

# Climactic Social Systems\*

Economic themes of "Plenty" and of "Scarcity" exist in parallel through history, and evolve on successive levels or spirals of civilization, reflecting how the Earth moves in space, circling the sun on its rotation around the galaxy. A "**climax human culture**" exists when stresses of competition and conflict are minimized by gifting and sharing, and by multi-faith expressions of spirituality in agreements such as the "**reciprocity ethic**" (e.g., Golden Rule, Wiccan Rede) and the concept of "**God/dess is Light.**"

\* The term "climactic social system" is from: Kenneth Boulding. 1970. *Economics as a Science*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

## Second Climax Human Culture:

Affirming the individual through collaborative action; the return of economic commons such as "geonomics;" multiple decentralized sources of energy; multi-faith and multi-cultural society

### Plenty Paradigm: Gifting and Sharing

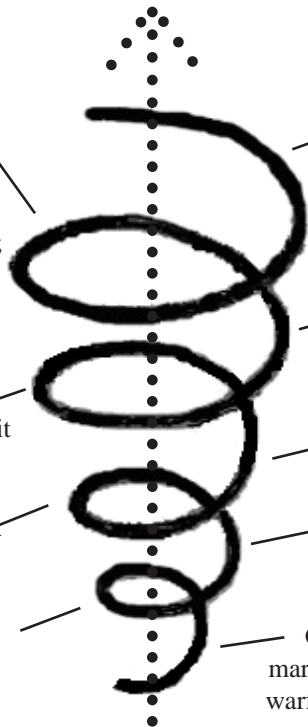
**Time-Based Economies of Labor-Gifting** replaces the monetary system by de-commodifying domestic services in cohousing, ecovillages, community land trusts, collectives, cooperatives and other intentional communities;

**Time-Based Economies of Labor-Sharing** replaces the monetary system through income-sharing and community-owned businesses

**Ideals of "inner light" and "individual election"** arise with the Reformation, Free Spirit and Anabatist movements in Europe

**Christianity merges monotheism and dualism, and sponsors forms of communalism** in response to or despite the evils of empire

**New religions and the first communal societies** appear in response to or despite the evils of early city-state civilization



### Scarcity Paradigm: Exchanging and Taking

**Globalism:** Fossil-fuel-based economy feeding climate change and conflict between North & South, East & West, and between Christian, Islamic and Jewish fundamentalisms

**Nationalism:** Mercantilism grows into liberal market capitalism with the "enclosure of the commons" and "Protestant work ethic"

**Feudalism:** The state as a tool of the Church as in the Holy Roman Empire

**Empire:** Centralization of wealth, Roman legal concept of "dominium" or property law, emperors as gods

**City-State:** Inventions of money, markets, slave-labor economies, constant warfare, and religion as a tool of the state

## First Climax Human Culture:

Primitive tribal gifting and sharing with forms of partnership or egalitarian culture, and forms of polytheistic and monotheistic spirituality

## Vacation Credits in Labor-Quota Systems

This invention by Kat Kinkade at Twin Oaks Community creates an economic system replacing that of monetary economics, applying utopian theory to the routines of daily life, forever changing communal theory and experience.

Group Affirmation:

**From All According to Intent,  
to All According to Fairness**

Individual Affirmation:

**From Each According to Ability,  
to Each According to Need**

# Gifting and Sharing Living the Plenty Paradigm in Cohousing and Communal Society

This brochure is a short version of the 64-page document by the same title, downloadable as PDF file from: [www.CultureMagic.org](http://www.CultureMagic.org)  
A. Allen Butcher, February, 2007

## PLENTY PARADIGM time-based economy:

- **GIFTING (pure altruism)** one-way, from-one-to-one or one-to-many (benevolence, mutual aid, solidarity), involving giving property or labor (time) as private-to-private or private-to-common (labor-gifting is a time-based economy) e.g., cohousing
- **SHARING (rational altruism)** from-many-to-many or multiplicity (attune, harmony, unity, integration), involving common property and/or labor systems (labor-quota or fair-share time-based economies) e.g., fair-share systems, and egalitarian communal societies using labor credit systems

## SCARCITY PARADIGM debt-based economy:

- **EXCHANGING (reciprocal altruism)** two-way (barter, trade, selling), involving the exchange of private property or labor (may be either debt-based economy using money or time-based economy as with labor exchanges, as the latter is sometimes mixed with alternative currencies) e.g., time dollars
- **TAKING (anti-altruism)** from-others-to-one, involving common-to-private or private-to-private (competition, possessiveness, selfishness, usury, greed), facilitated by the monetary system (a debt-based economy as money is created by lending)

