ME-04 Forrest Landry's small-group process and the Game B milieu

Introduction: The Metacrisis and the Architecture of the Third Attractor

The contemporary discourse surrounding institutional failure, existential risk, and the necessity for civilizational redesign is frequently encapsulated in the term "metacrisis." This concept, popularized by theorists within the Consilience Project and the broader Game B milieu, describes a planetary state where existing mechanisms of coordination are structurally insufficient to manage exponential technological acceleration and cascading ecological failures[1]. The metacrisis is characterized by multipolar traps—frequently analogized to the mythological figure of Moloch—wherein rational actors competing for localized advantages inevitably generate catastrophic global outcomes[3]. Under this framework, legacy governance models, encompassing representative democracy, free-market capitalism, and centralized authoritarianism, are viewed as inherently self-terminating[4].

Within this intellectual ecosystem, social philosopher Daniel Schmachtenberger introduced the concept of the "Third Attractor"[1]. According to Schmachtenberger's modeling, the First Attractor represents chaotic civilizational collapse resulting from uncoordinated multipolar competition. The Second Attractor represents a dystopic, technologically enabled authoritarian control system designed to forcefully coordinate human behavior and prevent the First Attractor. The Third Attractor is posited as the only viable pathway forward: a regenerative, highly coordinated, yet strictly non-coercive global society that aligns technological capacity with ecological and social well-being[1]. Achieving the Third Attractor necessitates the wholesale reinvention of collective sense-making and choice-making[4].

To actualize this theoretical state, various aligned philosophers and systems engineers have proposed novel organizational architectures. Chief among these are Forrest Landry's Ephemeral Group Process (EGP), Jim Rutt and Jordan Hall's Game B protocol, Bonnitta Roy's Open Participatory Organization (OPO), and Hanzi Freinacht's metamodern political framework outlined in *The Listening Society*[7]. This report rigorously evaluates these proposed governance models, isolates their testable mechanics from their philosophical aspirations, grounds them against historical and empirical antecedents—such as the Athenian demes, Quaker consensus practice, and Gerard Endenburg's Sociocracy—and assesses their structural vulnerability to capture by actors exhibiting the dark-triad traits of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy.

Forrest Landry's Ephemeral Group Process (EGP)

Philosophical Foundations: An Immanent Metaphysics

The Ephemeral Group Process, sometimes published under the moniker of the Small Group Method, was designed by systems engineer and philosopher Forrest Landry, alongside software

engineer Justin Olguin and educator Chris Eddy[7]. The process is presented as a novel algorithmic architecture for collective choice-making, expressly designed to scale governance from intimate interpersonal groups to civilizational sizes by structurally prohibiting the formation of static hierarchies[7].

The mechanics of EGP are deeply rooted in Landry's foundational philosophical text, *An Immanent Metaphysics* (originally circulated circa 2009 and revised through 2023)[12]. Landry's metaphysics establishes a triadic structure for human relations and coordination, dividing them into three distinct domains. The first domain is power, defined as coercion and control, which produces compliance but fails to generate mutual understanding. The second domain is transaction, defined as exchange and negotiation, which produces temporary agreement but inherently relies on the continuous mutual benefit of the parties involved. The third domain is care, defined as genuine mutual concern for the intrinsic well-being of the other, which Landry argues is the sole domain capable of producing the systemic insight and wisdom required to solve existential-scale problems[7].

In Landry's ethics of choice, universal ethics are achieved when action is guided by self-chosen principles of justice and reciprocity that transcend any particular social contract, functioning as an architectural specification that prevents the accumulation of long-term grievances[12]. EGP translates this metaphysics into a governance methodology by attempting to completely eradicate the domain of power from the decision-making apparatus, actively suppress the domain of transaction, and structurally mandate the domain of care[7].

Mechanics of the Small Group Method

EGP operates through a strict three-step algorithmic rotation designed to facilitate what Landry terms "holographic governance"[7].

