

**“Group Held Values” as Legitimate Domination: A Critique of Weber’s Typology of Authority in an
Intentional Community**

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Abstract

Since the release in English of Weber’s *Economy and Society*, scholars have critiqued his ideal types of social action and authority as containing “value rational” social action but lacking an accompanying type of authority. This paper explores the ways in which a modern Intentional Community re-arranges the institutions of power, labor, time, and money in service to a critique of Weber’s missing type of by adding empirical weight to the argument for existence of a value-rational authority. These Intentional Communities are social arrangements that inevitably call into question the legitimacy of one or more social arrangements and exemplify what is argued to be a Weberian value-rational form of authority because they place group ideals about the rightness of action over individual achievement.

Keywords: Weber, Intentional Community, Authority, Value Rationality, Legitimate Domination, Communal Groups

Introduction

Where organizations today are usually interpreted as operating through a Weberian rational-legal use of authority in an era defined by bureaucracy, this paper engages with the case made by

Weberian scholars for the existence of value-rational authority as a form of legitimate domination, a type omitted by Weber, as an ideal type organization exemplified by Intentional Communities (ICs). This paper focuses on a present-day IC as a case study of how group ideals lead to 're-arrangements' in the formation of organizational structure through an examination of how power, labor, time, and money as attached to value-rational, instead of purposive-rational, ends. The data presented offers insight into how a particular IC known as Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage (DR), as a n organization, navigates group ideals of egalitarian governance and environmentalism against the backdrop of a bureaucratic society.

The history of the United States is full of various communal experiments that fall under the umbrella of term Intentional Community. This includes religious and socialist experiments in the 1840s, psycho-social Skinnerian communes part of the 'dropping out' movement of the 1960s, and today communal experiments based on environmentalism, LGBTQ liberation, and a host of other idealistic concerns (Kanter 1972, Barkun 1984, Berry 1992, Miller 2019). Those experiments continue today, though they are motivated by greater a diversity of underlying reasons and take many different forms (Smith 2002, Miller 2019).

ICs are social arrangements that inevitably call into question the legitimacy of existing social arrangements as they work to re-form human interaction. They re-orient the everyday goals of the membership and represent a mode of action wherein organizations can leverage communal relationships in pursuit of common ideals. Typically, modern organizations are comprised of a hierarchical arrangement that empowers select few through a distinct division of labor, and they will often adapt and change to meet outside challenges to maintain that stratification. However, ICs are often inclined to prioritize the survival of group ideals over the easy functioning of the organization and thus exemplify the case for the value-rational authority type.

Weber on Social Action and Legitimate Domination

In his posthumous magnum opus, Max Weber (1978) noted that the transition of Western countries into the era capitalism also brought with it the rise of modern bureaucratic structures that transformed the nature of authority in society from being capricious (as with the whims of a monarch) to a more stable and predictable arrangement. This also brought with it the rise of instrumental-rational social action, which is recognized in the bureaucratic state through the hallmarks of divided labor, hierarchy, and highly rationalized decision-making based on established rules structures.

While bureaucracy as an organizational form is quite ancient in human history (Crooks and Parsons, 2016), the modern bureaucratic state is associated with reform of monarchic state power in western Europe to a model based on the espoused rationality of Capitalism. For Weber, this meant Europe stood apart from other global powers such as China because it contained the 'rational state in which alone modern capitalism can flourish' (Weber 1950: 339) despite a period in China's history where they briefly experimented with a rational state administered by expert officials. Rational bureaucracy's hallmarks are the erasure of individual legitimacy in favor of organizational legitimacy. People in bureaucratic organizations don't follow orders from a person because of who they are, but for the office they hold (Clegg 2006); and so as the authority of monarchs gave way, they were replaced with institutions where power was exercised by the office and as much as the office holder. Authority for Weber, then, was the logical result of submission to a form of legitimate domination, and is 'distinguished from persuasion by the fact that people *a priori* suspend their own judgment and accept that of an acknowledged superior without having to be convinced that his is correct.' (Blau 1963:307)

Bureaucratic organizations, such as the state, vest the power to make rules in an

impersonal, rationalized apparatus to achieve calculated ends. But social action, Weber noted, can also be motivated through *communal* relationships (*Vergemeinschaftung*), which are based on a sense of belonging, in addition to those *associative* relationships (*Vergesellschaftung*), which are based on mutually agreed upon ends and are the basis for modern bureaucratic organization. He notes that communal relationships tend to rest on the 'antithesis of conflict' while associative ones 'very often consist only in compromises between rival interests' (1978: 42). Bureaucracy, as a rational structure that constrains and shapes social action, controls potential conflict and mediates associative relationships through rationalized structures, formally codified rules, and a division of labor. Conversely, communal relationships avoid conflict because they are based on a subjective sense of belonging. Families, tribes, followers of charismatic leaders, and other basic forms of association are not without conflict but are the bases for association that manages aversity to conflict through that sense of belonging. ICs, similar to modern organizations and states, have their own bureaucratic structures which members navigate through both communal and associative relationships.

These relationships also track closely with Weber's concepts of value-rational authority (subjection to the norms of a group for the sake of belonging) and rational-legal authority (subjection to the norms of an organization for the sake of expediency and advancement). Communal relationships, according to Weber, avoid conflict through intimate relationships of the group, but don't necessarily avoid coercion (Weber 1978:42). It is important to note, too, that social actions (and therefore domination) can be both purposive-rational and value-rational simultaneously for differing reasons.

