a key focus of the ethical substance to be worked on through communal living. This would also support Sargisson’s suggestion, which was explored in the mode of subjection, that some community’s that have no shared ideology may instead share a general and somewhat vague commitment to community and co-operation (Sargisson 2004a:9).
diverse range of practices, or *self-forming activities*, that are performed on the self in both a communal and individual context. These practices result in the various goals, or telos, of communal life, including creating community, resistance to mainstream discourses, transformation of the self, the construction of different lifestyles and forms of freedom.

By way of comparison, participants on the land-sharing community of Stoney Creek did not share a communal philosophy or a co-operative ethos. As discussed by participants on this community, communal infrastructure may form the basis for creating community, which tends to be confirmed by the facilitative role it played in the lives of participants on the intentional communities in this research. As discussed in section 6.4 this contrasts with Kanter’s findings concerning communal infrastructure (Kanter 1972:111).

Though each aspect of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation has been considered separately in relation to the empirical research, Foucault argued that there were both relationships and a certain kind of independence between each ethical aspect (Foucault 1984a:355). As discussed in section 3.6.5, different telos required different ‘techniques of self-forming activity’ (Foucault 1984a:355). Furthermore, different eras might give rise to a different form of ethics. For example, the telos of Classical Greek culture—self-mastery—took into account only oneself and not the other; while later Greek culture was orientated towards self-mastery and care of the self (Foucault 1984a:357). The practice of an ethics is therefore contingent (Fillion, 2005:58) and situated within the possibilities of any given historical situation (Infinito 2003b:160).

There are clear relationships between each aspect of ethics in this research. As discussed in the mode of subjection, the authority which incites (Rajchman 1986:172) participants on these communities may simply reflect the very act of
communal living (Moisander & Pesonen 2002). This highlights the way in which communal living is the fundamental mode of subjection for participants in this research. As ‘care of the self’ dominated Greek ethics (Foucault 1984b; see also Bohill 2006) communal living permeates the practices of participants in this research. As Munro-Clark argued in relation to Australian intentional communities of the 1980s, community was a necessary condition for each member’s fulfilment (Munro-Clark 1986:83). Abrams et al. (1976:93-96) also recognised the essential nature of communal practice on British communes of the 1970s. Additionally, Moisander and Pesonen (2002:340), using a Foucauldian ethical framework, note the importance of this notion in the context of two aspects of ethics: that a ‘mutual quest for community’ acts as a significant mode of subjection that may guide and constrain participants on Finnish eco-communes; and that ‘the mere idea and the act of moving into a commune’ is itself a self-forming activity.

However, this thesis takes Abrams et al. (1976) Munro-Clark (1986), and Moisander and Pesonen’s (2002) contentions further by arguing that communal living represents the primary way in which participants are invited to recognise their moral obligations permeating all other aspects of an ethics, including the ethical substance, the self-forming activities and the telos. As O’Leary (2006:144) argues, ethical practice was ‘primarily a matter of giving form to one’s life through the use of certain techniques’. An ethical life therefore involved the invention for oneself of ‘the principles and rules according to which these techniques would be developed and this form would be given’ (O’Leary 2006:144). Intentional community living therefore represents this form for participants in this research, with each community’s philosophy bringing a particular flavour to each aspect of ethics. Intentional community living may consequently represent a form of ethics as praxis.
7.3 Other findings - Discursive constructions

The ethical analysis also highlights the practices that give rise to the discursive constructions that result from a performance of an ethics on the self. As discussed in section 4.2, within a Foucauldian ethical framework, subjects are constituted primarily through the practices they perform on their selves as ethical subjects. Moisander and Pesonen argue that Foucault’s ethics is essentially a mode of self-formation (Moisander & Pesonen 2002:33; see also Bernauer and Mahon 1994:143). It therefore implies a creation of one’s self or poiesis (O’Leary 2006) or what Rajchman refers to as an etho-poetic constitution of the self (Rajchman 1986:170). It may also focus on how subjects construct their life in accordance with the question: How is one to live? (O’Leary 2006). An ethical relationship with the self is therefore not simply ‘self-awareness’ but rather a process of forming one’s self as an ethical subject (Foucault 1984g/1985:28). As discussed in section 3.5, an ethical subject is an individualising subject when it constructs itself and gives itself an identity or style of life it alone affirms and creates.

Foucauldian constructionism (Miller 2008) forms the basis for discussing the why and what for of Foucauldian ethics. As the world, including one’s self, is not evidently ‘there’ (Miller 2008:268), we are left with the very real possibilities of self-construction. Moisander and Pesonen (2002: 330) argue that Foucault’s moral agency is a form of resistance, which on the one side is to refuse what we are, and on the other is to invent who we are by promoting new forms of subjectivity. This reflects the discussions in section 3.4 that concern core themes that underpin Foucault’s ethics and subsequently his notion of the ethical or individualising subject. Resistance and creation are twin faces of Foucault’s ethics and these were replicated in the findings of this research. In the next section I discuss the key aspects of resistance and creation that resulted from this research.
7.3.1 Resisting suburbia

Significantly, participants sought to subvert representations of ‘suburbia’ through communal living. However suburbia involved a conceptual framework of interlocking discourses that included normative representations of the nuclear family, individualism and consumerism. The central role of the nuclear family (see also Eräranta et al. 2009) within the confines of suburban living was perceived to be a limiting experience for not only child/parent relations, but also for nuclear family/neighbour relations. Suburban living was also constructed as promoting a form of individualism that meant participants often felt ill-equipped to deal with a communal form of life. The ‘urban nature’ of some participants was therefore blamed for the failure to produce any form of communal cohesion. This latter finding is an ongoing theme on intentional communities that is well recognised in the intentional community literature (Abrams et al. 1976:32-33; Metcalf 2004:89). Further, suburbia was constructed as promoting a consumer ethic, which, for some participants was viewed as a form of dependency that tied them to the mechanisms of mainstream living and the compulsion to consume goods at designated periods throughout one’s life.

For participants in this research, suburban living was not considered to be a natural or self-evident way of living. In particular, the subjectivities that are constructed through suburban living that are considered by participants to be isolating, individualistic and dependant on the consumption of consumer goods were significantly critiqued and refused. Moisander and Pesonen also found that green consumers on Finnish eco-communes refused their received Western subjectivity as Western consumers (2002:330). The refusal of subjectivities was also grounded in a number of participants’ rejection of identities associated with their former way of life in this research. These findings accord with the research of Abrams et al. (1976:95-96) that found
British commune seekers rejected socially given recipes for self-construction, yet at the same time turned to communes because they understood that selves were constructed socially.

Resistance is also found in the very practices that have become a familiar way of life for intentional community participants in this research. The *ethical substance* involves significant investment of the self in communal life for considerable periods of time, which contrasts sharply with mobility and transience often associated with contemporary economic labour markets. Varying levels of communal ownership of land, reflected in the *mode of subjection* is continually practised through notions of shared responsibility, which contests mainstream liberal ideals that underpin private property and the importance of the market value of individual ownership.

