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The Octagon Values Model: community resilience and coastal regeneration

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers efforts to build community resilience through bottom-up responses to socioeconomic and environmental change in coastal communities on the island of Ireland. The discussion adds to a growing body of research which suggests that regeneration initiatives which do not consider a community's resilience to change will fail to catalyse the changes needed to put that place on a more sustainable trajectory. The Octagon Values Model is presented as a heuristic device for exploring this potentially complimentary and co-influencing relationship between regeneration and resilience building. When applied to two case studies of coastal Transition Towns, the Model illustrates how, in practical terms, resilience may be used to tap into personal concerns to mobilise civil engagement in specific local regeneration initiatives. The discussion highlights some of the perennial practical obstacles confronting voluntary-based, community-level activities which raise questions for the generation of proactive community resilience responses and modes of governance. In capturing environmental, economic, social and governance value domains, the Octagon Values Model illustrates that reconciling values and resource use is critical to both regeneration and resilience ambitions.

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In terms of managing change and risk in the twenty-first century, resilience has imposed itself as the dominant discourse (Walker & Cooper, 2011). As a concept, ecological resilience was initially constructed as an expression of a system's capacity to maintain its essential characteristics while experiencing change (Holling, 1973). The concept has evolved and is used across a range of disciplines and in different ways. A diverse body of international resilience-informed work offers alternative, and sometimes competing, conceptual and empirical understandings of how systems and localities at different geographical scales respond sporadically or systematically to exogenous shocks and dynamic conditions. Shaw (2012) suggests that the "turn" to resilience has been directly influenced by the search for meaningful responses to the scale and intensity of the contemporary problems facing

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governments and societies. These problems may be precipitated by a disaster, or be environmental (e.g. climate disruption), economic (e.g. global recession) or social (e.g. terrorism). Some issues may be characterised as “wicked” problems (Rittel & Webber, 1973), that is, complex, cross-cutting and cumulative in nature. The intrinsic diversity in the subsequent responses potentially makes the initiatives difficult to deploy elsewhere.

Although the relevance, significance and potential of resilience thinking across diverse fields is contested (Davoudi, 2012), recent evidence of community experience of the 2008/2009 global economic recession highlights the potential use of resilience ideas in the sphere of regeneration (Batty & Cole, 2010; Milne & Rankine, 2013). A potential argument is that for regeneration initiatives to be effective they need to respect sustainability principles, the specificities of place and adopt a systemic perspective. Yet, to date, there is relatively little theoretical or applied research specifically exploring holistic modes of community-led resilience and regeneration approaches. This paper seeks to address this conceptual and empirical gap through a discussion of small island coastal regeneration schemes.

A seminal report by the House of Commons’ Communities and Local Government Committee in (2007) highlighted the socioeconomic effects of degeneration in many coastal towns in the UK. It identified coastal resorts as having undergone relatively profound structural changes and as being increasingly subject to unemployment, poor health, low educational attainment and a general deterioration in their physical environments. Subsequent evidence from the Centre for Social Justice (2013) again confirmed that poverty and disadvantage exist outside urban areas which have traditionally been the focus of sustainable urban regeneration interventions (Couch & Dennemann, 2000; Tallon, 2014). Parallel studies of erosion and climate disruption have emphasised the particular environmental vulnerability of many coastal settlements (Amundsen, 2012; Dolan & Walker, 2006; Duck, 2011). Taken together, conditions of relative locational peripherality, vulnerability and disadvantage highlight the distinctive place-based context and conditions confronting specific coastal communities. Importantly, ideas and understandings regarding the appropriate form and focus of regeneration approaches at the coast are contested.

In some areas, bottom-up responses to changing conditions and alternative scenarios have been led by individual citizens rather than local government. Nuanced arguments and lines of reasoning tend to be used to mobilise, persuade and enthuse others to engage with specific actions and agendas, although how such micro-practices are scaled up is less well understood (Seyfang, Haxeltine, Hargreaves, & Longhurst, 2013). A rather more extensive body of work has sought to explain who, how and why people engage in regeneration (e.g. Blakeley & Evans, 2009), but there is little critical discussion of how more recent ideas of “sustainable regeneration” and “resilience” can potentially reinforce each other. The absence of a framework for reconciling how different interests and coalitions express their values and frame-specific logics risks undermining the development of a coherent discourse.

In responding to calls for more holistic understandings of coastal degeneration and regeneration, the following section explores the potential complementarities between the regeneration and resilience literatures. The “Octagon Values Model” is subsequently introduced as a heuristic device to better understand community-based approaches to addressing degeneration and resilience at the local level. The application of the model is illustrated with primary data from two coastal Transition Movement initiatives on the island of Ireland. The Transition Movement offers a bottom-up approach and place-based perspective for local development with an emphasis on enhancing community resilience but, importantly,

Table 1. Classification of anonymised interviewees.

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>Kinsale</i> | |
| K1 | Transition Town Kinsale member |
| K2 | Transition Town Kinsale member |
| K3 | Kinsale Chamber of Tourism and Commerce |
| K4 | Town Council member |
| K5 | Town Council member |
| K6 | Local political representative |
| <i>Whitehead</i> | |
| W1 | Transition Town Whitehead |
| W2 | Transition Town Whitehead |
| W3 | Local business owner |
| W4 | Local authority |
| W5 | Local authority |
| W6 | Local political representative |

represents just one response to socioeconomic and environmental change. The data presented are based on qualitative analysis of 12, anonymised, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Table 1), with the aid of the text analysis software QSRNVivo10, which allows for structuring and analysing text through thematic coding (QSR International, 2014). The aim was to understand how community activists and policy actors understood and operationalised sustainable regeneration in their locality.

Regeneration and resilience: towards an integrated framework

Regeneration is an established concept within broader land use planning, governance and economic development traditions, reflecting a preoccupation with managing change, securing stability and responding to dynamic exogenous and endogenous circumstances (Roberts & Sykes, 2000). As a normative activity, regeneration variously involves a combination of fiscal and planning measures, economic and industrial initiatives, social, cultural and community projects, the provision of infrastructure, environmental measures and flagship or design-based schemes. As a policy activity, the forms and functions of regeneration have changed over time, with different implications for how different interests anticipate and experience regeneration (Matthews, 2012). For example, regeneration has been described as “aspirational” by Leary and McCarthy (2013, p. 9), aimed at producing “significant sustainable improvements in the conditions of local people, communities and places suffering from aspects of deprivation, often multiple in nature”. Indeed, Furbey (1999) described regeneration as a persuasive metaphor that has powerful religious connotations of renewal and rebirth. The policy outcome bar is raised still further when regeneration is preceded by the adjective “sustainable”, a term which is itself imbued with normative values and principles, and a concern with careful use of resources and a longer term responsibility to future generations. Central to our argument, Walker and Salt (2006, p. 9, emphasis added) contend:

the bottom line for sustainability is that any proposal for sustainable development that does not explicitly acknowledge a system’s *resilience* is simply not going to keep delivering the goods. (or services)

This insight asserts the importance of linking understandings of regeneration and resilience in recognition of the need to reverse the cumulative effects of degeneration and securing

stability and systemic change, whilst also remaining flexible and responsive to the fragility of local environments.

