

A Taste of Utopia?

Cultivating a Culture of Sustainability in Fairfield, Iowa

Lane Atmore
Grinnell College '16
Department of Anthropology
Advisor: Jon Andelson

Mentored Advanced Project, July 31, 2015

customized by its owner - a stark contrast to the uniformity that governs the rest of the Dome. Some have blankets and tassels draped over them, pillows at the base or leaned against them, one even has a pillow-pet in the shape of a sheep sitting next to it. To the immediate left is a section reserved for guests, and these back-jacks are not customized. Around the edge of the room, near the windows, are comfortable armchairs, presumably for elderly meditators who have trouble sitting on the mattresses.

I am awestruck at the room in front of me. It's beautiful. It's the kind of vast space where you feel the quantity of atmosphere around you and speaking at normal volumes seems like sacrilege. Right now, we're the only ones in here, but in about half an hour it will be filled with meditating women. I am led to the center of the Dome and a little off to the right, where there is a section of mattresses wi. s d(s)-1(e)4(ld(s)-1(e)4(ok)-5(t)-2(1(i)-2(n . -2(hhi(dr)3(

point has impressed upon me the amazing feeling of group meditation. What would it be like to transcend while surrounded by 400 other women who are also touching that unified consciousness? As I'm thinking this, my rational, critical self (one of many personalities I have inside this head of mine) is leaning against the wall of my brain and rolling her eyes. I tell her that she doesn't know everything, and to come back later and let me enjoy the moment.

We've been in the Dome for about half an hour and people start trickling in. We head back across the Dome, back th

brought with them a large amount of personal wealth (Weber 2014). Fairfield has a huge amount of venture capital. Manufacturing and local businesses have been reinvigorated by the meditator community, the town square has been revived, private businesses and jobs have been added to the economy. Regardless of culture clashes between meditator and non-meditator, today, everyone can agree that the movement has done great things for Fairfield.

In the last 15 years, there have been many new developments in Fairfield. The community dynamics in town have shifted and sustainability has become a key component of the Fairfield identity. There were several key events in the last 15 years that allowed these changes to occur. In 2001, a meditator was elected mayor of Fairfield and has remained mayor ever since. Mayor Ed Malloy is very popular with both meditators and non-meditators (referred to by Fairfield residents as “roos,” short for “guru,” and “townies” respectively).

I will discuss existing factions and tensions within the town at a later point, but everyone I spoke to names Ed and his position as mayor as a key component of an era of peace in Fairfield and to the level of environmental sustainability the town has achieved. In 2003, MUM established the Sustainable Living Department, another key component in the story of sustainability in Fairfield and a defining feature of the Fairfield narrative in the last 15 years. But before I begin a discussion of sustainability, it is important to understand the movement and MUM and how they fit into the Fairfield culture.

The official stance of the TM movement is that it is not a religion, worldview, philosophy, or lifestyle. However, what I observed of TM in Fairfield seemed very much like an institutionalized worldview and value system; a set of beliefs about the way the universe is constructed and how one should live their life. Maharishi is revered as a prophet, and his image and words are hung on the walls of many buildings, both in individual homes and academic buildings on the MUM campus. Maharishi is referred to as “His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi,” and the phrase, “Well, Maharishi said...” is ubiquitous among movement members. MUM students must learn TM and the basics of Maharishi’s philosophy when they arrive at school (which I will discuss in more detail below). Maharishi’s worldview, or belief system, and the more spiritual component of TM is a large part of education at MUM.

The belief system is complex and based on Maharishi’s interpretations of ancient Vedic texts, the Vedantas, and the Bhagavad Gita. ~~While~~ I do not claim to be an expert, I will outline some of the main components here. I focus on the tenets of this worldview that members have described to me in connection with sustainability, although I am aware that this is not the entirety of the worldview.