This leaves little room for organizations in an era defined by bureaucratic structures to be formed around communal relationships, and so Weber does not enumerate them as an organizational form in his ideal types of legitimate domination (1978:24, 215). Ideal types, as he

described them, are pure representations of a concept not actually found in grounded reality but are nonetheless meant to help order the world. Said types contain an easy portability between how Weber describes orientations to social action and the types of authority used by groups of people to maintain order. The four orientations to social action and three types of legitimate domination (which are the foundations of authority) are noted in Table 1. While there is a ready changeover between pure types of social action and domination in three of those types, the notable exception there is value-rational authority. Roberta Satow (1975) confirms this association and missing type, saying that while it is 'implicit in Weber that rational-legal authority is a derivative of purposive-rational motivation...there is no category of authority derived from the value-rational form of motivation and legitimacy.'

Weber's cataloging of ideal types was not simply an exercise in describing the world as it was in his time, but a methodological tool for differentiating the era of rational authority western Europe was witness to from the capricious rule of pre-capitalist, pre-modern bureaucratic states. Traditional and charismatic authorities, while capable of creating efficient bureaucracies, nonetheless rested upon the practices of imperfect humans who might change norms and practices "partly in terms of the master's discretion." (1978: 227) Rational-legal authority, on the other hand, portends a system which exists outside capricious authority and are vested in bodies larger than a single individual or elite few, as would a value-rational authority. To Weber, the march towards more rational forms was inevitable because they were in tandem with the advent of scientific thought and capitalism. To this point, Emirbayer (2005) also notes that in differentiating between value-rational and purposive-rational action, Weber created a hierarchy within his theorization of reason over emotion.

The difference between value-rational and instrumental-rational action was also the basis for Weber's critique of the rationalization inherent in bureaucratic forms (Waters 1989)

and fear that the 'iron cage' of bureaucracy would eventually rationalize communal associations out of existence (Gerth and Mills 1946 ref). In expressing this, he opened a heuristic wedge between material concerns such as monetary reward or advancement in the hierarchy (instrumental-rationality) and non-material concerns such as aesthetics or ethics as motivators to social action (value-rationality). Rothschild-Whitt (1979) expanded on this division, noting that an authority which rests on value-rational action (Weber's missing type) would differ from instrumental rational organizations in several key aspects:

1. *Authority*, which resides in the collective as a whole, rather than a few at the top of a hierarchy
2. *Rules*, which are minimal and enforced as norms based on group values, rather than formal prohibitions
3. *Social Control*, which is based on moral appeals to an equal rather than through direct supervision by a superior
4. *Social Relations*, which are based on the ideal of community rather than impersonality. People are whole selves, rather than specialized persons in a division of labor.

5. *Recruitment and Advancement*, which is based on fitness with the group ideals rather than the development of special skills, achievement, or experience.
6. *Incentive Structure*, which is minimal in terms of monetary reward, where in instrumentally rational organizations that is the primary motivator.
7. *Social Stratification*, which is as undifferentiated as possible. Resources are distributed based on need rather than prestige.
8. *Differentiation*, which is minimal, where in instrumentally rational organizations there is a division of labor and a hierarchy, in value-rational organizations individuals take holistic roles and often rotate positions.

A value-rational orientation towards social action, then, would prioritize the goals of the group over the goals of the individual with a division of labor, maintain a more uniform reward structure, and aim to equalize status across the group regardless of individual achievement. In a value-rational form of legitimate domination, authority would rest in a communal whole, and not in any one individual or subgroup. In contrast, rational-legal, the principal form of a capitalist bureaucratic society, rewards individual experience, promotes differentiation and stratification, and uses various criteria of achievement to reward some members of the group with more authority than others.

Rothschild-Whitt also conceived the existence of 'collectivist organizations,' her term for an organization operating under value-rational authority, as represented through the 'alternative institutions' of the 1960s and 70s which included free schools, legal collectives, food cooperatives, etc. She notes that, '[p]erhaps more than anything else, it is the basis of authority that distinguishes the collectivist organization from any variant of bureaucracy. The

collectivist-democratic organization rejects rational-bureaucratic justifications for authority. Here authority resides not in the individual, whether on the basis of incumbency in office or expertise, but in the collectivity as a whole.' (Rothschild-Whitt 1979: 511)

Why did Weber not create this fourth type of authority, then? Rothschild-Whitt suggests that there were few real-world examples of organizations for Weber to draw on when creating his types, and that value-rational action existed in his era but had not yet emerged as a decipherable organizational form. Conversely, Adler, Kwon, and Hecksher propose that value-rationality was assigned a form of social action but not domination because 'value-rationality accords no legitimacy to orders since all members are assumed equal in their exclusive subservience to the absolute value to which they are all devoted' (Adler et al 2008: 361) and thus value-rational actors cannot be subject to domination by authority at all. Weber visited an anarchist commune in 1913 and 1914, Monte Verita in Ascona, Tessin, and was aware of it throughout much of his later life. While there, his letters to family and colleagues make clear that he was concerned mainly with power while among those whose shared ideology pushed for the inherent subversion of state power. Weber characterizes anarchist figures as pursuing an ethic of complete conviction, i.e, a strong value rationality commitment. While culture provided a common ground between Weber and the anarchists (Whimster 1999: 5, 34), Weber saw power in terms of German national culture and the role of the state. In his encounter with the pacifist and playwright Ernst Toller in 1918, he respected Toller's absolutist ethic but completely disagreed with him on the necessity of state power (Levy 1999: 95-100).