*Self-forming activities*, such as the ecological practice of voluntarily dedicating communal land as a wildlife sanctuary, actively contributes to the intrinsic value of flora and fauna (Lockwood 1998), thereby contesting the economic cost benefit analysis of their worth to future generations. Further ecological practices such as the use of solar energy, composting toilets and homeopathic water filtration systems, play a part in actively resisting public health discourses around essential service provision, in addition to fostering ecological principles of self-sustainability. Further, the *telos* of communal living, replicated in a variety of styles of life, may also contest notions surrounding mainstream life trajectories that include thirty-five hour work weeks, mortgages, and notions of the ‘good life’ that reflect particular liberal ideals.

There is also a deeper level of resistance that embodies all these elements. Sargisson argues that simply choosing to live in accordance with even a vague ethos that concerns ‘co-operative living’ tends to challenge some of the major
assumptions in liberal thought and society (2004a:6). Thus, the contestation that occurs around values, as discussed in Chapter Two, and the implementation of those values through the construction of a communal life, confronts key institutions, norms and assumptions (Sargisson 2004a:7).

7.3.2 Constructing difference

The research findings also suggest that intentional community participants are actively engaged in the authorship of their lives. It is a very real consideration of what O’Leary argues is the cornerstone of Foucault’s ethics: How is one to live? (2006:1). Using Miller’s terminology, participants were able to construct and position themselves differently to dominant mainstream discourses (Miller 2008:268) through the very act of communal living.

For instance, the cultivation of different forms of relating resulted in constructions of the extended family and friendship networks in deference to the limit of familial relations. Abrams et al. (1976:32-33) similarly found that British secular family communes of the 1970s were an attempt to cultivate a friendship of equals, while Eräranta et al. (2009) found that Finnish eco-communards cultivated different forms of relating that resulted in the creation of the extended family. So, although Metcalf argues that Australian society assumes that family is a ‘natural’ thing and that most secular communities in Australia also assume that the family is natural (as cited in Kohn 2005:8) this research tends to indicate that the family is not evidently “there” for participants in this research. As Eräranta et al. (2009:359) point out, Finnish communes provided a space for eco-communards to re-think ‘family’ as a site of exclusive intimate relationships enabling members to subvert normalising discourses of the family through communal living.

In contrast to the representations of suburbia discussed above, participants discussed communal living as a place where different forms of relating could
be experienced. Extended non-biological family members had the possibility of playing the role of ‘parent’ in looking after other member’s children, while older members could also experience the role of being an ‘elder’ on a community. These findings are replicated in the work of Eräranta et al. (2009:359-364), who discuss the way in which Finnish eco-communes enabled participants to articulate alternative narratives of caring relationships and opened up the concept of ‘kinship.’ For participants in this research, intentional community living also offered participants different ways of relating to nature, that for some participants extended ‘beyond the skin’ to include the environment that formed part of their community.

Through the intensification of inter-personal relations, a sense of ‘creating community’ was also experienced as a further form of relating. Participants discussed feeling connected, having a sense of belonging, trusting the group, being safe and having a sense of being part of a cohesive group. Participants invariably constructed ways of being in a group that starkly contrasted with living in suburbia: communal living offered greater interaction; people wandering around were friends who participants had also known for a long time; other members were also people who participants made decisions with, regarding a whole range of issues that affected each other’s lives. As Baldassare (1992:474) points out, a declining quality of community life marked one aspect of a suburban crisis experienced by Americans during the 1990s. Communal living was therefore constructed as a site that was empowering for participants, even though interpersonal conflict was represented as a normalising discourse that infused communal life.

Communal living was also constructed as a better quality of life that was perceived to be unavailable to participants who lived in a suburban setting. In many ways, participant’s construction of communal living reflects what Australian suburban living used to be like in the 1970s where houses might
have adjoining backyards; neighbours knew each other and suburban living was considered to be safe for children to roam about\textsuperscript{1}. Communal living also meant that basic needs were perceived to be of a ‘superior’ quality. Air was considered to be fresh, and water and food were superior in quality because the intentional communities were located close to nature reserves and participants either grew their own food, or sourced it locally. The construction of these resources as superior in quality meant that participants believed they had a healthier lifestyle that was directly attributed to communal living.

Through the performance of various self-forming activities, participants could also work on aspects of individualism that undermined the ability to construct a sense of community. For many participants, choosing a simple lifestyle, harnessing resources through a shared purse or communal kitty and engaging in a variety of ecological practices meant that participants could actively construct something different to a mainstream consumer ethic. Further, egalitarian principles based on consensus or participatory decision-making encouraged participation in the governance of one’s life through the creation and amendment of communal rules at communal or tribal meetings.

There were a number of social processes that enabled participants to construct their ‘selves’ differently through communal living. For participants on far more communal intentional communities such as Danthonia Bruderhof and the Evergreen community, the intentional focus of their mode of subjection and the intensity of their communal self-forming activities meant that participants could actively construct a we-consciousness that is well represented in the intentional community literature (see Metcalf 2004:9). However, participants on far less communal intentional communities, such as the Thora Valley and Mountain Range communities, could also construct

\textsuperscript{1} This is my experience of growing up in ‘suburbia’ in Seaford, Victoria during the 1970s in Australia.
alternative subjectivities through a mode of subjection that affirmed individual pursuits within a collective environment. Most notably, participants who had joined their community because of their socio-economic circumstances could resist mainstream constructions of ‘being poor’ in favour of constructions that viewed those ongoing circumstances as ethical. For example, M4 used fewer resources than her mainstream suburban dwellers, indicating a smaller environmental footprint. Her style of life was also a better choice for the environment and she could therefore live with integrity on this community. As Eräanta et al. (2009:360) argue, Finnish eco-communes are sites that can offer new and different forms of subjectivity to their members.

Finally, participants also appropriated civil society in both the rearticulation of meaning and the reconstitution of civil society (Schehr 1997), or what Love-Brown (2002) refers to as mazeway reformation. Many of the self-forming activities discussed in section 6.4 are utilised in mainstream society. Meetings are a regular form of engagement in public and private institutions and are held by small voluntary groups, although consensus decision-making is rarely used. Individuals can access meditation on a regular basis through various Buddhist and self-help groups, and people that do not reside on intentional communities may also practise the spiritual practices performed on the self by participants who do reside on those communities, such as the Thora Valley and Evergreen communities. Further, many environmental practices are now readily supported through government programs and new rebate systems that encourage their use. However, it is the concentrated form of these practices on communities that are performed by voluntary groups of people for communal purposes that make intentional communities unique (see also Schehr 1997).

These practices are indicative of Foucault’s claims that techné are to be found in one’s culture and are themselves limited to the historical contingencies of
the time. As Foucault (1984a:365) argues, the point is not to pursue the indescribable, nor to reveal the hidden, but to collect the already-said. These practices are then rearticulated for very different objectives on intentional communities, which have been discussed above in the context of the telos and resistance to normalising discourses. As Moisander and Pesonen (2002:330) argue, eco-communards invent, not discover, who they are by developing and promoting new forms of subjectivity—or styles of life—that can be sources of effective resistance to disciplinary powers.

Thus, communal living as the primary *mode of subjection* is the pivotal element that forms both the basis for resistance against mainstream society, in addition to facilitating creative constructions of the self and communal life. I turn now to the implications of this research.

