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Article:

Stevens-Wood, K. and Pickerill, J. (2026) Stepping out of time: collective reworkings of everyday temporalities. *Social & Cultural Geography*. ISSN: 1464-9365

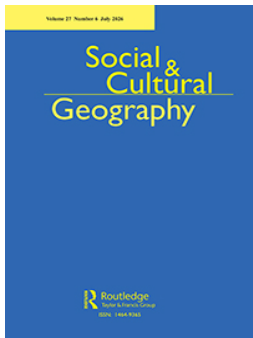
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2026.2673081>

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To cite this article: Kirsten Stevens-Wood & Jenny Pickerill (13 May 2026): Stepping out of time: collective reworkings of everyday temporalities, Social & Cultural Geography, DOI: [10.1080/14649365.2026.2673081](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2026.2673081)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2026.2673081>



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Published online: 13 May 2026.



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Stepping out of time: collective reworkings of everyday temporalities

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ABSTRACT

Is it possible to create a space that resists capitalist notions of time? In a world of ever-increasing busyness, it can feel as if time is under constant intensification. We examine what it means to step out of time in land-based communities. Using real-world examples drawn from empirical data, we consider ways in which these communities prefigure post-capitalist lifeworlds that challenge neoliberal rationalities. This paper explores how collective reworkings of time, shared tasks, and activities, enables eco-communities to adopt practices that align with seasonal rhythms and non-linear temporalities. We explore these reworkings through three examples in practice; the generation of collective time, the role of rhythm and pace, and experiences of non-linear transformations. Through the collectivizing of tasks, it is possible to observe how shared time can be experienced differently. As land-based communities build connections with the land, seasons, and non-human temporalities, they create alternative rhythms which in turn influences how time is prioritized and 'spent'. We examine the tensions and contradictions and question the narrative that these reworkings necessarily always entail a 'slowing down'. Time in eco communities is complex and non-linear, creating openings for prefigurative and hopeful relations with time.

Un pas en dehors du temps: reconfigurations collectives des temporalités quotidiennes

RÉSUMÉ

Est-il possible de créer un milieu qui résiste aux notions capitalistes du temps ? Dans un monde de plus en plus chargé, on peut avoir l'impression que le temps est en pleine intensification. Nous examinons ce que sortir du temps veut dire au sein des communautés ancrées dans la terre. Utilisant des exemples de la vie réelle tirés des données empiriques, nous considérons des façons dont ces communautés servent de précurseurs des mondes de la vie (« *lifeworlds* ») post-capitalistes qui remettent les rationalités néolibérales en question. Cet article présente une exploration de comment les

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 22 September 2025
Accepted 7 April 2026

KEYWORDS

Back to the land; Britain; post-capitalist; prefiguration; slow; eco-communities

MOTS CLÉS

Retour à la terre; Grande-Bretagne; post-capitaliste; préfiguration; lent; éco-communautés

PALABRAS CLAVE

Regreso a la tierra; Gran Bretaña; pos-capitalismo; prefiguración; lentitud; eco-comunidades

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reconfigurations collectives du temps, les tâches communes et les activités, permettent aux éco-communautés d'adopter des pratiques qui s'alignent avec les rythmes saisonniers et les temporalités non-linéaires. Nous explorons ces trois exemples en pratique : (i) la génération d'un temps collectif, (ii) le rôle du rythme et de l'allure et (iii) les expériences des transformations non-linéaires. À travers la collectivisation des tâches, il devient possible d'observer comment le temps partagé peut être vécu différemment. Comme les communautés ancrées dans la terre construisent des connexions avec la terre, les saisons et des temporalités non humaines, elles créent des rythmes alternatifs qui influent à leur tour sur la manière dont le temps est priorisé et « dépensé ». Nous examinons les tensions et contradictions pour ensuite remettre en question la perspective que ces reconfigurations impliquent nécessairement un « ralentissement. » Le temps au sein des éco-communautés est complexe et non-linéaire, ce qui ouvre la voie à des relations préfiguratives et porteuses d'espoir avec le temps.

Salir del tiempo: Reestructuraciones colectivas de las temporalidades cotidianas

RESUMEN

¿Es posible crear un espacio que resista las nociones capitalistas del tiempo? En un mundo cada vez más ajetreado, el tiempo puede parecer una intensificación constante. Analizamos qué significa salir del tiempo en comunidades basadas en la tierra. Utilizando ejemplos reales extraídos de datos empíricos, consideramos cómo estas comunidades prefiguran mundos de vida pos capitalistas que desafían las racionalidades neoliberales. Este artículo explora cómo las reestructuraciones colectivas del tiempo, las tareas y actividades compartidas permiten a las eco-comunidades adoptar prácticas que se alinean con los ritmos estacionales y las temporalidades no lineales. Exploramos estas reestructuraciones a través de tres ejemplos prácticos: la generación de tiempo colectivo, el papel del ritmo y la cadencia, y las experiencias de transformaciones no lineales. Mediante la colectivización de tareas, es posible observar cómo el tiempo compartido puede experimentarse de manera diferente. A medida que las comunidades terrestres construyen vínculos con la tierra, las estaciones y las temporalidades no humanas, crean ritmos alternativos que, a su vez, influyen en cómo se prioriza y se *ocupa* el tiempo. Analizamos las tensiones y contradicciones, y cuestionamos la idea de que estas reconfiguraciones impliquen necesariamente una *ralentización*. El tiempo en las eco-comunidades es complejo y no lineal, lo que abre la puerta a relaciones pre-figurativas y esperanzadoras con el tiempo.