A resilience analysis approach facilitates understanding of specific ecosystems and the associated institutional frameworks and organisational arrangements which seek to manage them (Folke, 2006; Lloyd, Peel, & Duck, 2013). A social–ecological resilience perspective extends Holling’s original (1973) definition to encapsulate more than a system’s ability to recover from disturbance and to include the ability of a system to adapt, innovate and transform under certain conditions “into new more desirable configurations” (Folke, 2006, p. 260). Gallopin (2006, p. 294), amongst others, argues that adopting social–ecological systemic perspective to resilience is beneficial when considering coastal zone dynamics since it enables an examination of interconnecting issues in interlinked systems involving people (e.g. communities, interest groups, decision-makers) and ecosystems (e.g. marine coastal environments) (Lloyd et al., 2013). This holistic view is based on articulating a relatively more strategic recognition of natural processes and a planned and coordinated approach to the management of coastal economies. Moreover, it reflects a concern that communities need to pay specific attention to their resilience to change as argued by Walker and Salt (2006). Key to this thinking is anticipatory change, rather than the ability to restore the status quo or return to “business as usual”, reflecting a powerful critique of the engineering resilience position and instead placing an emphasis on adopting an evolutionary approach (Simmie & Martin, 2009) which stresses adaptation and change. Adaptation here refers to the adjustment or preparation of natural or human systems to a new or changing environment (Folke et al., 2002). Reflecting sustainability principles, such adjustment requires a preparedness to shape change without losing intergenerational options for future adaptability; highlighting the centrality of governance arrangements in defining and securing sustainable outcomes. An anticipatory dimension of resilience, however, does not necessarily accommodate the aspirational aspect of regeneration.

Importantly, some authors contend that social–ecological resilience perspectives tend to privilege deterministic and positivist natural science-based behavioural assumptions that may not necessarily be appropriate for the resilience of human systems (Wilson, 2012). Adger (2000, p. 347) observed that “it is not clear whether resilient ecosystems enable resilient communities”, reminding us that holistic normative interpretations of community resilience require reconciling the principal domains of environmental, economic, social and governance values.

In parallel with the interest in social–ecological resilience, research has begun exploring vulnerabilities at the community level, with community resilience opening another important sphere for developing theoretical and policy understanding. Defining “community resilience” remains elusive (Wilson, 2012), however, attributed not least to the multiple meanings attached to both concepts of “resilience” and “community”. Amundsen (2012, p. 45) defines community resilience as:

the ability of a community to cope and adjust to stresses caused by social, political and environmental change and to engage community resources to overcome adversity and take advantage of opportunities in response to change.

This interpretation closely reflects that of social–ecological resilience, albeit the focus is on the ability to respond and adapt to continuous changes at the community level. The multidimensional nature of the types of potential stresses in individual places and particular points in time highlights the complex multiscalar nature of resilience and cross-sectoral responses,

echoing holistic interpretations of sustainable regeneration. In practice, however, responses may be mono or multidimensional. Following Seyfang et al. (2013) different coalitions may emerge to form or coalesce around particular initiatives or ideals, in responding to perceived challenges. Particular discourses of community resilience, such as that articulated by the Transition Movement, then rival competing interpretations of resilience, necessitating ways to reconcile potentially conflicting values and arguments.

Emphasising the individual and social dynamics of community resilience in rural settings, Steiner and Markantoni (2013) highlight the detrimental effects of iterative, corrosive change, associated with ageing and depopulation. Such slow-burning change contrasts with understandings of resilience in relation to a singular destructive event, such as a major flood, and has a strong resonance with eroding structural processes of socioeconomic degeneration which can be multifaceted and systemic. Berkes and Ross (2013) observe that many of the drivers leading to unexpected change are social and economic in nature. Similarly, Milne and Rankine's (2013, p. 7) elaboration of regeneration and resilience illustrates how, cumulatively, signs of physical deterioration, lack of mobility, erosion of community networks and a sense of economic and political abandonment progressively weaken attributes of community resilience. Such reasoning highlights a particular role for community-led groups, which can potentially draw upon internal resources and capabilities to "bounce back" from external environmental and economic "shocks" and "build in" resilience to anticipate future change through more systemic approaches. Capacity to adapt will, in part, depend upon how local regeneration aspirations are defined and articulated and by whom, illustrating how certain discourses come to the fore.

A number of studies have variously sought to outline desirable components or "strengths" required in fostering community resilience. It is argued, for example, that the availability of resources, including ecological, social and economic capital, and the way in which these resources are engaged in a community, form the foundation of community resilience (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Flora, Flora, & Fey, 2003; Magis, 2010). It is further contended that sustaining the diversity of such resources is an essential characteristic for achieving resiliency (Berkes, 2007; Buikstra et al., 2010; Longstaff, Armstrong, Perrin, Parker, & Hidek, 2010; Magis, 2010; Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum, 2008; Ross, Cuthill, Maclean, Jansen, & Witt, 2010). It follows that some form of diversification will be required in most coastal resorts, particularly those which are significantly dependent on tourism and fishing industries. The sustainable use and equitable distribution of available resources is also emphasised, demonstrating a concern with careful resource management and a longer term responsibility to future generations (Graugaard, 2012). This reflects McFadden's (2010) call to develop a broader understanding of societal, community and institutional responses to the management of change and the stewardship of coastal environments.

In this regard, enhancing learning, skills and knowledge emerge as essential prerequisites for devising appropriate interventions and enhancing community resilience (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Buikstra et al., 2010; Lebel et al., 2006; Lloyd et al., 2013; Longstaff et al., 2010; Magis, 2010; Ross et al., 2010). Armitage, Berkes, Dale, Kocho-Schellenberg and Patton (2011) argue that synthesising different sources of knowledge and co-producing knowledge are central for enhancing community adaptability to socioeconomic and environmental change, whilst experiential learning can enable more prompt responses to future change (Maguire & Cartwright, 2008). It follows that platforms for facilitating learning are fundamental to help increase a community's learning capacity. Moreover, the creation of common meanings

and understandings, and the provision of opportunities for members to articulate needs, views and attitudes, are required. Facilitating community resilience as a learning process is important because it empowers communities to shape the trajectory of change.

Well-developed social capital is considered a key ingredient for resilient communities by many sociologists and geographers, particularly in terms of bonding (group cohesion), bridging (ties between groups) and linking (vertical relationships) capitals (Davidson, 2010). There is a consequent need for rich forms of leadership (Buikstra et al., 2010; Longstaff et al., 2010) incorporating a range of leadership styles and dispositions. Notably, people–place relationships often underline efforts to both regenerate a community and build local resilience, and may be characterised by a high concern for community issues, respect for and service to others, and establishing a deep sense of connection (Amundsen, 2012; Berkes & Ross, 2013; Longstaff et al., 2010; Magis, 2010; Norris et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2010). A strong attachment to place and concern for community development potentially fosters a greater level of community participation. This is important as civic engagement is deemed critical to incorporating local knowledge with experimental or scientific information to develop more sustainable regenerative solutions to socioeconomic and/or physical decline (Berkes, 2007); and is thus a fundamental element of community resilience (Berkes & Ross, 2013; Magis, 2010; Norris et al., 2008; Ross et al., 2010). Yet, securing civic engagement is a difficult process, often imbued with tensions and conflicts regarding power and influence (Barr & Devine-Wright, 2012). Identifying ways for empowering communities through rich leadership and opportunities for community members to play meaningful roles is essential.