### 7.4 Implications

The wider implications and significance of the research are discussed in this section. It is divided into three parts which includes a consideration of the implications for the intentional community literature and intentional community living, as discussed in Chapter Two; Foucault’s ethics and the Foucauldian literature discussed in Chapter Three; and the methodology, in particular the use of Foucault’s ethical analysis discussed in section 3.6, and Foucauldian constructionism discussed in Chapter Four.

#### 7.4.1 Intentional community living

Schehr (1997:3-4) argues that intentional communities represent a form of unique ‘dynamism’ within civil society which conventional social movement literature is theoretically and conceptually unable to deconstruct (Schehr 1997:4). In comparison, the earlier intentional community literature of Kanter (1972), Abrams et al. (1976), Zablocki (1971, 1980), Cock (1975, 1977, 1979), McLaughlin and Davidson (1986) Metcalf (1984, 1986, 1989), Metcalf and
Vanclay (1987) and Munro-Clark (1986) has made significant theoretical contributions to an understanding of intentional community living that have also been invaluable to an application of Foucault’s ethics to the empirical data in this research. However, though the intentional community literature is incredibly diverse, its contemporary form is significantly undertheorised. Contemporary works are either grounded in the utopian literature (Sargisson 2000, 2001, 2004a, 2004b; Stillman 2001), or when applying Foucault’s ethics in the context of intentional communities (Moisander & Pesonen 2002; Skinner 2007; Eräranta et al. 2009) only briefly engage the intentional community literature. This research therefore makes a significant contribution to the gap in the research field.

Part of the lacuna in the research field also underpins Schehr’s argument that intentional communities have been overlooked as ‘non-movements’ due to the focus placed on the need for social movements to effect structural transformations at the level of the state (Schehr 1997:10). Early intentional community scholars also took this view (Kanter 1972; Cock 1975, 1979; Zablocki 1980; Metcalf 1986; Munro-Clark 1986) which, in the intentional community literature, has sometimes resulted in an emphasis on the decline of intentional communities because they are perceived to be less radicalised (Kuhn 2005) and less communal than their counter cultural counterparts of the 1960s and 1970s (see Metcalf 2004:46-47,48). This is despite intentional community literature that reflects the voices of both scholars and intentional community participants that are engaged in increasingly diverse and complex forms of communal living, as discussed in Chapter Two. In lieu of this, intentional communities that are less radicalised and less communal may be perceived as no better, or different, to ordinary suburban living (see Metcalf 2004:47).
For some intentional communities that contention may well be true. However, the findings in this research indicate that despite notions of radicalism, an intention to pursue a philosophical vision or goal, or levels of communality, ‘suburbia’ is a highly contested discourse that forms the basis for continuing resistance to mainstream representations by participants in this research. Discussions on resistance are certainly well documented in the early intentional community literature as discussed in section 2.6. However, though aspects of resistance may be discussed in the contemporary literature there is very little contemporary theorising on resistance and the sort of themes that are relevant to an articulation of resistance suggested by Schehr concerning agency, the appropriation and reconstruction of civil society (cf Love-Brown 2002; Sargisson 2001, 2004b), and the construction of different forms of intra and interpersonal relations (cf Eräranta et al. 2009). The use of a Foucauldian framework on ethics therefore provides a way in which to theorise resistance and construction in relation to intentional community living.

The construction of different forms of intra and interpersonal relations in this research therefore has implications for the way in which intentional communities have been defined in section 2.4.1. The focus on the need for intentional community members to display an intention in the form of a goal or vision as paramount for living communally (Metcalf 2004:9) severely limits the way in which intentional communities may function as modes of subaltern resistance (Schehr 1997). This focus best represents the type of intentional community participants that joined a community ‘in order to’ live out some philosophical vision or purpose (Metcalf 1986). Though there were participants in this research who focused on an ethical substance that represented such an intention, these participants also tended to be middle-aged, middle-class, tertiary educated and holding secure forms of employment. They also tended to be the original founders of an intentional
community. As Metcalf points out, historically, intentional communities have always been communities for middle-aged people (Kohn 2005:7). The findings therefore suggest that middle-aged participants live communally for the purposes of contesting the normative frameworks of middle-class living that are best represented by notions of ‘suburban’ living.

However, defining a vision or goal as paramount to intentional community living limits the way in which intentional communities also act as sites of resistance for participants that join an intentional community because of their socio-economic circumstances or through relationships. As discussed in section 6.5, participants who joined intentional communities because of socio-economic contexts re-constructed their circumstances very differently in the communal context. Thus, those who are characterised as being socio-economically disadvantaged within mainstream culture are also able to contest the normative frameworks of this discourse through communal living.

The ability to construct alternative subjectivities through communal living is well recognised in the early intentional community literature, as discussed in section 2.6.1. Further, many participants in this research readily slew off identities associated with their former lives or constructed lives that better represented an image of the right life. The work of Munro-Clark (1986) and Abrams et al. (1976) tends to emphasise the rejection of socially given recipes for self-construction, which might be characterised by what Infinito (2003a, 2003b) refers to, within the context of the Foucauldian literature, as a disavowal of an ‘imposed’ self (2003a:71). This act of disavowal reflects a ‘conscious resistance to societal forces that seek to define subjectivity for individuals’ (Infinito 2003b:158). The work of Abrams et al (1976) and Munro-Clark (1986) complements the literature that considers Foucault’s ethics. It also supports the notion that self-constitution offers a way to make ‘a satisfactory account of oneself’ (Abrams et al. 1976:95-96; Infinito 2003b:158;

This is a significant contribution to both the intentional community and Foucauldian literature as it confirms that they discuss similar conceptual notions with respect to identity and the way in which identity is constructed; through communal living in the case of the intentional community literature, and through ethical self-formation in the context of the Foucauldian literature. They also recognise that identities that have been constructed by others may be discounted or refused. Further, this literature affirms that the construction of new identities through self-constitution can lead to satisfactory accounts of oneself as has been discussed in section 6.5, on the subject of telos1. As Abrams et al. (1976:95-96) argue, the point of a commune is, through living with others, to make one’s way to a satisfactory account of oneself, an account realised and expressed in terms of one’s relations with those others. As Fillion argues, Foucault’s ethics reflects a concern for ‘living one’s life as one’s own’ (2005:57).

Finally, the argument that intentional community living can be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics as praxis means that ethics is a lived experience that is concerned with a very practical relationship with the self, and with the type of practices that may be performed on the self to effect transformation. To be ethical is to become the kind of person one aspires to be, to lead the kind of life one is invited to lead, or to obtain the moral state one is incited to attain (Rajchman 1986:172). The application of a Foucauldian ethics to the intentional communities in this research provides insight into their practices as a form of ethics and shows how intentional community participants seek to

1 For instance, T1 in this research transformed from being ‘straight’—and incompetent—to a ‘hippy’—and competent—through communal living on the Thora Valley community. Similarly, participants on the Evergreen community constructed identities that extended ‘beyond the boundaries of the skin’ to include their communal ecology.
bridge what Abrams et al. (1976:22) refer to as a philosophical dualism, and that philosophy alone cannot effect change through thought (compare Stillman 2001:20). Rather, philosophical dualism is to be denied in practice.

The following section considers the implications for Foucault’s ethics.

7.4 2 Foucault’s Ethics

This section considers moral agency in the context of a Foucauldian ethics; that though ethics is concerned with the construction of one’s self and one’s life, it is considered to be a social practice; the implications of freedom for a Foucauldian ethics; and raises the problem of values when considering Foucault’s ethics.