Introduction

The fast and intense temporalities of contemporary life are increasingly being resisted by calls to slowdown, to take time for slow food, reconnect with nature, and live in slower homes (Vannini & Taggart, 2013). We contribute to the debates on these temporal tensions by exploring what it means to step out of time in land-based eco-communities. We are working with collective projects in Britain that have intentionally

generated self-sustainable lifestyles – self-providing for the majority of their food, energy, water, and other needs – in a purposefully spatially bounded (often rural) place, which for many they may rarely leave (Rowe, 2025). This creates an opportunity for residents to individually and collectively redesign their engagements with time (Duporge & Facer, 2025). Far from simple or uncomplicated, we argue that time in such eco-communities is part of their prefiguration of post-capitalist lifeworlds – an ongoing, dynamic, interstitial, creative experimentation which challenges neoliberal rationalities – and is always partial, in tension, and requires negotiations. Indeed, the navigation of changing temporalities, and how resulting tensions are responded to, is of central concern here, and offers lessons beyond the particularities of land-based eco-communities and our examples.

In addition to examining what stepping out of time involves, feels like, and challenges, we argue such shifting of temporalities also purposefully impacts other relationalities and ways of being in the world, which engenders further political possibilities. Here, the collectivity of the reworking of time is central. There are already long established practices whereby privileged individuals can protect their time by outsourcing manual tasks (such as cleaning, ironing, food preparation etc.) to others. Indeed, a key facet of neoliberal society has been the use of time-saving practices and technologies enabling individuals (especially women) to engage for longer in the paid labour market (Shippen, 2014; Windebank, 2007). This highly individualized, or at least heteronormative household, approach to saving time, however fails to challenge neoliberal sensitivities.

Instead, we are purposefully exploring how time can be reconfigured collectively, beyond the household scale, in ways which radically challenge the need to be privileged in order to slow down, that require a sharing of responsibilities and tasks, and yet still enables communities to function by meeting all of their own needs. This collectivity works alongside the deep ecological commitment of these communities to reconnect with practices which reduce their environmental impact – often eschewing the convenience of white goods (including fridges, dishwashers), the use of fossil fuels (oil and gas powered central heating systems and in some cases grid-sourced electricity), or piped water systems.

Crucially, however, we question the narrative that these reworkings of everyday temporalities necessarily always entails a ‘slowing down’, even if participants might make such claims, and contest the often romanticized notions of back-to-the-land living in Britain. The rejection of many of the infrastructures of convenience might make basic tasks take longer, but this does not necessarily equate to a slowing down of everyday life and certainly not an easier life. In other words, we want to tease apart the everyday realities of how purposefully reworking temporalities complicates, tests, and fractures experiences of time, and with what implications (Schramm, 2021).

Part of this ‘stepping out of time’ can be experienced as a sharp disjuncture between community life and beyond. We are working with participants who have already engaged in long journeys of transformation into community living, for whom their everyday temporalities have become normalized. Residents are habituated into the rhythms and flows of community, which over time feel familiar and comfortable but also increasingly juxtaposed to life elsewhere (Stevens-Wood, 2025). This contributes to a spatially bounded experience of a distinct life which can feel gentler, easier, healthier, and ecological, and which in turn generates space and permission to live in less structured ways. Yet, despite these permissive contexts that challenge neoliberal rationalities and

seek post-capitalist futures, there remain conflicts about what time it is acceptable to engage in different activities, such as yoga, reading, and rest (Laughton, 2008). In part, these debates demonstrate the ‘stickiness’ of conventional ethics of productivity that residents bring into communities with them but also illuminates questions of how to collectively navigate the necessary tasks to survive (and ideally to flourish) in ways which are equitable and fair.

In examining these questions, we draw upon empirical data from three land-based eco-communities in Britain (Green Hills [pseudonym], and Friary Grange [pseudonym], Tiy y Gafel). We have worked with these communities over several years using ethnographies, semi-structured interviews, photographs, and field diaries (Pickerill, 2015; Pickerill & Maxey, 2009; Pickerill et al., 2024, 2025a; Stevens-Wood, 2025). Ethics approval for this empirical work was secured from the Ethics Committees of Universities of Leicester, Sheffield, and Cardiff Metropolitan.

Changing times

Time can be seasonal, cyclical, measured by lifetimes, and circadian. Humans experience time as multiple dynamic rhythms (Daley & Wright, 2022). There are numerous ways to understand time; a multitude of temporalities that shape our lives even if we are not always aware of them. Many of us may share a collective timescape structured by capitalist notions of productivity and value through clock time (Bear, 2014), but this does not negate the important differences in our temporal experiences. For example, Phillips (2020) draws our attention to the more than human aspect of temporalities through her work on beekeeping. Via the medium of interviewing beekeepers, Phillips narrates the way in which beekeepers describe ‘slowing their bodies, focusing on bees, and enjoying the distance from monitored and measured times’ (319). There is a suggestion that in attending to the bees, it is possible to shift temporalities, to become immersed and connected to the seasonal cycles of the bees themselves.

There are moments when time stands still and of discontinuity. Sometimes it takes an event or a particular set of circumstances to ‘see’ how time can be experienced differently even when clock time remains constant. Edensor and Holloway (2008) use the example of a coach tour around the Ring of Kerry (Ireland). They describe ‘polyrhythmic ensembles’ as they pass through a journey of shifting seasons and climatic changes in flora and fauna. The steady internal tempo of the coach is juxtaposed against the external landscape.