In the first step, termed "Gather & Inquire," small groups consisting of four to six individuals (scaling up to a maximum base unit of sixteen) gather around a shared, transformative question. An individual acting as an "inquiry coach" guides the conversation[7]. The rules for who speaks are not governed by parliamentary procedure or strict time limits, but rather by the behavioral mandate that all communication must orient from genuine mutual care. If the inquiry coach notices participants slipping into advocacy, debate, transactional negotiation, or power dynamics, it is their primary task to gently intervene and restore the orientation of care[7].

The formation of proposals in EGP is fundamentally different from traditional governance. EGP strictly prohibits voting[7]. Proposals do not form through the drafting of legislation or the building of majorities. Instead, participants work toward a convergent, emergent understanding.

In the second step, "Dissolve & Reform," the structural core of the methodology is activated. Once a small group has generated insights regarding the shared question, the group is entirely dissolved. Participants are then algorithmically remixed into new configurations with different community members[7].

In the third step, "Converge & Discover," the insights from previous sessions cross-pollinate as participants carry information into their new groups. Because the community's collective understanding becomes distributed across all parallel sessions, every part of the network eventually contains information about the whole. The architects claim this allows the system to

bypass the Dunbar threshold—the cognitive limit of approximately 150 stable human relationships—and scale infinitely[7].

The system claims to run three governance modes simultaneously. Within the small group sessions, it operates by *consensus*, requiring emergent collective understanding. In the facilitation layer, it operates by *meritocracy*, where individuals with deeper understanding of the framework contribute to question formation and coaching. In the participation layer, it operates by *democracy*, as the ephemeral group composition ensures every community member's perspective is mandatorily integrated[7].

Evaluation: Testable Claims versus Empirical Reality

To rigorously evaluate EGP, one must separate the philosophical aspirations of the architects from the empirical data generated by real-world application.

Regarding what the arrangement's own people say it does, the architects claim that EGP is inherently uncapturable and incorruptible because it maintains no persistent structural hierarchy. By continuously dissolving and reforming the nodes of communication, they argue that power cannot accrue to specific individuals, rendering the system impervious to authoritarian takeover[4].

However, looking at what the record shows it actually did, the empirical evidence for EGP is exceptionally thin and entirely preliminary. The developers note that the system took decades to conceptually engineer, but over the past three years, they have only conducted three experimental pilot events[11]. There is a total absence of peer-reviewed data detailing exact participation rates, the longitudinal survival of communities utilizing the system, or quantitative effect sizes regarding the efficiency or accuracy of decision outcomes. The methodology remains largely a theoretical algorithm rather than a tested governance reality.

Modern scholarship infers a highly critical view of the claim to uncapturability. Network theory and political sociology suggest that while formal, codified structures can be dissolved, informal social topologies—driven by charisma, pre-existing wealth, and out-of-band communication—persist indefinitely. The claim that removing structural hierarchy eliminates power conflicts directly with sociopolitical reality, a dynamic most famously articulated by feminist theorist Jo Freeman in her 1972 essay, *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*[15]. Freeman conclusively demonstrated that removing formal hierarchies does not eliminate power; it merely makes it informal, opaque, unacknowledged, and completely unaccountable to the group.

Ephemeral Group Process (EGP): Scale Ledger and Capture Test

Scale Rung	Group Size	Operational Status	Effectiveness and Rationale
Household	4 to 10	Works (Pilot Stage)	Relies naturally on consensus. Interpersonal relationships sustain the required

			orientation of mutual care and trust.
Hamlet / Band	30 to 50	Works (Pilot Stage)	Fits comfortably within the Dunbar limit. EGP's algorithmic remixing is highly effective for cross-pollinating ideas in this range.
Village	150 to 500	Untested Formally	This represents the threshold where EGP claims to achieve "holographic scale." Logistical overhead for managing constant reformation becomes highly complex without dedicated software.
Parish / District	1,500 to 5,000	Never Tried	Requires robust, incorruptible digital infrastructure to manage the continuous dissolving and reforming. High risk of participant fatigue and sense-making breakdown.
Town to Planet	15,000 to 8 Billion	Never Tried	Purely speculative. Scaling to these levels is mathematically and logistically

			impossible without globally pervasive, highly secure algorithmic infrastructure overseeing all human communication.