It follows that components of community resilience are not purely social or ecological in nature, but also incorporate infrastructure, livelihoods and economics. The way in which communities may variously combine (Amundsen, 2012) and draw on their strengths to enable agency and self-organisation (Berkes & Ross, 2013) are foundational to generating community resilience. “Building” community resilience can thus be characterised as the quest for generating a “composite of resiliences” within a community, necessitating what Norris et al. (2008) term in the context of disaster readiness, networked adaptive capacities. Reflecting Walker and Salt’s (2006) tight coupling of sustainability and resilience, we argue that networked adaptive capacities could be further informed by the sustainable regeneration literature which places additional importance on appropriate resource use, environmental context and governance capacity.

Drawing on the regeneration and resilience literatures, the next section introduces the “Octagon Values Model” as a heuristic device to better understand community-based approaches to addressing degeneration and resilience at the local level.

Introducing the Octagon Values Model

The Octagon Values Model (Figure 1) is based on a fusion of the regeneration and resilience literatures and consists of three interconnecting and overlapping layers. First, the four established value domains of sustainable regeneration – environmental, economic, social and governance – frame the model and highlight the imperative for reconciling different needs, priorities and values.

Second, the Octagon specifies the identified components of community resilience and illustrates how resilience thinking may be embedded within regeneration policy and practice. The model seeks to illustrate core attributes in each of the four domains, such as in

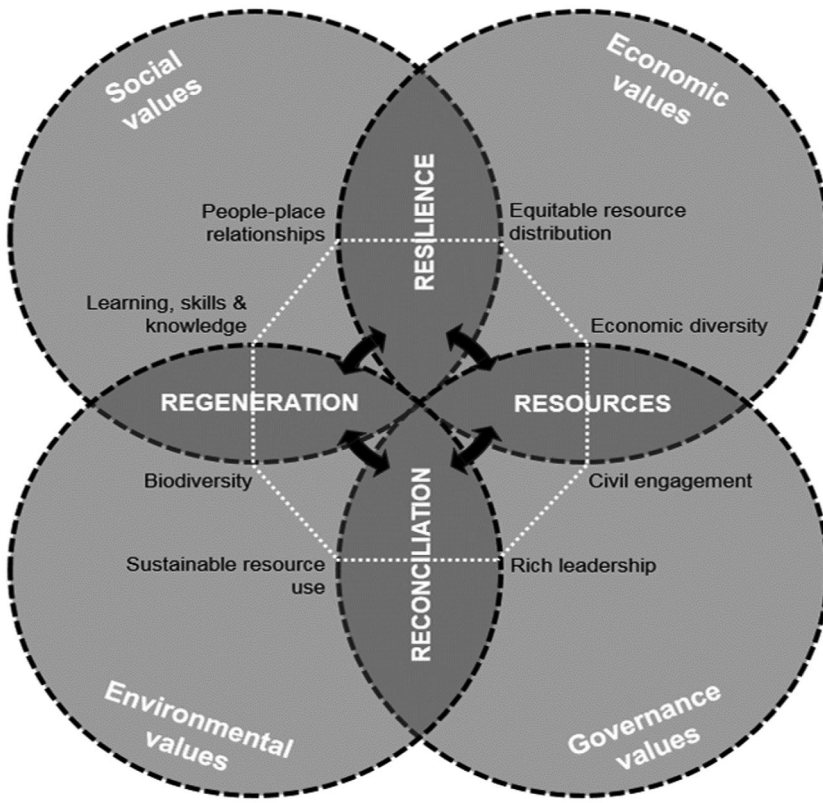


Figure 1. The Octagon Values Model.

the social domain where “rich” leadership and civil engagement come together. It also serves to highlight critical relations and potential tensions or trade-offs where components may be diametrically opposed, such as biodiversity and economic diversity or sustainable resource use and equitable resource distribution. Importantly, it is the combination and interaction of these dimensions of community resilience together which shapes community resilience. These linkages are captured by the intersecting curves of the four value domains of sustainable regeneration, thereby illustrating the interdependencies of the values which need to be reconciled if communities are to pursue multiple resiliences. In this way, the Octagon Values Model resonates with the view of community resilience as a set of networked adaptive capacities.

The four intersecting areas of the value domains provide an additional layer and represent the space in which ideas and coalitions may combine or collide. In this context, “Regeneration” refers to the ongoing processes of change which emerge, and are addressed, in differing ways across different spatial and temporal scales. “Resources” denotes the importance of different forms of capital, including natural assets and social capital as well as monetary resources. “Reconciliation” is associated with the mediation of competing interests and values in regeneration processes required to enhance robustness for enabling resilience. “Resilience” represents the ability to adapt, innovate and transform and acknowledges the interdependencies between social and ecological systems. The intention here is not to dissect

these processes as independent from each other, but rather re-emphasise their importance to advancing a relatively more holistic and strategic approach towards regeneration and resilience building ambitions. It follows that the placing of these concepts within the broader framework is of little consequence as each transcend the four value domains: a fluidity and dynamism which is captured by the rotating arrows.

The model is framed using dashed lines to emphasise the connectivity, or potential connectivity, across the realms of social–ecological systems and illustrates the mutually informing and co-influencing qualities of regeneration and resilience building processes. Next, we apply the model in the coastal context of the island of Ireland.

Regeneration and resilience in small island coastal contexts

Many small coastal resorts on the island of Ireland have undergone complex economic restructuring and are increasingly subject to a range of adverse economic and social impacts. More recent socioeconomic pressures for development and exploitation of the marine resource (Inter-Departmental Marine Coordination Group, 2012), including tourism-related and port infrastructure, and/or efforts to introduce hard engineering coastal protection schemes, are evidences of the dynamics of change. Taken together with their relative distance from major infrastructure and perceived urban “engines of growth”, “striving” coastal communities, for example, tend also to experience demographic pinch points, aggravated by an ageing population and outmigration of younger residents, likely putting the settlement on a more vulnerable trajectory (McElduff, Peel, & Lloyd, 2013). Without some form of self-help, private investment, explicit government intervention or “intrinsic resilience” to regenerate, small coastal towns or resorts may, following Butler (1980), stagnate or continue to decline.

Reflecting an emergent sensitivity to a multiplex of socioeconomic and environmental conditions at the coast, ideas regarding the appropriate form and focus of coastal community regeneration are explicitly concerned with ensuring intervention fit to context (Smith, 2004; Walton & Browne, 2010). Emphasis is placed on developing “integrated solutions” (SQW, 2011, p. iii), addressing environmental, social and economic challenges and, critically, “building a strong level of engagement and ownership within coastal communities [...] even where external “solutions” – whether economic or environmental – emerge”. Addressing the sustainability imperative is then critical (Rickey & Houghton, 2009; Peel & Lloyd, 2010) and implies not only preparing communities for alternative futures, economic opportunities and uncertain environmental challenges but reconciling values and associated behaviours. Under such conditions, certain coalitions and discourses can take root.

