

## **INVESTIGATING "THE SIMPLE LIFESTYLE"**

I started my research on what I call "the simple lifestyle" at the end of the 1980's. In my childhood I had wanted to become a scientist, but later I became aware of how our lives within modern society affected others and the environment in countless ways. 100 years ago the pioneering atomic physicists were mostly pacifists who believed their work would serve humankind. Yet when America dropped the atom bomb, many of them were close to suicide. I realized that as a scientist I would have little control over the repercussions of my work.

Instead, I chose to minimize my harm toward others by taking a path of responsibility: to learn how to reproduce the basic necessities of my life, which are delegated to others in contemporary society. If we specialize in a given profession it means that we only have a fragmented account of how we effect our environment. The other parts are in other hands. Within the modern world, it is impossible to live a responsible life.

Dependency and delegating responsibility to others are one and the same. The more people quit their manual work in primary production, the more machines took their place. On the one hand the use of machines and on the other hand the human working outside of agriculture made us reliant on fuel and resources we couldn't provide for ourselves.

As I moved toward establishing independence from such resources, I turned my attention to how humans leverage their available power resources. Humans can work for livelihood with simple hand tools or with extended use of technology, which increases input of energy. My theoretical results were entirely different from mainstream assessments that commonly espouse the benefits of any and all technological advances. For over a decade I focused exclusively on self-sufficiency practices. The experience proved my theoretical conclusions.

In the beginning I presumed that if I were to combine contemporary knowledge and ancient facilities, it would be much easier for me to live in self-sufficiency than for people 200 years prior. Step by step I lost this view. Old ways might appear clumsy, but they are often more efficient than modern solutions. Engineers have developed more efficient ovens, devices and processes, but they have forgotten the Whole, which is not calculable.

My booklet "Foundations of our life" contains my reflections about human labour, money and energy from the self-sufficiency standpoint. It can be downloaded at <http://omavaraopisto.fi/artikkelit/>.

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## TECHNICAL PROGRESS IS AN ILLUSION

**SORRY,...**

Humans and the environment cannot coexist if the majority of the world's population is working outside of primary production.

So-called "energy efficient" technologies do not account for energy use in a broader context.

If the purpose of work is basic subsistence, most technologies are inefficient when compared to the capabilities of the human body.

Advanced technologies effect significant changes in the structure of society, human labour, and our psychological well-being. These effects are complex and often unpredictable. This overrides even the theoretical advantages of technology.

Money transactions and energy transfer are closely interrelated. One underwrites the other's uncontrolled behaviour. Neither can be changed in separation without affecting an immediate collapse of both.

**...BUT,...**

Given the precarious nature of contemporary society, one way we can minimize catastrophe is by creating decentralized grassroots solutions for basic subsistence. They increase our autonomy and are more likely to avoid violence.

Governments are unable to decentralize their functioning because they essentially rely on resource exploitation. In times of crisis, these governments will heighten their power over people and tend toward totalitarianism.

While global communication is inherently unsustainable, it can contribute to an alternative unfolding of history.

**...DO YOU HAVE A GARDEN?**

## **PRACTICAL REMARKS ABOUT DEGROWTH**

The fundamental block to social change is not our lack of knowledge about global problems.

Unfortunately, a return to rural-based existence and primary production is equated with an impoverished lifestyle.

A change to the society also necessitates changes to our social standing within it. Most of us resist change until the very end out of the fear we will lose our place in the social hierarchy.

People in acknowledged positions of power will want to ensure their positions in the midst of any potential social upheaval. Such individuals tend to prefer to be the oversee others whom they expect to do the “dirty work” of social change.

We should not distinguish between “handworkers” and “headworkers.” Self-sufficiency is an intellectual challenge also for the headworker.

Current systems of government have gone through a political “evolution” over hundreds of years. They are optimized to efficiently control large populations of individuals. If this were not the case, these governments would have collapsed long ago.

The belief, that fundamental systemic change is possible within already-existent political channels ensures the dominant society’s continuity — regardless of the specific individuals involved.

Job and career specialization are not necessarily related to increased productivity. A division of labour instead ensures a complete dependence between individuals, which disallows them to leave contemporary society.

Let us examine our assumptions of political processes. We must allow for the possibility that what we believe is resistance to injustice is in fact disastrous support of it.

If you pay taxes and redirect your personal resources back toward the system, it really doesn’t matter what you are thinking.

Creating independence from social services, trade and food supply will reliably minimize our contribution to an exploitive system.

Rediscovering the simple life is not as difficult as we believe. Learning back to the roots demands less efforts than learning skills for life in an abstract society.

**YOU DON’T NEED TO BE RAMBO TO GET STARTED!**