Equally, as Monbiot (2013) asserts, humans’ social ordering of time is increasingly out of sync with nature’s time. This effect is a sign of the destructive impact of human actions on the planet that climatic warming is resulting in a shift in seasons – flowers blooming in winter, and that humans live divorced from the seasons, weather, and light cycles – and that this separation from nature’s time has enabled humans to ignore our environmental impacts.

Time is also non-linear – time does not progress evenly. As Heidegger (1967) notes, rather than time being a measurable sequence, time is existentially structured and tied to how humans understand their own existence. As such, Heidegger’s concept of originary time allows us to consider time as intrinsically shaped by our experience of being in the world. Interactions with nature can reframe not just our future understandings but also allow us to re-appreciate past experiences. As our

understanding of time is often limited to our lifetimes, we can struggle to comprehend deep time or distant futures. Yet as House et al. (2024) explore in their examination of British cemeteries and place-based temporalities, the phenomenon of the in-perpetuity grave right, forces us to contemplate the potentially eternal space. Environmentalists have also purposefully chosen precise end points in their predictions, but as we miss each deadline these shift, generating uncertainty and doubt as to their validity and complicating how future time is understood (Brace & Geoghegan, 2011).

Dominant understandings of time have limited our ability to engage with the climate emergency, and adequately examine post-capitalist possibilities. Indeed, the temporalities of urgency and apocalypse that are being generated around the need to respond to climate change, create space for the imposition of technocratic unjust solutions under the guise of not having the time to collectively assess, understand and implement alternatives (Swyngedouw, 2010). Therefore, it is vital we examine other forms of changing times, and how and in what ways some are seeking to step out of time.

Land-based communities

Eco-communities can inspire, provoke, and challenge us to live more environmentally harmonious and collective lives. They are practical, ongoing experimentations in how we might survive well together – humans and all living beings on this planet (Gibson-Graham et al., 2016; Pickerill, 2025). Eco-communities answer the call to find ‘new ways to live with the earth, to rework ourselves and our high energy, high consumption, and hyper-instrumental societies adaptatively’ (Plumwood, 2007, p. 1).

Eco-communities are examples of grassroot efforts at socio-ecological transformation – self-organized practices, infrastructures and spaces that seek to transform ways of being, living and working (Chatterton & Pusey, 2020; Renau, 2018). They are part of a broader social movements and activist initiatives that seek to build post-capitalist alternatives, which are a ‘reflective recalibration of economic, political and social institutions to support a temporally and spatially equitable, sustainable and dignified survival of the human and of non-human species’ (Schmid, 2019, p. 1). Here acts of prefiguration dominate – this living and adopting practices in the present for a future one hopes to bring into being (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020).

The land-based communities we explore here are a subset of these broader conceptualizations of eco-communities. While many land-based eco-communities attempt to transform all elements of their daily lives (a holistic and interconnected reworking of how we dwell, eat, work, educate, reproduce, age, etc.) these processes are always incomplete, in-the-making, unfinished and messy (Schelly et al., 2024). The creation of alternatives always struggle in tension with, against, and beyond capitalism and the associated structures colonialism, the state, patriarchy, racism, and heteronormativity.

This concept of community can be understood as a ‘mode of relating’ (Calhoun, 1998, p. 391). It can be experienced as a sense of belonging, a form of identity, a place of sharing, or as a mode of interdependency. Community-based politics can also be divisive, and communities are understood here as ‘as sites of contestation, difference, tension, and distinction’ (Taylor Aiken, 2017, p. 463), a point we return to when exploring clashing temporalities.

Land-based communities, then, are forms of eco-community that share an explicit intention to reduce their environmental impact while meeting human needs (Meijering et al., 2007). They are sites of collaboration and collective housing and living that develop experimental approaches to ecology, economy, community, and consciousness (Kunze, 2012; Litfin, 2014). Key aspirations of such communities include a culture of self-provision and self-reliance; minimal environmental impact and minimal resource use; low-cost affordable approaches; extended relations of mutual care for others; progressive values (for example, towards gender equality); and an emphasis on collectivist and communal sharing (Bang, 2005).

These aspirations shape how time in community is understood, experienced and transformed. There are multiple and overlapping drivers here including how time becomes collectivized through the repeated acts of living together and sharing home spaces, communal meals, livelihoods, and decision-making, which generate particular rhythms and pace in land-based eco-communities. There is often an attempt (conscious or otherwise) to move away from the dominant understandings of time as dictated by capitalism to an alternative, less frantic state of being, what Shippen (2014) describes as the 'decolonisation of time'. This might be experienced as a slowing down or savouring of time, a re-ordering of how time might be spent, and/ or moments of intensity and then rest. How time is reshaped is also influenced by the broader political intentions of eco-community members towards socio-ecological transformation and post-capitalist futures. Here, the non-linearity of transformation is demonstrated by the collective reworkings of time in eco-communities.

Dwelling in place

We are working with three land-based communities here: Friary Grange, Tir y Gafel and Green Hills. Friary Grange, is a semi-rural, back to the land community, home to around 50 residents who farm and manage approximately 65 acres in East England. Originally established with socialist and environmentalist ideals, the community has created a space where these principles can be enacted through the creation of a bounded community that includes land and buildings. From very early in its development, the community made a commitment to live in a way that would minimize their impact on the environment. This included extensive land-based activities to produce as much food as possible including meat and some grains (Stevens-Wood, 2025).