An overarching theme in Maharishi philosophy is the idea of layers. Everything has many layers, and by peeling back those layers one can achieve complete knowledge. The universe itself has many layers. This belief is grounded in Vedantic philosophy, particularly the ideas of maya and brahman. Maya is the world we see around us; it is an illusion, ever-changing, and will end at some point. Maya is like a veil over our eyes, which tricks us into forming bonds with material objects - the foundations of greed (19, June 15, 17). Brahman is another layer, the eternal

layer of consciousness. This consciousness, also called the “unified field” or “pure knowledge”, is shared among all living things, but it is manifested into the discrete beings we see in maya. Through meditation, one can break away from the trappings of maya, reach the layer of brahman and have knowledge of this unified field (19, June 15, 17).

If an individual meditates frequently enough and achieves total consciousness, usually by utilizing the TM Sidhi technique (a more advanced level of meditation which enables special abilities, such as yogic flying), they are able to achieve the state of total consciousness and maintain this state of being even while they are not meditating. However, even through “regular” TM, they believe the brain is shifted “from a random pattern to an integrated, synchronized level of

meditators to troubled areas around the world to meditate for peace (Weber 2014; 8, July 11).

The advanced meditators are given a badge that allows them to enter one of two large golden domes on the university campus, one for men and one for women. Members are technically supposed to go to the domes twice a day – morning and evening – to meditate for at least 20 minutes a day. If you go through the university campus around 4:00 PM you will see people coming to meditate at the domes. Many of these individuals have been meditating for 30 to 40 years. One witness of this procession noted the wide eyes and blank expressions of the meditators, saying, “If that’s what 40 years of meditation gives you then no thank you!” (14, June 7). While I have seen the tired meditators with wide eyes, I have also been told that meditating in the domes is a beautiful and invigorating experience. The shared experience of achieving total consciousness in the presence of hundreds of other people is not something to be dismissed lightly (2; 8; 28).

As a nonmeditator I was unsure of how well I could truly understand what TM actually is. What does TM feel like? Is it possible for me to comprehend TM without practicing it? I posed these questions to one of the meditators I had met and was given an enlightening answer (forgive the pun). The experience of transcendence, I was told, is something all humans have experienced before (6, July 7). It is the feeling you get when you have an intense reaction to something, be it a beautiful landscape, the sun, looking into the eyes of someone you love, or something else. When this happens, you experience the feeling that there is something larger than you out there, for example when you lie on your back and

stare up at the stars and have the sensation that ~~by~~ are one tiny being in the vastness of the universe. So the feeling achieved through TM is something that we have all experienced before, even if we've done so unintentionally. TM, according to this explanation, is the intentional experience of this ~~feeling~~ on a regular basis. This connection with that larger entity, that "consciousness", as it is known in TM, changes your life, your mind, and your worldview.

Maharishi University of Management

Maharishi University of Management, originally Maharishi International University, came to Fairfield in 1971 after the movement purchased Parsons College's former campus. MUM advertises itself as providing a new educational paradigm through "consciousness-based education". Consciousness based education is ~~found~~ based on the practice of TM and adhering to the teachings of Maharishi. Learning, then, is done from "the inside out" as the "technology of consciousness" is applied to individuals and they experience direct development through a fundamental internal change. As the Executive Vice President of the university, Craig Pearson, said, "If we don't focus on the inside, we can take everything we do on the outside and it will be too little too late" (June 20).

A key component of the ~~consciousness~~ based education is Maharishi's new scientific paradigm, Maharishi Vedic Science (MVS). MVS is founded on the idea that science is completely dependent on the instruments used to perceive and measure the world around us. Our bodies, therefore, can be counted as instruments of perception and measurement and must therefore be finely tuned. According to

meditation was checked, I was told that there is a series of questionnaires given to students of TM to check their experience of transcendence, but that mostly it constitutes sitting with the teacher while meditating (3, June 27). As one interviewee said, “Nobody knows what I’m doing with my eyes closed!” (6, July 7).

