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Utopias of Sustainability – The Sustainability of Utopias: Introduction to a Multimodal Intervention

What visions animate contemporary activism? How is it possible to uncover those utopian aspirations, strategic and/or ideological horizons that too often pass implicitly, silently or invisibly? Our 'Political Imagination Laboratory' aims to interrogate the shifting political imaginations of contemporary social movements and experimental forms of activism.

This volume collects both paper and audio-visual contributions of the fourth Political Imagination Laboratory on 'Utopias of Sustainability – The Sustainability of Utopias,' which took place at the University of Perugia, Italy, in October 2022, with activists, cultural anthropologists, filmmakers and visual anthropologists from Europe and South America. We follow the 'multimodal turn' within anthropology with our innovative form of publishing (Collins et al. 2017: 142; Cool 2020: 689), striving for hybrid forms of description, analysis and intervention.

This approach aligns perfectly with the tradition of our Political Imagination Laboratories, since it initiates discussions between filmmakers and ethnographers, scientists and activists, bringing their textual and visual contributions as well as different approaches into fruitful dialogue with each other. Our multimodal intervention includes more-than-textual forms of researching and interpreting. It wants to make the complexity of diverse forms of activism and imaginations of sustainability accessible and experienceable to a wide range of publics. Therefore, this collection of contributions is not only printed in an edited volume published by Morlacchi University Press, but also freely accessible online as a collection of ethnographic films and texts on the EthnOA repository of the Humboldt University Berlin. By letting the field partners of our contributors speak for themselves in the documentaries, and giving space to experimental formats, we take up Katherine Homewood's (2017) proposal that an anthropology of sustainability should foreground local voices which may question hegemonic ideologies and practices. It is here that sustainability entails

its utopian dimension, even if objectives between 'activists' and 'researcher' are not always congruent (Faust, Sekuler and Binder 2021).

The theme 'Utopias of Sustainability – The Sustainability of Utopias' addresses both one of the most urgent socio-political problems of our time and the answers of activists from different places around the world to them. Utopias of a better world appear increasingly as ephemeral, precarious and fragile, and therefore, concepts related to sustainability, the environment and rurality seem at the forefront of contemporary impulses for social change.

'We are stuck with the way things are', states Simon Critchley (2016) in his analysis of the deadlock of various capitalist and climate crises. However, he adds, 'to abandon the utopian impulse in thinking and acting is to imprison ourselves within the world as it is and to give up once and for all the prospect that another world is possible, however small, fleeting and compromised such a world might be' (ibid.). This is why the contributions of this Laboratory engage with utopias of sustainability.

Sustainability demands not only the protection of nature, based on an unchanged concept of politics and society, as the concept is often understood. International development institutions, governments or companies seem to equate sustainability with resilience, based on a thinking model which puts maintaining the status quo of the existing at the centre, with the goal of enabling societies to return to their 'normal' state after crises (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 10), thus, providing strategies of dealing with their symptoms and not for tackling their causes (Neocleous 2013). Instead, as Brightman and Lewis state, sustainability 'requires re-imagining and reworking communities, societies and landscapes, especially those dominated by industrial capitalism, to help us build a productive symbiosis with each other and the many nonhumans on whom we depend' (2017: 2). Such utopias are open-ended, in that they cannot determine the needs of future generations (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 12). They may also challenge Western, neoliberal narratives of progress, development and growth, which dominate political and institutional perspectives on sustainability, instead of promoting forms of equal interaction of human and non-human actors.

Our contributions show an understanding of sustainability similar to that underlying many anthropological approaches and initiatives and is at odds with the aforementioned hegemonic understanding: sustain-

ability as a concept that supports the creation of framework conditions for change by promoting diversity at different levels, be it the political, economic, political or philosophical (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 2).