7.4.2.1 Moral Agency

Miller (2008:268) argues that readers of her article on Foucauldian constructionism should see that Foucault’s interest in the way actors actively construct the world is secondary to his interest in the way subjects are positioned and position themselves through discourses. As discussed in section 3.4, Foucault re-positioned his ethical work in the context of his own discourses surrounding agency to account for the active subject and the way it constructs itself through existing discourses. Active self-constitution is a defining element of Foucault’s ethics (1982a/1998:18; 1984b/1988:11; see also Sybylla 2001:74, 76, 80). Therefore, Foucault’s concept of freedom, as discussed in section 3.4.1, enables the ethical subject a ‘freedom within limits’ to ‘reflect on ways it is positioned in such discourses … and to consider other styles of self …’ (Miller 2008:265). It is to position one’s self, rather than to be positioned, that is at the cornerstone of Foucault’s ethics (see Miller 2008:259, 267).
Agency is therefore conceptualised within a Foucauldian framework on ethics as representing choice. That is, the ethical subject has the ability to choose between different modes of being in the world; different subject positions and different constructions of the self. Participants in this research personified this form of agency through the very act of choosing an intentional community lifestyle. Intentional communities therefore embody active participants effecting change on their selves and their surroundings on a daily basis, as discussed in the context of self-forming activities and telos. Agency, rather than an objective ideal, is a subjective experience which, for intentional community participants, enables the exploration of the very real possibilities of an alternative life within a communal context that is also contextual and rooted in contemporary historical possibilities.

Agency is also rooted in Foucault’s notion of power relations and the inherent ability to resist forms of normalisation, as has been discussed above. As Foucault argues, at the heart of every power relationship is the ‘recalcitrance of the will’ (1982b:221-222). Intentional communities, as sites of resistance or subversion (Eräranta et al. 2009), enable participants to engage in striking examples of ‘recalcitrance of the will’, with forms of resistance, discussed in sections 2.6 and 6.5.6, considered to be significant factors that underpin intentional community living. As Sargisson argues, critical utopias offer a space for transgression that enables people to be different (2001:140-141).

7.4.2.2 Social Practice

Foucault (1984h/1986:51) argued that, in the context of earlier Greek utopian communes such as the neo-Pythagorean communities or the Epicurean groups, ethics ‘constituted, not an exercise in solitude, but a true social practice’, taking its form through institutionalised structures. Similarly, Abrams et al. (1976:22) argue that commune seekers of the 1970s moved from
theory to practice and from individual practice to social practice. Thus the early utopian context of Foucault’s ethics points to, as Moore and Infinito suggest, a social practice that deals with the life of a collective rather than a life of the individual (Infinito 2003b:166; Moore 1987:89). As Moore notes:

Foucault suggests a version of the ethical goal, which involves a collective’s dwelling within the relation between its theories or commitments and the institutionalisation of these commitments as the life of the collective. (1987:89)

However, as discussed in section 6.2, on the subject of ethical substance, it is not just others within an intentional community that form the basis for an ethics, rather it is significant others that form the basis for an ethical life.

It is therefore not surprising that Foucault’s ethics emerged from his views on what are considered to be early utopian communities in the intentional community literature. For instance, Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation is derived from communities such as the Essenes, the Stoics and the neo-Pythagorean communities (Foucault 1984h/1986:46-60). Writers such as Kozeny (2000a), Metcalf (1996) and Sargent (2000) argue that these are examples of early utopian communities. However, this contention is under-researched and under-theorised in both the Foucauldian and intentional community literature. For instance, Foucault considered ‘utopias’ in his text Of Other Spaces; however, very little research considers Foucault’s ethics in the context of early utopian communities. As discussed in Chapter Two, Foucault considered these social groups to be very limited in number and to represent a culture in which a techné tou biou—technique of life—could have a meaning and a reality (Foucault 1984h/1986:45).

1 Published in French in 1984 shortly before Foucault’s death; however, it was the basis of a lecture given in 1967. See M Foucault and J Miskowiec, Of Other Spaces, Diacritics, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring, 1986), pp. 22-27.
Contemporary intentional communities continue this legacy. For instance, the communities in this research ranged in size from median-sized communities with a total population of thirty members, to the largest community that included up to sixty households and approximately two hundred residents. Although they may no longer represent small elite groups, they continue to be ‘bearers of culture’, and in some cases possessing their own social, educational and political systems—even their own language. Although they may also be large federated organisations, they still tend to be small in number compared to the demographics of the wider population. For instance Schaub (2003:759) estimates that 0.03% of the North American population (i.e. 100,000 people) live in intentional communities, based on a very liberal definition of the term. While Metcalf (as cited in Kuhn 2005:11) estimates that there are between 20,000 and 30,000 people living in intentional communities in Australia making up 0.12% of the population.

7.4.2.3 Freedom

Moisander and Pesonen argue that Foucault’s ethics is the way we fashion our freedom (2002:33; see also Bernauer & Mahon 1994:143). For Foucault, freedom is ontologically prior to the performance of an ethics. It is therefore not surprising that a significant proportion of intentional communities are located in western democratic countries. This suggests that Foucault’s notion of freedom reflects a certain form of freedom that is conducive to both the establishment and ongoing existence of these types of communities. Further, although the intentional communities that participated in this research may not be representative of the broad spectrum of intentional communities across the world, all participants in this research were Caucasian and predominantly

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1 For instance the Federation of Damanhur in northern Italy, near Castallemonte, is an eco-society that has created its own language known as Selfic.

2 Metcalf points out that intentional community living is not limited to Western countries (see Metcalf 1986: 77; 2004:27). However, intentional communities are found in all western countries (Metcalf 2004:28).
orientated to same-sex relations. Being ‘white’ and ‘straight’ may also determine the particular form of freedom enjoyed by participants on these communities, although it is acknowledged that same-sex intentional communities do exist¹.

Communal living therefore provides the tools by which an alternative form of existence can be manifested. Through self-forming activities, participants bring about a whole range of transformations. Some of these transformations are concerned with the active construction of particular lifestyles, while others specifically focus on the construction of identities that resonate with their chosen communal style of life. In this way, many participants noted the way in which they had come to a better account of both their lives and construction of their selves. As E10 remarked: ‘I like myself better now’, reflecting a positive construction of one’s self that has been discussed in section 6.5.5. Intentional communities may therefore offer participants a way in which to become ‘mature adults’ in a world of ‘self-incurred tutelage’ (Fillion 2005:54).

7.4.2.4 The problem of values

To finalise this section I return to Prado’s critique, discussed in section 3.5.1. Prado (2003) asserts that a Foucauldian ethical self-determination is not possible because Foucault does not offer any values by which to distinguish between our real and apparent wants, intentions and assessments in choosing to act to attain a certain state of perfection. Similar arguments are made in the works of Pignatelli (2002) and O’Leary (2006) in the Foucauldian literature. However, as discussed in Chapter Two, Schehr (1997) argues that intentional communities as subaltern modes of resistance rearticulate values. Further,

¹ For instance, Sargisson and Sargent (2004b:18-19) discuss a New Zealand based co-operative sisterhood community called ‘Earthspirit’, which is based on radical feminism. It is committed to ‘creating a feminist life amongst lesbian women.’
Sargisson’s (2001:140) theory of transgressive utopianism focuses on the way in which critical utopias destroy, transform and revive traditions in which they are located.