Students must continue to meditate for each semester they are at MUM, according to the Developmental Consciousness (DC) policy (3, June 27; 4, June 29; 26). The DC policy governs the amount of time each student must spend meditating each semester. Failure to comply can result in failure to graduate on time. In recent years, the DC policy has been changing frequently as a result of student pushback. In 2009, the DC policy maintained that students had to meditate in the Domes twice a day with the rest of the regularly meditating population of Fairfield (3, June 27). However, too many students were failing to meet the required hours of meditation and the policy has now been changed to integrate meditation into classes, with a 20 minute period in the morning, a 10 minute period before lunch, and a 10 minute period in the afternoon (1, June 12).

The university maintains that all students and faculty complete the required twice-daily 20-minute meditation practices. However, as I was surprised to find, this is far from the truth. Instead of meditating together as advertised, many students simply leave the classroom during meditation time (1, June 12; 4, June 29). While there are opportunities to make up the missed DC requirements, it is unclear how many students actually do. Still other students simply sit and either wait for others to finish meditating or practice different meditation techniques, which is frowned

upon. Some professors will express displeasure to their students but seem to have little power to actually enforce the mandatory meditation (1, June 12).

The University draws mixed reactions from Fairfield residents. While no one disagrees with the fact that without the university and the movement Fairfield would not be as prosperous as it is today, they do not necessarily agree with many of the university's decisions. The university does not contribute to the town's economy as much as some would like (13; 14; 15). While the university itself says this is mainly due to economic instability within the institution, others believe they simply are not trying hard enough (13; 14; 15). The university also made enemies both within and outside of the movement when it tore down Parson's old buildings, particularly an old chapel. These buildings were protected as a national historic site, yet the university decided they needed to come down so new, Sthapatya Ved buildings could be built, including the two Golden Domes (8, July 11). This, and other actions, has made the University a controversial figure in the Fairfield community.

The People of Fairfield

The standard distinction in Fairfield is between the "townies" and the "roos". At one point in history that was the most accurate depiction of tension within Fairfield, but it is no longer quite so simple. As movement members became more involved in Fairfield, lines of communication opened between the townies and the once-cloistered roo's. This alone was very effective in lowering levels of tension between the two groups. Those who came to Fairfield in the "Great Move" started

having children, some of whom were sent to the public schools in Fairfield. Growing up as a child of the movement in Fairfield was often to be the victim of bullying and cruel pranks(a c)m6(l s u l l

1. Non-meditators
 - a. Long-time Fairfield residents
 - i. Lived in the town before the movement arrived
 - ii. Family has been in Fairfield for generations
 - b. Younger non-meditators
 - i. Typically care less about the distinction between meditators and non-meditators than their parents
2. The Meditator Community
 - a. "The Old Guard"
 - i. Those who moved to Fairfield in the 1970's and 80's or
 - ii. Those who have meditated and followed Maharishi for many years, although not necessarily in Fairfield initially
 - b. "The Second Generation"
 - i. Children of the Old Guard, mainly born in the 80's although there are some older and younger members of this group
 - ii. Grew up meditating but do not necessarily do so on a regular basis
 - iii. Are open to other gurus, types of meditation, beliefs, etc
 - iv. There are two different groups within the Second Generation:
 1. Those who went to MSAE and/or MUM
 2. Those who went to public schools in Fairfield and

iii.

institutionalized and involves ritual. While much of Maharishi's philosophy may generally fall into the "spiritual" category, there is no denying the institutionalization of Maharishi in Fairfield and the presence of ritual surrounding this institution. While the official line is that TM is not a form of spirituality, several interviewees told me that in Fairfield the idea of "consciousness" is synonymous with "spirituality" and that part of the strength of this community is that they all share a common worldview (1, June 12; 5, July 2).

You'd think that these meditators would be the most open. You think that. But they're not."
(27, June 20)

During my first week in Fairfield I was walking around the MUM campus with an acquaintance. He was telling me about the school, the administration, TM, and Fairfield at large. As we were walking through the Argiro building, the student center on campus, this acquaintance looked around, lowered his voice and said, of the movement as an entity, "It's something that starts with a 'c'...". That word was "cult," and if I was surprised to hear it at first, it became a very common phrase used

though, just that a large faction of the Old Guard who is in charge is perceived by others as being so.