The capture test for EGP reveals severe structural vulnerabilities. A person or faction with dark-triad traits would exploit the lack of persistent structure by recognizing that power in EGP lies entirely in the framing of the initial questions and the informal networks outside the sessions. A Machiavellian actor would systematically infiltrate the "inquiry coach" role—which EGP admits operates on a meritocracy of skill—and manipulate the prompts to corner the discourse. Alternatively, a coordinated faction of psychopathic or narcissistic actors could agree in advance, via encrypted back-channels, to aggressively push identical "insights" during the reformation phases, artificially manufacturing a false "holographic consensus" across the network.

Historical cases demonstrate the catastrophic failure of informal, unstructured communities captured by charismatic authority. The Oneida Community in upstate New York, operating from 1841 to 1881, functioned with roughly 200 members[17]. The community ostensibly operated without formal democratic structures or voting, relying instead on a process of "mutual criticism" and collective spirituality[19]. However, the founder, John Humphrey Noyes, manipulated the informal networks of the community, specifically maintaining absolute control over the members by acting as the "first husband" to young women and controlling the access of other men to sexual partners under the guise of "complex marriage"[17]. Because there was no formal, persistent democratic structure to challenge him, his charismatic authority was absolute until outside pressure forced the commune to abandon its practices and vote to become a joint-stock company in 1881[17]. EGP's lack of persistent structural checks renders it similarly vulnerable to a charismatic architect who claims the authority to define what constitutes "care."

The primary feature in EGP that resists capture is its strict prohibition on voting, which prevents a faction from simply stacking numbers to win a majority. Furthermore, the reliance on mutual care as a prerequisite for speaking requires dark-triad actors to maintain exhaustive, continuous emotional camouflage, which is cognitively taxing and often eventually exposed in sustained small-group settings.

The Game B Milieu, Sense-making, and The Listening Society

Parallel to Landry's work is the broader intellectual ecosystem surrounding "Game B" and the Consilience Project. Game B originated in the early 2010s, spearheaded by Jim Rutt, the former

chairman of the Santa Fe Institute, and Jordan Hall. The movement uses Game B as a memetic tag for an "omni-win" civilizational model designed to rapidly replace the rivalrous, extractive, and self-terminating socioeconomic system known as "Game A"[8]. Game B relies on the establishment of "Proto-B" communities, which are small, localized, experimental intentional communities that attempt to prototype new economic and governance rules[8].

Daniel Schmachtenberger's Consilience Project focuses intensely on the prerequisite for any functional governance: the epistemic commons[2]. The project argues that democratic governance fundamentally relies on the ability of a populace to engage in coherent sense-making, which is defined as the capacity to accurately perceive and interpret reality[23]. In a modern media environment captured by algorithmic radicalization, cherry-picking, sensationalism, and unconscious propaganda, sense-making is shattered, rendering any form of democratic governance virtually impossible[23]. The project highlights that technology is not value-neutral, and that the centralized, engagement-optimized algorithms of big tech companies have functionally reshaped global governance by determining the information landscape[25].

Adding a vector of developmental psychology to this milieu is Hanzi Freinacht, the pseudonymous author of *The Listening Society: A Metamodern Guide to Politics* (2017)[26]. Freinacht advocates for a "metamodern" political framework that incorporates the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC), a psychological system used for evaluating the cognitive complexity of the ideas that individuals can process[10]. The core premise is that the advanced governance architectures required to navigate the metacrisis demand a citizenry operating at higher stages of cognitive and emotional development[10].

Evaluation: Testable Claims versus Empirical Reality

Regarding what the movement's own people say it does, proponents argue that Game B, coupled with rigorous sense-making practices and metamodern psychological development, can engineer an anti-rivalrous society that will organically outcompete Game A by being fundamentally more efficient and resilient[8].

Examining what the record shows it actually did, the Game B movement generated a brief, intense proliferation of online discourse, including an initial political effort called the Emancipation Party that gathered approximately 100,000 posts before disbanding after a year[8]. While the #GameB hashtag gained traction on social media in 2019, concrete, long-lasting empirical success at scaling a physical Proto-B community beyond the household or hamlet level is virtually absent[8].