Both of the above are arguments of organizational structure and rely on an implicit predisposition that authority should be recognizable as an ideal type in order to then exist non-ideally in the complex social world. Bureaucracies are easy to distinguish, as rational-legal domination tends to come with strictly codified rules and roles (Sciulli 1986). Value-rational

authority, on the other hand, is more difficult to decipher because it is wrapped up in norms and practices of a given group rather than written laws or policies of an organization.

A value-rational form of legitimate domination would be similar to charismatic authority, in that those subject to it would willingly do so for the 'exemplary characteristics' they wish to follow (Blau 1963). It would differ, though, because those characteristics would emanate from a group rather than an individual. More than a submission to a group holding particular characteristics, a value-rational form of legitimate domination would place individual participation in the implementation of group ideals above any formal system stemming from associative relationships. Value-rational actors are more wont to ask 'does this action fit in with our values?' while instrumentally-rational might ponder 'does this action fit in the established arrangement?'

Value-rational authority, then, could be (and has been) equated to the 'one person, one vote' principle of democratic institutions (Spencer 1970) as an elaboration of the values espoused by various voting blocs. But, said equivalence would be superficial and misrepresent certain aspects of how democratic structures operate. Spencer (1970:129) argues that the principle of 'consent of the governed' demonstrates a value-rational authority in elected officials. Yet, what this illustrates is simply what Blau (1963) is quoted in saying above: that authority is derived from a group of people suspending their judgement about the system of domination. Democratic institutions are instead characteristically based in a rational-legal authority because decisions made within the context of democratic elections are done under a strict set of rules and procedures where the position of power itself wields the legitimacy over the person occupying its office. Oftentimes, these decisions are made with a narrow band of

options – a yes or no referendum, or one of a handful of candidates. A value-rational authority that prioritizes group ideals over formal process would offer fewer prescribed paths and more openness for participation in decision-making. It would be, then, more like egalitarian decision-making than democratic decision-making, which is further discussed below. Ideal types exist in an unideal world, and just as the authority of presidents share charismatic and rational-legal authority, so too does submission to value-rational domination often come with submission to other types of authority as well.

Intentional Communities as Organizations

The history of the West is filled with examples of groups forming intentional communities for a wide array of reasons, going back even as far as the Puritan settlements of Jamestown and Plymouth (Pitzer 1997) in the United States. Researchers have suggested that present-day ICs are of increasing relevance to contemporary social and environmental problems, and represent attempts at engaging potential solutions to them (Lockyer 2007, Lockyer 2017, Ergas 2010). To that end, they have variously been organized on a spectrum from retreatist, to utopian experiments (Sargent 1994), even social movements (Roberts 1971, Schehr 1997) and protest groups (Carden 1979) concerned with engaging and transforming society through promoting their alternative human arrangements. Regardless of whether such groups opt to retreat or engage, they are characterized by a level of member commitment to a set of ideals specific to the group (Kanter 1972) and the success of contemporary iterations is significantly predicated on the capacities of the community to provide a sense of agency and buy-in to the group's decision making process (Rubin, et. al. 2019).

ICs, as with any formal organization, contain hallmarks of one or more types of legitimate domination *including* value-rational. There are many historical (and fewer present-day) examples of domination by charismatic authorities, religious¹ or political² visionaries who rallied followers around their vision of perfection. Purportedly egalitarian communities, too, contain both aspects of rational-legal and value-rational authority as they must adapt to the requirements of the bureaucratic state. However, many communities practice egalitarianism quite effectively, and support the hypothesis of a value-rational authority type. The 'ecovillage' presented here is a particular type of IC that emphasizes 'human-ecosystem' interdependence (Kasper 2008) in addition to egalitarian power structures.

Rothschild-Whitt's (1979) study of the collectivist-democratic organization forms a solid basis here for what is more simply termed a *value-rational authority*, in line with Weber's original typologies. However, her method was to examine the presence of this type across several simple and singularly-focused organizations, where this paper is focused on the same concept as manifested in a much more complex, single organization that contains many facets. Thus, her dimensions of collectivist authority are included and dispersed throughout, as the expression of value-rationality in the domination of group members is expressed differently in each organizational attribute.

The argument presented here should be seen as one for the case at hand, rather than the whole collection of ICs past and present. This is not to say that other ICs don't contain such characteristics, because they quite arguably do. All ICs are built on some level of re-arranging human organization, yet each does it in their own way. Instead, this paper is intended to be a

call to probe further in to how value rationality works using an empirical case study to back study of what to this point has been a one-dimensional critique of Weberian theory.

Methods

Data for this project was collected in rural northeast Missouri at an IC named Dancing Rabbit Ecovillage. Data collection took place over the course of several years, starting with a brief Saturday morning tour in 2014, then a three-week visitor period later that year (designed for prospective new Rabbits³ to get the 'ecovillage experience' and see if the village is a good fit for them), followed by an extended residence there the in 2015 for 8 months. There are two components to the data: 1) a deep wealth of ethnographic experience that came from participant observation in residence at the community and, 2) a series of 19 in-depth interviews with adult Rabbits. The results, then, are a mix of first-hand accounts and quotes from Rabbits from numerous sources. This method of gathering data from a variety of qualitative sources builds from a Grounded Theory perspective (Glaser and Strauss 1967), where theorizing about the subject has been inductively generated from what the researcher recorded rather than tested from a pre-conceived hypothesis.

From both the interviews and participation in group meetings, the theme of 'group held values' emerged in the context of their group decision-making. Rabbits described their actions and decisions through the lens of this expression, as encapsulating and motivated by environmentalism and egalitarianism. Formal changes in the community's policies, as well and informal practices and norms, were frequently subject to the test of whether they were supportive of, or supported by, these 'group held values' important to the community.

