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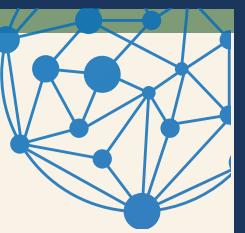


Alternative Communities

Booklet

A Framework for Emerging
Physical & Virtual Societies

ERIC MIKI



Introduction

This report is an attempt to provide a snapshot in 2025 of existing innovative societies without claiming to know them all or to understand all the technologies behind their development. We hope it will broaden your mind when it comes to upcoming possibilities in where you can live, work, and thrive. These are alternative models of communities that sometimes challenge the conventional perspective of modern society, and they would clearly surprise people from centuries ago. The terminology for them is confusing and debated everywhere, from intentional communities to new countries, but with recent technologies, they go from virtual nation to network state.



The point isn't to decide what is the best category for them, but to understand what they offer and how they could benefit the world.

Without turning this into a history class, society has obviously changed and continues to change drastically, mostly because of technology. Our improved comfort and ease of coordination haven't increased our connections with others though, and people live in isolated cubes, barely talking to their neighbors, showing a fake life online, all of this leading to a loneliness epidemic.

Nothing new, as it happened over centuries, and a lot of writers and entrepreneurs have tried to warn us, guide us, and even build better options. However, the last 15 years have seen the emergence of decentralized innovations that enable anyone to learn, join, and participate in such alternative options, creating a real "opt-in" set of alternative ways of living.

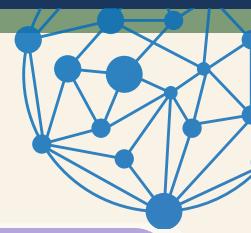


Most importantly, please keep an open mindset about each project. What appears online is always distorted, and it's impossible to know how the experience you would feel until you go there and try it. But whether you want to move, you want to invest, or you're just curious, there should be something for you here. You can join and try remotely first, and in person eventually. Our hope is that discovering new models will help you challenge your current social framework and rethink the communities around you. Why not explore better models if we have the opportunity?

*How should you use
this guide?*



It is worth acknowledging that this information is subjective and has been collected over the years by our team. There is always a chance that some of these projects will fail and disappear, as they are all at various development stages. This report captures a moment in an ongoing and rapid movement, very likely to be obsolete in a few months. Nonetheless, we hope you will enjoy these descriptions and we welcome any feedback you might have for future iterations.



Vocabulary & Taxonomy



Governance & Legal Terms

- Token-weighted vote system** Voting power depends on how many tokens (digital assets) you own
- DAO** Online group with shared rules, run on blockchain
- SEZ** Area with special economic rules to attract businesses
- ZEDE** Honduran version of an SEZ with its own legal framework
- Jurisdiction** Area where legal authority applies
- Supranational** Above the level of individual countries
- Decentralized public good** Shared resource managed without a central authority
- Declaration of Ascent** Symbolic document to show commitment or membership
- Embassy (non-traditional)** A meeting point or office representing a digital/alternative community
- Sovereignty** The power to govern independently
- Stateless** Not tied to a nation-state or traditional government



Miscellaneous / Specialized Terms

- Pop-up cities** Temporary or fast-built communities, often experimental
- Techno-optimist** Someone who believes technology will improve society
- Regen project / ReFi** Using finance or community to heal ecosystems and society
- Lunarpunk** A privacy-focused movement that values freedom and nature
- Cross-pollinating** Sharing ideas across different groups or systems
- Startup accelerator** A program that helps early-stage businesses raise money
- Infrastructure (non-physical)** – Foundational systems like software, not buildings
- Spin-off** A new project that grew from another one, usually a subsidiary
- Stablecoin** A digital currency tied to a stable asset (like USD)
- Digital citizenship** Online identity linked to rights or access in a digital community