Many newer residents of Fairfield come for other reasons than because they believe Maharishi's teachings are the end-all-be-all of existence: "...I'm totally interested in the consciousness aspect. But as an academic, not as somebody who's looking for a guru. Not as somebody who's looking to, just, check my critical thinking at the door, right?" (4, June 29). But attempts to change the system are frustrated across the board because TM has become a "closed system," a conservative paradigm that overshadows progressiveness" (2, June 23). It is this restrictiveness in knowledge and the lack of critical thinking, combined with punishments for failing to comply with movement standards (even choosing to meditate outside the Dome can have lasting social repercussions (8, July 11)) that has led many residents of Fairfield to label the movement a "cult".

While I will refrain from passing judgment on such labels, I believe the perception of the movement as such is extremely important in understanding the community dynamics in Fairfield, specifically the tension and fracturing within the meditator community. In the last 15 years, however, a new movement has started to supplant the Maharishi movement. Instead of focusing on Maharishi's teachings and trying to apply them to today's world, this new movement has a wider knowledge base, both spiritually and otherwise, and a different focus: sustainability

The Fairfield farmer's market was started in a similar way. Homesteading meditators came to sell their produce and crafts in town and pretty soon a large farmers market had developed. At first it was almost exclusively meditators who sold food at the farmer's market but that has changed (6, July 6). Today, many of the stalls are not run by meditators but by local farmers catering to the tastes of the Fairfield community. Many other small, grassroots initiatives were started as well. A lot of these included businesses which catered to the local, organic food aspect of movement lifestyle as well as providing economic revival for the town. In response to the new, niche market, businesses across the town began carrying more "sustainable" products and advertising this.

Part of the increase in sustainable practices was due to an increased awareness of environmental issues around the globe. The term "sustainable," in the sense used in this paper and by many people in Fairfield, was first defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report, which defined sustainable development as "...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (1987). Sustainability has also been defined using the idea of the "triple bottom line" of sustainability – economic sustainability, community sustainability, and environmental sustainability.

The sustainability movement in Fairfield didn't really take off until the early 2000's, but there are already so many sustainability projects in Fairfield that I could e ait

brief overview of some components of the movement that are currently in existence or being planned.

Abundance EcoVillage

In 2000, the first home was built at Abundance EcoVillage, a community just north of the MUM campus (6). It is a small collection of houses, all built in the Maharishi Sthapatya Ved style favored by the movement, interspersed with wetland reconstruction. Abundance EcoVillage is completely off the grid. Energy is supplied to the community by solar and wind power, all water comes from rainfall, and sewage is filtered through the wetland (with many more complex steps along the way). Although Abundance EcoVillage is off the grid in terms of energy, water, and sewage, there is little food production in the EcoVillage and most food is purchased in town. It's location, far from the town center and on a busy county road, also makes transportation difficult, and most residents are forced to drive everywhere. However, it is a true feat of engineering and a symbol of the level of sustainable-mindedness in Fairfield.

Sustainable Living Department at MUM

By 2002, the biology department at MUM had all but disappeared and desperately needed reform. In 2003, it was born anew as the Sustainable Living (SL) department. The name "sustainable living" as opposed to "environmental science" is an important point in understanding what the SL department teaches:

Environmental science had become this kind of institution, a conventional thing and young people didn't necessarily relate to it very well. But "sustainable living," it was

Another professor says that meditation and the understanding of consciousness is another way of understanding the course material. There is the abstract, theoretical framework of sustainability, there is the hands on application, and then there is the spiritual/consciousness side, which gives students an understanding of the importance of what they're doing.

The SL department quickly became one of the most popular programs and is probably the most widely advertised undergraduate degree at MUM. Within just a few years, the new department had become the largest undergraduate program at the university. While numbers have declined, partially due to other institutions

on campus, the idea being that since the SL department is taking care of it no one else has to worry about sustainability (6; 14; 15).