Other research has alternately shown that Dancing Rabbit (DR) is constructed on an alternative values system, one that replaces the prevailing neoliberal profit motive with an ecological motivator (Rubin 2019), or what Lockyer (2017) labels degrowth. ‘Being enmeshed in the commons is not compatible with actions motivated primarily by the pursuit of personal gain that drives the growth economy’ he notes, ‘[i]nstead, one is bound by a set of agreed upon values that reflect the intents of the larger group endeavor. In the case of DR, these values include the stewardship of their land and other common property resources...’ (Lockyer 2017: 525-6).

The remainder of this paper contains a mix of observational findings and the words of member Rabbits themselves. It follows four major themes that demonstrate the exercise of value-rational authority - power, labor, time, and money – with specific examples of manifestations of each. They are a deeply inductive look at what is argued to be a value-rational organization, built on the ideals and practices of a collection of individuals intent on creating a way of life built upon the principles of egalitarianism and environmentalism.

Re-Arranging Institutions as Value-Rational Authority

I’m living a life according to my moral values. I hope other people will see me doing that and want to live that way as well...I would not be here if I didn’t think I could live the way I wanted and change the world in doing so. I could go be poor and farm anywhere, but I chose to do it here because I feel like I’m making a difference. – Harlequin, a Rabbit

Power - Consensus Decision Making

Like many other ICs both past and present, most decisions at DR are managed using a modified form of consensus-based decision making. Governance is highly complex, perhaps warranting its own full-length manual to fully explain all the nuance. Between the various committees, procedures for proposing and finalizing decisions; and the web of relationships between the many different formal and informal entities in the village, though, is a common thread of egalitarianism. Almost every idea, from its nascent stages as a proposal to finalized implementation, goes through several opportunities for community input where everyone may exercise a 'blocking' concern that prevents finalization until adequately discussed to see if it fits within the matrix of group held values. Everyone is equally capable of proposing, modifying, and blocking new ideas as they are subject to the test of what is within the matrix of group held values, rather than such powers resting in the authority of any single person.

This style of governance aligns much more closely with value-rational than rational-legal authority. While there are many formal processes outlined, like meeting roles for facilitator and note taker; the reporting of decisions to the community within a designated window of time, and term lengths for certain subcommittees, the process by which they come to decisions is highly fluid. Meeting roles are rotated, rather than resting on the specialization of one or a few Rabbits, and committee membership is frequently selected for based on affinity and preference, though often this includes background experience.

Consensus-based decision making has a long history of being associated with countercultural groups, and especially so with ICs. The earliest forms of consensus decision making are associated with Quaker religious groups, who used it to build group cohesiveness and saw it as an integral part of their religious tradition that placed everyone on an equal

footing before God. Consensus, at its root, means that the decision-making process itself creates a sense of group belonging, rather than the group's sense of belonging leading to any sort of easy decision (though that is a desirable result). It is also notoriously frustrating to live with, as purportedly 'leaderless' organizations do tend to have informal leaders that create stratification and benefit from it regardless of group ideals towards egalitarianism (Freeman 1972).

Communes founded on the psycho-social ideals of B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (2005 [1948]) marked a starting point in modern times for the deployment of egalitarian ideals embodied in consensus-based decision making which is also used for most decision-making at DR. These ICs of the 1960s and 70s relied on this alternative of democracy as a means of rejecting what they saw as mainstream obsession with conformity to rules that quelled individual expression, and it has evolved to meet the egalitarian needs of today's ICs. Kathleen Kinkade, in biographing the Skinnerian-inspired Twin Oaks community of the 1970s, wrote at the time that '...the decision-making group became defined as simply those people who were willing to put up with the slowness of consensus procedure. Arguments could go on for hours, and there were other things to do,' (1973:53) yet '[a]s we find fault with them, we make changes to correct the faults and make the systems fit our situations better.' (57)

Egalitarian decision making, as an expression of value-rational authority, discards the 'one person, one vote' rule common to democratic structures (as discussed in Spencer [1970] above) and replaces it with an 'everyone, all votes' practice. Or, put another way, in a democratic system a slim majority can get 100% of their desired outcome, but in egalitarian decision making everyone in the group will obtain at least 51% of their desired outcome.

Certainly, some people will get more of a say in some decisions because they care more about the issue, while they silently assent to others. In issues discussed with great passion, observational data gathered for this project showed that individuals will often withdraw their arguments once they realize that their personal opinions are in conflict with group held values.

At DR, consensus is practiced as the central means of community decision making, and is similarly subject to constant tweaking to be more inclusive. Meetings are facilitated, but the facilitator does not have any more power than anyone else in the meeting to finalize a decision – in fact, there is an implicit expectation that they will work to minimize their opinion about the decision itself and try to remain a neutral voice while in that role. Unlike decisions made in a more purely rational-legal context, decisions are made when members consent to a proposed idea and the flow of discussion varies by whose turn it is to facilitate the meeting or whomever is more passionate about an idea.

Re-arranging decision making through egalitarian practices fulfills a host of Rothschild-Whitt's criteria for how value-rational authority works differently: authority, rules, social control, social relations, and differentiation of roles all operate differently in this arraignment than in one conceived by instrumental-rational authority. The 'group held values' is a common parlance at DR, though when asked no two people gave the same answer for what fits within those boundaries or what is excluded beyond the core group values of egalitarianism and environmentalism, and a few codified goals and covenants stemming from them. In this, the practice of consensus decision making is constructed as a means of ensuring that the group does not violate its core values, and the weight of those values is carried by each member rather than any specialized role or authority as they would be in a legal-rational arrangement.

