



# City in a Village: Imagining a Rural Future for South Korea\*

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Urban migration and an aging rural population have left numerous regions of South Korea “population extinct” and its villages economically, socially and physically neglected. Top-down rural policies and the promises of modernization prioritize cities, industrialization and individualism over rural living, agriculture, and community. City in a Village 1.0 (CiviChon 1.0) is a narrative tool of invention combines conventional research methods with methods and tools from world building and narrative fiction to imagine an alternative future for village-life in South Korea. CiviChon 1.0 is a fictive village, on a fictive site, inhabited by fictive personas that projects a possible alternative future for rural Korea. Taking into account the history of modernization of the country and current realities, and based on an epistemology of imagination, CiviChon challenges the inequality and unsustainable practices to imagine a more diverse, equitable, and physically, socially and mentally sustainable rural future. It is a shift that demands an evolutionary shift from the biospheric and geosphere to the development of the noosphere that towards greater individuation and unification of its elements as the complexity consciousness necessary to reconfigure the relationships between humans, and between humans and the non-human world.

**Keywords** Imagination, Rural Futures, Revitalization, World Building, Design Fiction

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## I. Introduction

In spite of the prominent role that farmers and agriculture had in defining the nationalist discourse of Korea, agricultural production and the quality of rural life has steadily deteriorated since the end of the 19th century. The rural population has declined steadily from 95.2% (1925) to 8.9% (2017-2018), with the exception of a recent increase to 11.2% (2019-2020). Koreans working in agriculture and livestock declined from 49.5% (1970) to 6.4% (2011), and only 16.9% (2018) of the land is dedicated to agriculture or grazing. The share of agriculture of Korea's GDP has also decreased from 25.5% (1970) to 1.6% (2019) (Kwon et al., 1974; Park A., 2013; World Bank, 2021a, 2021b). The voiding of rural regions is exacerbated by the demographic trend in which 16 of 37 regions were predicted to become super-aged societies by 2020 (Kim et al., 2020). On average each farming household is 27.2 million krw (\$23,200) in debt with no prospect of repaying the debt with income from off-farm jobs, or educational opportunities further widening the economic and social gaps between cities and villages. These statistics are the outcome of the modernization of Korea in which global economics and government policies privileged urbanization and heavy industry over the rural and agriculture in what is currently a high technology-based neoliberal economic system characterized by division and inequality.

The trend of increased ruralization reflects the disillusionment with the failed myth of modernization that sacrifices made in the name of modernization would bring future prosperity. At the same time, there is a desire for a more communal life as an increasing number of people are experiencing loneliness, isolation and disconnection from modern society by abandoning the high cost and stress of urban life in South Korea accompanied by a nostalgia or myth of the possibility of a "simpler" life in rural and agricultural areas (Park A. et al., 2021b). The Kwinong Movement is

a nationwide member-supported organization of citizens that trains urban Koreans who are interested in “returning” to rural life as small farmers in ecological farming and countryside ways of life (Youn, 2019). Koreans are increasingly thinking and informing themselves about how to build an alternative to the stresses of urban life in rural areas.

The search for alternatives to the country’s history of global economics, government policies, and demographic trends that have left rural life in Korea in a socially and physically weakened state is also part of the history of modernization. A fresh reading of Korea’s modern history reveals, “layers of tension in modern Korean history between norms and counter-norms and authority and counter-authority and how these forms of tension have given way to fresh opportunities for protest and creation” and a “history has been pregnant with openings for humans and non-humans to build new pathways for social and ecological renewal, regardless of the power of hegemonic, top-down forces that try to control the direction of human and non-human worlds” (Park A., 2021b). Unveiled in this history of resistance to Korea’s modernization are the conditions and impetus for building an ecological order for social and physical renewal through a participatory process based on core values of diversity and reciprocity and strategies of decentralization and rural, agricultural and cultural development.

The questions raised by the problem of the rural are numerous. How can we further strengthen the current migration of urban dwellers to rural villages in South Korea? How can ruralization help to revive the life and prospects of the aging villages and slow their population extinction? What kind of community could emerge from bringing city to a village? What can be learned from the changing concepts and practices of community through Korean history? Can the restoration of vibrant and sustainable village life lead us to greater biospherical egalitarianism? (Park A. et al., 2021b). These questions open up opportunities for supporting the recent increase

in reverse migration of “cultural capital” from the city to the village. The aim of this kind of revitalization is to create a new kind of culture that allows the amenities and desirable features of cities and villages to overlap engaging rural inhabitants and urban migrants in a participatory process that could lead to the social and spatial renewal of a village (Park K., 2021b). CiViChon is a response to the question: How can we bring the city to the village to create a meaningful, and socially and physically sustainable village? (Park K., 2021b).

City in a Village, or CiViChon (*Ci=City, Vi=Village and 'Chon' = 'town' or 'village' in Korean*) is an idea. It is a thought experiment, “a narrative tool for invention,” an imagined speculative future that addresses the failed promises and crises resulting from the modernization of Korea organized around individualism, urbanization and industrialization at the expense of community, rural living and agriculture (Park A., 2021b). CiViChon is a vehicle that explores an alternative future for the rural crisis in Korea founded on a shift in values from technology, markets, and rational and objective solutions of the country’s modern history, to personalization, individuation, and unity as fundamental to re-envisioning contemporary forms of collective life, and sustainable, equitable and reciprocal relationships between humans and between humans and non-humans (Park A. et al., 2021b; Riedy, 2013). CiViChon 1.0 is not *the* proposal for a future village, but a speculation or “spatial story” of *a* form that the concept of CiViChon could take. It is a foundation for other possible forms and opportunities for its realization in the real world.

This imagined and fictive village of CiViChon 1.0, includes the premise that a future of rural life based on these new values can only be sustainable if it is based on more than a philosophy of *ecology*, which refers to our external environment, nature and human beings, but requires

a *deep ecology*. Deep ecology is a way of thinking about the world that eliminates the traditional separations between nature, humans and the earth, breaks down the hierarchical divisions and foregrounds *biocentric equality* that conceives of humans as part of the world *as a whole* acting and in connection with it, and with other people (King, 2005). A deep ecology is requires an evolutionary shift beyond the concepts of the geosphere (inanimate matter) and the biosphere (biological life) to the next and highest evolutionary stage of the integrating vision of the noosphere. The noosphere, as conceived by Teilhard de Chardin, includes the biosphere and the sphere of reflexive self-consciousness, and the integrating vision of *complexity consciousness* that is a uniquely human capacity made possible in a world with radically networked technologies. The noosphere conceives of the concept of the ‘world as a whole’ as including “the layer of mind, thought and spirit within the layer of life covering the earth” (Nordblad, 2014).