How local challenges are socially constructed may include reconciling competing issues of conservation and energy and resource needs, and dilemmas surrounding the management of coastal erosion and flood risk. Imaging alternative futures is then subject to the prevailing social *milieu* which can morph over time and space and in relation to specific institutional and community dynamics (Longhurst, 2013). Reconciling issues, options and, most importantly, values varies spatially, however, and much is dependent on, for example, local circumstances and community capacity, available physical, financial and intellectual resources, and how power is exercised in specific governance contexts.

Processes of coastal management and socioeconomic restructuring are articulated differently, depending on locational and historical contexts, cultural and physical attributes

and the socioeconomic characteristics of a given area, including scope to diversify the local economy. Coastal resort economic regeneration in Ireland, for example, has traditionally been addressed by the provision of tax incentives for the construction of tourism-related infrastructure. Tourism remains a dominant component of many coastal resort regeneration efforts across the island (Cooper & Boyd, 2009), reflecting a certain coastal resort path dependency which may, or may not, liberate alternative thinking and approaches. An “island-wide awakening” to the resource potential of coastal and marine environments (Devoy, 2008), for example, has offered a new catalyst for generating alternative economic purposes in coastal locales (Department of the Environment [DOE], 2013), whilst potentially precipitating societal concerns. If pursued in a sustainable manner, offshore developments have the potential to stimulate a range of employment opportunities – from research and development to construction and manufacture of components. Major new infrastructure, however, requires considerable public and private investment and risks bringing distributional effects and adverse developmental and environmental impacts that may exacerbate erosion and flooding concerns and conflict with established local values. Such interventions may be contrasted with community-led responses and strategies to enhancing and/or sustaining local economic, social and environmental assets.

A community approach has often been advocated as the optimum means of achieving locally relevant outcomes that could promote more effective decision-making, planning and management in areas susceptible to socioeconomic and environmental change (Dolan & Walker, 2006; Graugaard, 2012; Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009; Shaw, 2012; Steiner & Markantoni, 2013). Yet grassroots strategies for enhancing resilience and adaptation to environmental and socioeconomic change have received relatively little attention in research and policy. Specifically, and notwithstanding an acknowledgement of the vulnerability of coastal settlements (Duck, 2011), there is relatively little research exploring holistic modes of community-led resilience in a coastal context (but see, for example, Amundsen, 2012).

In any case the ability of civil society initiatives to foster resilience is disputed and there are calls for more empirical evaluations of community resilience (Graugaard, 2012; Steiner & Markantoni, 2013; Wilson, 2013). Barr and Devine-Wright (2012, p. 530) caution:

... their constitution may not be a form of Utopian or romanticised local pastoralism but rather constitute a resilience based on power, prestige, position and influence that could ultimately lead to a dystopian future marked out by inward-looking and even ‘gated’ forms of community.

Similarly, Wilson (2012, p. 1219) critically observes that community resilience is often pursued by “highly varying stakeholder networks, some of which may be directly contradicting and undermining efforts by other groups in the community to achieve maximum resilience”. It is important, therefore, to question whether resilience is universal or selective, a right or something earned. Moreover, it highlights that community-level actions may not always be the best approach to building resilience (Wilson, 2013). Some form of external regulation of resilience transitions may therefore be required, reiterating the importance of the governance values domain. Nevertheless, as Norris et al. (2008, p. 146) contend, as a framework for understanding and building strong communities, the value of resilience lies:

... not in whether it can be easily captured and quantified, but in whether it leads to novel hypotheses about the characteristics of – and relations between – stressors, various adaptive capacities and wellness over time.

In other words, the strategic value of resilience lies in its ability to motivate and/or initiate effective interventions and policies that increase the probability of adaptation. This dynamism is difficult to capture in practice.

The Transition Movement: interpretations of community resilience

The Transition Movement can be viewed as a form of community-based governance specifically aimed at fostering community resilience in relation to the potential negative consequences of climate change and peak oil. The movement emerged in 2005–2006 as a grassroots response to the predicted negative effects of peak oil and climate change and asserted the need to move to low-carbon sources (Hopkins, 2008; Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012). It now operates around the world (Haxeltine & Seyfang, 2009), illustrating a certain appeal and transferability. Facilitating “energy descent” is supported by a number of practical measures using available local resources and funding streams. The ethical and design principles of permaculture (Holmgren, 2002) are amongst the most significant intellectual influences on the Movement, which itself adopts principles from ecology, appropriate technology and sustainable agriculture (Morrison, 1988). As such, Transition thinking runs counter to the more dominant narratives of economic growth and globalisation.

The Transition Network, a charitable organisation, was established in 2006 to “inspire, encourage, support, enable networking, and train” those aspiring to the movement’s ideals (Hopkins & Lipman, 2009, p. 15). The Transition Network (comprising 10 employees based in Totnes in England) has developed the movement’s overall strategy and guidelines and delivers training for Transition groups. Importantly, the Transition Network has established a system of “branding” and formal designation as a Transition Town requires adherence to a number of “ingredients”, including a strong leadership group, appropriate training and connections to a local council (Transition Network, 2014). Transition initiatives that are inspired by the Transition Movement principles, but that do not yet comply with the official criteria, are referred to as “muller” initiatives. Questions are raised concerning the potential formalisation of such community-led initiatives. Ironically, this form of institutionalisation may itself limit the creativity and organic development of the grassroots movement as it effectively imposes an artificial management on local initiatives. Yet, there is little monitoring of individual town activities, since the movement is voluntary, relying on the continual input and support of local communities, and adopting an informal network approach to promoting organic actions and intrinsically place-based schemes. Communities thus develop their own actions and priorities in response to the needs and capacity of their locality (Feola & Nunes, 2014; Wells, 2011). A number of common themes and activities have emerged, including local energy generation, food production, local currencies, self-help groups and education (Ennis, 2013; Hopkins, 2013). These activities share an imperative to envision alternative futures, mobilise community action and foster public empowerment and engagement in the face of climate change and peak oil. Such initiatives are intended to be holistic, seeking to increase social resilience (e.g. by building new networks and strengthening local identity); build economic resilience (e.g. by stimulating trade and increasing self-reliance); and enhance environmental resilience (e.g. by cutting carbon emissions and encouraging environmentally friendly agriculture) (Graugaard, 2012).

Reflecting on wider debates to explain how particular discourses come to the fore and how discourse coalitions form and establish themselves (Hajer, 2003), it is helpful to consider

how the Transition Movement uses the concept of resilience. The concept of resilience is borrowed in the framing of the Transition model as a deliberate means of highlighting that change is required beyond (merely) securing carbon emission reductions (Hopkins & Lipman, 2009). Transition thinking uses the concept of “resilience” rather than “sustainability” to effect behavioural change since, it is argued, “the concept of resilience goes far beyond the better known concept of sustainability” (Hopkins, 2008, p. 54). Positing resilience in relation to sustainability in this way reflects Walker and Salt’s (2006) argument that sustainable development proposals need to critically consider a system’s resilience to change, highlighting the importance of interdependencies across a number of domains.

The perceived success of the movement in building community resilience is, however, disputed. It is argued that the purposeful vagueness in the use of the term resilience in Transition thinking constitutes both the “primary appeal of the movement and its central weakness” (Cato, 2008, p. 96). Notably, resilience is often criticised as it hides conflicts and power relations (Brand & Jax, 2007; Cote & Nightingdale, 2012; Hornborg, 2009) and thus conceals “transition to what or where, by whom and for whom?” (Alloun & Alexander, 2014, p. 14). Whilst the positive use of resilience as a motivating framework for community action has also been acknowledged, it is important to recognise that the advocacy of resilience is made from a particular standpoint.