Modern scholarship infers that the milieu is heavily constrained by intellectual elitism and a profound lack of operational rigor. Sociologists and political scientists warn that emphasizing "cognitive complexity" and attempting to measure citizens against the MHC risks recreating rigid, eugenic-adjacent technocracies, where individuals deemed less "cognitively complex" are disenfranchised[8]. Furthermore, an obsession with perfect "sense-making" frequently results in analysis paralysis; intentional communities trapped in this dynamic endlessly debate ontology and epistemic frameworks while completely failing to execute basic municipal logistics.

Game B (Proto-B Communities): Scale Ledger and Capture Test

Scale Rung	Group Size	Operational Status	Effectiveness and Rationale
Household	4 to 10	Works Temporarily	Heavily reliant on the private capital of the founders. Often functions successfully for short periods as a standard cooperative living arrangement.
Hamlet / Band	30 to 50	Failed or Fragmented	Frequently fails due to a lack of formal conflict resolution mechanisms and economic unsustainability when operating outside the "Game A" market matrix.
Village to Planet	150 to 8 Billion	Never Tried	Remains entirely an abstract philosophy and memetic framework rather than an operational, scalable governance protocol.

The capture test for Proto-B communities is highly revealing. A narcissistic leader can easily capture these environments by weaponizing the highly abstract, specialized jargon of the milieu—terms such as "anti-rivalrous," "omni-win," and "epistemic commons"—to construct an intellectual monopoly. When community members raise practical, logistical objections to the leader's behavior, the leader utilizes DARVO tactics (Deny, Attack, and Reverse Victim and Offender), gaslighting the members by claiming they are trapped in "Game A rivalry," exhibiting "confirmation bias," or simply lacking the necessary "cognitive complexity" to understand the vision[23].

The historical archetype for this specific mode of capture is the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh movement and the establishment of Rajneeshpuram in Wasco County, Oregon, between 1981 and 1985[29]. The community scaled globally, claiming between 350,000 and 500,000 members, by appealing to "enlightenment" and liberation from the conditioning of traditional society[30]. However, because the community completely surrendered its agency to the guru, abandoning traditional concepts of right and wrong as mere social conditioning, it created an absolute power vacuum in its administrative layer[30]. This vacuum was captured by a Machiavellian faction led by Ma Anand Sheela, the guru's secretary. Sheela captured the informal power structure, resulting in mass exploitation, a massive wiretapping operation, and ultimately a bio-terror attack that deliberately poisoned at least 700 local Oregonians with salmonella to influence a county election[29].

There are virtually no features inherent in the Proto-B model that resist this type of capture. Because these communities explicitly reject traditional state structures and rely almost entirely on the good faith and presumed high consciousness of the participants, they are exceptionally fragile to dark-triad infiltration.

Bonnitta Roy's Open Participatory Organization (OPO)

Addressing the extreme fragility of purely unstructured, ephemeral networks, organizational innovator Bonnitta Roy developed the Open Participatory Organization (OPO) framework[9]. Unlike EGP's reliance on constant structural dissolution, OPO acknowledges the fundamental human need for architectural stability. However, it replaces rigid, legacy managerial hierarchies with a "location-based structure" governed by "action protocols"[33].

Roy bases OPO on the principles of complex adaptive systems, self-organized criticality, and team flow[35]. The core mechanism of governance is the action protocol. Roy uses the analogy of being lost in a forest where the map is outdated due to environmental changes, such as a river being dammed into a beaver pond[33]. Instead of trying to construct a perfect new map (which leads to sense-making overload), individuals rely on robust action protocols, such as "always follow flowing water upstream to reach high ground"[33]. In the OPO, static roles like "Manager" are abolished. Instead, leadership is contextual, taken up "on demand" by whichever individual has the specific skills required for the immediate task[34].

Regarding what the arrangement's own people say it does, proponents claim that OPO releases tremendous amounts of organizational complexity. It avoids the "law of sub-optimization"—the paradox where optimizing a lower systemic level inherently sub-optimizes the higher level—and relies on the psychological fact that humans are naturally driven by helpful participation rather than rewarded performance[34].