CiViChon is a work of fiction for how we can produce more mentally vital and socially and physically sustainable forms of village life in Korea. It is the product of imagination for an alternative future for rural life in Korea that values equally the country’s historical inheritance, current realities, and desires for a more equitable future. It is a spatial story that addresses this complex and emergent problem by bringing together the city and the village, humans and nature, individuals and the community, and urban culture and agriculture, and acknowledges the need to shift attention from attempting to solving problems by physical means to changing the mental ecologies that are causing problems in the social and physical world.

This complex and emergent problem cannot be solved in a sustainable way by the common approach of providing technological, structural and infrastructural solutions. A sustainable approach requires that solutions are meaningful to the people for whom they are intended. Arriving at a meaningful approach requires awareness or self-consciousness, not only

of the physical needs of people, but of the social and more importantly the internal world, or mental world, of a population. Internal worlds are the deep assumptions that define a world, or a problem: the world views/paradigms of individuals; and the myths and metaphors of a culture or world at a given time. The world of myth refers to the deep stories, collective archetypes of a culture or epoch, such as seeing a population as a community rather than a statistic, or seeing people as creative resources (Sohail, 1998). World views are the mental structures and discourses, be they cultural or religious, which not only support and legitimate a particular world or problem, but actually constitute how we frame it. Because inner worlds form external worlds, and external worlds create internal worlds (Sohail, 1998, 2013), the way we frame something informs what and how something will be brought into the external world. The internal world is the intangible context, which when it intersects with the conditions of the external world, determines the field of future possibilities from which the physical and social worlds emerge. A sustainable approach is not sustainable if it only addresses physical needs. A truly sustainable approach is one that is relatable to a population because it is grounded in the past, acknowledges the conditions of the present with sufficient nuance for a particular population, and imagines a future that has sufficient and continued meaning to support the difficult task of transforming existing myths, metaphors and narratives necessary to change the pathway to a more desired and equitable future.

The trajectory of the internal world of Korea shifted from the values and world views of Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Catholicism of the dynastic Choson Kingdom (1392-1897), to clashes with the introduction of Protestant Christianity, followed by movements of agrarianism, communism, nationalism and individualism during the rupture and violence of the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), and the nationalism, authoritarianism

in the conflict of the Korean War (1945-1953). The post-Korean War period saw the rise of anti-communist and resurgence of Confucian sentiments in an era of authoritarianism and industrialization (1961-1992) followed by democracy, capitalism and globalization (1992-1997). Neoliberal capitalism continues to privilege heavy industry and high technology and consumerism that has brought brought inequality and division to Korea and with it a rise in the number of people searching for alternatives in intentional communities and the cooperative movement (1997-2017) (Park A., 2013, 2014, 2021a; Paik, 2018; Suh, 2015).

## II. Imagination

An awareness of the internal worlds is important as a pathway to a meaningful and sustainable future, but these intangible forces and values cannot be given form or exist without imagination.

Imagination is not a marginalized or specialized activity of the mind, or an irrational and undisciplined cognitive function. It is not the exclusive purview of artists, or the counter-faculty to reasoning and science. Imagination is involved, to varying degrees, in every cognitive function of humans from perception and deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning to speculation, experimentation and free play. Experiment, speculation and free play have higher degrees of imagination than the paradigm – facts and truths produced by conventional reasoning allow. Imagination is not a flight of fancy, a sophisticated critique of the status quo, or dreaming of Utopias. Imagination is not creativity, although imagination is necessary for creativity. Imagination is a “special form of agency” (Pendleton-Jullian et al., 2018). Imagination is the way we make sense of the world. It is the power or capacity of humans to form internal visual or auditory images

of things and situations (Pendleton-Jullian, 2015). It lies at the center of human cognitive processes, and the cognitive filter through which we interpret our experience (Pelaprat and Col, 2011; Khasnabish and Haiven, 2014). and cognitively order disparate elements of a disorderly world when we see something for the first time. Imagination is the way we “break sense” of the world (Pendleton-Jullian et al., 2018). It is “our capacity to think about “things” that we do not, or cannot directly experience. Imagination informs our actions and is shaped by our actions (Khasnabish and Haiven, 2014).

In the framework of pragmatic imagination, it “both resolves and widens the gaps between what is unfamiliar—new/novel/strange—and what is known.” Pragmatic imagination is a special form of knowing (Pendleton-Jullian, 2015). As conceived of in this investigation, the framework of pragmatic imagination does not exclude conventional epistemology, but expands the framework of what we think we can know and how we can know it. Imagination expands the field of future possibilities that allows for possibilities that lie outside existing mental, social and physical frameworks. Imagination as a form of research lies beyond the limitations of conventional epistemology, which is extraordinarily productive for investigating things that can be known and solving simple problems, but is inadequate for investigating things that cannot be known and for complex and emerging problems. To examine a subject that cannot be known an alternative epistemology of imagination is required. Accepting an alternative epistemology of imagination is not a challenge to conventional epistemology, but crucial for examining complex and emergent problems in a rapidly changing world for which there cannot be a definitive answer, only an ongoing series of responses for a particular moment.



### III. Narrative Fiction

Fictive narratives, whether they are text or drawings give form and create a synthetic image of a future society. They are a tool for exploring things that cannot be known. They are a form of “radical empathy” for defining the kinds of experiences, emotions, social rituals and the settings of daily life in a future scenario. Narrative fiction about the future is probably “the most active experimental laboratory of the world-constructing enterprise” (Doležel, 1998). It is a space of free play where imagination can connect with reality and allows visions to go beyond incremental change.

Fictive narratives are about space, or “spatial stories,” as Michel de Certeau refers to them, “found” or pre-figure the future. Spatial stories “create the field” that precedes the historical realization of social actions that are yet to come. They function as a “fixation,” which means that they do what they say they will do (De Certeau, 1984). This gives spatial stories “distributive power” and “performative force” (Khasnabish and Haiven, 2014). Fictive narratives of a future have the same “decisive role” of creating the ground for future actions. Jürgen Wertheimer, a professor of comparative literature, and his team developed methods that showed a tangible link between futuristic literature and empirical events that was so accurate that it was of interest to the German defense ministry. According to Wertheimer, literature has a “tendency to channel social trends and moods” and writes have a “sensory talent” that allows them to “represent reality in such a way that their readers can instantly visualize a world and recognize themselves inside it. They operate on a plane that is both objective and subjective, creating inventories of the emotional interiors of individual lives throughout history” (Olterman, 2021).