Initially, Hopkins (2008) cautioned against Transition initiatives taking a strong political stand on specific issues. Conversely, Alloun and Alexander (2014) question whether Transition can achieve fundamental change without engaging in “top down” political action. Similarly, it is argued that the implementation of Transition initiatives may necessitate a collaborative approach between government and local communities. Ennis (2013) suggests increased collaboration may potentially improve resilience by increasing the diversity of possible responses for dealing with change across various scales. Adopting a holistic, multi-value approach might then address a criticism that the Movement is, as is perceived to be the case with conventional grassroots environmentally conscious groups, relatively more narrow and exclusive, tending to be dominated by middle-class, ecologically minded individuals (Barr & Devine-Wright, 2012; Smith, 2011). Such silo thinking emphasises the need for a more holistic (sustainable regeneration) analytical framework for practising resilience, such as that proposed in the Octagon Values Model.

Applying the Octagon Values Model: Transition Towns on the island of Ireland

In practical terms, the Transition Movement aims to challenge socioeconomic norms, raise awareness of environmental limits, promote alternative localised forms of economic and community development and encourage iterative and reflexive learning. Reflecting broader ideas around community and socioecological resilience, Transition initiatives emphasise the critical importance of community-building and collective action, and the benefit of learning to imagine and then put into practice what it means to live in a low-carbon economy (Hopkins, 2008). Importantly, resilience is seen not as something to impose on communities but something to build and foster, based on (inculcating) particular values through progressive social interaction. Civil mobilisation emphasises the importance of the fourth-value domain – governance values for resilience. This reasoning is consistent with Berkes and Ross’s (2013, p. 16) contention that: “transformational change at lower levels may enable

resilience at higher levels”. Accordingly, multiscalar feedback mechanisms are required so that community-based impacts and interventions are used to assess the effects of local interventions, such as waste recycling or energy generation, or/and to inform strategic-level communication and actions through community planning and strategic regeneration discussions. Cooperation between levels of governance, and finding ways to balance interaction and cooperation across governance scales to integrate resilience within the environmental, economic and social domains, are then a matter of reconciling values and priorities.

We now use the four intersecting value domains (regeneration, resilience, resources and reconciliation) to examine the Transition Town Movement in two coastal settlements on the island of Ireland: Whitehead in Northern Ireland, part of the devolved UK, and Kinsale in the Republic of Ireland (hereafter Ireland) (Figure 2). Following Eisenhardt (1989) and Meyer (2001), the aim was to choose cases that were likely to extend the emergent theory

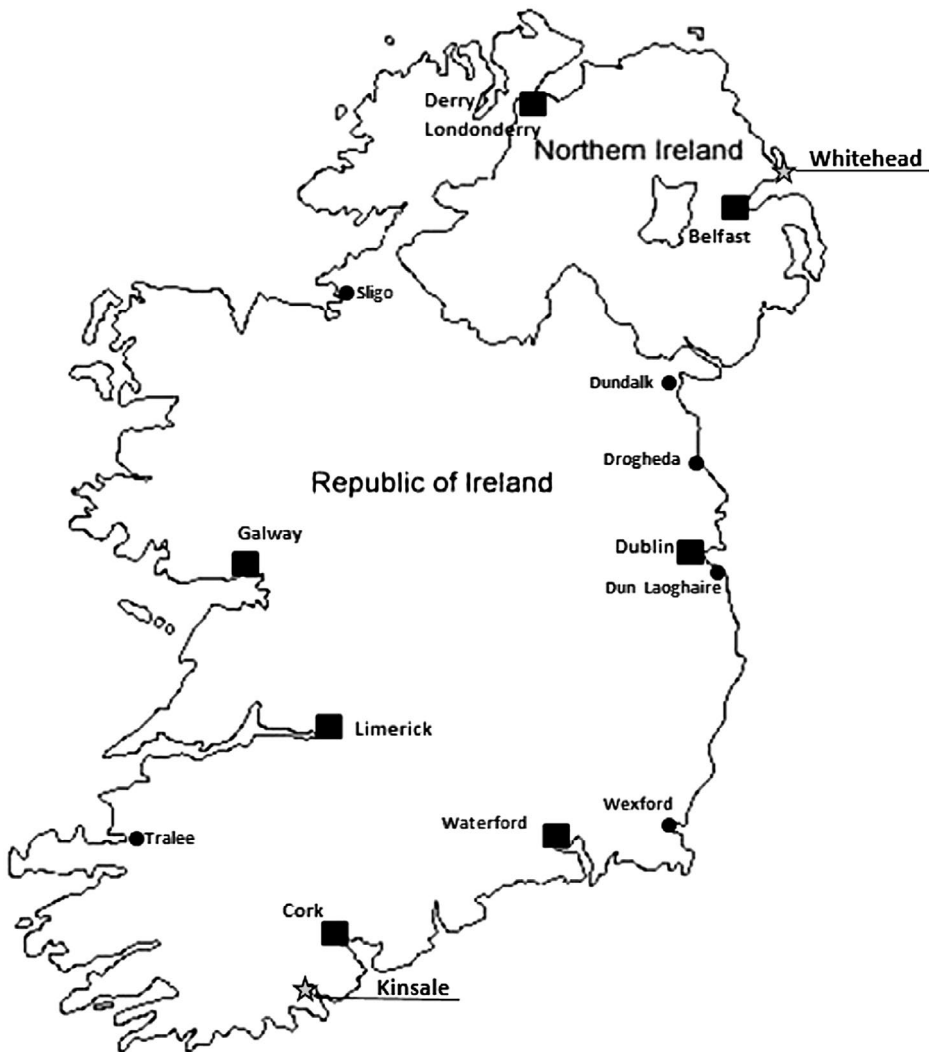


Figure 2. Location of case studies.

and fill theoretical gaps and, accordingly, the cases were purposefully selected from a typology of small coastal towns (McElduff et al., 2013) based on three key factors. First, the case studies exhibit different sociodemographic and economic characteristics. Whitehead may be regarded as a “retiring” town with a notably ageing population and associated out migration of young people. Kinsale, by comparison, has a more cosmopolitan and transient population base and, following McElduff et al. (2013), appears to be undergoing a process of “reinvention”. Such differences allow for an exploration of differing interpretations of, and approaches towards, community regeneration and resilience. Whilst, it is acknowledged that their shoreline location also presents certain physical hazards such as flooding and erosion, which undoubtedly affect the level of resilience achievable in practice; these are not the focus of this paper. Research concerning coastal vulnerability and resilience has tended to focus on these physical implications of climate change (see e.g. Devoy, 2008; Dolan & Walker, 2006; Kittinger & Ayers, 2010; McFadden, 2010; McLaughlin & Cooper, 2010). The influence of non-climatic environmental change or socioeconomic change is relatively less considered.