What the record shows it did is notable: the OPO model has been successfully piloted in corporate environments, particularly within agile software development firms such as CRiSP in Stockholm, Sweden, successfully transitioning legacy businesses away from traditional, top-down management structures[9].

Modern scholarship infers that OPO aligns remarkably well with the principles established by Nobel laureate Elinor Ostrom for managing common-pool resources. Ostrom proved that communities can self-govern without state intervention if they establish clear boundaries and

match rules to local conditions. OPO’s location-based structure fulfills this requirement. However, scholars note that OPO's success has largely been contingent on the existence of a high-trust, economically stable baseline—specifically, modern, well-capitalized corporations where participants are insulated from existential resource scarcity.

Open Participatory Organization (OPO): Scale Ledger and Capture Test

Scale Rung	Group Size	Operational Status	Effectiveness and Rationale
Household to Hamlet	4 to 50	Works	Highly effective in agile teams and small organizations. Self-management emerges organically around clear action protocols.
Village to Parish	150 to 5,000	Works (Conditional)	Functional in medium-sized enterprises, but only if the strategic overarching goals of the various "locations" are perfectly aligned by the market.
Town to Planet	15,000 to 8 Billion	Untested	Completely untested as a civic governance model. The complexity of action protocols required for municipal resource distribution remains theoretical.

In the capture test, an OPO is vulnerable to a psychopathic actor manipulating the definition and interpretation of the action protocols to funnel resources to their specific location. Because

leadership is taken up "on demand," a highly aggressive dark-triad actor can persistently demand leadership in critical moments, utilizing abrasive tactics to exhaust their peers, who will naturally retreat to avoid continuous conflict[34]. Historical precedents in corporate holacracies show that they often suffer deeply when a highly aggressive individual dominates the space under the guise of "self-management," exploiting the lack of a formal Human Resources apparatus or grievance structure to remove toxic peers.

However, OPO possesses a strong feature resisting capture: the location-based structure explicitly binds the success of the individual location to the interdependent coherence of the entire organization. A parasitic actor who destroys the synergy of the group to enrich themselves becomes immediately visible as a point of failure, as their location cannot survive without the voluntary participation of the surrounding network[34].

Historical Antecedents: Sociocracy, Quaker Practice, and Athenian Demes

To properly ground and evaluate the highly theoretical frameworks of the Game B milieu, one must examine historical governance systems that have successfully maintained horizontal coordination over extended timeframes. The historical record demonstrates that longevity requires structural scaffolding that the modern milieu often dismisses.

The Sociocratic Circle Method (SCM)

Developed by Gerard Endenburg in the Netherlands in 1981, Sociocracy, also known as Dynamic Governance, was heavily influenced by Endenburg's experiences in a Quaker boarding school during World War II[37]. The system was designed to combine the spiritual equality of Quaker consensus with the operational efficiency required for a modern electrical engineering firm. SCM is based on four core, non-negotiable principles[37].

First, decision-making is governed by *Consent*. Consent is explicitly not consensus; it does not require unanimity or enthusiastic agreement. A decision is made when there are no "paramount and argued objections." To be valid, an objection must demonstrate that the proposed action actively interferes with the group's ability to achieve its stated aim. If a participant can "live with it," consent is granted[37]. Second, the organization is composed of *Circles*, which are semi-autonomous, self-organizing groups with a specific domain of authority and a clear aim[37]. Third, the organization uses *Open Elections*, where roles are selected by consent after open, transparent discussion[37]. Fourth, and most crucially for scaling, the circles are connected by a *Double-Link*. A functional leader (representing top-down authority) and an elected representative (representing bottom-up authority) connect every circle to the next higher circle, creating a fractal, bidirectional flow of power and information that prevents isolation and tyranny[38].

Quaker Practice (The Religious Society of Friends)

Documented meticulously by Jesuit priest and political scientist Michael J. Sheeran in his 1983 work, *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*, the Quakers have utilized a consensus-based governance model since the 17th century[40].