The work of Schehr (1997) and Sargisson (2001) finds resonance with Foucault’s contention that ethics is based in the discourses of any given historical period. Their work also reflects the findings in this research. As discussed in Chapter Six, normative values are contested and reappropriated for different purposes by intentional community participants, resulting in different styles of life and different ways of constructing the self. The contestation around values, and the ongoing resistance to values that constitute forms of identity, demonstrate the ways in which existing values can be contested and rearticulated through a variety of different practices performed on the self. Foucault’s failure to enter into a modernist preoccupation of a single normative framework is seemingly irrelevant in light of the possibilities that are available for rearticulation in any given discourse. As Sybllya (2001:75) argues, in trusting our own judgment, Foucault gives us choice and so ‘people are left to make up their own minds, to choose, in the light of their own existence’. Intentional community participants actively practice this choice.

7.4.3 Methodology

This thesis has already resulted in a significant contribution to knowledge. As discussed in section 3.6, it has differentiated between Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation, as discussed in The Use of Pleasure (1984g/1985), on the one hand and care of the self, as discussed in The Care of the Self (1984h/1986), on the other. This distinction has been discussed elsewhere (Bohill 2006), yet it is a direct result of this research. In consequence, although both The Use of Pleasure and The Care of the Self concern practices of the self and have been
drawn on in this context, this thesis subsequently considers Foucault’s ethics as a distinct theoretical framework from care of the self.

This research has therefore explored the notion that Foucault’s ethical analysis may also be used as a broadly defined qualitative methodology (Davidson 1986; Scheurich & McKenzie 2005). Although Aycock (1995) uses Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation to undertake a document analysis of texts, very few works focus on an application of Foucault’s ethics as the organising principle for analysis of empirical research. Moisander and Pesonen (2002) do so, while the work of St Pierre (2004) uses Foucault’s ethical analysis as an *a priori* theory to analyse her empirical data. Researchers such as Eräranta, Moisander and Pesonen (2009) also build on former research that has already undertaken this analysis (see Moisander & Pesonen 2002). This research therefore extends on the notion that Foucault’s ethics can be utilised as a broadly defined qualitative methodology that focuses on the practices subjects use to construct their selves – and their lives – as ethical.

Within the context of Foucauldian constructionism, as discussed above, I agree with Miller that Foucault’s larger interest is in discourses (Miller 2008:268). However, I feel uneasy with Miller’s (2008:266) contention that Foucault’s ethics shifts away from an interest in resistance per se, to the struggles of the subject to form itself as ethical. As has been discussed in Chapter Three, resistance is embedded in Foucault’s notion of discursive power and forms the basis of Foucault’s subject as a form of power. This research has shown that resistance and creation are twin faces of Foucault’s ethics. As Moisander and Pesonen (2002: 330) argue Foucault’s moral agency is a form of resistance, which on the one side is to refuse what we are, and on the other is to invent who we are by promoting new forms of subjectivity. This also reflects Schehr’s argument that intentional communities are ‘subaltern modes of resistance’ (1999:249) that enable participants to engage in
a form of resistance through the active redefinition of their social world; a suggestion, which is also reiterated in the work of Moisander and Pesonen (2002) and Eräranta et al. (2009) on Finnish eco-communes.

7.5 Limitations

The intentional community literature tends to focus on the notion of ‘successful’ communities that have been established for long periods of time. The intentional communities that formed the basis of the case studies discussed in Chapters Five and Six were chosen on the basis of their difference from each other, their rural location, and the fact that they were long-term communities and therefore might be considered successful according to Kanter’s yardstick (Kanter 1972). Notions of ‘success’ therefore permeated the empirical research, as it was perceived that the study of longer-term communities, in light of a Foucauldian ethics, might offer significant insights. In some instances this was borne out. For instance, issues surrounding longevity of membership have been discussed above in the context of the ethical substance and in relation to notions of resistance.

The theorising of successful communities in accordance with Foucault’s ethics, such as those portrayed in this research, does not necessarily exclude communities that might be deemed ‘unsuccessful’ according to Kanter (1972). For instance, Zablocki (1980) points to short-term communes that may be established for a particular purpose and then disbanded within a relatively short period of time. Metcalf (as cited in Kohn 2005), for example, discusses living on Pleiades, a very intense short-term community. He notes that living on this community was a ‘pivotal’ experience in showing him the strengths a group can achieve (cited in Kohn 2005:2). Arguably, communities such as these may also be analysed using a Foucauldian ethical framework. Future research may therefore seek to focus on newly formed intentional
communities to ascertain whether these communities focus on different practices of the self. This would provide a comparison with the literature presented here on longer-term communities.

The research presented in this thesis is also limited to a very small number of rural spiritual and secular communities located in northern NSW, Australia. As has been discussed, participants were predominantly Caucasian and lived in same-sex relationships. This presented implications for the findings on Foucault’s notion of freedom, as discussed above. Future research might consider focusing on communities that are predominantly non-Caucasian, or gay and lesbian communities, for insights into notions of ‘freedom’ for a practice of ethics.

Further, only a very small number of participants participated in this research from the Mountain Range community, despite being a very large community. This provided a wide range of views from different hamlets on this community, providing a purposive sample of communal life across the community. Future research on similar communities where hamlets also form the basis of communal life may instead focus on collecting data from an entire hamlet as a representative sample of the larger community. This might provide additional insights into the life of a ‘community within a community’ on very large communities.

A very broad approach was taken towards the collection and analysis of data. This method yielded a significant amount of data and has provided a very detailed account of participants’ practices and styles of life on these communities as presented in Chapter Six. A more subtle examination may focus purely on Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation in the collection and analysis of data in future research on one intentional community. This may provide a greater in-depth analysis of ethics as practised on such a
community, in addition to particular constructions of subjectivity in the same way that T1’s subjective account of her transition from being ‘straight’ to ‘hippy’ through communal living has been presented in this research.

7.6 Implications for future research

The findings of this research indicate that there are eight significant areas that would benefit from future research. The first relates to future statistical research on intentional communities in Australia and its implications for an ethics as praxis. The second and third areas consider issues relating to ageing on intentional communities and the implications for young people who are raised on intentional communities. The fourth considers the importance of the utopian literature for notions of a Foucauldian ethics. The fifth, sixth and seventh areas consider further research on socio-economic disadvantage in the context of communal living, the ‘ethical moment’ that incites a choice to live communally, and the effects of transformation on intentional communities. The final area addresses the wider implications of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation for contemporary social movements and an ethics as praxis.

There is a paucity of demographic data on intentional communities in Australia (compare Metcalf 2004). For instance, the Communities Directory lists a total of twenty-seven communities in Australia, of which many are noted as ‘forming’.1 Inclusion on this database is dependent on communities listing their community and updating their information. Yet Metcalf notes from experience, that there are somewhere between 200 and 300 intentional communities in Australia (cited in Franklin 2005:11). Metcalf and Vanclay (1987:11, 57) noted significant issues around the reliability of data and difficulties associated with obtaining relevant data in their research in 1987.

