

"The community is the nucleus of social life."

Bottom-up participation as a guiding principle

First, we need to clarify the term "transformation": How does the transformation referred to here differ from terms used in current discourse (Karl Polanyi's "Great Transformation," social change, development, modernization)?

The approach to social-ecological transformation should encompass several objectives: grassroots democratic structures, decentralized/federalist, rule-based self-governance (Elinor Ostrom), cooperative, public service-oriented, anti-capitalist, anti-monopolistic, environmentally sustainable

To concretize the approach, a few historical examples can be cited, with particular reference to the international settlement movement that began before 1914 and reached its peak in the aftermath of World War I. According to Gustav Landauer, the settlement, with its self-contained and manageable production and circulation structure, should represent the basic form of the society to be reconstructed. Supplemented by a council administration, "authority-free self-determination of the social whole" (Erich Mühsam) could become a tangible reality. The settlement movement has its roots in classical anarchism, and its influence extends into more recent times (cf. Frithjof Bergmann, Janet Biehl and Murray Bookchin, Leopold Kohr, B. F. Skinner).