## Essential Aspects of the Vacation-Credit Labor System—Developed at Twin Oaks Community

- **The labor-quota** is the minimum amount of work which members agree to contribute to the community as a requirement of membership. Members accumulate labor credits at the rate of one credit per hour of work, then quota (e.g., 40 hours/wk) is subtracted from member's personal labor credit accounts at the end of the week, resulting in a running balance. This is "**labor accounting**."
- **Labor supply** = quota x number-of-members. Labor supply is divided among managerial labor budgets. Adjustments include lower personal quota for sickness, pension (subtract 1 credit/yr for each year over age 49), leaves-of-absence, etc
- **Labor budgeting** involves annual planning processes (Trade-Off Game) with review cycles involving members deciding what tasks are included in the labor system. This sets the amount of the **labor-quota**. Members agree on what work is "**creditable**," or that when completed adds credits to their personal accounts as "**done labor**." This may be only cleaning work or only income-producing labor, or may include hundreds of tasks.
- **Members indicate preferences** from the list of creditable tasks, and get a weekly "**labor sheet**."
- **Working under quota** results in deficits, or being in the "**labor hole**," which must be made up by working "**over quota**," for a person to remain in good standing and maintain their membership.
- **Working over-quota** results in the accumulation of "**vacation credits**" which may be used for on-site vacations or when traveling, or given as **PSCs**.
- **Labor credits are only transferable** according to special agreements, such as "personal service credits" (**PSCs**) involving the use of vacation credits given to others for services provided.
- **Labor credits are only used to purchase items** according to special agreements, usually involving over-quota production in community businesses for acquiring commodities to be used as gifts.

## Motivations for Labor-Gifting and Labor-Sharing

In the labor-sharing economy, encouragement and reward for participation requires creative methods for expressing group affirmation and appreciation for the time and skills contributed by individuals. Since there is no monetary motivation for work in the time

economy, forms of positive reinforcement for contributing work may include:

- personal satisfaction for doing work that is valued and appreciated by others, and which contributes to the common good,
- recognition by other members for each person's work, offered publicly or personally, perhaps in creative ways,

• knowing that other members are also doing the best quality work they can for the community, with a resulting esprit de corps, sense of group awareness, appreciation and commitment, and

### Happiness is Labor-Sharing

From 1966 until about 1976, Walden House, Twin Oaks and East Wind pursued the fabled "variable-credit," until realizing that in the labor-quota economy members are happiest with "all labor valued equally."

• knowing that other members are contributing a similar amount of, or quantity of work for the good of the whole, due to the "labor-quota," decreases resentment and burnout, the latter being a loss of the intention originally inspiring the individual, due to the daily effort required to maintain commitment and participation.

## Types of Gifting and Sharing Economies and of Exchange Economies

### Gifting and Sharing Economies (Plenty Paradigm, Time Economies):

- **Labor-Gifting** - no minimum labor requirement (**pure altruism**, from-one-to-others or one-way)
- **Labor-Sharing** - requires a labor contribution (from-many-to-many)
  - » **Labor-Quota Systems** - flexible hour commitments using labor accounting (**rational altruism**)
  - » **Fair-Share Systems** (anti-quota systems) - labor requirement with no accounting, often but not necessarily with gender-specific work roles

### Exchange Economies (Scarcity Paradigm):

- **Labor-Exchange** (time economy) - hour accounting used as trading commodity (**reciprocal altruism**)
- **Barter Economy** - item-for-item or "indirect barter" using mediums of exchange such as wampum, tobacco, chocolate, precious metals or stones
- **Monetary Economy** - currencies: paper, coin, electronic or digital (may be backed by a commodity)

**In sharing economies fair-share is to labor-quota, as barter is to money in exchange economies.**

### Sharing Theory:

- Rational Altruism
- Intentional Hand
- Mutual Advantage
- Law of Intent and Fairness
- Multi-Faith Reciprocity Ethic and the Spirit of Communalism

### Economic Consent

As economic systems are merely agreements made, changing between exchange and sharing economies simply involves **removing our consent from one system and giving it to the other**. Each is described by opposing theories.

### Exchange Theory:

- Rational Self-Interest (Adam Smith)
- Invisible Hand (Adam Smith)
- Comparative Advantage (David Ricardo)
- Law of Supply and Demand (Ricardo)
- Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (Max Weber)