The idea of utopias seems somewhat antiquated nowadays. More recent concepts have proposed a less abstract understanding of utopias. Ruth Levitas, for instance, proposes the term 'concrete utopias,' which should be understood as 'latency and as tendency. … It refers forward to the emergent future … a praxis-oriented category characterized by "militant optimism"' (1997: 70). Davina Cooper unleashes an apparent oxymoron in *Everyday Utopias*: She suggests that the concept of 'concrete utopias' refers to those who 'work by creating the change they wish to encounter, building and forging new ways of social and political life' (2014: 2). Both Levitas's and Cooper's work builds on the influential utopian Marxist Ernst Bloch (1986), who found glimpses of the utopian in a wide array of different social practices, including daydreaming and storytelling. Bloch anticipated the Lacanian critique of classical utopian thinking, considered a 'revolutionary fantasy' in which one 'master' is simply 'replaced with another "master"', essentially reproducing existing power structures and reaffirming the authority of the 'master' (Newman 2016). This has been essentially the *faux pas* of the abstract utopias that are haunting our past. Sustainability seems to be more similar to a 'concrete' utopia, to something that can be realised in the 'here and now'.

Thus, by connecting sustainability with the idea of utopia, we ask: Which more or less visible utopian impulses haunt contemporary forms of activism? How, for example, are concepts such as sustainability, rurality and nature employed by different actors? To which ideologies and/or utopias are these connected? In which context is sustainability, rurality or ecology invoked – or not? How can discourses and practices of sustainability, rurality and ecology be made visible by ethnographers? And how can ethnographers as political actors make a sustainable impact?

Sustainability: definitions, discourses and anthropological perspectives

'It is time that the spirit of fun was introduced into furniture and fabrics. We have suffered too long from the dull and stupidly serious' (Woolf 1940: 194–5). This sentence was pronounced at the wake of

the First World War by Roger Fry, a member of the Bloomsbury collective of artists and intellectuals formed around Virginia Woolf and her siblings and friends.

Just as the conservative Victorian era of the 19th century in Great Britain was ending, the Bloomsbury collective developed ideas around the environment, socialism, pacifism and sexuality that would influence the decades to come. They considered not only their art but also their living in a collective as an act of protest against the First World War.

Some aspects of such a fresh, utopian free spirit has also permeated our fourth Political Imagination Laboratory. In fact, this is not an ordinary conference in which people simply present their papers. The Laboratory has always been a space that has fostered long-lasting friendships and enabled intellectual collaborations far beyond its time-space. This is why we place special emphasis on horizontal exchange, additional discussions in working groups across different research topics – and always invite newcomers to contribute. We are aware that this needs an atmosphere of the spirit of fun, in the sense of Roger Fry, a 'serious fun,' especially in times of crisis.

Utopias of a better world appear increasingly ephemeral, precarious and fragile, therefore, concepts related to sustainability, the environment and neo-rurality seem to be at the forefront of contemporary impulses for social change. The latter concepts are what seem to be closest to a contemporary utopia after the glamourous downfall of the big utopian narratives of socialism, modernism or universal Western development.

There are many definitions of sustainability. What they have in common is an understanding that 'the current planetary situation is unsustainable because we are consuming and/or degrading the resources which sustain us' (Moore 2017: 68). Consequently, sustainability ought to be the opposite of unsustainability (ibid.). Most definitions refer, in one form or another, to the influential Brundtland report, which stated: 'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987: [41]). Thus, the concept of sustainability, as it is understood today, means a principle of action for the use of resources in which a lasting satisfaction of needs is to be ensured by preserving the natural regenerative capacity of the systems involved – above all, of living beings and ecosystems.

Different models of sustainability have been developed by scientists, politicians and economists. Even though influential documents have explicitly questioned the very idea of an everlasting economic growth, sustainability was often looked at through the lens of economics: It was and often still is interpreted by national governments and transnational bodies, such as the European Union, as sustained economic growth and competitiveness in order to secure the continuation of established lifestyles and patterns of societal development (Blühdorn 2009: 2, 2013; Blühdorn and Welsh 2008; Moore 2017: 69). Social, economic and ecological dimensions are on an equal footing in terms of cognition and action in the triangle concept, whereas the priority model sees the ecological dimension as a fundamental precondition for the social dimension, which, in turn, is the basis for economic sustainability (Loschke 2023: 37).

The concept of sustainability experienced a boom in the course of the global debate on the environment and development policy since the Second World War, with landmarks being the Club of Rome's famous document *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al. 1972), the definitions by the World Commission on Environment and Development set up by the United Nations in 1983, the aforementioned Brundtland Report (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987), the Rio Declaration (United Nations General Assembly 1992) and the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations Sustainable Development knowledge platform 2015).