Second, the bi-jurisdictional dimension of the study enables a platform for cross-border lesson drawing and responds to calls more collaborative working not only at the territorial interface but for the coast, where issues often transcend jurisdictional boundaries (Blair et al., 2007; Department of Regional Development & Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2011; DOE, 2006; Flannery, O’Hagan, O’Mahony, Ritchie, & Twomey, 2015; Inter-Trade Ireland, 2012; Ritchie, 2014). Finally, whilst Whitehead and Kinsale display differing sociodemographic and economic issues and are situated in different jurisdictional contexts, both have embarked on the Transition Town Movement. Whilst the two cases are at different stages of maturity, they nevertheless demonstrate a local understanding and commitment to building community resilience and thus provide a basis for cross-comparisons. Attention is paid to how each example variously fosters community resilience in terms of the eight identified components. Although the individual initiatives are at different stages of development, (TTW is not recognised as an official initiative by the Transition Network), both towns have common goals and activities, including the consumption of locally produced food, energy-saving measures and an emphasis on community-building and collective action.

Regeneration

In the wider context of coastal resort regeneration, Transition was viewed as an additional, but important, “layer” to existing regeneration projects in each town, playing a specific role in raising awareness, enhancing local conditions and fostering enthusiasm and activity at the community level by engaging people in real projects:

... the voluntary sector, the community initiatives, do have a significant part to play in making the town a good place to live. (W1)

Reflecting how civil society responds to issues and challenges and builds a coalition of interests to mobilise certain arguments, the Transition “brand” in Whitehead has been used, in part, to attain recognised status for community concerns by becoming:

a good sort of flagship for projects now and again. (W2)

Arguably, this role is of particular importance at the coast which has enjoyed limited political and policy attention over recent decades (Tallon, 2014). The potential linkages and interdependencies between regeneration and resilience, as envisaged by Transition thinking, were highlighted, with one interviewee commenting:

[Transition's] beginning to have an impact ... a model sustainable community might be the way the town regenerates itself. (K1)

Interviewees from both case studies identified the potential offered by their shoreline location, particularly in terms of developing and/or sustaining tourism and the importance of protecting the local environment. TTK have endeavoured to foster local stewardship by developing "seashore walks" and the introduction of a "Marine Creatures Community Art Project". The perceived ability of individual projects to contribute to wider regeneration efforts, however, varies and with the exception of explicit awareness raising of its ecological value: there were a lack of projects relating to the coast. In this regard, the need for more time and resources and the inherent limitations of voluntary civil action in regeneration were acknowledged, particularly in terms of addressing wider structural changes in traditional coastal industries. In Whitehead expectations about what Transition on its own could achieve were specifically recognised:

as far as regeneration is concerned, [Transition's] only nibbling around the edges really. (W2)

There may therefore be a lack of capacity (perceived or actual) to deal with the dynamism of the coast. Consequently, external top-down intervention may be required and/or desired, highlighting the need to balance interaction and cooperation across governance scales (Owen, Moseley, & Courtney, 2007; Paxton, Pearce, Unwin, & Molyneux, 2005) to secure resilience across environmental, economic and social domains.

TTW have made advances in terms of facilitating this interaction and cooperation and are represented as a stakeholder on the Whitehead Regeneration Group, the steering committee behind the Whitehead Regeneration Master Plan. This means that local Transition members have an opportunity to influence the future strategic development of the town. The inclusion of TTW in the group suggests an awareness by the local authority of specific Transition skills, knowledge and capability (W5 and W6). Moreover, it is illustrative of the potential role of a Transition perspective which explicitly acknowledges the interdependencies between, and intricacies of, social and ecological systems and advances an alternative societal paradigm which in turn may contribute to more informed and holistic approaches to regeneration. Fostering such debates is of particular importance at the coast where demands for resources and development are increasingly in parallel with changing environmental parameters. The Transition ethos thus appears to have potential to play an important role in mobilising civil action and contributing to local regeneration strategies and potentially influencing regional thinking.

Resilience

The Transition action plans in both Kinsale and Whitehead are not only aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the potential negative effects of climate change and peak oil, but also acknowledge the need to enhance economic resilience. In Kinsale, projects have included a community-run anaerobic digester which offers local farmers an alternative to chemical fertiliser and reduces the miles food waste travels to landfill. This practical

scheme has the potential to improve soil and water quality, thus enhancing local biodiversity and aims to provide local employment when completed. The promotion of allotments and community gardens has also enhanced the local economy and environment by providing additional sources of locally grown produce. These projects are supported by TTK's "50 mile menu", which encourages the town's restaurateurs to source their ingredients locally. This initiative has also encouraged TTK to embrace the benefits and opportunities offered by their coastal location. For example, fish caught in the bay are used in local restaurants helping to tighten the feedback loop and simultaneously sustaining Kinsale's reputation as a centre of high-quality seafood. Such initiatives potentially increase the diversity of the local economy and illustrate the need for joined-up working between projects which, although separate and led by different members, complement and enhance each other in terms of creating shared beneficial outcomes. The interlinking of, for example, locally grown food with local restaurants enhances interdependencies bringing the consequences of resource production and consumption closer to home, connecting the environmental, economic and social values domains.

Learning about resilience is a fundamental goal for Transition activists:

Really all we we're trying to do is raise awareness of these issues. (W2)

TTK's Education for Sustainability's team of facilitators aims to inform children in local schools about sustainability issues and creating organic food gardens. This intervention is based on the view that practical skills, like growing food, are important so that young people become aware of where their food and other essential resources come from. As part of the "Big Energy Saving Challenge", TTW made recommendations as to how energy could be saved in local homes and helped facilitate the improvements required. Solar hot water, energy-saving light sensors and double glazing were also installed in the local community-centred and energy-saving kits were freely distributed amongst the local community, thereby helping local residents become more aware of their energy usage. TTK's Community Powerdown Project, in 2007, was based on similar principles. Both Transition Towns thus adhere to Hopkins (2008) advocacy to imagine and practise what it means to live in a low-carbon economy. Such practical projects, embedded in the local community, also help to increase awareness of the initiative itself. As illustrated by the logic of the model, the intersecting values domains emphasise the need for equitable distribution of resources, including for future generations.

The impetus for action in both Kinsale and Whitehead was closely related to a sense of place attachment:

I don't want to be employed to do this stuff ... this is stuff I want to do because I want to do it, because I value where I live and I want to put something back in. (W1)

There is still a pride in the town and I think that's what's going to help us ... they see a value to what's here and it's not a commercial value to them because most of them aren't in business, but it's a value of the quality of life that there is here ... they all feel they belong to the place and they have an attachment, a responsibility and a pride. (KS4)

Clearly people-place relationships and sense of community are critical in fostering civil responses to local challenges and embedding resilience. In-migration can also be beneficial in terms of generating new ideas. Fortunately, coastal towns on the island of Ireland tend to have a growing and more multicultural population than their inland counterparts. Kinsale has a particularly cosmopolitan population which is held to have increased opportunities through the availability of additional skills, knowledge and enthusiasm:

Luckily for Kinsale, it has a very rich and diverse history; it had an influx of, I would say, external people who were movers and shakers. (K5)

The ability to capture such opportunities will depend, however, on the inclusivity of the initiative and people's willingness to engage.

Whilst there was a lack of projects aimed at addressing specific coastal hazards; the provision of learning opportunities and fostering close people–place relationships will increase the capacity of the communities to act if/when such physical change does occur. In any case, the interviewees shared a feeling of responsibility in terms of the stewardship of the coastal environment, reflecting a level of consciousness pertaining to the careful use and management of resources.