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Research may then consider particular demographic populations and their constructions of self within a communal environment. As this research has primarily theorised intentional community living as a form of ethics as *praxis*, particular population groups may in fact demonstrate significant differences in their *mode of subjection*, *self-forming activities* or *telos* associated with intentional community living.

The issue of ageing on intentional communities is well documented and it is pertinent that only one participant of sixty participated in this research. Although that participant continues to be a member of the community, he no longer physically lives on his chosen community. Further, many older participants were actively contemplating separating from their community for periods of time if age-related issues arose. Constructions of ageing on intentional communities, and the impact ageing may have for the ongoing practice of an ethics, are particularly relevant to current long-term intentional communities in Australia.

At the other end of the age spectrum, many young adults who have grown up on intentional communities do not have automatic rights to membership. In some communities, even if membership were automatically granted, there is very little ability for communities to provide houses or house allotments when membership is full. The work of Ledgar (2000) indicates that social capital may be one of the greatest legacies left to children growing up on the Bundagen community in northern NSW. Her work demonstrates that many of these young people may live together in communal houses in suburban locations, yet continue to practise the ethical practices they learned as children growing up on their intentional community. For instance, consensus decision-making may form the basis of group decisions in these households. Further, common purses may operate in these households based on trust and reciprocity that have been cultivated through intentional community living.
The inculcation of an ethics as _praxis_ for these children who have been brought up on an intentional community may continue to influence their lives and lifestyle choices as young adults.

This research has primarily considered the intentional community literature and has drawn on specific utopian texts. However, an analysis of Stillman’s (2001) writings on literary utopias, raises the consideration that utopian _thinking_ as a form of analysis may also be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics. Productive future research could be gleaned from analysing the literary utopian literature in the consideration of whether this genre may be analysed as a Foucauldian form of ethics based purely on _thought_, as expressed through the practice of writing about utopias.

As much of the intentional community literature assumes an intentional focus based on notions of success and commitment, very little positive attention is given to the possibilities of communal living for people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. For instance, in the third wave of utopian experimentation in Australia a variety of utopian schemes were either established or supported by various state governments (Metcalf 1995:26, 34-35). However, Metcalf describes some of these schemes, such as the Kibbutz scheme established by the then Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, as ‘harebrained’ because the last thing young, unemployed, unskilled people wanted was to live in the countryside on an intentional community (Kohn 2005:12). This research, however, has shown that intentional community living offers those from lower socio-economic backgrounds the ability to construct their selves and their lives differently. Munro-Clark (1986:182-200) considers the question of what benefits might flow to the wider society from intentional communities in the context of evolving ways of living for specific groups within society, such as the young urban and working-class.
Future research might also focus on the ethical ‘moment.’ For instance, Eräranta et al. (2009:347, 349) argue that Finnish eco-communards choice to live communally was facilitated by important crossroads and fateful moments participants had encountered in their past lives. In comparison, participants in this research chose to live communally primarily through following existing relationships into a communal life. This potentially reflects a trend in Northern NSW, as the work of Barker and Knox (1985:8) indicates communities surveyed in the Rainbow region of Northern NSW were generally formed through social networks.

Further, research might also focus on stories of transformation. Though transformation has been discussed in the context of the intentional community literature in section 2.6.4, and figured in the findings of this research discussed in Chapter Six, as Caplan (2000:54) argues, the transformative possibility that communal living provides in not a well-recognised value of communal living.

This research has also shown that intentional communities are sites that enable participants to engage in the performance of an ethics. However, Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation has wider implications for an ethics as praxis. If, as Davidson (1986) and O’Leary (2006) argue, Foucault’s ethics provides an answer to the contemporary crisis in morality then an analysis of ethics would be concerned with the models that have been established:

> for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as the object. (Foucault 1984g/ 1985:29, emphasis added)
7.7 Conclusion

This thesis confirms that intentional living may be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics. Further, an application of Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation to intentional communities in this research indicates that communal or co-operative living is the dominant mode of ethics that permeates all other aspects of an ethics as praxis. This thesis has also shown that ethics in the Foucauldian sense is a practical philosophy that engages its practitioners in an active constitution of the self through the practices they perform on themselves through communal living. These practices are both the source for participants in this research resisting normalising discourses that represent suburbia, while also forming the basis for constructing one’s self and one’s life differently. Intentional communities are therefore sites that form the basis for a Foucauldian form of ethics.

These findings raise a number of implications. Firstly, bringing together two seemingly different bodies of literature addresses a significant gap in the research field. However, though they are distinct bodies of literature they share a common discourse. The intentional community literature and the literature surrounding Foucault’s ethics seemingly speak to each other about ethics as a form of personal choice, as a practical philosophy, and as a social practice. The literature and the findings also confirm that, in the constitution of the self, participants on intentional communities are, as ethical subjects, potentially individualising subjects in that they engage in a Foucauldian form of agency and resistance, and engage in practices of freedom and liberty. However, for intentional community participants the practice of that freedom may be predominantly, but not exclusively, limited to western democratic countries and to certain subject positions, such as being ‘white’ and ‘straight’. Further, the fact that Foucault doesn’t provide a normative framework is irrelevant for the work at hand for intentional community participants. The
way in which intentional community participants both rearticulate practices and problematise values, thus resulting in a variety of lifestyles, tends to affirm the situated context of the historical possibilities of their existence.

Significantly, this research has also shown that Foucault’s ethical conceptualisation can be differentiated from care of the self, and in turn, can be used as a broadly defined qualitative methodology. Furthermore, Foucauldian constructionism is concerned primarily with the twin faces of Foucault’s ethics: resistance and creation (cf Miller 2008). The research has also highlighted a range of future research possibilities, including the consideration that utopian thinking as a form of analysis may also be theorised as a Foucauldian form of ethics. In the analysis of an ethics, future research may also be concerned with other sites that form the basis for a Foucauldian form of ethics.
LIST OF REFERENCES


in Australia (pp. 115-126). Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.


APPENDIX A

Map of northern New South Wales, Australia
Figure 1: An example of a sign produced by Danthonia Designs for the Café Midale, Armidale, New England
## APPENDIX C

### Foucauldian analysis of Kanter’s Commitment Mechanisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical Substance</th>
<th>Mode Of Subjection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homogeneity (C)</td>
<td>Abstinence (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persecution (C)</td>
<td>Irreversibility (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment (S)</td>
<td>Outside World (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Differentiation (M)</td>
<td>Couple-Family (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sanctions (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Probationary Period (M)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Institutional Awe (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power/Leadership (T)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Forming Activities</th>
<th>Telos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communal Work (C)</td>
<td>Commitment (C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularised Group Contact (C)</td>
<td>Transcendence (T)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ritual (C)</td>
<td>Renunciation (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austerity (S)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession (M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance (T)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probationary Period (M)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Foucauldian analysis of Kanter’s Commitment Mechanism
(Source: based on Kanter 1972:75-125)

Legend for Kanter’s Commitment Mechanisms:

- (C) Communion
- (S) Sacrifice
- (I) Investment
- (R) Renunciation
- (M) Mortification
- (T) Transcendence

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APPENDIX D

Fieldwork Documents

Attachment 1: Informed consent form

TO BE PLACED ON SCU LETTERHEAD

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Name of Project: Intentional Communities and ‘care of self’

You are invited to participate in a study concerning Intentional Communities. In particular, the researcher, a PhD student with Southern Cross University, is interested in exploring the way in which community members take care of themselves. That is, how community members engage in activities that aim to better themselves in terms of physical, emotional, mental or spiritual aspirations. In examining these aspirations, the researcher is also interested in how these activities may help the community member living in the community and care for other community members, engage with the wider community and whether such activities assist each participant care for the environment. Other aspects of the project concern how your communities’ requirements influence, or impact upon the way you take care of yourself, care for other community members, the wider community and the environment.