Sustainability in cultural discourse and anthropological perspectives

Sustainability as a concept was developed during the Enlightenment in the 18th century, regarding forestry (*Sylvicultura Oeconomica, or a guide to the cultivation of native trees*, by Hans Carl von Carlowitz, 1713), thus, based on the Judeo-Christian idea of the right of man to use nature for human needs as legitimised by the Old Testament (first book of Moses, 1, 28) and setting the goal to ensure the continuity of this use (Grober 2012: 83).

A second strand of sustainability discourse is ecological relations, with Goethe and the Romantics as proponents, stressing the role of man as part of nature (ibid.: 95).

However, in terms of intellectual history, the beginnings of the idea of sustainability can be traced back to the theological concepts of *conservatio* and *sustentatio* – the preservation of all things in their existential fulfilment as determined by creation, and to the asceticism and poverty lived by monastic orders such as the Franciscans. Saint Francis himself considered the flora and fauna surrounding him as fellow creatures to be treated with respect and preserved through renunciation. A theory of sustainability can also be derived from Spinoza's ethical theory of thinking man as a part of nature and the call to act in harmony with nature in order to preserve the natural foundations of life. Other historical discursive strands of sustainability are the guiding concept of biologist Carl Linné of *oeconomia naturae*, the unity and wholeness of nature, as well as idealising descriptions of the 'close-to-nature' life of Indigenous peoples and socialist ideals (Grober 2013: 22–28; Kehnel 2021: 321–349).

Karl Marx pointed to a 'metabolic rift' between man and nature, and stated that 'private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear quite absurd as private ownership of one man by another' and that a society must 'hand it [the planet] down to succeeding generations in an improved condition' (Marx 2018: Pos. 40148). Eco-socialism, developed by English novelist and poet William Morris during the 1880s, merges aspects of socialism with that of green politics, ecology and alter- or anti-globalisation. Related to these are the schools of thought of (often male and romanticising) green anarchism, which puts a particular emphasis on environmental issues based on the thoughts of the American anarchist Henry David Thoreau and his book *Walden* (Cramer 2004) as well as Leo Tolstoy and Élisée Reclus, and of social ecology, which is closely related to the work and ideas of Murray Bookchin and influenced by anarchist Peter Kropotkin (cf. Pepper 2002).

An environmentalism emerged in the 1970s and 1980s which recognised capitalism as the main factor responsible for environmental degradation, and brought forward a critique of consumerism, leading to the rise of the anti-globalisation movement. Within the latter, not only ecological responsibilities but also a necessity for change in society and economic visions were addressed. We argue with Henrietta Moore that '[s]ustainability is not just a matter of fixing the current technical problems of climate change, water, food security and so on, but a larger project of changing values which themselves will require novel social and economic institutions, possibly even innovative ideas

about some of the fundamental prerequisites of communities and so-
cieties as they have been conventionally understood in anthropology,
such as sociality, trust, companionship' (2017: 69). Thus, the concept
of sustainability as an ecological responsibility has also been support-
ed by the philosophy of deep ecology (Naess 1989) and animist world-
views, which emphasise the idea that all organisms are interrelated
(Brightman and Lewis 2017: 4).

The current global crises of resource depletion and climate change
have led to the question of sustainability becoming of vital urgence,
felt by many different actors and movements all over the world, lead-
ing to a new regime of norms of sustainability (e.g. the necessity of
paying attention to one's own ecological footprint) and manifesting
itself in trends such as the minimalist movement (Derwanz 2022;
Heimerdinger 2022; Gruhn 2023). Under the neoliberal economic
regime, daily life has become the most important site of improvement
in which people are encouraged to be better in all aspects of living
(Sandberg 2014: 7–8; Jespersen and Damsholt 2014). Therefore, call-
ing oneself sustainable can be profitable in itself (Raippalinna 2022:
8). Sustainability is a form of survival in times of scarcity, which entails
a variety of transformation processes, as Luise Stark and colleagues
(2023: 10), referring to Tauschek (2015) and Pufé (2017: 20), have
pointed out. However, as such, it changes as it represents different
goals. Thus, similar to Elena Apostoli Cappello in her studies on Ital-
ian farmers, we look at sustainability in this volume as a 'relational
category and a bargaining ground, the meaning of which changes de-
pending on who is claiming it and why' (Cappello 2023: 4), since it
can be used as a source of 'political legitimation' (ibid.: 11, 18).