Tir y Gafel is a land-based eco-community in Pembrokeshire, West Wales. Established in 2009, on 76 acres, designed for 9 smallholder families it is now home to 18 residents (Pickerill, 2025b). Previously a sheep farm, the founders pioneered what is now the One Planet Development approach, a unique Welsh planning policy introduced in 2010 that permits low-impact, off-grid residential smallholdings in the open countryside Welsh planning (Thorpe, 2014). Residents are obliged to generate 80% of their needs from the land itself within the first 5 years and exist off-grid from mainstream energy, water and sewage infrastructures. This is monitored by the local planning authority.

Green Hills (an land-based off-grid eco-community in Country Durham, home to 9 residents on 15 acres, established in 2005) is an income-sharing community whereby all income generated (from the land and externally) is shared equally between residents. Community tasks are divided between residents, with members variously taking the lead

on different elements of the land including the Community Supported Agriculture system, animal care, building, volunteer organization, childcare and homeschooling, and woodland management. As a small eco-community they have always struggled with capacity and lived on very low incomes, often qualifying for welfare support.

Time in community

We explore the reworkings of time through three examples in practice; the generation of collective time, the role of rhythm and pace, and experiences of non-linear transformations.

Collective time

It is a late summer afternoon at Friary Grange. Ruth and Hannah are walking the cows back from the field for the afternoon milking. As the cows tail bat away flies, they wind their tongues around tasty morsels to be found in the surrounding hedgerows, needing to be gently moved along with a 'come on Tansey, move along Clover', at the same time, Ruth and Hannah gradually fill brightly coloured plastic bowls with ripe blackberries, fingers stained with dark red juice. The chat is easy and centres around the afternoon chores. Ruth, a resident of Friary grange for over 15 years shares:

For me, the cows are the heartbeat of Friary Grange, they set the rhythm of the community, the routine of milking whatever the weather sets me up for the day. Some people don't like the winter, but I love being up before the sun, down here with [the cows], the smell of the bedding straw, frost on the hedges, it keeps me in touch with the world, the natural world.

Once the cows are milked and bedded down, the milk will need to be taken up to the dairy, filtered and deposited in the huge community cold store. The smaller, secondary kitchen is already prepped for apple and blackberry crumble making. A large basket of apples from the mixed orchard sits on the side ready for washing, peeling and chopping. Two of the children home from school are eager volunteers, fingers in the sugar, fruit disappearing into small mouths. Huge trays of fruit desert will make up part of the community meal later that day.

Although many of the residents of Friary Grange have external work and social commitments, it is also possible to experience Friary Grange as a temporally autonomous space. Work takes place within the boundaries of the community in a way that intersects the formal and the informal. Growing is often undertaken at a leisurely pace and at times that are convenient to the individual. It is not unusual to find a half weeded row of onions, or a spade leaning against a wall awaiting the return of its owner. Large tasks are managed through call-outs to the wider community for example, annual hay bailing or the harvesting of time critical crops, often followed by collective celebrations and communal eating. Work is managed and interspaced with leisure in ways that allow for non-work activities such as school pick up or summer swimming in the local river.

The ability of the community to shape and manage their time collectively means that, in part, they are able to create their own temporal understandings of urgency and non-urgency, fast time and slow time. Daily collective meals create a shared time and space for eating, sharing news, and simply 'being' in community. Friary Grange has become

intrinsically linked to seasonal rhythms of the land. Winter takes on a slower pace, doors are closed, and warm spaces sought out. Short evenings create a sense of dormancy, as the land sleeps the community retreats to indoor spaces and activities. This shifts collective expectations, some members experience this as time for extended periods of rest, others shift to a different form of 'busyness' that is indoor (and potentially less visible to others). Summer, and in particular late summer, represents a period of collective busyness and urgency – extended daylight hours expand and elongate community time and increase food production demands. Activities centre around harvesting and preserving produce, onions are dried and strung, plums are picked, halved and frozen, and male calves born the previous spring are slaughtered and hung. Communal meals are boosted by the summer abundance of salads, fresh eggs, milk, and cream. Longer days enable a feel of a more relaxed form of busyness, where tasks can be interspaced with leisure activities.

The temporalities of daily life at Friary Grange have also been shaped by its past. Current members are cognizant of their history, and decisions made now are influenced and shaped by what has gone before. There is the sense of a shared and ongoing journey, in that the choice of living collectively also binds them to events and decisions of the past, current choices, and what will be in the future. Friary Grange residents experience both the immediate temporality of the day-to-day as well as the long, slow rhythm of years and even decades as they pass.

Land-based eco-communities are a collective endeavour. Their *raison d'être* is to create a shared space that extends beyond conventional heteronormative family ties and creates Gemeinschaft-type (Tönnies, 1887) relationships within communal settings. Time – its perception and use – is shaped by social and spatial factors (Ho, 2021) and shared temporal practices, for example, cooking and eating together can consolidate collective identities (Plessz & Wahlen, 2022; Zerubavel, 1979). Socially shared activities, such as collective food preparation or work-based tasks, are socially and temporarily coordinated (Southerton, 2013). Shifts from individualized understandings of time, to the generation of collective configurations recraft how time is valued, used and shared, and recalibrates how time is experienced. The sharing of time opens up different possibilities not just for what can be 'achieved', but what can be challenged in conventional understandings of time and the use of time (Southerton, 2020).