Narrative fiction is a framework that is supported by fictive facts. A fictive fact is a fact that does not exist in past and current temporal frame,

but that describes the qualities of a future world. Fictive facts contribute to the coherence to an imagined future world. A fictive fact is one that does not exist yet, but which is relatable to the realities of the past and present. If the imagined world becomes an empirical reality, a fictive fact can become an objective fact. The validity, or “truth” of a fictive fact lies in the degree to which it is consistent, coherent and believable within the future world that it describes. Fictive facts are a tool for convincing a population of the viability of a possible future world. Fictive facts do not displace objective facts that describe current reality, but exist in the realm of imagination to describe a future world that could become a reality. The notion of a fictive fact challenges conventional epistemology and what is considered to be fact, but like the truth of facts, fictive facts describe a truth in a fictive world (Pedret, 2021).

#### IV. Method

To investigate the subject of a future village, and to make it coherent, relatable and convincing requires a hybrid research method that sustains a believable interplay between fact and fiction, and overlap of the temporal realities of the past, present and future. Investigating the past, present and future each require different methods and produce different kinds of knowledge that are integrated into this fictive rural world. A fictive narrative about the future, if it is to be relatable and convincing requires reexamining, reconfiguring and reevaluating the narratives of the past, and formulating new paradigms and myths as a foundation for reimagining meaningful alternatives to the hegemonic structures, systems, worldviews and myths of the present.

The past of the rural of Korea was investigated by a post-structuralist

history using an adaptation of Causal Layered Analysis from Future Studies to tell the story of the external events and the internal beliefs that describe a history of the rural and changing ideas of community in the modern history of Korea (Sohail, 1998). It is a multi-level history that traces the overlapping and crossing trajectories of external circumstances and internal drives in four layers: key events in Korean modern history, beliefs, rural population, and community spirit beginning in the Joseon Era (1392-1897) to the present. The history of modernization of Korea is one of tensions between the predominant Confucian ideology of the Choson period, followed by rupture and violence of the Japanese colonial period (1910-1945), and then the Korean War (1945-1953). The postwar period began an age of authoritarianism and industrialization (1961-1992) as globalization and the rise of consumerism was introduced to South Korea through normative modernizing policies such as the Globalization Policy (Saegyehwa) of President Kim Young-sam. The rise of inequality in the age of neoliberalism (1997-2017) marked by events like the Asian financial crisis (1997) and the deregulation of the economy and cuts in social welfare required by the IMF. This has left Korea with division and inequality in the present and the privileging of heavy industry and a high technology-based neoliberal economic system (Park A., 2013; 2014, 2021b). The internal world of Korea changed over this period through the shift in values and priorities of Shamanism, Confucianism and Buddhism in the early modern period, to Consumerism and Neoliberal Capitalism, to Democratic Neoliberalism in the present. With these changes came changes in how “community spirit” was viewed from Confucian-based attitude of mutual support and the local community as defining people’s identity in the late 19th century to the development to alternative communities and new economies in the form of cooperative movement to mitigate the ruptures of modernization and the turn to the formation of cooperatives like Hansalim (founded 1988)

and the Hongdong Township cooperatives beginning in the last decades as a means for stabilizing agricultural and rural sectors (1961-1992) (Park A., 2014, 2018, 2021a; Jung and Rösner, 2012). Presently, South Korea has some of the leading cooperatives in the world, such as Hansalim and Dure, which supply alternative systems of production, exchange, and consumption that stress an intimate producer/consumer relationship and an ecology-based culture of living (Park A., 2014).

Interviews were conducted with the residents of Hongdong Township, an agglomeration of organic farms and cooperative-based enterprises in Chungcheongnam Province, 93km south of Seoul (De Remer and Sonnenberg, 2021) and members of Hansalim, Korea's largest consumer cooperative grocery store (Park, A. and Paik, 2021a). Interviews with artists and other cultural producers living in Seoul or abroad which are imagined as being the future CiViZens of CiViChon were also conducted (Park K., 2021a). A straw poll of the values and change in values that a small group of design students from the top research university in Korea Figures 1 and 2. This demographic was chosen because they are part of a demographic in Korea that is increasingly interested in rural lifestyles as an alternative to the increasing disparity between income and cost of living in Seoul, the cultural capital of the country. They are also included because they form a sub-group of an elite but larger demographic of established cultural producers around which the concept of CiViChon. The small sample size (n=5) does not meet criteria of truth demanded by conventional research methodology. Choosing to examine the desires and values existing and future cultural producers, while not comprehensive, is consistent with core concept of CiViChon of creating a village that could attract artists, designers, performers, researchers, architects and other cultural producers to a rural center of cultural production. The results of the straw poll is illustrated in the Value Index and Change in Values Index Figures 1 and 2.

The physical elements of Korean villages including the organizational logic of agricultural land, and the typologies of residential, farm, industrial buildings of Korean villages, was investigated by examining Google Maps, Google Earth, YouTube videos, and a site visit to Hongdong Township. The research of building typologies was translated into architectural drawings of building typology that were the basis for the CiViChon 1.0 masterplan, and a pop-up model to make the project for the exhibition and a wider audience Figures 7, 8 and 9. The site visits to Hongdong Township were pivotal for understanding the influence that the founding values and philosophies that comprise the mental ecology played in determining what is planted in the fields, the amenities and facilities required to support institutions and agricultural education, and the library, cafés, and village archive that provides spaces for social life to thrive. Hongdon Township demonstrated how a village that looks like any other village in Korea hosted an alternative social and mental and spiritual life to address the failed promises of modernization. The values and spiritual foundation, reaffirmed that a deep ecology requires more than imagining the physical world of a future village, but more importantly to specify the mental and social ecologies from which the particular physical world emerges. Thus, for CiViChon 1.0, the three ecologies diagram that describes the mental, social and physical ecologies, which was arrived at through a process of reiterative dialectic inquiry is, for this author, the key to understanding the alternative lifestyle proposed by CiViChon 1.0 Figure 3. The Three Ecologies diagram is a necessary step towards embodying the core concept of CiViChon by defining the three spheres that constitutes human life as a whole, which in turn forms the basis of the particular social and physical forms that the community and village of CiViChon could take Figures 4, 5, 7. The imagined future residents, or CiViZens, and the masterplan and the legend that describes the programs and institutions are a possible future

based on historical trajectories and current realities and trends, to create a fictive village that is relatable and thus believable as a possible future.