Sustainability has gained popularity within anthropology through
feminist theories and in the context of reflections on the Anthropocene
and multispecies relations, as a perspective and a subject of research.
According to Donna Haraway (2016), anthropologists need to study
the inner workings of unsustainable worlds to expose and eventually
change them. For some authors, such as Arturo Escobar (2011, 2012,
2015), sustainability can be associated with the latest developments of
the modernising project, and, thus, it remains an ethnocentric concept
that needs to be unravelled, much like development, progress or mo-
dernity. However, Escobar also defends the idea of a pluriverse as a con-
cept against the one world of all-encompassing, top-down development
models of ecology and green politics. 'Gaia has a thousand names'; there

are many ways of living on a damaged planet. Sustainable futures can be found by overcoming these modernist conceptions. William Adams has proposed a 'conservation from below' (2017), which focuses on good relations of people with nature and takes into account the diversity of the perspectives, interests and needs of a diverse world. According to Adams, 'the future of non-human biodiversity demands nothing less than a re-imagining of conservation itself' (ibid.: 121). Similarly, Brightman and Lewis, with reference to Manuela Carneiro da Cunha (2017), propagate 'practices that will foster, prize, support, defend and generate diversity at every level' (2017: 17) as a basis for sustainability.

Consequences

As one important consequence, we wish to emphasise that sustainability cannot be conceptualised only in its ecological dimension. The contributions in this volume show that sustainability remains necessarily interlinked to social, economic and political issues. Examples include experiments with self-production, new forms of horizontal cooperation, new understandings of rural-urban and nature-culture relations, as well as activism against megaprojects around the world. Yet, while social scientists around the globe have appreciated these forms of activism as prefigurative for broader social change, others underline how similar utopian impulses can easily be appropriated by neoliberal logics, for example, propagated by consulting as a management goal, cited by companies as an advertising slogan or being incorporated into profit-making schemes, such as eco-tourism.

Political and institutionalised understandings of sustainability nowadays seem to set economic considerations as primacy (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 5) or, at least, use them as their main argument. Sustainability efforts by international organisations and companies – which William Adams calls 'conservation from above' (2017) – are informed by neoliberalist values, prioritising marked-based approaches and hierarchies of knowledge that devalue local perspectives and practices (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 9). In particular, some voices interrogate the degree to which sustainability fits into an ethos of post-materialist renunciation. Nancy Fraser has coined the term 'progressive neoliberalism' (2013) for the self-immunisation of neoliberalism through the appropriation of ideas from movements such as feminism. One might

ask, following Hardt and Negri (2000), whether there can be an 'outside' of the capitalist system. Anna L. Tsing points to the fact that the term 'sustainability' 'is also used to cover up destructive practices, and this use has become so prevalent that the word most often makes [her] laugh and cry' (2017: 51).

How visions of sustainability are connected to political convictions should also be taken into account. The example of extreme right-wing settlers in Germany shows that utopias of sustainable agriculture can serve as supportive practices for nationalist and racist ideologies – therefore, sustainability is not a value in itself.

In addition, neither the reference system for which the term is to be valid, nor its corresponding holistic accounting is defined in the common definition of sustainability (Loschke 2023: 39f.). Consequently, if the term 'sustainability' can be applied equally to different systems, for example, a machine, a company, a social relationship or the geo-ecological system of the planet Earth, the sustainability of one system can mean the non-sustainability of the other. Translated to the everyday, an abstract and multiple concept such as sustainability tends to look banal: Lars Kaijser calls banal sustainability 'a process in which complicated, abstract and distant environmental challenges are domesticated into everyday routines and sustainable consumption practices' (2019: 75–76). At the same time, while entering the sphere of everyday life, the complexity of sustainability tends to become more apparent again when its temporality confronts those who want to capture its essence with the fact that sustainability not only relays visions of futures that are to be sustained but also consists of systems that themselves constantly change (Moore 2017: 71).