Procedures to be Followed:
The researcher has obtained approval from Southern Cross University’s Ethics Committee, and your Community, to undertake this research. This ensures that the University’s ethics policy and procedures have been followed.

Your name will not be recorded unless you wish to provide it. If you do not wish to provide your name, each interview will be recorded as ‘Interview 1 in Community A’, ‘Interview 2 in Community A’ etc.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. This may vary depending on how much information you would like to share about your experiences living in this community. The purpose of the interview is to explore and gather information about each community member’s participative experiences living in this community. There are no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ answers, only your answers (even if you have no response to the question asked).

Each interview will be digitally recorded. If you do not wish your interview to be recorded, notes may be taken by the researcher. Once the interviews are completed in the community, each interview will be stored either as a sound card or transcribed.
notes in the researchers’ locked cabinet. No other person will have access to this information.

**Possible Discomforts and Risks**
No discomforts or risks are anticipated during this research, however sometimes disclosing sensitive issues can result in emotional challenges. If at any time you feel unable to continue due to emotional challenges, please tell the researcher of your needs and whether you require a break or wish to discontinue the interview. In addition, if you have a health condition, such as diabetes or an inability to sit for longer than 45 minutes, please inform the researcher prior to the interview of any actions you may require the researcher to undertake, or assist you with, should the need arise. Prior to this interview, the researcher will have familiarised themselves with community requirements regarding health and safety procedures. Please also find attached a list of free Counselling services that may be of assistance should you require support following the interview.

**Responsibilities of the Researcher**
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. In addition, the communities’ permission will be sought prior to the public release of any information.

**Responsibilities of the Participant**
If at anytime you feel uncomfortable, you would like to take a break or discontinue the interview, please let the researcher know.

**Freedom of Consent**
If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation at any time. The entire interview will be digitally recorded or written notes may be taken. Should you at any time wish to retract any statement you may ask the researcher to delete any statements made. You may also request the researcher to delete your entire interview should you wish to do so at any stage.

**Inquiries**
If you have any questions, we expect you to ask us. If you have any additional questions at any time please ask:

**Supervisor Details:**

**Associate Professor Michelle Wallace**
Head of School
School of Social Sciences
Southern Cross University
PO Box 157
LISMORE NSW 2480
(02) 6620 3609 Email: mwallace@scu.edu.au

**Researcher Details**
Ms Ruth Bohill  
Postgraduate Student  
PO Box 139  
ARMIDALE NSW 2350  

(02) 6772 1106 Email: ruthbohill@kooee.com.au

who will be happy to answer any queries you may have.

OR if you have any problems associated with this project, please contact:

Mr John Russell  
Graduate Research College  
Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
LISMORE NSW 2350  

(02) 6620 3705 Fax (02) 6626 9145 Email: jrussell@scu.edu.au

You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

I have read the information above, or contained in a separate information sheet entitled ................................................................., and agree to participate in this study. I am over the age of 18 years.

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:-------------------------------------------- Date: ......................

(Signature of parent or guardian if participant is under 18 years of age)

Name of Witness (who shall be independent of the project)

Signature of the Witness: -------------------------------------------- Date: ......................

I certify that the terms of the form have been verbally explained to the participant, that the participant appears to understand the terms prior to signing the form, and that proper arrangements have been made for an interpreter where English is not the participant's first language. I asked the participant if she/he needed to discuss the project with an independent person before signing and she/he declined (or has done so).

Signature of the researcher: ------------------------------------------- Date: ......................
List of Counsellors
The purpose of counselling is to provide debriefing following interviews that may cause emotional upset. If you require counselling, please find following a list of **free** counselling services that may be of assistance:

**Free Counselling Services:**
- **Armidale & District Women’s Centre:** (02) 6772 9540
- **Armidale Family Support Service:** (02) 6772 7243
- **Lifeline:** 13114
- **Lifeline Face-to-Face Counselling:** (02) 6622 4133 (during office hours)
- **New England Area Health Service:** Community Health Centre: (02) 6776 4738

**Northern Rivers Area Health Service:** Free Counselling Services Available at:
- Lismore: (02) 6620 2967
- Casino: (02) 6662 4444
- Alstonville: (02) 6628 0849
- Casino: (02) 6634 1319
- Urbenville: (02) 6689 1288
- Nimbin: (02) 6689 1288
- Murwillumbah/Tweed Heads: (02) 6672 0277

**Other Helpful Numbers:**
- **Tenants Advice & Advocacy Service:** (02) 6621 1022 or 1800 649 135
  Provides telephone advice for tenants Mon – Thurs 9am – 3 pm & Thursday nights 5 pm – 7 pm.
- **North Coast Community Housing Company Incorporated:** (02) 6621 8644
  Email: ncchc@bigpond.net.au
- **Department of Fair Trading - Tenancy Information Line:** 1800 451 301
- **Department of Housing - Far North Coast of NSW:** (02) 6623 2424
Attachment 2: Interview questions

**Interview Questions**

**Approximate Duration: 45 minutes**

**General Observations**

Community Name
Interview location (eg participant’s house, community hall, coffee shop etc)

**General Questions**

Female/Male  Age range of participant: 18-25; 26-34; 35-44; 45-54; 55-64; 65-74; 75+
Single/Married/Defacto/Divorced/Seperated/Widowed

Children? How many? Still living at home? Still living in the community?


Spiritual or Religious Orientation?

Where in this community do you live? (eg. hamlet, share house, own house, rent, guest etc)

When did you join this community? Why did you join this community? Do you envisage remaining in this community?

What do you enjoy about living in this community?

What do you find challenging about living in this community?

**Caring for yourself (care for self)**

How do you care for yourself? (examples may include: eat biodynamic foods, undertake yoga, meditation, self-help reading, therapeutic writing, gardening, group process work, counselling, follow a spiritual practice such as Buddhism, other etc)

How have you learnt these skills? (eg teacher, self-taught, books, discussions with friends or community members, community seminar, workshops etc).

How often do you undertake these activities? How important are these activities to you?

How does caring for yourself help you in your day-to-day life?

How does caring for yourself help you in your relationship with others? (eg. children, spouse, other community members, work colleagues etc)
How does caring for yourself help you in this community?

How does caring for yourself help you in the wider community?

Does caring for yourself help you care for the environment? If so, how?

Are there any other activities you would like to participate in that would benefit you, or this community, or the environment?

**Community practices and care for yourself (community practices that require care for yourself)**

Have you participated in community activities or practices? If so, what were those activities or practices?

Did these activities or practices complement the way in which you care for yourself? (examples may include, composting toilets, permaculture or biodynamic gardening, non-use of pesticides, group participation skills etc)

How do these activities or practices benefit you personally? How do these practices benefit you personally?

How do these activities or practices benefit this community? Not benefit the community?