The existence of the sustainable living department and its national renown has brought a new type of student to MUM:

...they [the movement] move here in the 70's and they set up the school and they're coming here because they're already meditators and they want to get a degree and also meditate. They want to learn Maharishi's knowledge, that's why they're coming here, and they want to meditate but they also want to be able to get a ~~year~~ year degree in psychology at the same time, an accredited one.

- x Demonstration of sustainable practices
- x Focus on education and leadership
- x Increase in recycling
- x Reduction in energy emissions
- x Increase in green building
- x Emphasis on forestry and agriculture
- x Sustainable water resources and management
- x Volunteer engagement

According to the review of the first 5year plan (Go Green Commission 2014), the achievements of the Go Green plan to date are:

- x 500+ trees planted, including a community orchard
- x 50+ educational workshops hosted
- x 67% increase in recycling after implementing singlestream recycling
- x \$1,394,936 added to the Fairfield economy
- x \$81,216 annual reduction sps hosted

at least partly powered by solar panels. What is truly unique about the Sky Factory is the 1-acre farm located next to the building. Modeled after a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture), this is a “BSA” – Business

reinvention of the way people think about weeds and interjecting science into “back to the land” philosophy.

Grassroots Initiatives

residents have utilized their prodigious plant knowledge to graft different fruit species onto public fruit trees and utilize public space to expand edible landscaping in Fairfield.

“Sustainability is a dirty word in Fairfield...”

This phrase was something I was surprised to hear, given Fairfield’s fame as a community with a strong environmental sustainability movement. In Fairfield, the phrase “sustainability” has become indelibly associated with MUM and seen as “a mediator thing

Why Fairfield?

There is no denying that the sustainability movement in Fairfield is coming out of the mediator community and institutions affiliated with that community. It is spreading throughout the town these days and is even a common ground on which meditators and non-meditators can come together. My questions, though,

department and the SL center. Although there were grassroots efforts in Fairfield prior to the opening of the SL department in 2003, this was one of the first institutionalized sustainability initiatives in the town.

Outside the SL department, the university is not involved in many sustainability efforts. However, Maharishi believed in eating vegetarian, organic, and local, and as a result the university serves locally sourced food and has two large greenhouses on campus for growing food. Aside from actual practice, the university is perceived as a beacon for sustainability both in Fairfield and outside of it, due in some part to advertising campaigns for the SL department and in some part to the people brought to Fairfield because of the strong sustainability component of education at MUM.

2. Maharishi's Teachings

Initially I was not sure if Maharishi's teachings specifically emphasized sustainability. I was, in fact, surprised to find that they do not, considering the strength of the sustainability movement in Fairfield today. While it turned out to be more about the people who practice TM and not TM itself that informed sustainability, there were some aspects of the movement that laid the groundwork for being sustainably minded.

First, Maharishi Vedic Science requires that each individual take care of their body, their instrument of perception. This means they must eat well, be vegetarian, avoid pesticides, and eat local and organic. Sustainability is deeply connected with personal health and maintaining one's health, both through food and lifestyle

choices, which are both components of MVS and Maharishi's teachings/movement lifestyle. Therefore, the basis of sustainable living was built into some of Maharishi's teachings.

Second, some meditators claim that the act of meditation and reaching the unified

through meditation and self-discovery the external problems of the world will be righted because the awareness and consciousness of those around them will be “enlivened” as a result of their meditation. The Second Generation understands the importance of self-development, but has the desire to actively extend this to the rest of the world to a greater extent than many of the older generation, both meditator and non-meditator alike.

The divide between action and thought is also seen on the MUM campus in “the two sides of the highway” (15). The Old Guard and much of the MUM administration believes that spreading a new paradigm of thought and ways of achieving knowledge are the most important while those across the highway in the SL center are more focused on action. There is a reason the Sustainable Living degree is one of the most popular undergraduate programs at MUM, and that is because of this action component.

4. “It’s a tribe...”