Resources

The governance arrangements prevailing in both TTK and TTW have had an important influence on how available resources, such as financial and institutional resources and social and environmental capital, may be utilised. From a bottom-up community-led perspective the most critical resources arguably include community involvement and buy-in, and the availability of local skills and knowledge which can be drawn upon. Both case studies highlighted that the extent to which increased economic and biodiversity is achievable in practice is dependent on local community, and business, acceptance of Transition ideals and values and individual willingness to act – behavioural change that is not always easy to secure. Even in Kinsale, where the Movement has gained momentum, an interviewee observed:

There's a little bit of people being ready as well, for whatever you're trying to do. It is the right thing to do and people probably know it back here, but are not quite ready to act on it. (K1)

A key concern of the Transition Network (2014) is that not being able to imagine a low-carbon world is a considerable barrier to designing and realising change. Accordingly, a number of platforms for learning and awareness raising were identified in both towns. The Transition Network itself is an important resource: offering the potential for international lesson and resource sharing which may stimulate ideas from beyond jurisdictional boundaries. At an all-island scale, the Transition Ireland and Northern Ireland Network is an important resource helping to facilitate knowledge exchange, and offering the potential to both generate new ideas and find solutions to existing barriers or issues.

At the local level, regular meetings in a local community centre provide TTW with an arena for self-evaluation through identifying limitations and successes in projects. TTK holds annual community events, including “Springamagig” and “Earth Hour”, to raise awareness of Transition values and to enhance community cohesion. Local open forums with invited expert speakers similarly provide interactive sessions to address various issues and opportunities facing the town. Bringing different kinds of knowledge together in this way, and focusing on the complementarity of knowledge systems, can help increase communities' capacity to learn. Indeed, the ability to pull together knowledge from different sources to make a new synthesis and co-producing knowledge (Armitage, Berkes, Dale, Kocho-Schellenberg, & Patton, 2011) is considered an important resource for enhancing community adaptability and building civil engagement.

In terms of generating active (local) agency, the challenges of mobilising and sustaining momentum were keenly felt in both towns. Critically, stimulating and sustaining civil engagement were considered greater barriers than access to funding:

There are lots of ways and means of getting money but unless you have two or three people on the ground who want to make things happen, it won't happen. (K1)

A common response was that individual projects only gain traction because the project champions are provided with the opportunity to exercise their personal interests and motivations. The Transition Town Movement thus became an umbrella context for members to pursue individual projects of their choice – but for the overall betterment of the town.

Nevertheless, extending community involvement in the movement remains problematic:

It's the same people time and time again who get engaged with voluntary activity ... there's an awful lot more people who are passive – who want to be recipients rather than activists if you like. That's quite difficult to overcome. (W1)

Consequently, addressing local passivity and increasing the inclusivity of the initiative were considered necessary to grow TTW into a fully fledged Transition Town. Similarly, TTK conceded that not everyone in the community is willing to get involved in Transition initiatives even when the benefits are made evident:

You're trying to sell something to these people and if people don't buy into it and think about whether it is the right thing for this to happen, in this place, it's not going to work. (K1)

Inactivity was cited as the principal barrier to the success of the initiative in both towns in part because it undermines the initiative's values of inclusivity and diversity. This limitation is consistent with findings concerning the Transition Movement in general (Barr & Devine-Wright, 2012; Hopkins, 2008; Smith, 2011). In Kinsale, early and targeted community engagement was identified as helping overcome such barriers. Moreover, ensuring the seldom heard are represented is an important objective for both the cases studied, as building capacity and strengthening community cohesion are identified as requiring the active engagement of all members of the community, bringing new thinking and skills to each group and allowing the Transition initiative to expand into previously overlooked areas.

In terms of meeting the aspirations of Transition advocates, the pace and level of TTW's progress has been frustrating to those seeking to mobilise anticipatory change. There is an acknowledged imperative to generate momentum to advance Transition thinking in Whitehead. A lack of time and resources on behalf of members is perceived to have hindered the implementation of further projects, due, primarily, to the voluntary nature of Transition. Time becomes a critical resource. One member (W2) described TTW as being “in hibernation”, highlighting the need to revive and reinvigorate interest and calling for an investment of time, expertise and resource. Effective communication is then a key issue for TTW (W3 and W4):

there's a bit of a communication problem with Transition Town ... it needs to be brought back out into the community. I don't think people are really aware of it. (W3)

The relationships with formal entities, type of leadership and institutional networks were also matters of concern in terms of enhancing the availability and use of local resources. Building relationships within and between different levels of governance, therefore, was identified as a critical aspect in extending the reach and impact of the Initiative in each case study. Following the Octagon Values Model this will necessitate, for example, suitably

diverse – rich – forms of leadership and effective civil engagement. Reconciling different, and often competing, perspectives and discourses prevalent within and across different value domains is therefore important.

Reconciliation

Strengthening people–place relationships between different groups and bodies and increasing solidarity around Transition were fundamental aspirations in both Whitehead and Kinsale. In particular, establishing connections with organisations perceived as capable of influencing the development and quality of life of the locality, especially the local authority, were considered critical to advancing the Transition agenda:

If you collaborate you achieve things quicker. (K1)

Critically, a degree of disconnect between Transition activities and “local networks of power and influence” (K2) was apparent. In Whitehead, for example, interviewees expressed the view that professional interest, expertise and funding in terms of regeneration and community development tends to be concentrated in the neighbouring larger town to the exclusion of the needs of the smaller settlement. Consequently, a degree of resentment and distrust, characterised by a “them and us” situation has materialised, despite the Transition initiative being represented on the town’s Regeneration Group. In comparison, TTK enjoyed a greater level of interaction with its local authority. The original Kinsale Energy Descent Action Plan (Hopkins, 2005), for example, was endorsed by Kinsale Town Council, who provided funding for subsequent projects. Although the level of direct involvement and financial support subsequently decreased, the Town Council continued to pledge its commitment to TTK until the abolishment of town councils in Ireland under the Local Government Reform Act (2014). Finding novel ways to reconcile competing perspectives of regeneration and resilience is thus important, particularly, in the context of changing governance structures and powers, which may have a potentially significant impact on how coastal resort regeneration is envisaged, designed and implemented. Delivering more joined-up approaches is further complicated by the complex governance architecture at the coast (Duck, 2011; McFadden, 2010). Nevertheless, whilst project integration is considered valuable, it is important to note that, in terms of agency, the focus for action remains at the individual level:

That is one of the beauties of Transition, it’s not about waiting on somebody else to do stuff, it’s about doing it yourself. (W1)

Self-motivated civil engagement is thus an imperative and raises an important point about a tendency of contemporary government to emphasise top-down policy drivers, as may be illustrated by the concept of localism in England. Yet, from a community resilience perspective, the notion of working with local government could, for some, then be considered oxymoronic for a social movement of this nature.

