
Life Itself quantitative study

Contemplative activism residency (work in progress)

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What is it about?



The key question explored in this piece is:
How can we map and analyse community life?

We propose an abstract method for creating and mapping community life addressing its evolution in space and time. Through documenting activities and space of the community life in “Life itself” during Sympoiesis #2 we demonstrate how we can use this method as a mapping technique for other communities.

Using this method we propose here, one can also compare various community experiences at the same place and different periods, and understand deeper possible reasons for discomfort within communities connected to general space-time usage.

Other questions to be answered here: How to replicate or encapsulate the experience lived by community members to be able to transmit best practices to other community hubs?

The core idea of our method is definition of *phase space* of the community*. After defining the main axes of phase space we map community activities, how it explores the physical space (living areas). It's only by understanding the complexity of interactions inside a community one can deeper understand and maybe also improve its activities that we can identify the key community characteristics.

How do we define the concept of *community phase space*, which allows us to dissect and clearly see some tendencies of community life. The term “*phase space*” is a mathematical concept widely used in complex systems and dynamical systems theory. Axes of phase space are associated with certain properties of a system. For example, for community life phase space we consider two main axes: the first axis spans the range of “discussions vs. contemplation” and the second axis - “individual vs. collective”.

General observations and key points about community life:

1. Healthy community life spans the whole phase space throughout its functionality (Figure 1). If activities of a community are homogeneously distributed around the whole space and have balanced (in time, Figure 4, Table 1) activities within the day, then the group is balanced.
2. If the space map (Figure 3) is aligned with activities map (Figure 1), this enables community to fulfill its needs and main inward-outward life balance
3. Synchronisation time should be synchronised regarding the inward-outward spectrum: inward-outward (Figure 2).

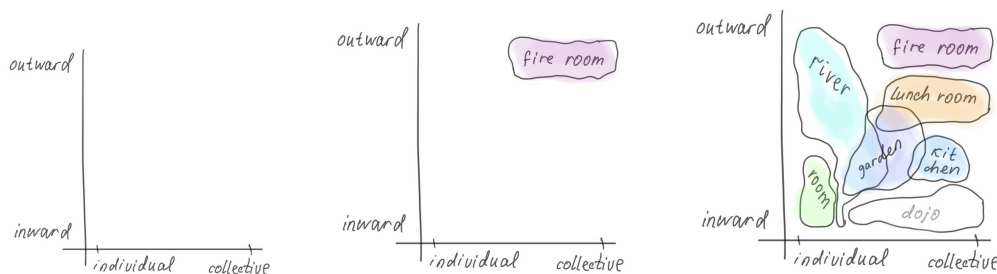


Figure 1: Algorithm for mapping communities: (left) phase space for community mapping, (middle) choosing the first community space to be mapped e.g. fire room, (right) mapping of the phase space* of the community in life itself. The common spaces (kitchen, dojo, lunchroom and fire room) have different functions, which also is marked on the vertical axis.

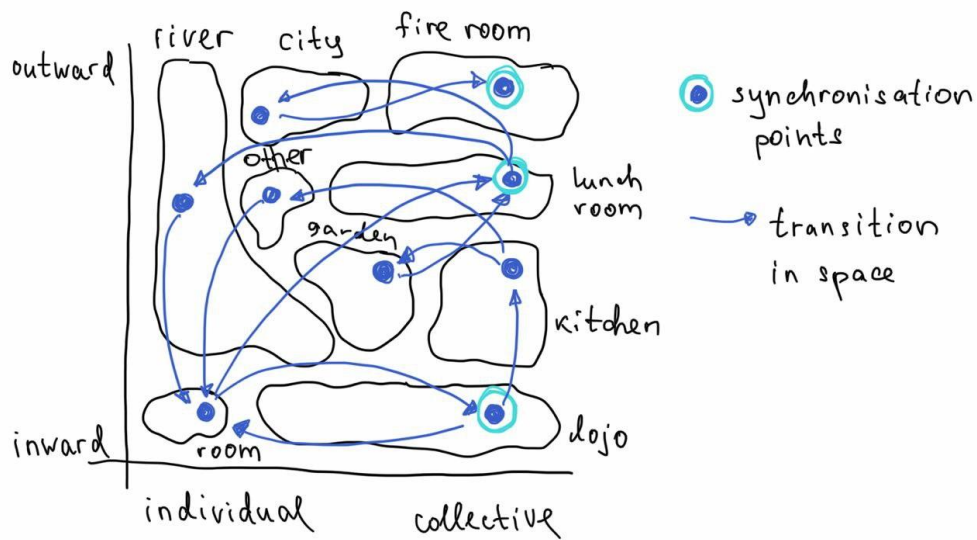


Figure 2: Trajectories of people in communities

Everyday people travel between spaces in coliving space, however there are some particular moments of synchronisation, which makes it different from living in a hotel or WG. importantly, these moments of synchronisation span all the spectrum from inward to outward.