The relatability of CiViChon 1.0 as a possible future is crucial if this vision is to convince audiences of a viable and achievable desired future, rather than continuing to crawl incrementally to an unknown future that lacks a vision or desires for a better one than indicated by current trends. CiViChon functions as a visual fictive narrative using Design Fiction and world building as tools for imagining the texture of everyday life in this imagined future (Raven et al., 2015; Raven, 2016). World building describes a process of constructing a coherent world by “designing rich, coherent, highly detailed and scalable contexts across diverse domains” to produce coherent contexts that stories inhabit and for things to happen in (Pendleton-Jullian et al., 2018). CiViChon is an exercise is a sketch of a world that designs the intangible and tangible forms that the environments, buildings and structures of the village could take as a context in which an alternative to the lives that can no longer exist in the current crisis of modernity.

## V. City in a Village: CiViChon

CiViChon 1.0 is a preliminary sketch of a life that reconciles the inequalities between urban and village life by envisioning a rural cultural hub that overlaps the desired features of urban and rural life to not only make it possible, but attractive for urban residents to move to the village either part-time, full-time or periodically. CiViChon is an idea that could be manifested, or not, or adopted and adapted to real and different social, mental and physical contexts. It is a fictive village, on a fictive site, with fictive buildings, populated by future personas. Like all believable fiction it is based on current realities which in this project are the demographics

of the rural and urban in Korea, lived realities, rural histories, the logic of agriculture and settlements in a mountainous topography, existing urban and rural building typologies, and social and cultural patterns of rural Korea. CiViChon 1.0 is based on an internal world that shifts our understanding of reality from binary thinking to non-binary thinking, and from the world conceived in terms of either/or to both/and i.e. objective facts *and* fictive facts, fact *and* fiction, the past *and* present *and* future, and the values and amenities of *both* the city *and* the village. CiViChon 1.0 shifts the focus from solutions to approaches, and from designing things to “designing” the mental and social contexts from which the physical world emerges. CiViChon 1.0 aims to create sustainable and meaningful responses to complex and emergent problems which requires human transformation of changing our internal worlds – our world views, values, myths and metaphors, and deeply held assumptions about modernity, the city and the village. It also requires that we change our methods of thinking and harnessing collective intelligence that is demanded by addressing complex problems. Humans while easily changing the world around them, resist changing themselves, but this is the most impactful agent for ensuring sustainable and meaningful approaches to this and other complex problems.

## VI. Intangible Fictions

The values associated with the village, city and CiViChon 1.0 were investigated by surveying a small sample of students at a Korean university and summarized in the Values Index diagrams. For the city, the most valued amenities and features are financial opportunities, transportation/delivery system, convenience, entertainment and infrastructure. The most

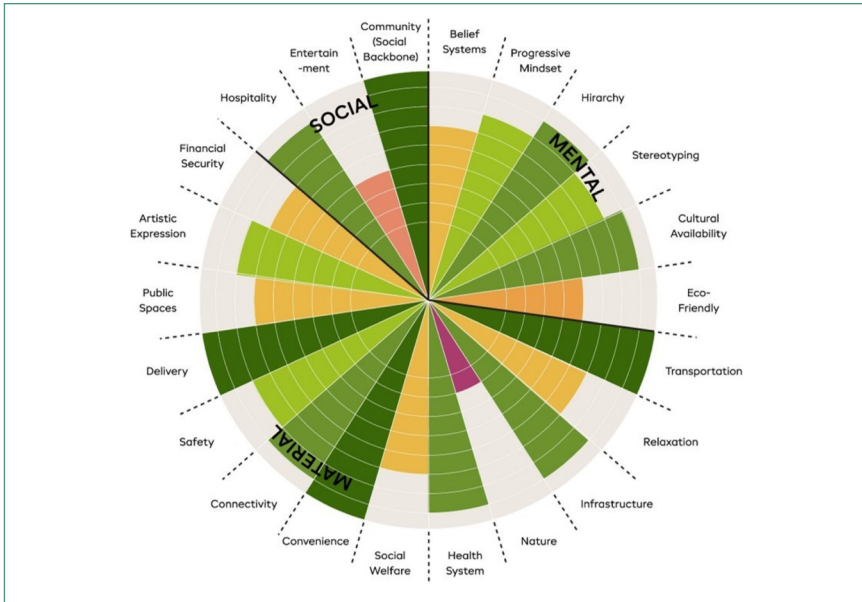


Figure 1a Values Index diagram for the city

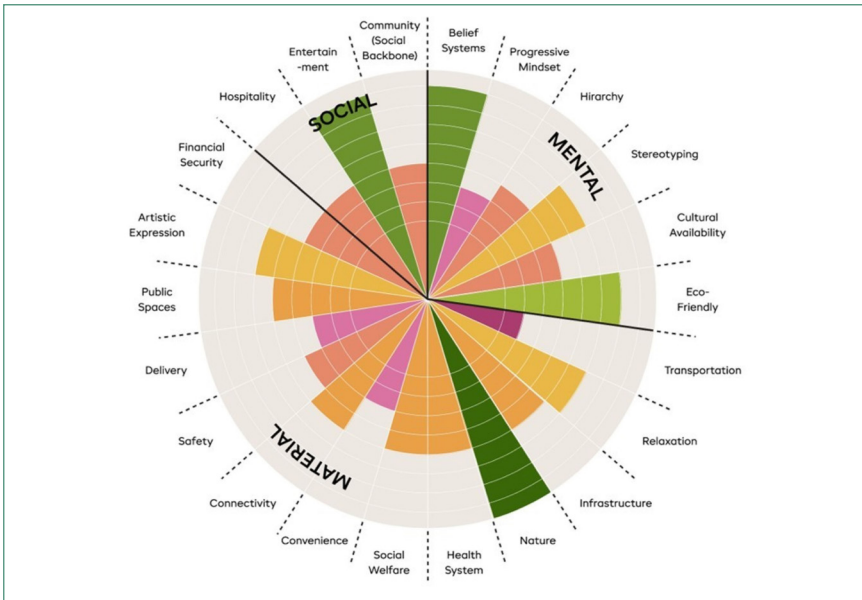
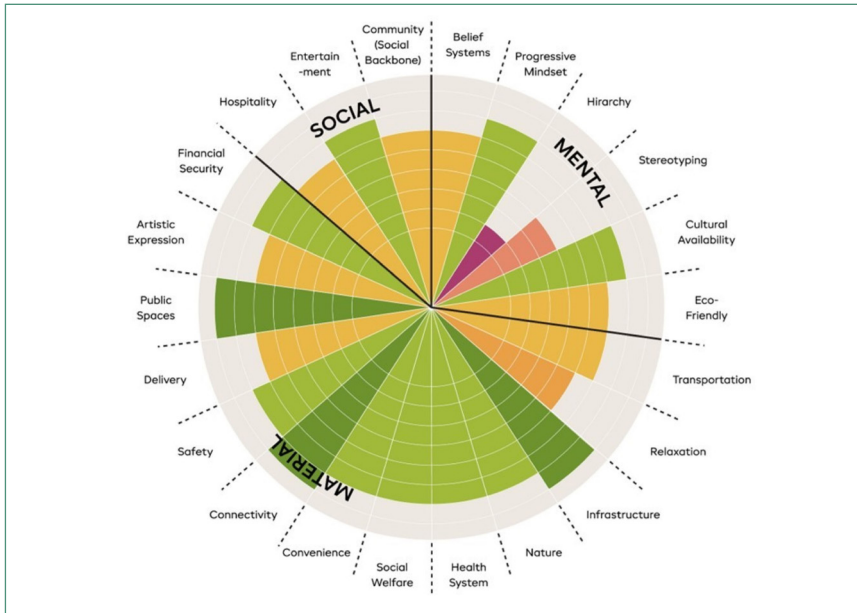