Despite recognition of the need to, and advantages of, making linkages with formal modes of governance, interaction with regional or national government was minimal in both case studied. In Whitehead, this may be explained by TTW being at a developmental stage. As a locally oriented venture, however, Transition specifically encourages non-reliance on mainstream (global) food and energy businesses, for example, which are identified as undermining local resilience, threatening local enterprises and potentially influencing degeneration. Evidence from elsewhere suggests that cooperation with government-level bodies has raised

some criticisms of the movement, particularly with respect to its asserted apolitical stance (Seyfang & Haxeltine, 2012; Smith, 2011). Transition may therefore be marginalised from mainstream programmes, raising questions about undermining the benefits of cumulative impact and how best to find ways to address the wider regeneration challenges facing each settlement. This paradox highlights how local communities must reconcile different resource and regeneration challenges in building resilience from the bottom up.

Developing links and cooperation with local businesses was seen as key to increasing local acceptance and providing support, for Transition initiatives. The absence of a Chamber of Commerce in Whitehead is considered a significant barrier to facilitating increased interaction with local businesses and enhancing overall traction. In comparison, TTK's embryonic links with the Kinsale Chamber of Tourism and Commerce has enabled increased communication between the group and local businesses which may become a source of financial support and project legitimisation. Aligning projects make meeting TTK's specific ambitions more achievable. The Chamber, for example, organises an annual Gourmet Festival and encourages chefs to use local ingredients by endorsing TTK's "50 Mile Menu" initiative, illustrating a form of rich leadership where different organisations share complementary leadership roles in different ways.

In addition to developing links at the local government and business level, establishing civil society linkages within the local community and enhancing social networks was considered vital in both case studies. As well as pursuing individual Transition projects, there was evidence of collaboration and alliance building between local groups, particularly on projects with a related sustainable and resilience-building remit. TTK, as a relatively more established organisation, is particularly conscious of its role in creating links in the community:

What makes a community work is how well connected everybody is. (K2)

Reiterating the importance of networked governance in creating resilient communities, Transition's role in developing stronger local identities and relationships is deemed a core function:

What's as important as getting the work done is the kind of synergies it creates. It builds communities, it creates community resilience. (K1)

The Transition ethos thus has value beyond the immediate benefits derived from the projects themselves. Critically, Transition thinking stresses the social interpretation of resilience, highlighting what community resilience might look and feel like from the bottom up and across the different value domains. In this instance, the close relationship between the reconciliation and resilience components of the Octagon Values Model is demonstrated. Arguably, through stimulating interest and understanding, building local resources and improving the quality and number of relationships within a place, further synergies and innovative responses to socioeconomic, environmental and governance challenges can be fully developed and realised.

Conclusions

The Octagon Values Model is proposed as a useful analytical framework for considering community-based initiatives, such as the Transition Movement, and how these might reconcile regeneration and resilience. The Model carries an important symbolism and certain

metaphorical weight since, similar to the concept of regeneration, “octagon” is infused with spiritual significance and religious meanings of regeneration, totality (holism) and transition.

Predicated on how desirable change is perceived and how the need to enhance resilience is socially constructed, responses will manifest differently according to context, timing, experience and scale. Different regeneration schemes will variously stress the importance of one value domain over another to reflect the specificities of place, the regeneration approach adopted and/or the scale of intervention. For example, contemporary coastal resort regeneration approaches on the island of Ireland might stress economic returns from tourism to the potential detriment of environmental values; heritage-led initiatives may seek to enhance and/or exploit the social and environmental assets of a resort, whilst energy-based interventions may emphasise governance and economic values of coastal and maritime resources. Grassroots initiatives, such as those the Transition Movement inspires, are likely to place greater emphasis on social values. Accordingly, different actors and discourses will operate within and across the different domains, sometimes aligning over different domains, with certain coalitions developing in relation to specific issues. Reflecting the principles of sustainability and resilience, the model helps explain why weaknesses and critiques of Transition Towns prevail and opens up ideas as to where future possibilities might exist. When applied to Kinsale and Whitehead, the model highlighted important considerations and challenges around regeneration, resilience, resources and reconciliation.

A specific role for the Transition Movement in local regeneration initiatives was identified in both case studies. The specific value of Transition ideals, knowledge and capabilities was identified by the local communities, businesses and authorities as a key additional “layer” to existing regeneration initiatives. The Transition ethos also plays a potentially important role in accessing resources and in the local execution of regional projects. Nevertheless, local capacity and time restraints were cited as key barriers to further civil contributions in regeneration activities, highlighting the importance of local resources and the vulnerabilities inherent in voluntary activities. Arguably, increased community participation would provide additional legitimacy to underpin local projects.

The findings highlight the use of resilience as a motivational concept for community action. Explicit awareness raising and knowledge building, as a means of gathering interest and momentum, is deemed important in conjunction with practical projects which provide tangible outcomes. This helps embed resilience thinking within the local community and potentially to attain community and business buy-in. Increased understanding is a fundamental issue in coastal locales as communities are subject to feedback effects between social and ecological elements. Whilst the cases acknowledged the inherent benefits of their coastal location and the need to protect this vulnerable resource, there were a lack of projects aimed specifically at harnessing these resources. One potential reason behind this omission relates to the diverse range of actors in the coastal zone who often have different perspectives and preferences as to the functionality of the coastal system which means prioritisation of intervention and investment at the coast can be highly sensitive and emotive. There are important interdependencies, therefore, between different scales of intervention, particularly if wider economic regeneration ambitions are to be achieved.

The availability and (sustainable) use of internal resources was deemed a prerequisite to fostering community resilience. In particular, the availability of a diverse skills pool was considered advantageous as bringing together different sources of knowledge potentially

facilitates expansion into new areas. Stimulating and sustaining community involvement, however, was identified as the greatest challenge. Both initiatives face similar dilemmas and challenges to other social and voluntary movements that aim to achieve radical social and economic change. As initiatives grow in scale and attract more participants and actors, the ability to translate Transition ideals into mainstream settings potentially becomes more attainable. The role of local champions is key in developing and sustaining momentum even though these may revolve around personal interests. Tapping into grassroots individual motivation and human capital in this way arguably builds richer forms of leadership.

The case studies demonstrate that reconciling regeneration and resilience is largely dependent on the prevailing governance arrangements in each locale. The complexity and dynamism of both regenerating an area and building resilience highlights the need for multiscale feedback mechanisms which, in turn, necessitates improved cooperation and interaction between different governance scales. This requirement resonates with Ennis (2013) promotion of collaboration as an important prerequisite for building resilience. Increasing socioeconomic, environmental and institutional uncertainty requires embedding adaptation responses in all tiers of governance – both formal and informal. Critically, gaps in governance arrangements were identified in both Kinsale and Whitehead which may hinder reconciliation. In any case, the scope for reconciliation varies spatially and is dependent on local circumstances and community capacity, available physical, financial and intellectual resources and governance contexts. At the community level, an emphasis was placed on the need to enhance social networks and connections to develop local identities, foster community cohesion and ultimately build community resilience.

Overall, “building” resilience is a dynamic challenge and raises questions around how to design, manage and implement interventions, at what scale and with what resources. The Octagon Values Model offers a composite heuristic with which to imagine a strategic vision, with governance featuring as a critical domain in securing the necessary resources for resilient outcomes. The exploration of the Transition Movement in this paper offers just one example of how the model may be used and invites further empirical evidence of how the relations and potential tensions between the different identified components of community resilience may be strengthened to mobilise networked adaptive capacities.

Disclosure statement

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