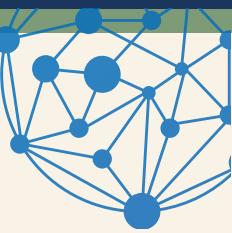
Technology & Crypto

- 3.0** **Web3** A vision of the internet run by users, not big companies
- NFT** Unique digital item that proves ownership, like a certificate
- Native token** Main digital currency used in a project
- Blockchain** Digital ledger that records transactions securely
- Trustless infrastructure** Systems that don't require trust in people or institutions
- Interoperable** Can work or connect with other systems easily
- Cryptographic** Using math to secure digital information
- Private blockchain** A blockchain controlled by a select group of people
- On-chain** Actions recorded directly on a blockchain
- DePIN** Network using real-world devices run by users, not companies
- Proof-of-presence protocol** Digital way to confirm you were physically present
- Proof-of-sweat system** Digital reward for physical work
- Digital ID** Identity stored and verified online
- Tokenomics** Economic system based on digital tokens
- Marketplace (token)** A digital shop for trading blockchain-based goods



Sociological & Philosophical Concepts

- Utopia** An imagined perfect society
- Identity-forming narratives** Stories or beliefs that shape who people think they are
- Dunbar's number** The idea that people can only maintain ~150 stable relationships
- Planetary health** A focus on the health of people and the planet together



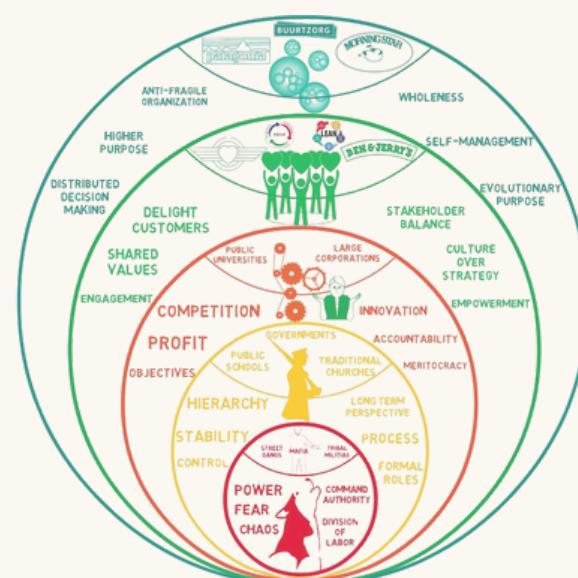
The Evolution of Communities

A community can be defined as a group of humans gathering around shared identity-forming narratives, creating a sense of cohesion, purpose, and boundary, distinguishing insiders from outsiders. Human imagination and storytelling are the drivers of the collective, allowing the community to create meaning. Communities used to be limited to kinship and geographic proximity, but eventually started to organize around economic production, the working class, and national identities. In recent decades, communities have become more fluid, multi-layered, and based on values.



For an interesting perspective on the evolution of human civilization based on prosperity, look up Frederic Laloux's developmental model. It is worth noting that not all of humanity is at the same stage, considering there are still isolated authoritarian groups in the world, while others have achieved participatory structures.

Technology has had a huge impact on this progress, particularly information technologies. It democratized access to knowledge and networks, even though there is still a lot of work to be done towards decentralization.

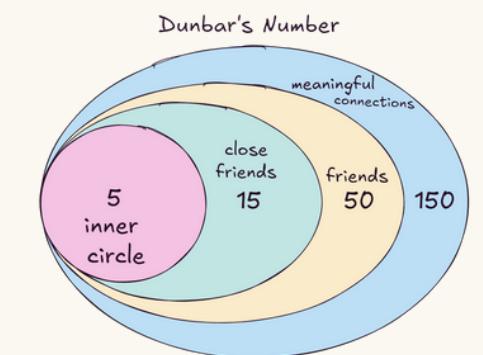


Laloux Culture Model

"...look up the Method Laloux... technology has had a huge impact on this progress..."

No matter where you are, whether you are one of billions of inhabitants in a country, or you are a nomad with no specific attachment, it seems like Dunbar's number (150-person cognitive limit for social relationships) holds true, and anything above that is about interaction with external systems: governance, coordination, and consensus. All these systems like nation-states, governments, global coordination have emerged after millennia of human history, and as technology improves, we are witnessing a better distribution, or decentralization, of these systems. This huge set of technology is regularly referred to as web3, the evolution of the internet, aiming to become an infrastructure owned by everyone.

"...Dunbar's number holds true... interaction with the system, governance, coordination, and consensus..."



Human relations thrive on depth not breadth



Many of the founders of the following communities aspire to consciously create better communities, better incentives and better outcomes aligning with human flourishing and planetary health.