The Quaker model seeks the "sense of the meeting"—a search for substantial spiritual unity

rather than mathematical unanimity[42]. Unlike secular consensus models, the Quaker process is explicitly spiritual, rooted in the practice of "waiting in the Light" to discern a communal truth that is viewed as superior to individual, rational logic[42]. Voting is strictly and absolutely forbidden; early Quaker documents, such as the 1656 citation by the Elders of Balby, stress that voting creates factions, establishes winners and losers, and breaks the fellowship of the community[42]. In practice, a designated "Clerk" acts as a facilitator, listening to the deliberation and gathering the sense of the meeting into a proposed written minute. If unity is absent, the decision is simply deferred[42].

Deep History: The Athenian Demes

The earliest recorded example of spatial and structural nesting for democratic governance is found in Athenian democracy, following the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508 BCE[45]. Cleisthenes reorganized the landscape of Attica into 139 or 140 *demes*, which functioned as local villages or townships[45].

The demes operated as fully functional local governments with their own assemblies, maintaining local civic records, managing local cults, and electing their own officials[45]. To scale this to the city-state level, the demes were nested into *trittyes* (thirds), which were in turn nested into ten newly created tribes. This complex spatial nesting ensured that the central Council of 500 (the Boule) contained a mathematically proportionate, localized cross-section of the entire polis, structurally preventing regional factions (such as wealthy coastal merchants or inland aristocrats) from capturing the state apparatus.

Historical Antecedents: Scale Ledger and Capture Test

System and Scale Rung	Operational Status	Effectiveness and Rationale
Quakers: Hamlet to Parish (30 to 5,000)	Works	Sustained for over 350 years. The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting operates efficiently due to profound, shared cultural homogeneity and a strict spiritual baseline[41].
Sociocracy: Hamlet to Parish (30 to 5,000)	Works	Operates globally in democratic schools, co-housing, and mid-sized corporate enterprises. The double-link system scales fractal communication brilliantly[38].

Athenian Demes: Village to Town (150 to 50,000)	Works	Sustained for nearly two centuries. The demes provided the vital, localized civic training required for citizens to participate competently at the city-state level[49].
All Systems: Nation to Planet (50 Million to 8 Billion)	Failed or Untested	Quakers and Sociocracy face terminal administrative friction at scale. Athenian direct democracy required a massive slave population to free up citizen time and ultimately collapsed under imperial strain.

The capture test for these historical systems reveals the necessity of structural immune systems. In Sociocracy, a Machiavellian actor will attempt to weaponize the concept of "consent" by consistently raising disingenuous, yet grammatically valid, "paramount objections," freezing all action and holding the circle hostage until their covert demands are met. The system resists this because objections must demonstrably threaten the *circle's aim*, not the individual's preference, allowing a strong facilitator to overrule the actor[38].

In Quaker practice, a narcissist will attempt to capture the meeting by filibustering the silent worship, giving impassioned, lengthy vocal ministry while claiming a direct "divine leading." If the group is entirely horizontal, no individual has the authority to silence them. The Quakers solved this by establishing an informal but culturally absolute immune system: the "Elders" or "Weighty Friends." These are individuals universally recognized by the community for their extreme spiritual maturity. They possess the culturally backed authority to gently but firmly silence abusive actors, defer decisions, and maintain the integrity of the process, acting as a non-coercive but highly effective hierarchical check on dark-triad behavior[40].

The Strongest Case Against the "New" Milieu

The most severe critique of the Game B, EGP, and Sense-making milieu is that it suffers from profound historical amnesia, relying heavily on the naturalistic fallacy—the assumption that small, organic, and unstructured equates to fair and equitable. Critics, rooted in political science and institutional economics, point out that these frameworks frequently commit the error of designing utopias for highly evolved "post-formal actors" while completely ignoring the base reality of human conflict, resource scarcity, and the statistical inevitability of dark-triad personalities.