One wonders how far utopias themselves can be sustainable. When utopias are lived and transformed into daily practices, they might either lose their utopian appeal – when group dynamics and processes of institutionalisation lead to the establishment of routines and power relations and destroy the utopian aspiration 'to do everything differently and better.' Or utopias might be invigorated and perpetually actualised by maintaining a superordinate utopian goal inside the utopia, for example, when monks try to lead a godly life in order to gain the favour of god in the afterlife.

'To evoke the Brundtland Report, there is not just one "common future", but there are many common futures – those of different social groups, different nations, different species; different cosmologies,' as

Brightman and Lewis (2017: 27) state. The contributions in this volume show the diversity of imagined and lived attempts to enable sustainable futures.

In this anthology

In the following section, we intend to give the reader an overview of our multimodal anthology. We divided the contributions into four sections. They are differentiated thematically as well as regarding their perspective – not the medium used to present the findings. Thus, all sections include audio-visual material. All audio-visual documentations are accompanied by an introducing and reflecting text.

While the first section assembles projects that reflect on social aspects of sustainability in social movements, especially regarding their longevity, the second section highlights more-than-human approaches to sustainability activism. A third section discusses and thereby exoticises everyday practices in (Western) sustainability projects through audio-visual modes of documentation. The last section gathers explicitly cooperative and engaged projects interchanging between activism, ethnographic study and artistic production. They also lead the viewer and reader to ask the question: What makes activism and utopia sustainable?

Reflections on social aspects of sustainability and longevity in social movements

MARION NÄSER-LATHER in her contribution asks why some movements are able to continue their struggle for decades, while others, although addressing vital societal issues, collapse after just a few years. She explores facilitating and hindering preconditions for the sustainability of activism, referring to social movement approaches, such as mobilisation theory, political opportunities, structural strains and emotions research. She identifies interrelated factors on three levels: the political conditions on the level of society, structures and cultures of movements, and the living conditions and attitudes of individual activists. Among other things, Näser-Lather discusses the ambivalence of paid activism as a strategy which can support activists

in continuing their engagement but, at the same time, runs the risk of reducing their motivation and changing the discourses within the movement as well as its culture.

The results of Christine Hämmerling's research on paid fundraisers in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) point to similar dynamics: When NGOs try to promote social sustainability by taking concepts from paid work to optimise volunteering, in the form of measures for well-being at work, boundaries between work and leisure blur into a neoliberal work-life imbalance leading to self-exploitation. Hämmerling discusses the benefit of pay and other forms of rewards, such as recognition, for the sustainability of movements and their co-optation by neoliberal thought. Based on her findings, one can ask whether there really is, as Theodor Adorno (1978) so eloquently put it, no right way to live a false life, or if we have to accept such inconsistencies in order to enable ourselves to continuously take small steps in the right direction.

Madeleine Sallustio's documentary on a self-managed agricultural collective seems to indicate exactly that. The activism of her protagonist, Léo, is based, among other things, on flexibility, the acceptance of things she cannot change and living with incoherences and imperfectness, not adhering to one ideology or big narrative, but to do what she can from day to day without exhausting herself. Moreover, Léo's way of life shows that realising sustainable utopias does not need to mean planning for uncertainties in order to avoid them; instead, it can be obtained by embracing them, as pointed out by Kirsten Hastrup (2017) using the example of the Inughuit's life in Northern Greenland. Accepting uncertainties challenges understandings of sustainability as a measure to ensure predictability, which proves to be increasingly unrealistic in the age of the Anthropocene, characterised by the instability and interrelatedness of global dynamics (Brightman and Lewis 2017: 12, 17) – putting Haraway's call for 'staying with the trouble' (2016) into a new perspective and showing how a 'life in capitalist ruins' (Tsing 2015) can be realised. In addition, Sallustio's documentary rejects the idea of living utopias as striving for maximum goals that harbour the probability of failure: For the protagonist Léo, her life as an eco-activist is a manifestation of change on a small scale without the final goal of the transformation of society as a whole.

