THE ETHICS OF ECOVILLAGES: sustainability in the new media environment

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Introduction

- The aim is to discuss the interrelations between mediatization and the sustainable practices of ecovillages
- Expansion of capitalism x communication systems
  - Unjust effects x increased possibilities
    - Ecovillages movement
- Mediatization as a sociospatial concept

Mediatization: the new media environment

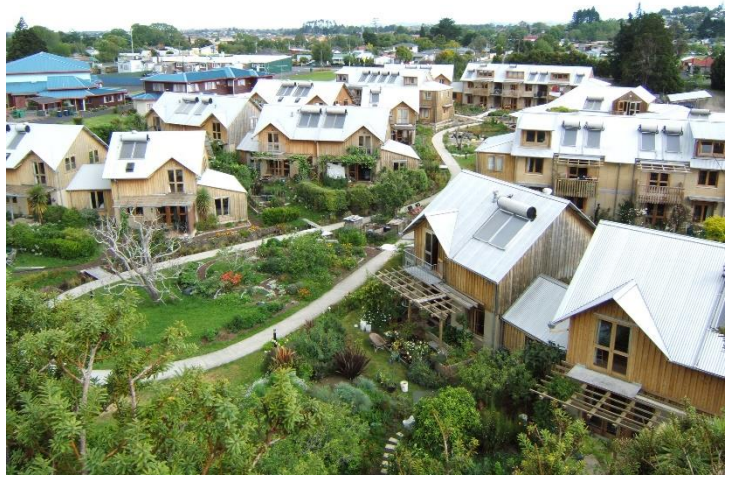
- By crossing over other social fields, media originates a new media environment: media as social practice
- As environment, media is not just and “appendix” of social practices but a key component of them
- Media works not just as an intermediator of representations; media itself forms a new kind of reality within which means are produced (FAUSTO NETO, 2006)
- The sociospatial concept may work as an holistic, non-mediacentric approach to mediatization, providing “an improved toolbox for generating complex understandings of the media’s role in historical and contemporary transformations of social space” (JANSSON, 2013, p. 281)

Mediatization: the new media environment

- “Since mediatization (…) refers to dependencies and normalizations in social space, the concept addresses the deeper moral and ethical issues of social life, and thus calls for a humanistic research agenda in media and communication studies” (JANSSON, 2013, p. 281)
- Media defines “the moral space within which the other appears to us, and at the same time invite (claim, constrain) an equivalent moral response from us, the audience, as a potential or actual citizen” (SILVERSTONE, 2013, p. 15)

The ethics of ecovillages

- Holistic approach to sustainability
- Three dimensions: ecological, socioeconomic and cultural-spiritual
- “The whole-systems approach of the ecovillage movement is not only pragmatic in its design from nature, but also serves as a source of meaning for the individual. Thus, ecovillagers view themselves as pioneering an alternative socioeconomic system to the unsustainable legacy of modernity. They seek to mend the modem split between people and the rest of nature by placing human existence within a holistic cosmology while simultaneously granting humans a special place as conscious designers of harmonious systems” (LITFIN, 2009, p. 132)



Global Ecovillage Network (GEN)

- The ecovillage movement has spread globally through the Internet
- It seeks to fight social alienation and ecological degradation “from the bottom up”, by reeducating populations from different continents about sustainability in all its dimensions, based on the core values of the ecovillage movement
- GEN not only has been aknowledged by the United Nations Organization (UNO) but also is consultant for UNO’s Economic and Social Council

GLOBAL ECOVILLAGE NETWORK



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