Figure 1b Values Index diagram for the village





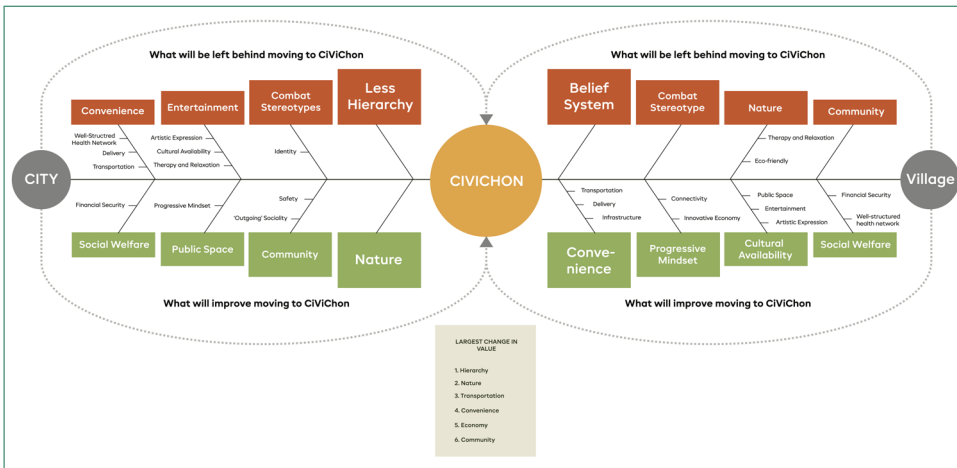
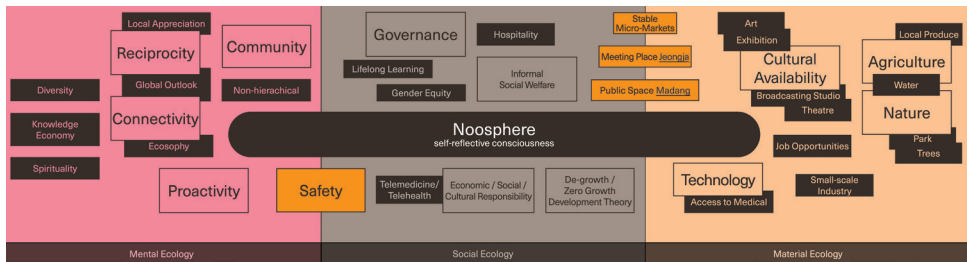


Figure 2 Change in Values Index

CiViChon 1.0 community. In the material realm, they would forego excellent public transportation and high-quality accessible health care facilities, convenience, and delivery services for more nature, public space, bottom-up social welfare, greater artistic expression, and a rural life that could provide greater financial security. The largest change in values were hierarchy, nature, transportation, delivery, convenience, stereotypes, financial security and entertainment.

The Values Index and Change in Values Index along with the interviews and questionnaires of the cultural producers and residents of Hongdong Township, and the site visits were the basis for determining the programs and structures to be accommodated in CiViChon 1.0. For example, the high valuation of nature which was conceived as including greenhouses, fields, the rivers, rice paddies and stables, a shed for shard equipment, new programs for greenhouses, hiking trails, stables, a cherry blossom road, and the focus of projects by various artists; the desire for community led to understanding new enterprises, schools as centers of social life, along with the emerging need for a large scale *madang* or public meeting space,



**Figure 3** The mental, social and material ecologies of CiViChon 1.0

traditional pavilions used by Koreans to meet their friends and family [*jung ja*], a library and village archive, and cafes and restaurants. The needs of urban cultural producers to make and disseminate their work in CiViChon 1.0 led to designated spaces for art and architecture installations, an exhibition space, broadcasting studio, diverse forms of housing, and share studio space.

The mental, social and material ecologies define the domains, or fields of study, that define the qualities and specific characteristics of the world of CiViChon 1.0 Figure 3. The most important domains in the mental ecology of CiViChon 1.0 are reciprocity, connectivity, proactivity and community. The social ecology of CiViChon 1.0 is characterized by self-governance, and cultural capital as an economic engine, and a bottom-up social welfare system and digital technologies. The material domains of CiViChon 1.0 include accessibility to the production and dissemination of culture, agriculture, nature, and technologies for access by digital technologies of specialized medical care in the city, and economic opportunities provided by new small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and accessibility to the production and dissemination of art and culture.

The mental, social and physical ecologies of CiViChon are based on a deeper philosophy of the coosphere, which describes the nature of humans and their relationship with other humans and non-humans. The



Bak Seo-hyun

**Age: 32 | Married – 2 children | Guesthouse Owner | Religious | Thoughtful**

While born in CiViChon, Seo-hyun longed for the city, and decided to make it her home, but as she fell pregnant with her second child her priorities changed. Opposing her husband, she made the move back to CiViChon with her children.