Rhythms and pace

On a late July morning at Green Hills, May is settling down to her breakfast. She has already walked up the steep hill past their straw bale house to the communal compost toilet, emptied their wee bucket from the night before, and refilled the handwashing water container from the spring on her way. She has tended to the sheep and chickens, sent the kids off on some activities for home school, and loaded the car with the dirty washing to take off-site later.

Committed to 'the simplicity of a lower consumer lifestyle' (interview) has meant forgoing many time and energy saving technologies. She dreams of having her own 'fridge, a washing machine, a bathroom'. They purposefully garden without the use of fossil fuels, increasing the time and manual effort required to run their CSA business; 'our system of gardening is very labour intensive. That works well in that we're not using fossil

fuels, but that can also be a challenge'. Even with the help of volunteers 'some of them require a lot of input ... it is looking after people, and you give them jobs to do and they don't do it properly'.

As a small community, its members share a frustration with always having too much to do, despite the benefit of sharing tasks; 'I'd like it to be a different pace ... I'd like it to be a bit slower ... I would like to be able to give my son a bit more of my time'. Residents navigate a quest to live a life more dictated by nature and their personal needs, but 'our rhythm is very much about a commitment to the business, a commitment to each other'. While released from the pressure to earn because they self-provide, in that 'that I don't have to pay rent, gas bills etc', clock time still dominates:

we do live very much by the clock, especially with the kids and all their activities. And working with volunteers who work between ten and four, and we tend to always have our dinners around six-ish, because it's the only way really we can keep going ... we're very much working to the clock.

Although clock time dominates daily life, May argues that they live dictated by seasonal cycles; 'my life is very, very seasonal, even to the level of energy that I have. Around summer solstice I can be on such a high ... my days are mental, absolutely mental, especially over the summer ... I do feel quieter in the winter, more restful'. These seasonal shifts mirror the differing seasonal intensities of gardening. Explicit links are also made between daylight hours and personal energy levels, living more slowly and restfully in the winter months.

Land-based eco-communities like Green Hills are bounded, semi-permeable spaces where members can choose a different pace and tempo to the external world. Eco-community residents seek to resist the intensification of time and to reclaim time from the predominant productivist work-ethic, but – as May describes – work still has to be done and clock time is retained as a useful communal structuring device.

Members invest in a slower rhythm of life that enables them to relish and celebrate the passing of time and notice natures' temporalities, often through forgoing convenience technologies. Embracing slowness as a temporal tactic has multiple implications. If we slow down, we end up doing less. If we lead less hectic lives, we might require fewer resources. We might not be rushing between places meaning we can use slower forms of transport (walking and cycling rather than driving). If we do less we have more time to repair, make, mend, and repurpose, rather than consume new materials. It is this purposeful use of time, of making, choosing, and investing in certain activities and not others, which distinguishes it from a capitalocentric approach which prioritizes achieving as much as possible by, for example, working faster (Sagan, 2019). Days are dictated by the rhythms of nature and seasons. Clock time can become secondary to other more-than-human forms of time such as seasonal cycles or circadian rhythms, but it still retains a presence.

Eco-communities also take a collectivist approach where time is often shared (sharing errands, tasks like cooking communally, space, and responsibilities such as childcare), enabling efficiency while also 'spending' time carefully. Shared time, therefore, can be experienced as more expansive than individual time. Sharing time is also a strategy to enable *all* to potentially do less, or to do things more slowly. Often the time tasks take can be both shortened through collective endeavour and lengthened by including social

interaction or sharing work with volunteers. Tasks might be completed less intensively, or with less focus, but be experienced as more enjoyable during the process. However, it is not just that residents do everything slowly, rather that they are conscious about their temporalities and temporal relations, and adopt non-conventional rhythms and pace.

Living more slowly also requires abandoning things we do not want to do, choosing to spend time differently, perhaps more meaningfully, and by prioritizing fun and more enjoyable activities. May shared that although her summers are hectic that is in part because they take time-out to attend festivals, travel, and have spontaneous days of leisure. With experience, they are also shifting how they use their time, learning what is worth spending their time on: 'you can't make money out of vegetables or chickens or sheep ... we don't try and grow all the crops, because they're not all profitable ... we supply everybody with potatoes every week [in the CSA], but if we were to grow potatoes for everybody we'd have to have a field and a tractor'.

Non-linear transformations

Tao is coming to the end of another long day of gardening, building, animal care, and working with volunteers at Tir y Gafel. His days start at 7.30 in the morning and, especially in summer, he works until 9 in the evening. Yet, he shares,

I'm doing things I love and it feels spacious and energising and empowering ... I'm in a self-created and self-designed rhythm and groove that really works for me ... life is about the dance, enjoying the dance, enjoying the rhythm

. Tao concedes, however, that some of his community neighbours have struggled with the transition. In order to comply with the One Planet Development planning criteria 'we are in a situation whereby we need to demonstrate the viability of an alternative lifestyle approach very quickly'. This timeframe and the extensive planning requirements, led to a predictably intense period of rapidly building homes, polytunnels, renewable energy systems, and of establishing plant and animal production, alongside generating income from these activities, which in these early years included selling dried meat, skin creams, and wood carved bowls. Yet,

it's quite a stressful transition for some people, it's a period of rewriting . it may simply be just a matter of time . that the people here who have really struggled just need a bit longer . there are certain thresholds that I've observed people go through on the land ... Once you have an acceptable degree of comfort in your lifestyle than that's' a threshold ... Another one comes when the land is actually giving you returns to the point where you're starting to feel supported ... for some people neither of those has yet occurred . and their distress has been directed outward onto the community.