The modesty and effectiveness of this approach align with Hardesty, Boyce and Rasmussen's (2021) proposal of micro or small-scale activism as a way for realistic, sustainable activism. Such a mode of continuously living utopias of sustainability through daily practices is also presented by Piotr Goldstein's documentary on a coffee-from-a-bike cooperative of Polish migrants in Manchester, United Kingdom. The activists are not part of a movement, but try to implement their ethical ideas through everyday activism, by selling organic, fair trade coffee from a self-made bicycle trailer. Their way of doing business is informed and permeated by imaginations of an alternative, ecologically and socially fair economy which transcends the hegemonic concept of capitalism. Goldstein highlights the effort and commitment rendering this practice sustainable despite economic difficulties and crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and argues that, in this case, collective identity as 'Polish' is not what holds this activist community together, but rather, a shared vision of a more ethical way of living.

More-than-human perspectives on sustainability projects and activism

Most traditional concepts of sustainability are human-centred. However, as Anna L. Tsing has argued, 'meaningful sustainability requires multispecies resurgence, that is, the remaking of liveable landscapes through the actions of many organisms' (2017: 51); it is only possible as a multispecies effort. Brightman and Lewis draw from this the conclusion that the existence of 'cross-species socialities' (2017: 19) and spaces of resurgence are the precondition for the preservation of a liveable world. Brightman and Lewis, in this context, speak of 'multispecies relationships, chance meetings and sharings, that result in sustainable communities' (ibid.: 24) and demand an according awareness in anthropology. Introducing a more-than-human (Tsing 2012; Haraway 2016; Kuřík 2016) perspective helps one to understand social movements – especially those that are fighting for sustainability. Sustainability as utopia even in the 'here and now' can be felt, touched, perceived and seen. Thus, it is the material world that not only pushes humans to become politically active. More-than-humans also show their involvement in questions of value-making.

CLAUDIA TERRANGI addresses the worldwide fight against global warming in 'Multispecies Disobedience. Vegetables-activists Relation in Italian Social Movements.' She argues that an alliance between the anthropology of social movement and multispecies ethnography is helpful to better understand the relation between activism and the non-human entities for which it advocates. Focusing on activists in Padua (Italy) who are recovering and redistributing vegetables considered unsaleable by the food trade system, she interprets this entanglement with Haraway's companion species (2016), showing that it is not only the human actors who are bringing a social movement to life.

NIKOLAUS HEINZER asks, 'What does a 'good' river look like?' and analyses sustainability and aesthetics in the context of river restoration. He regards sustainability as a keyword at the core of societal debates and political conflicts about pressing global water-related environmental issues. These and other terms are brought into play as (e)-valuating, explanatory or legitimising categories or as desirable goals when it comes to questions about how humans do or should relate to watery environments. Heinzer examines these valuation and negotiation processes by looking at river restoration in Switzerland and Europe. He asks how sustainability is 'made' in practices, for example, how it is enacted and how value is imbued with meaning. Analysing three case studies of media discourses and representations within river restoration, he poses the question: What is sustainability, what is a 'good' river supposed to look like in these water-related utopias and how are they represented?

ALEXANDER KOENSLER's visual anthropology project *The Border. Resisting Monocultures in Central Italy* represents communities in the rural peripheries of central Italy in their attempt to safeguard a varied agricultural landscape against an ever-growing industry of monoculture farming. At first glance, the discord seems to be well described with identity conflicts in Alaine Touraine's 'new social movement' paradigm (1988). However, looking at the threat of the 'Plantationocene' (Chao et al. 2023), Koensler's film analyses a new shift in the co-ordinates of the central conflict towards a less identity-based and more materialist, more-than-human dimension: 'Pro-biotic' concerns (Lorimer 2020) are returning, fighting what is perceived as 'anti-biotic,' building 'a border,' but one that turns out to be partly fluid.

Exoticising Western everyday practices: Audio-visual documentations of sustainability projects

The following section offers a number of highly nuanced insights into recent visual ethnographic practices that highlight a renewed sensitivity for reflexive and sometimes ironic approaches.

CRISTHIAN CAJE, CORNELIA ECKERT and CARMEN SILVIA DE MORAES RIAL offer the results of an unique experiment of cross-cultural encounters on recycling in *The Utopia of Recycling*. They visually documented the surprises, doubts and inspirations that two Brazilian anthropologists, Carmen Rial and Cornelia Eckert, have when inquiring into practices of recycling in a Dutch city. The intent of the research was to explore how recycling practices in Dutch domestic spaces compared to those in Brazil. It is a specific ironic gaze at intercultural contacts that is one of the major strengths of this visual project.