First, as articulated by Jo Freeman in *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* (1972), attempting to build "uncapturable" systems by removing persistent formal structures (as EGP explicitly attempts) actively invites capture by charismatic, Machiavellian actors[15]. When a community

possesses no formal mechanisms for voting, airing grievances, or enforcing rules, the most aggressive and charismatic personalities inevitably dominate the informal networks. Structurelessness does not breed equality; it breeds a shadow oligarchy.

Second, the milieu's reliance on highly complex, idiosyncratic terminology (MHC stages, holographic governance, third attractors) closely mirrors the early stages of high-control groups and cult dynamics[30]. When a community's primary mechanism for interaction is abstract "sense-making," it naturally selects for intellectuals who enjoy debating ontology but systematically fails to attract the pragmatists required to execute basic logistics, such as agriculture or sanitation.

Finally, the theoretical frameworks directly contradict the empirical findings of Elinor Ostrom in *Governing the Commons* (1990). Ostrom proved that common-pool resources can be managed without state coercion, but *only* if the community implements clearly defined boundaries, graduated sanctions for rule violators, and accessible, formal conflict-resolution mechanisms. EGP and Game B actively avoid codified sanctions and structural boundaries, relying instead on "care" and "omni-win" alignment. Historically, systems relying solely on human care and good faith invariably collapse under the weight of free-riders and psychopaths. What is genuinely new in EGP and Game B is merely the application of digital algorithmic scaffolding to rotate participants; the underlying sociological vulnerabilities remain ancient and unresolved.

Summary of Robust Findings

Unstructured or purely ephemeral organizations, such as the Ephemeral Group Process, are not uncapturable; rather, they are highly vulnerable to informal power capture via charismatic authority and back-channel coordination, validating Freeman's thesis on the tyranny of structurelessness. The Sociocratic double-linking mechanism provides the most robust empirical method currently available for scaling horizontal governance from the household level up to the district level without relying on coercion. Consent-based decision-making, as utilized in Sociocracy, is operationally superior to absolute consensus because it strictly bounds objections to the group's shared aim, neutralizing the ability of a single holdout to paralyze the community based on personal preference. The extraordinary longevity of Quaker consensus relies not merely on its procedural rules, but on profound cultural homogeneity, a shared metaphysical baseline, and the informal immune system provided by "weighty" elders. High-abstraction "sense-making" communities that lack formal, graduated sanctions for antisocial behavior will reliably fragment under logistical pressure or fall to narcissistic capture. Localized, nested civic units, mirroring the Athenian demes, are mandatory prerequisites for training individuals in basic governance before they can participate competently at broader scales. Finally, genuine mutual care cannot scale as a primary governance mechanism past the Dunbar limit of approximately 150 individuals; past this threshold, formal architecture, codified rules, and graduated sanctions must bridge the structural gap. The most resilient historical communes survived by adapting pragmatic, often hierarchical structures in response to crises, while ideologically rigid, structureless groups inevitably collapsed or were captured by dark-triad actors. Dark triad actors consistently weaponize the precise vocabulary of alternative governance—using terms like "omni-win," "divine leading," or "care"—to paralyze their well-meaning critics. Effective governance is inherently fractal: the principles operating at the hamlet level must logically nest

into the village level, but the administrative overhead grows exponentially, requiring physical or digital architecture to manage effectively.

Contested or Open Questions

Several critical questions remain unresolved within this field of study. First, it is fiercely contested whether EGP's "holographic governance" can actually bypass the Dunbar limit, or if the cognitive load generated by constantly dissolving and reforming social bonds will simply overwhelm the participants' capacity for trust. Second, it remains an open question whether it is possible to encode Sociocratic double-linking and action protocols into decentralized digital ledgers (such as blockchain) to scale consent-based governance beyond the parish level without re-introducing state coercion. Third, sociologists have yet to determine how a community can cultivate a robust "immune system" against dark-triad actors—similar to the Quaker Elders—without that specialized class of individuals eventually calcifying into an oppressive oligarchy. Finally, it is entirely unknown how a post-collapse society could manage complex, continent-spanning supply chains using slow, consent-based governance in the absence of the speed provided by authoritative executive fiat.