The speed of this initial work was ultimately in service of crafting a slower life more in tune with nature's rhythms. Once they had successfully passed the 5-year criteria, the community shifted into a different tempo, one marked by less construction work, more time spent in leisure and celebrations, and by no longer needing to demonstrate 80% income from the land, the economic activities changed for example, to being less land-based spiritual trainings and the creation of sacred music.

While the speed at which Tir y Gafel altered national planning legislation had a demonstrable benefit for other emerging eco-communities in the region, and beyond,

it unfortunately left little time to build social bonds and community practices. Tir y Gafel has struggled with social disintegration, becoming less a cohesive community and more a village or neighbourhood. Despite having a communal house there is little sharing or collectivity between the majority of residents, and sharp internal discord between some members. In their haste for transformation not enough time was used to build community.

Time in land-based eco-communities is not just a finite resource to be used most efficiently but employed as part of efforts for broader social transformation. It is a process of making the 'now' linger, what Mauch (2019) suggests as a 'stretching of the present'. Embracing slowness can enable residents to take the time necessary to build collective and inclusive communities, through participatory decision making, practical experimentation, and reflection and evaluation. It is about creating space to try things out, to fail, and then try again, all moving towards a more liveable present and an imagined post-capitalist future. A slow temporal tactic recognizes for example, that climate change is worsened by humans' quest for speed, productivity, production, and that one response should be to do less, reduce our needs, savour what we have, and make the now linger. Acknowledging the temporal tensions between nostalgia for an (imagined) past of a slower life more in tune with nature's rhythms, cherishing the present, and rapidly preparing for an uncertain future, encourages a recognition that we have to 'learn to dwell in this predicament' (Garrard, 2020).

Just as time itself is non-linear (Heidegger, 1967), so too is social change. These collective temporal shifts and rhythms enable transformation in unexpected ways and moments. Thresholds might be crossed that shift what practices achieve, change can seem mundane and everyday, but can enable radical shifts in how the world is experienced and what is prioritized (Southerton, 2013, 2020). Here, it is shifting between different tempos that is experienced, rather than a slowness *per se*. Straddling a conventional emphasis on speed and productivity with a temporality that celebrates taking time for 'non-productive' activities can be unsettling, but many residents revelled in these juxtapositions. It is not that eco-community members do every task slowly, rather that they purposefully shift tempos to enjoy the contrast between temporalities.

Transformation, then, is not a simple forward momentum, rather it can be discontinuous and circular. Eco-communities purposefully use different paces in their daily lives to create this contrast and temporal delight. Time can be employed intensively when required – during establishing themselves, during building projects or harvest time – and then slowly for a while, revelling in the singularity of the task and moment – such as the slow work of caring for soils (Puig De La Bellacasa, 2015). This temporal delight can create space for the very different ways of being that socio-ecological transformation requires. This non-linear temporal tactic also acknowledges that transformation will not be linear either, and therefore that it is valid and necessary to hope for, and attempt to create, some radically disproportionate ecological shifts that can occur relatively quickly in the right circumstances, even while simultaneously making the 'now linger'.

Temporal tensions

The diverse ways that temporalities are experienced in eco-communities and the shifts between differing tempos, unsurprisingly generate tensions which have to be collectively negotiated. Residents have contrasting perceptions and values of how time is best 'spent' and so how eco-communities step out of time requires collective re-evaluation. For many residents, these tensions emerge from embedded notions of productivity inherited from the conventional society many are seeking to challenge, and the pressure to collectively survive off the land – in that food needs to be grown, meals cooked, buildings maintained etc.

We encountered many community debates about how many hours is appropriate for each member to contribute towards collective tasks, what constitutes 'adequate' intensity of contribution (with some members, for example, arguing that food production was harder work than managing community finances), whether some skills should be more highly valued than others, and when community tasks should be completed (grumbles about residents doing yoga mid-morning, for example). At its heart, many of these tensions emerge from an ingrained desire or need to be (or be seen to be) 'doing' enough in the community, as opposed to valuing simply 'being' in place. We explore these temporal tensions and their negotiation through three examples in practice; embodying busyness, fairness and equity, and choice and privilege.

Embodying busyness

Will spends most of his time at Green Hills using permaculture principles in their gardening, animal care, and to generate an income through consultancy and teaching. In a typical day, this is interspersed with doing the majority of the community admin, overseeing the CSA and garden, home schooling, co-ordinating volunteers, and continuing to build his straw-bale house. There is a busyness and physicality to this work, where; 'we all collectively say there's not enough hours in the day, and I think that's partly managing a business, managing a family, managing a farm. There's always more that can be done' (interview).

Wills' understanding of time is heavily influenced by his permaculture training, which has deepened and detailed his temporal rhythms;

getting into that rhythm ... the change over the years is the depth of that, just some of the detail within it ... the subtleties of exactly when those raspberries are ready or exactly when I need to do that particular harvesting job or when I should take out the thistles in the pasture or the best times to be harvesting firewood.

Will uses this attentiveness to help him 'recognise that whatever you get done is the right thing to get done, it's the right amount to get done. You have to be satisfied at the end of the day that what I've done today was enough'. He seeks balance between the multiple demands by embodying patience and an intuition that 'there's something about time-liness for me, which is knowing when it's the right time for something to happen' and recognizing 'the time to invest in making that job happen and then the resultant saving of time' in the future.