Seo-hyun runs a guesthouse in, meaning her day starts before sunrise as she has to not only tend to her small vegetable garden, but also prepare breakfast for not just her children, but the guests residing there.



Kim Ye-ji

**Age: 23 | Parents & 1 brother | Student | Creative | Ambitious**

Ye-Ji has lived her whole life in CiViChon, working on her history major through online lectures, although she has recently been thinking about changing her major to that of arts and crafts, as she feels it is more in line with what she wants to do in life.

Although having always lived in CiViChon, Ye-Ji has no immediate interest in moving away, she feels connected to the nature the village offers, providing a beautiful canvas for her photography hobby and hopefully, one day, career.



Gabriel Moretti

**Age: 30 | Married | Farmer | Cooperative | Sharing**

While studying in the U.S, Gabriel met his current Korean wife, and ended up setting in Korea. However, while he appreciated the life in the city, he wanted their soon to be born baby to experience a cooperative rather than competitive society, which is why they decided to settle in CiViChon. Gabriel opted into the local agricultural studies with the hopes of one day being able to grow his own crops, but as turned out, it was a lot harder than he had ever imagined, thankfully, the community was very supportive and gladly assisted when struggles arose.



Kim Hyun-ji

**Age: 25 | Parents | Student | Curious | Ambitious**

While Hyun-Ji does not reside in CiViChon, she is still closely connected to the community, not just because she grew up in CiViChon, but equally because she makes it a priority to return whenever she gets time off during her studies at KAIST.

Hyun-Ji's research at the university is centered around forwarding the agricultural processes utilized in CiViChon, an area she knows all too well from her uprising, and equally, where she can identify a lot of areas of improvement.



Kim Cheolmin

**Age: 55 | Married – 2 children | Doctor | Charismatic | Father Figure**

Cheolmin grew up in the countryside and therefore knew it for good or for worse, as he experienced the death of his mother first hand, as the village was incapable of providing the necessary care she required. Even then, he always longed for the city, so Cheolmin decided to move to Seoul to undertake his medical studies and eventual, medical practice. But despite being content with his life in Seoul, he could not forget about the life he had left behind, and how he had lost his own mother. Cheolmin therefore decided to move to CiViChon to open his own clinic.

Figure 4 Short descriptions of fictive personas of some future residents of Civichon 1,0



**Bak Yong-gyu**

**Age: 72 | Married – 4 children | Farmer | Conservative | Diligent**

Yong-Gyu has spent his entire life in CiViChon, he was born there, and plan on one day dying there, it is where he belongs and where he feels at peace, yet, his life is not without problems.

Yong-Gyu is the father of 4, and has to work hard to support his children (who all reside in Seoul), yet, he manages, while taking care of the village at the same time. By many, he is considered the head of the village, and people look to him for guidance.



**Amelia Brown**

**Age: 25 | Parents | Researcher | Adventurous | Compassionate**

Amelia grew up in a small rural village in New Zealand, so when she had the chance to visit Seoul as part of her agricultural studies, she were excited beyond belief. However, as the months passed in the bustling city, she came to realize just how much she missed the countryside.

As luck would have it, Amelia was offered the chance to move to CiViChon to continue her research,(hoping to revitalize part of the nearby forest) while teaching at a small agricultural college in the village.



**Kim Byeong-chul**

**Age: 58 | Married – 4 children | Farmer | Conservative | Diligent**

Byeong Chul moved to CiViChon before his daughter was born, giving up the conveniences of city life in favor of securing a safe and comfortable upbringing for his daughter. Byeong Chul used to be a teacher, but unfortunately he was unable to make a living off teaching alone, and had to pick up agricultural work in the village to make ends meet, despite this, Byeong Chul very much appreciates his new way of living.



**Sim Ki-ho**

**Age: 29 | Parents – 1 sister| Police Officer | Cheerful | Courageous**

Ki-Ho was born in the city; however, his grandparents lived in CiViChon, Ki-Ho did not do well at school, so when he was discharged from the army at the age of 25, he decided to pursue his childhood dream of becoming a police officer, which he succeed at 3 years later, when he was assigned to his grandparents village of CiViChon.

In CiViChon Ki-ho mostly deals with minor administrative and civil complaints, and a such has a lot of time on his hands, to mediate between existing residents and new people wanting to move to CiViChon.



**Kim Okja**

**Age: 78 | Widowed – 3 children| Retired | Friendly | Caring**

Okja was born in CiViChon and spent her entire life farming without ever visiting the outside world, despite this, she is content as CiViChon has a very special place in her heart. All of Okja's children have opted to leave CiViChon to pursue higher education, thankfully, they now send money back to her, ass nowadays Okja is too old and weak to work.

To combat the loneliness Okja recently obtained a brown cat she rightfully named Potato.

Figure 4 (continued)



Figure 5a Detailed Fictive Persona of a future resident of Civichon 1.0

Noosphere, as it was conceived by Teilhard de Chardin, is this grounding philosophy for CiViChon 1.0. The noosphere, is the next and highest evolutionary step after the transformations of inanimate matter and biological life with the geosphere and the biosphere, by the evolutionary development of human cognition that is dominated by the mind together with networked technologies that is capable of fundamentally transforming





Figure 5b Detailed Fictive Persona of a future resident of Civichon 1,0

the biosphere (Noosphere, 2021; Svoboda and Nabert, 1999). By mind Teilhard de Chardin means the evolution to *complexity consciousness* with is a self-reflective consciousness that is the ground or foundation for developing all levels of reciprocal relationships between people, between people and non-human worlds, and between the city and the village. Underlying and informing the tone of these ecologies is the philosophy of self-reflective





that values local and global knowledge equally. The kinds of relationships between the eleven CiViZens is articulated on the relationship diagram Figure 6.

## VII. Tangible Fictions

The masterplan of the village could easily be misunderstood as being a representation for how CiViChon 1.0 would be organized Figure 8. CiViChon 1.0, with the exception of the public space, looks like any village in Korea. This masterplan is just one possible form that the idea of CiViChon can take. The masterplan functions as a “spatial story.” It is *a* possible organization of the village and not *the* definitive organization CiViChon 1.0. It can take any physical form making the physical form of the village not as important as the programs that inhabit the buildings and sites. This masterplan shows how for now, non-descript volumes can contain existing village life and new programs and activities for a more diversified social and economic communities. The architecture in this masterplan gives physical form to the values of CiViChon 1.0 described in the three ecologies diagram and the legend articulates even more specifically those values on which CiViChon 1.0 is founded by the renaming existing institutions and introduction new ones. New programs, for example address gender equality and domestic violence in this future village with the Ch’oe Yong-sin Center for Women, in honor of a female rural critic from the Japanese colonial period, and the police station which has been renamed as the Center for Non-Violent Conflict Resolution. Accommodation for housing cultural producers and spaces the production, installation and dissemination are also introduced to the village. As the most the tangible expression of the idea of CiViChon the masterplan with

its overlapping meanings from the past, present and future makes the idea more relatable, and hence more convincing to people—rural and urban—who might resist contemplating a new hybrid culture.