CARLOS FONSECA DA SILVA presents his ongoing research in a newly established eco-hamlet in the south of France in his audio-visual project *Setting the Scene for Two Sustainable Projects in a French Eco-hamlet*. His project is composed of three parts. The first introduces the protagonists, while the following two parts offer a perspective on two different economic activities in the community: the production of spirulina (an algae used as a food supplement) and herbal teas. Activists and inhabitants strive for an autonomous, self-sufficient life that also encompasses a form of protest against conventional lifestyles. Similar to *The Utopia of Recycling*, the author's gaze is one from a distant world which self-reflectively and ironically observes people in their daily lives, thereby exoticising common Western everyday activities.

SARAH RUTH SIPPEL and TIMOTHY D WELDON introduce us to the Italian countryside with a documentary shot in the intimate space of the rural kitchen of Gabriele and his family. Their film allows the viewer to take a glimpse into the passion, tradition, and sacrifice associated with their daily practice of cheese-making. This documentary attempts to produce 'provocative encounters' that inspire reflection, a change of perspective, and the possibility to challenge taken for granted assumptions about the world. Through these provocative encounters we aim to go beyond critical theory and inspire 'critical reimagining.' Critical reimagining seeks to make practical and tangible contributions while actively reimagining the world within a prefigurative relationship between reflection and implementation of alternatives.

Fighting for the impact and sustainability of research: Filmic and artistic forms of activism

The final section of our anthology reaches back to its beginning, asking questions regarding the longevity and sustaining impact of activism. It presents the work of two collaborative projects, alternating between activists' research, engaged anthropology and audio-visual intervention. Both projects are pursued in a cooperation of a multitude of actors. Not only are they produced in cooperation between two researchers each, but they also keep in close contact with those they want to represent or give a voice.

Cahal McLaughlin, founder of the 'Prisoner Memory Archive' and a professor of filmmaking at Queen's University, Belfast, is a human rights activist and cooperated with Siobhán Wills, Director of the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University, Belfast, interested in human rights and transitional justice. They produced two documentary films: *It Stays with You* and *Right Now I Want to Scream*, on the use of militarised violence in policing operations against marginalised communities in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. They used participatory practices as a methodology to collaborate with survivors of state violence as they tell their stories of violent raids, inadequate medical support, criminalisation by the media and exclusion by authorities in addressing the injustices inflicted by states. Thus, the films provide a platform for marginalised black voices that call for the acknowledgement of human rights' abuses and demand recognition, justice and reparation. In their contribution, McLaughlin and Wills not only present the audio-visual result of their projects, but they also reflect on their production, cooperations, post-production, screenings, reception and political impact. They shed light on the longevity and sustainability of their research and activism.

The sustainability of social engagement, and the strength needed to make social change and receive recognition is equally impressively shown in the collaborative project of Konstantina Bousmpoura, an independent researcher, anthropologist, filmmaker and human rights activist, and Paula Serafini, a cultural anthropologist with a focus on social movements and art activism, who have already combined for a series of projects. They provide transnational perspectives from the intersection of art, dance, activism and research with their reflection on 'Aesthetic and Affective Practices in Latin American Feminist Move-

ments.' Drawing on theoretical, empirical and audio-visual material from their ethnographic work on performance activism, as well as from their experiences as feminist activists in Europe and Latin America, they discuss how contemporary Latin American feminisms embrace different forms of aesthetic and affective practices for activism.

In sum, with the current global social, environmental and political situation in mind, we see an ever-growing importance of resurrecting the concept of utopia in combination with the idea of sustainability. This will not only sustain the status quo of the world but rather bring back hope to all areas of sustainability: ecology, economy and society, by touching different dimensions of how to promote change: attempts to actually promote change through micro-practices in everyday life as well as by fighting 'cultural wars' of representation. The aim of this anthology lies in pushing forward alternative futures in trying to understand the importance of utopia and reflection, as well as of co-operation, between activism, research, everyday life and the arts.

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