Below, several practices and prohibitions are noted in examples under the other re-arrangements. Each of these had to, at some point, be subject to the 'group held' values test to determine both which course of action was best and which outcome most desirable for the village as a group (or for some of the sub-groups within the village, like co-ops) *through* the de-stratified process of consensus decision making.

Labor - Co-Ops and Resource Sharing

Unlike many other communities both past and present, DR does not rely on an income sharing program where everyone participates in communal work responsibilities and is, in turn, given a stipend. Income sharing would be a good example of domination by value-rational authority, but one would need to look at a different community to fully explore such re-arrangement. Instead, at DR incomes are individualistic and not guaranteed. People are expected to have their own jobs, and Rabbits have found work in a variety of endeavors, like organic farming, working for the village's educational non-profit, online consulting, and traveling construction work. 'We're pretty capitalistic,' Rabbit Sparrow⁴ said, 'and that actually turns some people off when they come here' because they are expecting a more communal economic experience like the income-sharing arrangements used by many ICs.

Nonetheless, there is a strong ethos of cooperation and resource sharing that goes strongly against the individualistic grain of the larger society and represents the presence of a value-rational arrangement of labor.

First, most people eat in kitchen co-ops, which contain between five and ten members. Some buildings in the village are crafted specifically to be common kitchens, while others are in

private residences. For each, though, members of the co-op take turns cooking dinner (and for some, lunch), sharing the responsibility and thus lowering their own work load to one or two long cooks shifts each week rather than cooking most nights as an individual, and reducing food waste by cooking in large batches – in part achieving the group held environmentalist goal of reducing waste. The norm is for everyone in a co-op to eat dinner at 6:30 PM, and so community events tend to be scheduled around this time frame.

There is also a car co-op, where four vehicles and one tractor are shared between most of the 40 adults who lived at DR at the time of data collection. Former member Baladi, who has traveled to dozens of other ICs around the country, reflected of this requirement by saying ‘...I really think that the car co-op is pretty unique, that there's 3 cars and a truck now (one of those cars electric). That is pretty darn unique about DR. Other ecovillages I've been to - everybody owns their own car, people are constantly driving to town, to whatever.’ Though there are fewer reasons for people to commute to around their rural community than an urban one, there are nonetheless errands that must be run. Since they do not produce nearly enough of their own food or durable goods, driving to buy them is necessary from time to time. Individual car ownership is forbidden for members of the village, which is a rational-legal form of domination over the actions of Rabbits. Yet, this prohibition intersects with a value-rational decision to self-prohibit in the first place through collectively agreed-upon covenant.

A common practice in the community, then, is for people to solicit shopping lists from neighbors if they decided to drive to town, and recruit others to ride with them. This is incentivized by the high cost of driving, which is currently at \$.65 per mile - much higher than one would expect to pay as an individual car owner. A clear example of this is the Monday milk

run: every week someone volunteers to go to the neighboring dairy a few miles away and load up several gallons of milk in glass containers for different kitchen co-ops in the community.

Since that adds up to quite a bit of bulk, a car is necessary, and everyone who drinks milk takes turns running the errand to distribute the cost while also avoiding having many different people making the same trip for milk each week.

The car co-op covers insurance for all drivers legally as a 'fleet,' and pays a few people to do regular maintenance on the vehicles. These members are not selected for their technical knowledge of cars (no one at DR is a trained mechanic), but rather from those that are interested in doing the work and willing to learn the skills to do it. Recruitment for work in the co-op is not based on special skills, but rather on affinity at the time of need.

Finally, there is the Milkweed Mercantile. The Mercantile began as a private venture – the vision of two Rabbits starting a bed and breakfast for visitors – but eventually became a co-op after the business was firmly established. The transition happened for two reasons: 1) the couple running it was aging and had trouble keeping up with the demands of a small business, and 2) both the couple and several community members had been longing for more communally-operated businesses at DR. After several months of planning, and additional half-dozen Rabbits bought stakes in the Mercantile and turned it in to a co-op where jobs rotated and decisions were made at semi-weekly meetings by all stakeholders. The entire process of formation for the new ownership model took place using consensus of the new group of stakeholder Rabbits.

The value-rational ethic of egalitarianism appears in these forms of cooperative culture at DR. Radical notions of resource sharing and use minimization drive their consumption

patterns in stark contrast to mainstream, highly individualistic US culture. Collective ownership rejects stratification within co-ops and establishes member parties as equal stakeholders in the endeavor, in contrast to instrumentally-rational organizations that would require a division of labor and authority as a means of achieving organizational ends.

The Mercantile, for example, is still a business, and needs to make money in order to survive. Yet, unlike most for-profit businesses, the so-called 'bottom line' is actually two lines: one for making money and another for supporting the village. When considering what services to offer and products to carry there is a dual consideration of whether they will make money and whether the endeavor promotes a more environmentalist mission. The Mercantile could probably make a lot more money by hosting corporate retreats, but they instead opt for soap-making and spirituality workshops because they more closely align with the group held values of both the group that co-owns the business and the overall village.

The norms of labor at DR also demonstrate more how ideal types are arranged unideally in organizational structures. Labor is re-arranged along Rothschild-Whitt's dimension of social control, social relations, recruitment and advancement, incentive structures, social stratification, and differentiation. At the same time, none of these dimensions are completely value-rational under the authority of any co-ops at DR, nor the village as a whole. Many of the co-ops need boards of directors to maintain tax exempt status with the IRS, which is rational-legal structure of social control. The Mercantile relies on the one member with programming knowledge to maintain their website because he has a background in that, while a purer expression of value-rational authority would eschew such differentiation.