Will's attention to temporal rhythms and careful scheduling of his time, also speaks to a temporal tension at Green Hills. Will speaks of a frustration about members who do not 'stack' their activities appropriately. Using the permaculture principle of 'stacking', 'I do get a bit frustrated if I see somebody go offsite literally to just go and do one thing', arguing instead that 'I'm not going to go into town to just do that one job; I'm going to wait until I've got five or six jobs to do'.

While Green Hills have changed and rotated primary roles over the years (especially as the four children grew up), there has remained a privileging of physical visible work, and a judgement of how others' use time. In an effort to radically revalue time, challenge the concept of time as money, and adopt a permaculture fair shares approach, the community adopted a shared income system from its inception;

we're a co-op and we do lots of work together, but we've got multiple income streams. Some things are done collectively and some things are done quite individually ... But it doesn't matter what work we're doing, the money that we earn all goes to Green Hills. It all goes into the same pot and we all draw from that an equal wage every week.

The intent was to value all contributions equally, be that childcare, 'hoeing the thistles in a pasture or managing a hedgerow, both of which generate no income whatsoever', or working off-site. Yet as two of the women shifted to more off-site income generating activities and more cerebral work – establishing willow-weaving workshops, yoga classes, running training programmes in Non-Violent Communication, and offering counselling and coaching services – one of the men took umbrage at what he perceived was an unequal contribution by the women, despite ultimately the women securing such significant contracts and external income that the residents were no longer supplemented by state welfare support. Physical visible busyness was valued more than the value of income generation.

Land-based eco-communities are physical spaces, there is a demand on the inhabitants to engage in land-based physical labour alongside less visible activities. These demands shift seasonally and are unevenly distributed through the year. Whereas in conventional capitalist constructions of work, the most valued work is that of the non-manual white collar worker, eco-community residents tend to place the highest value on time spent in physically embodied activities. Through a rejection of capitalist understandings of work, members embrace an alternative currency where the physicality of their labour becomes enmeshed in the cultural value and understanding of the community.

Shir-Wise (2019), uses the term 'conspicuous busyness', to denote the act or appearance of being busy and therefore productive. As demonstrated at Green Hills, there is often a preferencing of the more visible and physical tasks such as milking the cows or driving the tractors. These can be seen to take precedence over the less visible (and yet equally time-consuming) tasks such as keeping the accounts, answering emails, supporting volunteers, or organizing informal social gatherings.

Fairness and equity

At its inception in the 1970s, Friary Grange drew up a list of all that needed to be done and divided this by the number of adults living there. This became the 15-h work commitment still in place 50 years later. Life at Friary Grange involves a complex mixture of formal and informal time and labour commitments. Community hours can be divided into domestic

(cooking, cleaning, washing), organizational requirements (administration, meetings, accountancy), and farming (horticulture, agriculture, general land maintenance). However, even though the original 15 hours remain in place and the number of adults have almost doubled, the distribution of tasks, who does what, and the availability for 'free' time remains a contentious topic. Whilst it may be that all adults are committed to 15 h of community work per week, there is an inequality to be found amongst members in terms of their capacity to fulfil their commitment. For example, it may be that George has recently retired and therefore can easily fulfil his 15 h over the week and is often done by lunchtime – leaving the remainder of the day for leisure activities. Whereas Sarah needs to work part time and is the mother of two children. She often finds it difficult to fulfill all of her community hours and sometimes finds herself completing her hours on evenings and weekends. Jai (a mother of two) expresses this frustration:

When the kids were small I just used to take them with me, they would build dens or just play, but now they have after school clubs, homework, friends they want to see, so I have to fit in my job, parenting and my community hours, it can be hard and if I'm honest, I sometimes look around me and see other people who don't have to do all these things and feel a mild resentment.

Living collectively is a purposeful act of negotiation, some of which may be explicit (time sheets, labour agreements) but much of which is unspoken and assumed. While we may be hardwired for fairness (Fehr & Schmidt, 1999), how fairness is defined and collectively understood is often disputed. How time is valued – such as a simple tally of the number of hours worked – is complicated by judgements of rates of productivity in that time, the perceived importance of the activity being contributed to, and the other informal or care obligations being managed by each resident.

Olive, the oldest resident of Friary Grange who is in her 90s remains active and tidies away and organizes the communal papers each day. She is also known for offering a listening ear, teaching the young people card games and welcoming new members when everyone else seems to be so busy. Natalie remembers when she first joined Friary Grange:

Olive was so kind; she made time for me and [names partner]. She is like the hidden superpower of Friary, helping people settle in, reassuring us that we didn't need to go at breakneck speed, that relationship building was just as important as all the other stuff.

Inhabitants of land-based eco-communities, therefore, experience multiple temporal tensions. All time is not equal, and as a consequence, communal life in the same community is experienced differently by different people. These tensions are obviously not unique to eco-communities, as feminist scholars like Abbott et al. (2005) have long argued, there are deeply rooted inequalities between the value attributed to men's work contributions, especially in highly visible tasks like farming, and the absence of value attributed to (less visible) care work which is often predominantly contributed by women. There remains a privileging of certain types of visible work. Steve, a retired social worker voices this tension and how it manifests in Friary Grange:

It's easy to see the farming side of the community, the physical stuff, as core to our identity. Even now we can be guilty of not appreciating the unseen labour of people like Dotti who

does the insurance and admin, or Carol who does countless hours behind the scenes. We sometimes fall into that trap of thinking that the big jobs are the important ones.

Many eco-communities opt for a very literal approach to temporal equality by allocating weekly minimal hours required of time contributions towards community tasks (typically between 10 and 20 h a week). While seemingly 'fair', such temporal allocations ignored the inequities of residents' obligations (such as childcare) and uneven need to secure external income. This approach also did not quell inter-community disputes about the differing pace at which residents subsequently worked.