## 1. Physical Ecology

The masterplan of Civichon 1.0 is based on current realities such as the topography and profiles of Korean mountains; the massing and typologies of rural and urban buildings Figure 7; locating villages near a water source; the history smallholder agricultural plots that spans centuries, and logic of fields bordered by the slopes of mountains; the particular features of sunken rice paddies separated by elevated paths that are sometimes planted for historical and symbolic reasons; greenhouses that grow crops that cater to an increasing appetite for organic and non-native exotic produce of strawberries and blueberries. Current social life continues to be

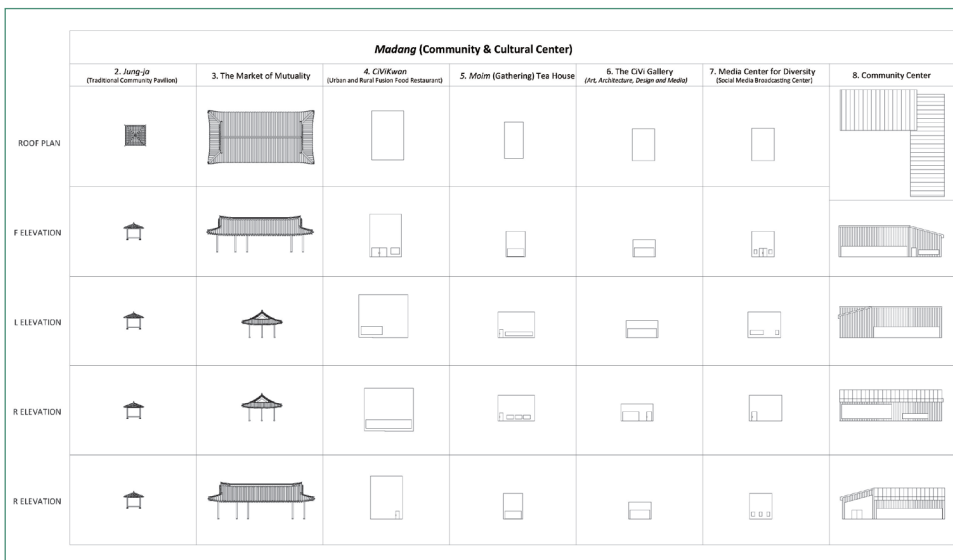
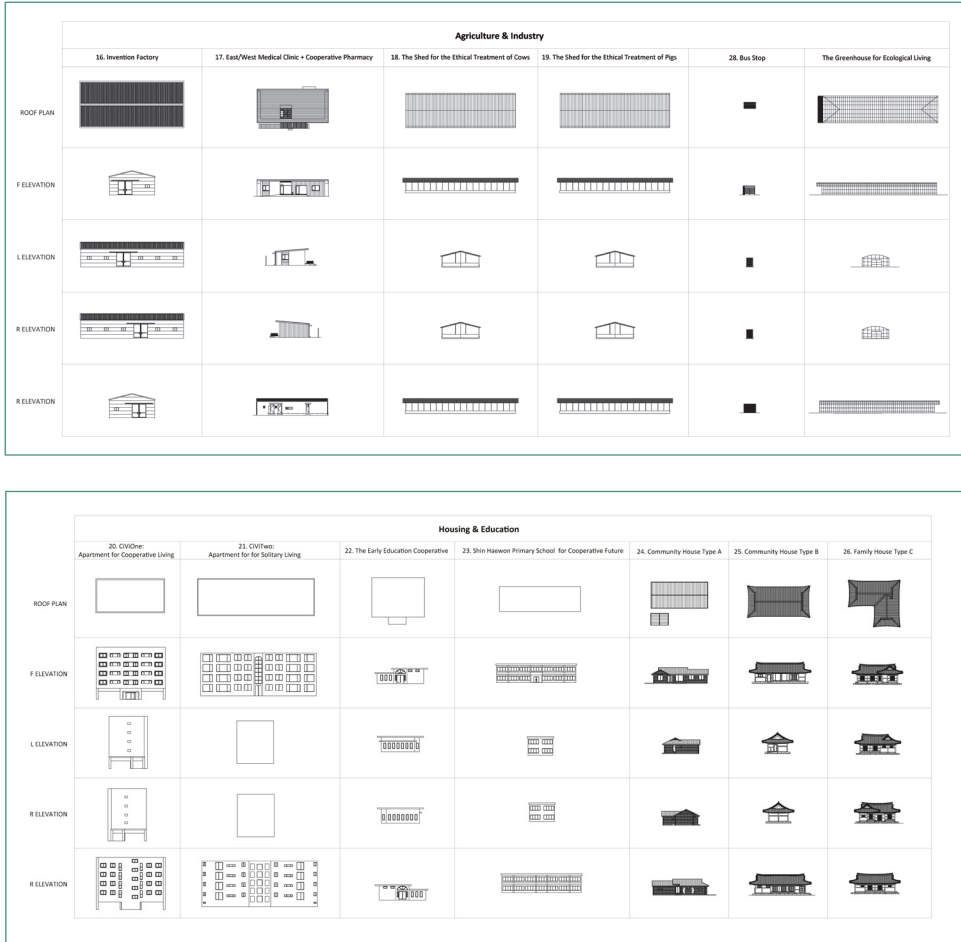


Figure 7 Building typologies of rural and urban Korea

Figure 7 (continued)



played out in domestic space of houses in the exterior courtyard (*madang*) of traditional Korean houses (*banok*), and the traditional community pavilions (*jung-ja*) scattered around the fields and village continue to be the locus for informal and casual gatherings.