Sources to Read in Full

For a comprehensive understanding of the mechanics and historical realities of alternative governance, several primary texts are essential. Michael J. Sheeran's *Beyond Majority Rule: Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends* (1983) provides crucial ethnographic data on how consensus functions over centuries. Gerard Endenburg's *Sociocracy: The Organization of Decision-Making* (1981) is the foundational text outlining the mechanics of consent and double-linking. Jo Freeman's *The Tyranny of Structurelessness* (1972) remains the definitive critique of how informal power captures decentralized groups. Elinor Ostrom's *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (1990) establishes the empirical baseline for managing shared resources without state intervention. Forrest Landry's *An Immanent Metaphysics* (2009/2023) is required to understand the philosophical architecture underlying modern ephemeral processes. Daniel Schmachtenberger's essays published via the Consilience Project (specifically regarding the epistemic commons and propaganda) define the metacrisis driving these innovations. Hanzi Freinacht's *The Listening Society: A Metamodern Guide to Politics* (2017) introduces the integration of cognitive developmental complexity into governance. Finally, Spencer Klaw's *Without Sin: The Life and Death of the Oneida Community* (1993) provides a vital historical autopsy of the failure modes inherent in alternative, charismatic structures.

Implementability after the Fall

Minimum Viable Version (Operating with no state, no grid, and no internet):

- **Household (4 to 10 people):** Direct democratic consensus. This scale requires no formal architecture, only a shared physical space, daily proximity, and mutual interdependence for survival.
- **Village (300 people):** Sociocratic Circles. The village must be strictly divided into functional working circles (e.g., Agriculture, Water, Security, Health), each consisting of 10 to 15 individuals. Each circle makes operational decisions exclusively by *consent* (the

absence of paramount objections related to the aim), abandoning the pursuit of absolute consensus to maintain operational speed.

- **District (3,000 people):** Double-linked nested councils. Each village functional circle sends two representatives—one operational leader and one elected representative—to a District Council governing that specific function (e.g., a District Water Council). This preserves the chain of consent from the household to the district without ever requiring 3,000 people to sit in a single, paralyzing meeting.

What it needs to start:

- **Literacy and Records:** A durable, physical ledger detailing community aims, circle domains, and a chronological record of all decisions. This is the primary defense against gaslighting by Machiavellian actors.
- **A Shared Calendar:** A rigorously maintained, highly visible physical calendar to synchronize circle meetings, preventing the scheduling chaos that destroys horizontal organizations.
- **A Meeting Place:** A central, acoustically sound physical structure large enough to hold 50 people comfortably, shielding the governance process from the elements.

The First Failure to Expect:

- **Meeting Fatigue and Apathy:** In a post-collapse setting requiring intense, daily physical labor for baseline survival, participants will quickly resent the substantial time required for Sociocratic rounds or Quaker-style consensus. Apathy will inevitably lead to widespread absenteeism. This creates a vacuum, allowing a small, highly motivated, and potentially Machiavellian faction to attend every meeting, effortlessly manufacture consent, and quietly capture the administrative apparatus of the village.

Principles

Governance Principle	Testable Sentence
The Principle of Formal Transparency	The deliberate absence of formal structural hierarchy does not eliminate power dynamics; it merely renders them informal, unaccountable, and highly vulnerable to capture by charismatic actors.
The Principle of Consensual Boundaries	Consent-based decision-making only functions efficiently when objections are strictly and legally bound to a clearly defined shared aim, rather than the personal preferences of the participants.
The Principle of Dunbar's Ceiling	Governance mechanisms reliant exclusively on intimate mutual care and interpersonal

	trust cannot scale effectively beyond approximately 150 individuals without formal architectural scaffolding.
The Principle of Fractal Nesting	Horizontal governance can only scale to regional populations if communication and authority flow bidirectionally between functional levels via double-linked representation.
The Principle of the Immune System	Durable self-governing communities require recognized, culturally legitimate mechanisms—such as designated elders or codified graduated sanctions—to actively identify, silence, and neutralize antisocial behavior.
The Principle of Epistemic Pragmatism	Communities that prioritize abstract sense-making and ontological alignment over codified logistical action protocols will inevitably fragment under the pressure of resource scarcity.

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