Perhaps the best expression of how the village has re-arranged labor in a value-rational way is with the norm that no organization at DR pays their highest paid employee more than twice what the lowest paid employee earns. As with other aspects that make DR a value-rational organization, there is little in the way of formal codification for this. The village runs an educational non-profit to promote its activities and recruit new Rabbits, which does have as part of its bylaws this stipulation on pay since it needs to codify such practices to maintain its 501(c)3 status. But, other entities that provide paid work follow that as a norm without written requirement. The Mercantile pays for hours worked, the car co-op pays the same rate for completing weekly maintenance checks regardless of how long they take the person whose turn it is, and kitchen co-ops are strictly volunteer labor.

This is not a perfect re-arrangement of incentive structures or stratification, because one part of DR (the non-profit) does have a codified rule about pay and specific roles like Executive Director and Development Director. But their general practice beyond that is nonetheless a radical departure from the incentive structures of rational-legal organizations. The norm of no employer paying their highest paid employee more than twice as much as their lowest paid employee exemplifies ideal-typical value-rational action, where the authority of group values is exercised strongly through group norms rather than formally codified rules.

Rabbits' non-material concerns of egalitarianism outweigh possible incentive structures and the construction of a hierarchy, the latter of which we would expect to see in bureaucratic, rational-legal organizations.

Time is not something that can be literally re-arranged, so in the context of ICs like DR it is *concept* of time that is altered to suit the egalitarian and environmental purposes of the organization. John Hall notes that communal groups like ICs will use the concept of time as a means of organizing action, that,

[f]or people in communal groups, the revolution, whatever its nature, is carried out in everyday life. What has been taken for granted in the constructions of time in the dominant order becomes problematic, for status passage from old times does not prescribe what new times are to be. Alternative communal groups thus give new accounts of the times – both of the old world of the established order and of the new communal world (Hall 1988: 43).

It is therefore possible to live in the present world, organized around a universal and rationally prescribed passage of time, yet also build alternative epistemological conceptions of past, present, and future in to the everyday practices of the community. Communities, according to Hall, do this in one of three ways:

1. *Diachronically*, where they have a conception of past, future, and present that may be separate from the world at large, and organized in a different way, but correspond to it.
2. *Synchronically*, which tends to be focused on the 'here and now,' without an investment in an influential past or possible futures.
3. *Apocalyptic*, where groups imagine themselves as already living in a post-collapse world and are engaged in rebuilding it.⁵

The latter two ask community members to eschew much representation of the past, because whatever happened is either unimportant or hold no lessons for the present and future.

Apocalyptic communities build their conceptions of time around Millenarian or world-ending belief systems, while synchronic groups include non-Western, non-linear conceptions of time that render thinking about the past and future irrelevant.

At DR, though, they practice a diachronic time structure that involves everyday interaction and acceptance of the Western, 24-hour day and the Gregorian calendar. Yet, Rabbits see themselves situated in a historical position much differently than the rest of society. The future is fraught with looming environmental disaster, and so their time is value-rationally oriented around the premise that climate change can only be addressed in the present, as an immediate pressing need. While environmentalist organizations around the globe work as part of a larger movement on campaigns that set exact targets for renewable energy production at exact times, and proscribe that progress through legislation, DR prohibits almost all use of carbon-based fuels in the present regardless of circumstances.

Members must re-arrange their lives around this and other prohibitions. This makes many things harder, like transportation as noted above. But it also exemplifies submission by members to a value-rational authority that prioritizes the group held value of environmental impact over rationally calculated progress towards that end. Rabbits commonly reserve their most electric-intensive tasks, like the use of heavy power tools, for when the sun is shining brightest so that their electricity is most likely to come from the solar panels in their grid-tied system rather than the coal-powered state grid they are connected to. They trade devices around that monitor how much electricity a given appliance uses in order to optimize its usage during peak renewable energy production, and often remind each other on sunny days that they are optimal times to charge batteries or run equipment.

Among Rothschild-Whitt's criteria for value-rational domination, this fits best with recruitment, as the burdens of living with such environmentalist restrictions serve as an indicator of fitness for group membership. Those who can thrive without a personal vehicle and re-arrange their electricity use habits around when renewable energy is more plentiful, or those that are able to adapt, are more prized recruits than high earners or experts in any given field. The only 'expertise' needed is an ability to live under the set of conditions that uphold group values. There is also some consideration for rules in this re-arrangement. Where there are formal rules about car ownership suggesting a rational-legal domination, the lack of formal rules combined with reminders and practices around electricity use suggest submission to a value-rational arrangement of authority.

Money - ELMS

The Exchange Local Money System (ELMS) at DR, Rabbit Sallander estimated in a public presentation to visitors, is possibly the most successful alternative currency in the United States, if not the world. While that claim is not necessarily something verifiable, the significance of ELMS to the lifestyle at DR is. Rabbit Sambucus reported that the ELMS currency did just under 1 million dollars in transactions in 2016 alone, with an average of about 80,000 ELMS in circulation at any given point in time.

The elevated importance of their local currency is found at the confluence of being a very rural community with a membership expected to have independent incomes. The distance to a bank and can make getting and using cash a real hassle, according to Sallander. So, ELMS is completely online, set up on a private, password protected server accessible from any internet-

connected device. From there, one can send units of ELMS⁶ to others, set up automatic recurring payments for expenses like rent, authorize others to make withdrawals, or withdraw their balance to a Paypal or Dwolla account of standard US dollars.