The everyday needs of CiViChon 1.0 residents are met by a supermarket which is conceived as a place of cooperative production and consumption; the police station/post office is called the Center for Non-Violent Conflict



Figure 8 A possible masterplan for the fictive village of CiViChon 1.0

Resolution and Communication Office; the East West Medical Clinic and Pharmacy support diverse medical practices; houses and apartments in the form of three- and four-storey “villa” buildings for individual and collective living. The Sheds for the Ethical Treatment of Livestock, Sheds for Collective Farm Equipment, and the Choi Jaeun Institute of Forest Regeneration, and the CiViChon Seed Library, and a space in a refurbished barn to accommodate volunteer residents, reflect the value of reciprocity between humans and non-human world.

Urban migrants, discouraged by the expensive real estate market of Seoul are attracted to rural living by the lower cost of housing. Paired with



**Figure 9** Infopanel with history of modernization of South Korea (left) and future mental and social ecologies (right), and pop-up model, masterplan and legend. *CiViChon: City in a Village*, Vienna Biennale for Change 2021, Climate Care: Reimagining Shared Planetary Futures, Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna, May 28 - October 3, 2021. (Graphics: Sunhee Yang; Model: Giacomo Faella; Masterplan: Spatial Strategies Lab, Seoul National University; Photo: © Georg Mayer/ MAK 2021)

digital infrastructure and delivery services which are basic infrastructural requirements for urban dwellers living in CiViChon 1.0, would allow off-site employment for Seoul-based companies and access to urban markets. All residents could benefit from opportunities provided by the present of secondary industries in the form of SMEs, such as CiViChon's Publishing House, and the Invention Lab and Design Factory that could supplement farming income for some and provide full-time employment for others (Shoji et al., 2019).

## 2, Social Ecology

CiViChon 1.0 accommodates new kinds of social life: public space modelled on the *madang* of Korean houses are conceived as a space for governance, commerce in the form of open-air markets, and culture in the

form of art installations and performances. This central meeting space of the village is surrounded by buildings that house cultural programs such as the CiVi Gallery for Art, Architecture and Design, the Media Center that produces and disseminates social media, podcasts, YouTube videos, and radio programming, and the Center for Contemporary and Traditional Performances, Film, Theater and Music. Supporting these functions are shared studio spaces for artists, architects, designers, and media artist. A fusion restaurant and coffee bar/tea house bring urban social spaces to the village. The social space of governance in the village is given space in the Center for Participatory Democracy and Community Center. Social issues that affect village life today such as gender inequality, women's rights and domestic violence are recognized and given space in the Ch'oe Yong Sin Center for Women (named after a female rural activist from the Japanese colonial period).

### 3. Mental Ecology

There are designated sites in the village for art, architecture and installations and other media, a residency program to attract cultural producers. Spaces are provided for schools, a Knowledge Hub (library and study rooms), Publishing House, and research in the form of an Invention Lab and Design factory that is "open to children and adults for teaching design and building tools that are useful to the community" (Park, K., 2021a), and an Onggin Kitchen and Fermentation Lab:

Onggin Kitchen is a cooking and distribution community using Korean preservative methods such as fermentation and drying food. Onggin implies storing food in *ongies* which are breathable ceramics. It is comparable to canning but more beneficial and healthier than sealing food in a jar. In OK,

village people can make *makeolli*, *chungukjang*, *kimchi*, yogurt, sourdough bread, and dried *namul*, etc. OK is not only a research lab as a culture bank that keeps the starting cultures safe and examines them. It also works as a recipe bank that develops dishes using fermented food. This place functions as a pub, youtube production studio, and retailer for people who visit CiViChon, as well. OK is a place where other people hang out with CiviChon people learning about fermentation and sharing wine and food. People can contribute to OK in many ways and share food by points rewarded by contribution hours or provided produces. People in the village can volunteer as sales associates for the retail department or as instructors and workers at the cooking studio, and more. Volunteers can use working hours as contribution hours which can be exchanged for products from OK (Park K., 2021a).

The Onggin Kitchen is an example of how new programs in CiViChon 1.0 integrate historical and new knowledge, and meet the mental, social and physical needs of a diverse population.

Financial stability for rural life to support resident with different economic situations and stages of life is a key factor in the sustainability of CiViChon 1.0. CiViChon 1.0 extends the current “agro-ecological” model of revitalization (Kim and Jamal, 2015), into an agro-ecological-cultural which can attract residents and visitors the could stimulate a tertiary-sector economy and with it, new markets and alternative forms of income. With the focus of CiViChon 1.0 on knowledge, developing current and traditional knowledge and disseminating the products of knowledge through gallery, media production and performance space could be extended to using the farm as an education center for visiting students, resident students as is the case in Hongdong village and as it is being developed in the China’s massive rural revitalization. Rural revitalization, if there is no niche product, or factory, or tourism, or visionary leader is that these strategies are still based on, and are at the mercy of a modern market economy (Standaert,

2020).

The more profound that designing buildings and products is the problem of re-thinking rethinking modern market economy. Donut Economics is an example of a new economic mindset that envisions sustainable development as a regenerative and distributive economy based on a social foundation and limited by an ecological ceiling (Raworth, 2017; DEAL, 2021). Another particularly relevant example for how internal worlds can re-form external worlds is the approach of described in a case study of a business venture that developed new corporate ethics based on Bhutanese Buddhist values that transformed extractive business culture to one of “strategic interdependence” between local producers and an international company that directs the benefits of the enterprise back to the local community (Sonnenberg, 2021). More than designing buildings and things, what needs to be designed in this era of existential crises are the mental ecologies – the values and paradigms and beliefs towards greater reciprocity and diversity that would transform the relationships between humans and between humans and all beings and things that are not human that will in turn transform all forms of production be it agricultural, cultural, business, or education.

## VIII. Concluding Remarks

CiViChon is an idea for regenerating a rural Korea by encouraging urban-based cultural producers—artists, thinkers, architects, designers, performing artists, theater, academics—to move to a rural village. As the first iteration of CiViChon, Civichon 1.0 is an act of imagination that synthesizes village life of the past, present and a possible more desirable future. This fictive village embodies the internal and intangible values and



cultural, economic, and political commitments of a desired village that are usually not taken into consideration, but which are crucial for sustainable and meaningful approach to the problem of the urban-rural divide. While CiViChon is an idea for how reciprocity of agriculture and cultural life could transform rural villages, it points to the need to transform ourselves to becoming more aware of the values, beliefs, paradigms, worldviews, myths and metaphors that need to change if we are to recognize the intimate relationship between all things and people, and the physical and non-physical aspects of reality that are fundamental to the meaningful sustainability of rural life in the short and long-term. It is the call for transforming ourselves that makes this strategy to rural revitalization relevant in any context in an aging rural Asia.

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