It is hard to put into words the strength of the meditator community in Fairfield. One informant, who had grown up in Fairfield and gone to MSAE and MUM, put it this way, that when you think about the fact that you spent hundreds of hours of your life achieving transcendence with these people, it is hard to give that up. The act of meditating together brings community members closer together and allows them to feel a sense of connectedness with each other that is seen in many small-town communities. The meditators feel that the bonds they form during group meditation are uniquely strong.

Fairfield was described to me as “comfortable” by nearly everyone I spoke to. While problems certainly exist between different subdivisions of the community, it is overwhelmingly a place where people feel they can have “crazy ideas” and get support for them. As I heard many times, Fairfield is a place where you can tell a group of people your idea and be guaranteed that at least one person will be willing to help make that idea happen. And while some have expressed feelings of censorship, as I discussed earlier, people overwhelmingly claim that they feel comfortable socially in Fairfield.

Feeling comfortable and connected aside, I believe the strongest part of the Fairfield community is the willingness to challenge themselves as a single entity and the belief that they can accomplish those challenges. A few years ago, Fairfield participated in the Hometown Rewards program, a program sponsored by Alliant Energy in which six towns were to lower their energy consumption by 4%. Out of those six towns, Fairfield was the only town to complete the challenge. Furthermore, they not only met the goal, but they lowered consumption by 8% (11, June 30; 9, July 13; 12, July 22). I asked one person why Fairfield was able to do this when the other towns in the program were not:

You know, we are a very confident community. And we also love to complete a challenge. We also have, you know, people who love to be involved and engaged, we have very high volunteerism, we have good philanthropy within the community so if there are projects that need money there is money available for them, too. But when we took this project on we were fresh off our own plan and we saw it as a vehicle to show what we could accomplish as a community. And I think we just took it more seriously than the next community and we take great pride in our ability to meet a challenge. (11, June 30)

Belief in the power of the community and maintaining the narrative of what the community can accomplish has made this narrative a reality in Fairfield.

5. Culture of Philanthropy

There is a lot of money in Fairfield. Sustainability initiatives are frequently funded by donations and philanthropy, both on a municipal level and a grassroots level. This facilitates the strength of the community and the feeling that anything can be accomplished in Fairfield. There is always someone who can help you realize your dream. It just so happens that very often these days, that dream has something to do with sustainability.

6. Key Individuals

The background necessary for a sustainability revolution in Fairfield was in place; there were existing grassroots movements in the meditating community, a strong awareness of environmental issues, local farmers had been practicing organic agriculture for 30 years, the community was openminded and prepared to take on a challenge, to create action. All that was necessary was for these rumblings to be harnessed and turned into a true movement, not just vague underpinnings of an existing lifestyle. Without key individuals who saw this opportunity and took action, Fairfield would not have a reputation as a beacon of sustainability.

The first example of this is through the founding of the Sustainable Living department and the work of individuals in that department to make sustainability a part of MUM curriculum and lifestyle. These individuals were already involved in grassroots sustainability initiatives, but it was now institutionalized as part of the MUM identity, and it took off. As I've previously mentioned, this department

facilitated the growth of a new movement in Fairfield and attracted people from around the globe.

Another key individual was Mayor Ed Malloy, who inaugurated the Go Green Initiative in 2009. Through the Go Green plan, Mayor Malloy created a platform for municipal sustainability and got an enormous cross-section of the town invested in building a new culture of sustainability in Fairfield. The initiatives carried out by

movement. The 90's saw a lapse in environmentalism and sustainability initiatives

“awareness”: knowledge of the topic and an understanding of what can or cannot be

through achieving total consciousness. Members of the meditator community have a very strong belief in their ability to manifest an ideal narrative into reality.

Whether the ability to manifest a narrative stems from the TM movement or some other aspect of the town, the culture of Fairfield has been intentionally crafted at least to some degree, especially in the arena of sustainability. An ideal narrative of Fairfield as a “green” town has been crafted through the university and the Go Green plan, which has allowed the reality of this to be manifested. Part of the mission statement of the initiative, as I described in an earlier section, is to create a culture of sustainability through education and demonstration. Fairfield wants to become a model for both its citizens and other towns.