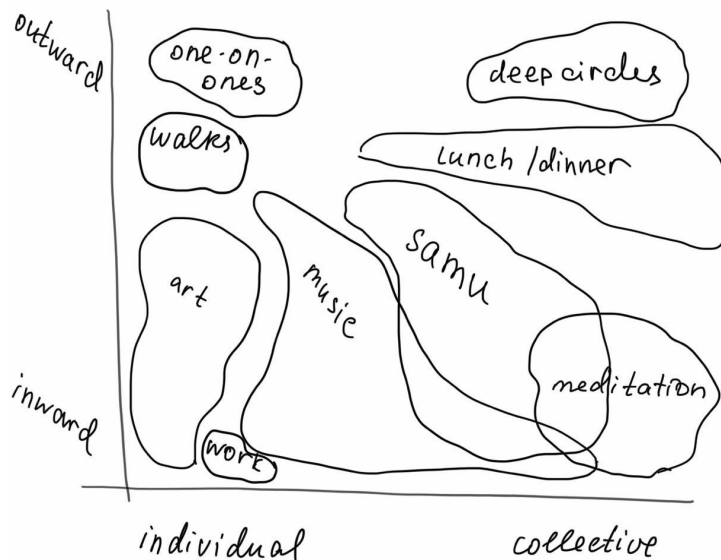


Figure 3: Mapping of activities of community in “Life itself” during residency. The space of activities is structured and aligned together with the map of spaces. Maps of space in Figure 1 enables activities, at the same time, activities may be organised and initiated independently from the space structure.

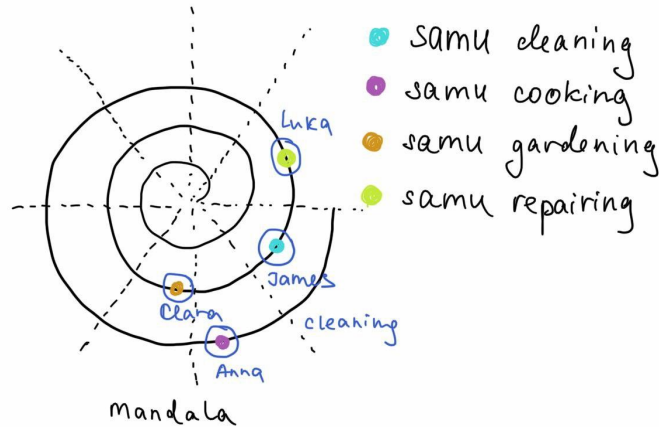


Figure 4: Mandala scheme of activities during the day. Monastic structure of the community time sets a frame, which also can be adjusted and discussed by the community members every week during community meetings.

Comments on community of “Life itself”:

- While staying at the residency of “Life itself” one can experience rare moments of synchronicity in collectives: while staying on your own, you feel a strong connection with other individuals.
- Hypergraph structure of the community is activated throughout the day while we are passing through practices
- Common spaces are separated into several types: some have special spiritual meaning (like dojo), some have more common secular purpose
- Serendipity happens thanks to the organisation of spaces: common space (non-dojō) is situated in the middle of the ways of people outside the house
- Frame and structure, which sets the structure of time in Table 1

Table 1: Quantitative study of community time.

Category	Practice	Time spent	Place	Regular
Many contemplative	Meditation	30min + 30 min = 1h	Common space (special space dojo)	yes
Many	Deep listening	1h30	Common space	yes

discursive				
Many contemplative	Cooking Samu	1h	Common space (special kitchen)	yes
Many discursive	Workshops, world cafe	1h	Common space	no
Focused one-ones	Discussions one-ones	1h-3h	Nature, common space	no
Individual contemplative	Work (personal), reading (personal time)	Differs: 2h-8h	Differs: Individual or common space	yes
Many contemplative	Cleaning Samu	1h	All space	yes
Many discursive	Cigarettes	30min-1h	Garden common space	yes

Comments on the table:

(*) Shared common space: kitchens, bathrooms, lounges, gardens, laundrettes

(**) Category of activities are individual/many or discursive/contemplative

To whom this research piece may be of interest:

community facilitator, customer insights, community architect, community organisers

Research proposal:

The research proposal consists of several parts on mapping community life and development. During each residency community is functioning in its own way, using the space differently. We propose the method for meta-cognition of communities and residency-communities.

Method aims at:

1. Finding and mapping trajectories of community evolution
2. Documenting serendipity qualitatively and quantitatively
3. Exploring collaboration and community formation

Outlook:

1. Mapping middleground of communities

2. Interviewing people for creating common phase-space maps for communities
3. Creating such maps for various communities and families