How do these activities or practices benefit the wider community? Not benefit the wider community?

How do these activities or practices benefit the environment? Not benefit the environment?

**Knowledge**

What knowledges are you influenced by? (examples may include, science, history, biographies, genealogies, economics, a particular religion, philosophy, permaculture, alternative living, healing modalities, criminology, peace etc)

How have you come to learn these knowledges? (examples may include, a teacher, a course, seminar, school, university, work, group discussion, friends etc)

How does this knowledge influence your day-to-day life?

Does this knowledge help you care for yourself?

Does this knowledge help you living in this community?

Does this knowledge help you in the wider community?

Does this knowledge help you in relation to the environment?

**Questions, comments or suggestions offered by the participant:**
Dear [Address of Community],

I trust this email finds you healthy and happy!

Please find attached your interview. I must apologize for taking so long to get back to you. After visiting Thora Valley I visited a number of other communities – Evergreen, Mountain Range, Stoney Creek and a Bruderhof Community near Inverell. I have subsequently taken quite a while to transcribe all the interviews in amongst reading, living and remembering to breathe! Nevertheless, the interviews are completed and I am in the midst of writing up the thesis.

In addition to the interview, I have attached the original questions. You will see that I did not stick to my own guide :-) instead, preferring to tailor the questions depending on the answers given. If you would like to add to your interview, please provide any additional information on a separate sheet of paper and send it back to me. If you want anything changed or deleted please provide details of these changes and I will alter the interview.

I will be sending all community members who participated in my research their interviews over the next week. Some will be sent by email, whilst others will be sent by mail.

If you can get back to me within the next couple of weeks that would be great. The attached interview is of course for your own records.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Kind Regards,

Ruth Bohill
Ph 02 6772 110
APPENDIX E

Ethics committee documentation

Attachment 1: Ethics committee approval

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY

~ MEMORANDUM ~

To: M. Wallace/R. Bohill
   School of Social Science
   mwallace@scu.edu.au
   ruthbohill@kooee.com.au

From: Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee

Date: 17.9.04

Project: Intentional Communities and 'Care for Self'.

Status: Approved subject to standard conditions of approval and some special conditions.

Approval Number ECN-04-135

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HREC)

At the meeting of the HREC on the 13 September, this application was considered. This has been approved subject to the usual standard conditions and the following special conditions.

Compliance to the special conditions is mandatory to the approval and is required within one month of the approval. Please send all correspondence to the Secretary as indicated.

Special Conditions

(a) At Question 10 – How will the results of this project be used/disseminated? Please refer to National Statement 1.7(a).
(b) At Question 12 - Please clarify how the participants will be selected. At Question 13 – Please specify the age range.
(c) At Question 25 – Is there a risk that community tensions may be disclosed and consequently exacerbated? The Committee recommends a follow-up/debriefing and the inclusion of contact details of a counsellor.
(d) At Question 27 – the signature needs to be that of the Director of Postgraduate Studies in this instance.

(e) How will the researchers ensure that collected data has personal and community consent prior to publishing?

(f) Informed Consent Form

(g) Please include in the Introduction if this is a postgraduate research project.

(h) The Committee recommends that the first sentence of the Procedures to be Followed, be re-written.

(i) The Committee recommends changing ‘subject’ to participant.

(j) In Possible Discomforts, please provide contact details of a Counsellor because of possible disclosure of sensitive issues. Please make the risks more explicit.

(k) Where do the interviews take place? Include details.

(l) Full contact details of the Researchers are to be included on consent information.

**Special conditional approval** will lapse one calendar month from the date of this approval if the special conditions have not been fulfilled, and thereafter the University will not accept any further responsibility in regard to the research. The certification for special conditions that have been fulfilled is attached to this letter.

Please return this **signed certification** to the Secretary when you have complied.

**Standard Conditions** (in accordance with National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992 and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans):

1. That the person responsible (usually the Supervisor) provide a report every 12 months during the conduct of the research project specifically including:

   (a) The security of the records
   (b) Compliance with the approved consents procedures and documentation
   (c) Compliance with other special conditions.
   (d) Any changes of protocol to the research.

   Please note that compliance to the reporting is mandatory to the approval of this research.

2. That the person responsible and/or associates report and present to the Committee for approval any change in protocol or when the project has been completed.

3. That the person responsible and/or associates report immediately anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the research protocol.

4. That the person responsible and/or associates report immediately any adverse effects on participants.

5. That the person responsible and/or associates report immediately any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.
6. That subjects be advised in writing that:

“Any complaints or queries regarding this project that cannot be answered by the person responsible for this research project should be forwarded to: Mr John Russell, Ethics Complaints Officer Graduate Research College, Southern Cross University PO Box 157, Lismore, 2480. Ph: (02) 6620 3705 Fax: (02) 6626 9145 Email: jrussell@scu.edu.au”

Suzanne Kelly 
Secretary, HREC 
Ph: (02) 6626 9139
skelly1@scu.edu.au

Dr Baden Offord 
Chair, HREC 
Ph: (02) 6620 3162
rofford@scu.edu.au
Attachment 2: Ethics committee certification

CERTIFICATION
ECN-04-135 – M. Wallace/R. Bohill - 13 September meeting

Intentional Communities and 'Care for Self'.

Please return the following certification when the special conditions have been addressed. Include a copy of your changes so that the Committee can note the changes at the next HREC meeting.

Certification

Conditional approval will lapse one calendar month from the date of this memorandum if the special conditions have not been fulfilled, and thereafter the University will not accept any further responsibility in regard to the research.

If special conditions have been imposed, you must complete this and return it to the Graduate Research College by the lapse date. Please notify the Secretary if timing is a problem.

I certify that the special conditions outlined above have been fully met, a copy is attached, and that the standard conditions will be met.

Signature of Researcher: ........................................... Date: .........................
Special Conditions

a. At Question 10 – How will the results of this project be used/disseminated? Please refer to National Statement 1.7(a). See 10B

b. At Question 12 - Please clarify how the participants will be selected. Specified.

At Question 13 – Please specify the age range. Specified.

c. At Question 25 – Is there a risk that community tensions may be disclosed and consequently exacerbated? The Committee recommends a follow-up/debriefing and the inclusion of contact details of a counsellor. See 25A & attachment of Counsellors.

d. At Question 27 – the signature needs to be that of the Director of Postgraduate Studies in this instance. Executed.

e. How will the researchers ensure that collected data has personal and community consent prior to publishing? See 10C.

f. Informed Consent Form Please include in the Introduction if this is a postgraduate research project. Amended.

g. Please include in the Introduction if this is a postgraduate research project. Amended.

h. The Committee recommends that the first sentence of the Procedures to be Followed, be re-written. Amended.

i. The Committee recommends changing ‘subject’ to participant. Amended.

j. In Possible Discomforts, please provide contact details of a Counsellor because of possible disclosure of sensitive issues. Please make the risks more explicit. See attached list of counsellors & Amended.

k. Where do the interviews take place? Include details. Interviews will take place at Intentional Communities. Location will be decided at the community meeting or by individual participants.

l. Full contact details of the Researchers are to be included on consent information. Included.

CERTIFICATION

ECN-04-135 – M. Wallace/R. Bohill - 13 September meeting (Notification received 17 September)