Another example of intentionality and making the narrative of a strong, supportive culture a reality is the Bunnell Building Project/St. Mary’s Project started by members of the Second Generation. While they have run into some roadblocks, this program has given Fairfield an atmosphere of intentionality in terms of community support that many other communities simply do not have. It is organizations like this that help make the youth of Fairfield feel that they can accomplish their goals. This organization has allowed grassroots sustainability initiatives to become reality, including initiatives that focus on community education and intentionally spreading sustainable practices throughout Fairfield.

Exportability of the Fairfield Story

“We envision our community as a model showing how sustainability increases the quality of life for all by enhancing economic vitality while restoring and preserving a healthy natural environment.”
(<http://www.fairfieldiowa.com/2020-fairfield-go-green-strategic-plan>)

Fairfield is a very unique town with a unique past, one that is not easily replicable. But does that mean there are no lessons to be learned from the Fairfield story? While Fairfield may have many unusual traits, there are some that can be applicable for other small towns hoping to create their own culture of sustainability.

Intentionality is a key component of the success of sustainability in Fairfield. While there was an existing platform that was ripe for sustainability to take hold, it was still a very intentional process, at least on the municipal level. The Go Green Plan is based in creating a new, intentional culture in Fairfield and not one that is just for meditators or non-meditators, but one that can be shared by all. This is being achieved through community education and raising awareness through demonstration. Education and demonstration are not unique to Fairfield, and could be embraced more strongly in other places.

Perhaps most importantly, as I mentioned before, they have a strong belief in what they can accomplish as a community. While there is some tension between the narrative of the Fairfield community and the dynamics of that community in reality, in comparison to many other small towns Fairfield is a cornucopia of possibility and is overall a very supportive community. They are lucky in that there is a lot of money available for philanthropic efforts, but it seems to me that even without the strong culture of philanthropy in Fairfield there would still be a strong sustainability movement. While I cannot directly compare the supportiveness of

Fairfield to other small towns, the culture of support was impressed upon me by many people, both by residents and nonresidents of the town.

I have focused in this paper on successful sustainability initiatives, but there were many that failed or never got past the planning stage (7, July 9). This did not stop people from picking up the pieces and trying again or creating something new

sustainability may yet save the town and continue to make it relevant, but in order for it to do so there needs to be more intentionality behind the direction Fairfield is moving from a social standpoint.

Part of the narrative of the TM movement is that it is counterculture; the worldview and lifestyle are different than that of mainstream culture. They are clearly adhering to some sort of lifestyle associated with the practice of TM.

However, the narrative of that lifestyle may not align with the reality of Fairfield culture:

...from the mid60's onward there's a huge cultural pushback against the establishment and so he's going into colleges and universities and giving lectures, right, and then there's like this radical group of young people who see this as a challenge but also a genuine alternative path. And all of this can be legitimately true. But there is still something about it, and this has been confirmed to me by a lot of young people here who they grew up in the movement, that they just substituted one father figure with another father figure. Like they said "fuck you" to the man and

existed before no longer really exists. But if you don't meet every generation where they're at, if you are dogmatic about you hold that purity then nobody's going to adopt it and it's going to die anyway. You have to do both of those things in order to keep it real. And so what happens right after the guru dies, you're erring on the side of the purity of your teaching but you're alienating the very people who are coming here and would be able to take it forward into the next generation (4, June 29)

Maintaining the purity of the teaching is an enormous part of institutionalized TM in Fairfield and at MUM. But there is almost no evidence of meeting the current generation where they are, and until that happens community and economic sustainability in Fairfield will not be reached.