The Many Roads to Sovereignty

We saw 15 different types of projects that could potentially lead to a network state, which in this vision is a community growing big enough to negotiate with existing nation states. We covered complex topics that we encourage you to research more, from SEZs, DAOs, DIDs, to fully private networks that could build alternative jurisdictions ... while nation-states can also join the movement and decentralize themselves. Can there be any more

categories? Of course. Complexity is going to keep increasing and make this exercise of categorizing what is a candidate to build a network society almost impossible as time passes.

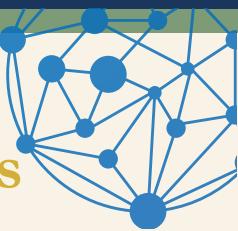
For example, we mentioned a lot of technical projects but who's to say a farming community cannot adopt the latest governance tools on top of their current food and water resilience, and quickly become independent from their host country? Some of them are already very autonomous, like the Amish are in the US. At the other end of the spectrum, some DAOs and online groups are using the same tools to aim for sovereignty, while others are already thinking about the coordination of lunar settlements and beyond.



New words and new concepts will be invented as the innovators create new systems to coordinate communities, and it already started with the popup cities.



Multiple new city projects are building DAOs from day one to manage infrastructure and coordination among residents. Some projects plan SEZs focused on longevity to invent life-extension products that would generate such high demand they could create enough wealth to achieve sovereignty. Others simply prioritize quality of life. Designing digital infrastructure for SEZs is another approach, effectively connecting multiple jurisdictions around the world.



The Pop-Up Path to Network Societies

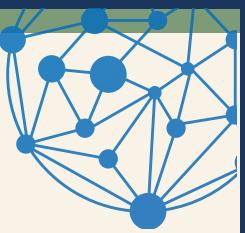
This trend began with Zuzalu, a 2-month experiment in Montenegro that attracted experts from the field of AI, web3, network states, and even synthetic biology (engineering applied to organisms).

The key idea is simple: create a gathering that is between a conference and a campus, both in time and population. The format quickly became popular and got replicated: Zuzalu-inspired events, TheMu, Edge City, Ipe City, etc.



They attract a specific crowd of nomads and remote workers, particularly the ones interested in new technologies and continuous learning. The rate of technology change makes it hard to keep up with the latest disruptions, so these events help participants stay current with industry evolution.

These pop-up events are getting more numerous and more diverse by the day, creating new highly aligned communities with dedicated locations to meet up.



These locations are usually not purpose-built for pop-up cities, but they benefit from their activities and can provide services to enhance their experience. For example, they can provide activities related to longevity and enhance builders' health and mental clarity.



Over a few years, a network of locations providing a better lifestyle and gathering talent started to emerge. Some pop-up cities are already claiming to be permanent, and they look a lot like traditional startup accelerators and incubators, but supercharged by AI and web3.

In a world where you could choose a new theme to work on every month, a new sport to focus on, or a new location to explore, while still being part of the same network of decentralized services... Network Societies seem inevitable, even though their exact form remains uncertain.

Adding to the complexity, a lot of these projects are using blockchains, which are themselves composed of multiple communities of builders. Each blockchain hosts a web of protocols and applications that create a whole ecosystem where developers can build a fulfilling career. Some blockchains are even developing SEZs for their members to gather globally and are effectively creating an interconnected network of web3 builders.



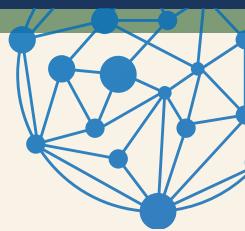
"What makes pop-up cities particularly fascinating is how they're redefining the very nature of innovation hubs."

Figo Saleh

But a lot of the popup cities are on Ethereum, using protocol-level tools like ENS (Ethereum Name Service), EFP (Ethereum Follow Protocol) and EAS (Ethereum Attestation Service) - we encourage you to research these great tools, but the insight is, these protocols are providing decentralized tools for any community to leverage.

Many blockchain communities are developing with the mindset of creating a new society, using words like citizen or council. Some of the lesser-known ecosystems may even be slower to develop because they are focusing on the big picture which requires highly secure and robust infrastructure. It is too early to tell, after all, Ethereum, which is called the decentralized world computer, just celebrated its 10-year anniversary.





About The Curator

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“This is not the end—just
the beginning of
discovering how we live,
govern, and belong.”

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