There also remained ongoing questions about what tasks needed doing, when, and how. Some members' purposeful slowness rankled against others' identification of tasks which could not wait – such as planting, harvesting, and cooking. These tensions required many residents to purposefully 'let go' of the desire to see projects completed, or a tidy polytunnel, or a maintained shed, and ultimately to let go of a quest for perfectly an equal distribution of tasks and work, and to embrace a state of incompleteness (Schramm, 2021). Simultaneously, efforts were made to make tasks which might be less appealing more enjoyable through working groups through which people rotate (such as cleaning, growing, cooking, building, etc).

Privilege and choice

Hoppi revels in the 'complete freedom, just freedom' of life at Tir y Gafel. She has 'noticed my relationship to time is quite seasonal. I tend to not really be as aware of what day it is. I do find when I have a commitment outside that is clock based, I find that very stressful ... I prefer to live without it'. Yet in Hoppi's description of daily life on their plot at Tir y Gafel there are two contrasting dynamics that shape her temporalities; the use of convenience white goods, and the reliance on volunteers.

In the initial years of construction Hoppi lived without electricity, 'it really is the dark ages without electricity ... for the first two years of being here, no internet, no phone ... my life changed radically the day we got a fridge'. Over time, as they have stabilized their electricity provision from hydro and solar power they have expanded their use of white goods to include a freezer and washing machine. However, 'the washing machine's juicy ... it means everything else has to go off' when you use it. This navigation of limited use of time-saving technologies unsurprisingly falls unevenly within eco-communities. Many of the tasks that have to be manually completed are left to women (especially laundry and cooking). Even while Hoppi uses an old clunky gas cooker her partner has suggested that they transition to fireplace cooking with sticks,

I've overheard him saying when we are in the main house we'll be cooking on sticks ... that doesn't sit well with me ... making faggots [a bundle] of sticks in the winter, storing them and every time I want to cook something I have to burn a faggot ... I just can't quite see myself getting into that.

Likewise, the work required to support childcare with minimal technologies was felt disproportionately by women. This was further compounded by much of this work not being seen as constituting physical 'busyness', and therefore women not 'fairly' contributing to prioritized collective tasks (as in the Green Hills example above). Notably, Hoppi's partner had been happy to use other time-saving technologies like diggers on the land;

when we first got here, we had this sweet little naïve fantasy that we would dig a track way up to the house by hand ... we just said fuck this, it's ridiculous ... we did it by mini digger ... there's certain machines that most definitely have a place.

In addition to navigating which technologies to embrace and what to do manually, Hoppi acknowledges that their land-based living is reliant upon a constant stream of volunteers

we couldn't manage this land without the numbers of people that we have ... and that brings into question the whole sustainability of it ... what I notice is when we don't have a regular team, we fall behind with the land and it becomes very stressful ... it works out about an additional four adults, and that keep us on top of everything.

Within eco-communities part of the inequity in how time is understood and experienced is a reflection of an unevenness of privilege and therefore choice. While many residents are privileged by their whiteness, middle-class heritage, and university-level education, they have purposefully chosen lifestyles shaped by voluntary simplicity (Vannini & Taggart, 2013) and what Demetry et al. (2015) term 'strategic poverty', 'defined as when an individual with cultural and social capital adopts a life of low income in order to form other social identities' (87). These identities are a choice, but also often operate as judgement on how others, especially intra-community, should live. Crucially, many of these choices and decisions about how time should be 'spent' rely on the hidden financial wealth of some members and extensive contributions of volunteers, which diminishes the need for them to engage in external labour.

Conclusions

Time is not a simple linearity from past into the future, and eco-communities' temporalities offer us the possibility of resisting dominant temporal orders, or using our time differently, even when we have – of rather despite of – a prevailing sense of the scarcity of time. Eco-communities' acknowledgement of the messiness of this current temporal moment, their practices in the everyday rather than just advocating for a distant utopia, creates a vital space of reflection. Analysing their lived experience, four temporal tactics can be identified: savouring the slow every day; enacting a prefigurative approach; acknowledging the incompatibility of multiple temporalities; and the possibilities of non-linear change.

In their acts of savouring the slow every day, these eco-communities are choosing to reject notions of speed and take pause in their lifeworlds to appreciate and value 'mundane' actions such as food preparation or foraging. Drawing on the ideas of Heidegger (1967), we suggest that residents of eco-communities are engaging in elements of originary temporalities where time is relational and shaped by our engagement with the world. Within this is the acknowledgement of the incompatibility of multiple temporalities, that one cannot adhere to both clock time and daylight or seasonal time without encountering incongruencies or contradictions. Eco-community residents therefore participate in an imperfect form of prefiguration, shifting between the demands of dominant time structures and less fixed, more-than-human temporalities that are dictated by seasonal and climatic fluctuations. While environmentalists' discourse might be dominated by urgency and the scarcity of time, the need to act and move quickly, their practices tell a different story of time – of slowing down, of finding balance, and

developing new temporal relations and tactics. In these temporal disjunctures, there is plenty of time for hope.

Acknowledgments

This research was undertaken with funding provided by University of Sheffield and a Visiting Fellowship to The Greenhouse Center for Environmental Humanities at the University of Stavanger, Norway. Thanks are due to the generosity of all the interviewees and the constructive feedback of anonymous reviewers and journal editor.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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