Maharishi's movement as it exists today is not as relevant to the current generation as it was to their parents; they want more and they have and will continue to look outside the movement to satisfy this want. Members of the Second Generation have already started to leave Fairfield for good. The movement needs to be rebranded and reorganized if it wants to survive. I was extremely impressed by the air of opportunity in Fairfield, and I think they have the capacity to survive this bump in the road and choose the right path if conversations are started now. As one recent immigrant to Fairfield said, "Iowa to me just blows my mind, I think that anything is possible here" (3, June 27).

Acknowledgements : I would like to deeply thank all those who were willing to participate in interviews with me, both formal and informal, as well as the town of Fairfield as a whole for welcoming me into their community.

Appendix I - Interviewees

Formal Interviewee

1. Female, 20's
 - a. B.S. from MUM in Sustainable Living
 - b. Grew up with parents from the movement
 - c. Does not practice TM anymore, open to other types of spirituality and meditation
2. Male, 30
 - a. MSAE and MUM alumnus
 - b. Grew up in Fairfield with parents from the movement
 - c. Heavily involved in the Fairfield community
 - d. Occasionally practices TM, but open to other types of spirituality and meditation
3. Female, 30's
 - a. B.S. from MUM in Sustainable Living
 - b. Experimental farmer
 - c. Occasionally practices TM
4. Male, 40
 - a. Professor at MUM
 - b. Practices TM, not a devotee of Maharishi
5. Male, 66
 - a. Professor at MUM
 - b. Long-time practitioner of TM
6. Male, 50's
 - a. Professor at MUM
 - b. Long-time practitioner of TM
7. Male, 30's
 - a. Non-meditator
 - b. Involved in Go Green Strategic Review
 - c. Works in economic development
8. Female, 60's
 - a. Long-time practitioner of TM
 - b. Moved to Fairfield in the 1970's
 - c. Involved in grassroots sustainability initiatives
9. Male, 40's
 - a. Involved with Go Green Strategic Plan
 - b. Non-meditator
10. Female, 50's
 - a. Involved with sustainability organizations based in Fairfield
 - b. Non-meditator
11. Mayor Ed Malloy
 - a. Long-time practitioner of TM
 - b. Initiated Go Green Strategic Plan for Fairfield in 2009
12. City Councilman Michael Halley
 - a. Involved in sustainability planning for the town

Informal Interviewees:

13. Male, 30's
 - a. Raised in Fairfield with parents from the movement
 - b. Involved in grassroots sustainability
14. Male, 50's
 - a. Practices TM but does not adhere to Maharishi's philosophy
 - b. Works at MUM
15. Male, 30's
 - a. B.S. in Sustainable Living from MUM
 - b. Involved in grassroots sustainability initiatives
 - c. Works at MUM
16. Female, 30's
 - a. B.S. in Sustainable Living from MUM
 - b. Involved in grassroots sustainability initiatives
 - c. Grew up in Fairfield with parents from the movement
17. Male, 50's
 - a. Non-meditator
 - b. Beginning the process of inserting sustainable practices into lifestyle
18. Male, 30's
 - a. Non-meditator
 - b. Beginning the process of inserting sustainable practices into lifestyle
19. Male, 60's
 - a. Long-time practitioner of TM
 - b. Close to Maharishi
20. Male, 20's
 - a. Current student at MUM
21. Male, 30's
 - a. Raised in Fairfield with parents from the movement
 - b. Occasionally meditates
 - c. Involved in grassroots sustainability
22. Male, 60's
 - a. Long-time practitioner of TM
 - b. Moved to Fairfield in the 1970's
23. Male, 80's
 - a. Non-meditator
 - b. Sustainability activist
24. Female, 50's
 - a. Long-time practitioner of TM
25. Female, 30's
 - a. Raised in Fairfield with parents from the movement
 - b. Involved in sustainability initiatives in Fairfield
26. Female, 60's
 - a. TM instructor at MUM
27. Male, 50's
 - a. Non-resident of Fairfield

- b. Practices TM technique and visits Fairfield regularly
28. Female, 30's
- a. Ph.D. student at MUM
 - b. Practices TM regularly

Appendix II - References Cited

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