Local currencies like this incentivize local consumption, where groups using alternative currencies seek to promote alternative consumption patterns and bring new members in to the fold of existing local alternative consumption arrangements (North 1999). The point in using the system, when US Dollars are readily available, is keeping money – and labor and goods – flowing through the community rather than going in and out of it. Rabbits are therefore encouraged to re-invest resources in the group. Rabbits will look to other Rabbits for goods and services first before expanding their search to areas outside the village. Even some of the village's neighbors who own farms nearby have begun to accept ELMS in exchange for their meat and produce because they recognize an inherent financial benefit in selling directly to people close by rather than to wholesalers.

Sallander, who led the charge to implement the alternative currency, estimates that 70-80% of all economic activity in the community that uses currency is done in ELMS. More than convenience, ELMS is a way that DR has re-arranged the Rothschild-Whitt aspect of incentive structure. The point of an alternative currency is not for the group to replace the US Dollar in its entirety, but to re-arrange the ways in which those dollars can be spent by substituting the normal flows of money with ones that incentivize keeping money within the community. ELMS are not required, but Rabbits participate in the currency voluntarily because it supports the ecovillage's mission. Explaining this point to visitors, Sallander said, 'I don't fantasize about a society without money, I fantasize about a society with socially just money.' The way money is

used at DR, then, is a means of supporting the group's pursuits even when people are expected to have individual incomes. Rothschild-Whitt's dimensions of social relations and incentive structures best match the re-arrangement of monetary systems at DR.

Discussion

If an ideal type must be decipherable on its own, then no ideal type can exist as a methodological tool. Yet, the idea of a value-rationality seems to have been discarded for just that reason, because it lacks the easy decipherability inherent in the use of ideal types. The Weberian backdrop for understanding ICs, then, is a means of explaining motivators for social action, while at the same time explaining the complexity of how action takes place among interacting systems of authority.

ICs like DR re-arrange aspects of their everyday interactions around communal relationships, which then creates a value-rational authority that members are subject through a sense of belonging to the group and the appeal of the 'group held values.' At DR, those values are egalitarianism and environmentalism. Authority, as the means of legitimate domination in the Weberian theoretical tradition, is a complex and often messy concept to draw out. The 're-arrangements' at DR, though, clearly describe the missing value-rational authority type discussed above, and how communal relationships and the value-rational action that stems from them can, in contrast to Weber's original description, ultimately be a basis for legitimate domination. These 're-arrangements,' though, are merely the clearest ways in which value-rational authority is present at DR because they are built directly from the group's core values. Future case studies of other ICs should be conducted to test the myriad ways that value-

rational authority can manifest in a communal social arrangement, and as their ideal typical forms meet with the less ideally organized, more complex social world.

For example, ELMS are distinctly Sallander's mission in the community. He does all the programming, paperwork, and shepherding of US Dollars that people exchange for ELMS and it is clear that without his work the experiment would fail. To this end, deciphering the use of this alternative currency could be seen as a routinization of charisma through his 'exceptional powers or qualities' (Weber 1978: 241) of computer programming, financial planning, and as an advocate for alternative currencies. Yet, in the context of the community, members repeatedly expressed their adoption of the alternative currency as facilitating community building – they participated because they believed in the good it would do for the community, not because they believed in Sallander. Despite being the (for lack of a better name) brainchild of one member, the system's function to support value-rational action contextualizes it under value rational group submission.

Likewise, while the community was founded by a core group of three people, these members had long since departed by the time of data collection. While their charismatic leadership was certainly routinized into some norms of the community, this does not fully explain members' submission to the egalitarian norms and ecological goals. Weber describes the routinization of charisma as '...in a very specific sense unstable, and all its modifications have basically one and the same cause: The desire to transform charisma and charismatic blessing from a unique, transitory gift of grace of extraordinary times and persons into a permanent possession of everyday life.' (1978: 1121) What should be emphasized here is the 'extraordinary times.' For other ICs who subscribe to what Hall called 'apocalyptic' time, this

could certainly be an attempt to routinize the extraordinary claims of an extraordinary leader. But for the diachronically-aligned DR the times are not special, just different. The effects of climate change are happening now instead of in the future, and they live their lives according to this understanding. The community is stable, and celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2017, so while they may be extraordinarily interesting they are perhaps not in the extraordinary times by which Weber characterized submission to a charismatic authority.

We can also see how Weber's argument that the march of bureaucratic rationalization is inevitable holds weight in a value-rational regime. Even DR has, over time, developed highly rational-legal features among their value-rational expressions of authority. This is, in part, due to the requirements forced on them in an era dominated by capitalist bureaucracy, like how they need to have a board of directors for their promotional non-profit to keep the village in good standing with the IRS. It is also the default form, more easily grasped and implemented than the rarer value-rational organization.

Several examples stand as an inverse example to the march of rational-legal authority at DR, like the car co-op because it demonstrates how value-rational action can displace prior rational-legal arrangements. That co-op was inspired by a model used by several for-profit car-sharing services, like Zipcar. Car-sharing services contain some degree of value-rational action inasmuch as members perceive themselves as part of an effort to reduce consumption through joining. Yet, car-sharing consumers typically join for purposive-rational reasons like saving money (Lane 2005) or are deployed by municipalities to reduce traffic congestion (Fellows and Pitfield 2000). At DR however, the vehicle co-op, as a form of car-sharing, was developed because the group prohibits individual car ownership among members: an exercise of value-

rational authority because it furthers group values of environmentalism above any individual's need or desire to make use of a personal vehicle.

The Mercantile is a good example of how the village navigates the different Weberian authority structures. It started out as a private business in the purposive-rational vein yet transformed in to a co-op as it evolved organizational forms to support the village's group held values. Rabbits initially created an organizational model based on rational-legal authority and re-arranged it to suit their own value-rational ends.

Do these examples demonstrate that value-rational action is somehow *less* rational than instrumental-rational action? A clear hierarchy and adherence to values over rules would suggest that this is the case. However, any answer to that question cannot be abstracted from the dominant position of bureaucracy in capitalism, where hegemonic paradigms of human behavior lead us to interpret social action as inherently self-serving: the individual subject to charismatic authority will gain salvation from their sacrifice, the individual under traditional authority will avoid the wrathful monarch, and the individual under rational-legal authority will be given opportunity to gain power and wealth. Value-rationality requires a vision of humanity as willingly subjectable to an altruistic, rather than selfish, authority – something that Weber did not acknowledge as feasible in the industrial capitalist era. Any subjection to authority is rational for its own ends, and only needs empirical weight to back its legitimacy.

Because more than one type of social action and legitimate domination can be and are often present simultaneously, we should examine such inequality among more contexts than just who gains wealth and power in a given rational-legal arrangement. Even within organizations like DR, where value-rational authority can be detected thanks to the widespread

voluntary participation of members in the matrix of domination by group held values, their subjection to domination of rational-legal authority in cases where they cannot escape the march of bureaucracy is a notable source of inequality. Beyond that, DR is like many other ICs in being a very white, highly educated group, though the critique of those sources of inequality warrant their own, fuller explanations elsewhere.⁷

Conclusion

The four re-arrangements described in this paper represent aspects of value rational authority found at DR, indicated by a voluntary submission to a re-arrangement of norms and rules that prioritize group held values over traditional, charismatic, or rational-legal ones. It is the voluntary submission to group held values that allows us to empirically distinguish this type of authority from the others. While there is a bureaucracy at DR that exemplifies rational-legal authority, member rabbits also act of their own accord in supporting the norms that support village goals of their own accord and not because a formal structure requires it.

To this point, the missing value-rational authority type from Weber's *Economy and Society* has existed merely as a theoretical concept and critique of his social definitions. Where Rothschild-Whitt (1979) found the presence of a value-rational type authority in simple, one-issue organizations, the case here shows 1) that a value-rational authority is present in more complex organizations, and 2) that the 'ideal type' is co-present with other types of authority, as most Weberian scholars would find in their analysis of any case of legitimate domination. This support not only offers an elaboration on how one should understand authority in the Weberian tradition, but also opens a path to larger critiques of how power operates in a

bureaucratic society. The viability of value-rational authority within organizations presents an alternative mode of human organization that may be capable of breaking the so-called 'Iron Cage' that saps individuality and autonomy (Weber 2002) by offering a de-stratified model of authority in action. Emirbayer (2005) drives home the importance of tackling Weber's 'animus against the emotions' in the Iron Cage metaphor as being oppressive to an individual rational capacity.

Not all the practices found at DR are similarly found at other ICs, either present or past. Where ELMS is highly unique to them, practices like consensus decision making, co-ops, and diachronic time prescriptions are shared to varying degrees with other ICs past and present. Nonetheless, ICs should be seen as a form of communal relationship capable of re-arranging their social world as a part of subjecting members to a value-rational authority. Individuals within these communities are part of rational decision making structures, though with a rationality geared towards the achievement of group values rather than individual ends. When a Rabbit sells their personal vehicle in order to live at the community, or pays higher than minimum wage when hiring fellow Rabbits, they may be doing so out of a sense of obligation to the rational authority because it is in accordance with the community's formal covenants. But they also do so out of their conviction for the rightness of the action in itself, for more sustainable and just actions are the whole point of joining the community in the first place. This makes it recognizable as submission to a value rational authority.

ICs are a tiny proportion of the overall population, yet have had an outsized cultural impact. The communes of the 1960s and 70s and the ecovillages of today have been laboratories experimenting with novel social arraignments in response to society's ills. Their

larger contribution, though, is as an example of how unique forms of authority can and do function. Members orient towards value-rational action through submission to group held values and by sake of joining call in to question the foundations of the bureaucratic state, and they demonstrate an applicability for the previously unarticulated value-rational form of authority.

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Table 1- Weber's Orientations to Social Action and Types of Legitimate Domination

Orientations to Social Action	Authority Type (Legitimate Domination)
Traditional, or that determined by ingrained habit	Traditional, rests on a belief in tradition, and the authority of longstanding practice.
Affectual, which is determined through an individual's feelings or what is affecting them	Charismatic, rests on devotion to a person or set of persons with 'exemplary' characteristics.
Purposive-Rational, which is determined by the conditions or means and in which the social actor pursues rationally calculated ends	Rational-Legal, rests on a belief in the legitimacy of enacted rules, and vests trust in those charged with their creation and enforcement
Value-Rational, taken through a conscious belief in the rightness of action, regardless of how likely it is to create success or gain for the individual	<i>Missing</i>

Endnotes

¹ See, for example, John Humphrey Noyes' Oneida Community

² See, for example, Robert Owens' New Harmony Community

³ A moniker members of DR use for members of their community

⁴ Respondents' names are changed to protect anonymity.

⁵ Hall 1988

⁶ One 'ELM' is equal to one US Dollar

⁷ for example, see Chitewere (2010) and Chitewere and Taylor's (2010) discussion of

social justice and equity at the Ecovillage at Ithaca.