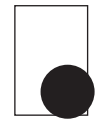

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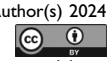

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Aspired communities: Reconsidering community in light of the temporal dimensionality of social life

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Abstract

I argue in this article that our understanding of community is enhanced by examining the formation of collective aspirations for a shared future. Using examples from my fieldwork on long-term community recovery after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 in the town of Yamamoto, I illustrate the potential of using the social process of collective aspiring as an analytical tool in theorizing and studying community. Instead of treating community as a particular grouping or identity, I approach the concept of community as a processual analytical frame for understanding various forms of sociality constituted by continuous and mutually constitutive enacting and envisioning within social practices. This practice approach not only overcomes the tensions between the agency, structure, actualization, and abstraction characteristic of conceptualizations of community, but also enables us to explore the significance of the future dimension of social life. The concept of future orientation of collective aspiring allows us to ethnographically grasp the contingent formation of community in the dynamic process of striving toward the desired futures in contrast to anticipation of uncertain futures. To capture the many aspects of this process, aspiring is explored as shared objectives, action-oriented pursuing, and affectively charged yearning. This proposed analytical tool sheds light on ever-evolving forms of sociality not only in their unity and togetherness but particularly in their ambiguities, conflicts, and power relations.

Keywords

Community, collective aspiring, future orientation, disaster, social practice

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Introduction

> With the strength of one-by-one *proceeding forward, with cooperation and sharing mutual desires*, certainly [the community] will start taking form. Every day, a little, but gradually, one can understand the form. Yesterday, it was a seed, but gradually, the sprout and, then, leaves appear. Now, when looking closely, one thing at a time, the shape [of the community] is changing.
>
> (The chief monk of a Buddhist temple in Yamamoto)

This was one of the many characterizations of community that I heard after I had traveled in late 2014 to study the long-term community disaster recovery in Yamamoto town in the Tohoku region of northeast Japan. The quotation reflects the main argument of this conceptual article, which proposes a recalibrated analytical focus on the future orientation of collective aspiring in understanding community as varying and dynamic practice-based forms of sociality. Three and half years earlier, on March 11, 2011, Yamamoto had experienced a compound event known as the 3.11 triple disaster: the magnitude 9.0 East Japan Earthquake and the ensuing tsunami that ravaged the Tohoku coast and triggered a meltdown in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. Yamamoto was spared from the immediate impact of the nuclear accident, but the destruction caused by the tsunami was drastic: the tsunami inundated 37.2% of the town area, took a toll of 635 lives, injured many more, and destroyed or damaged approximately 5000 buildings. The tsunami directly affected over half of the population, which stood at 16,704 at the time, through losses of life, housing, and livelihoods, while the indirect effects, caused by the loss of relatives, friends, and places of importance, are innumerable.

I was perplexed by the simultaneous omnipresence and diversity of the idea of community during my fieldwork explorations of the less-studied long-term disaster recovery period (Gomez and Hart, 2013). Everyday life had gradually settled into routine existence, after the immediate post-disaster phase, which is well known for its accentuated awareness and sense of community (e.g., Hoffman, 2020; Oliver-Smith, 2020; Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015; Solnit, 2009). Yet, the locals continued constantly referring community as lost, longed-for, essential, new, rediscovered, neglected, secure, ideal, or town or district-wide communities. The national and local reconstruction plans stressed the importance of community participation in the development of new post-disaster communities that were, nevertheless, often defined according to pre-disaster administrative districts. Meanwhile, the media continued praising the local and national post-disaster community spirit and solidarity. This post-disaster community hype was reflected not only in the selection of *kizuna* (human bonds) as the *kanji*[1] of the year in 2011 but also in the long-term rebuilding strategies that emphasized local community capacity to enhance revitalization in face of the economic and demographic decline of the rural disaster areas.

These observations underscore the intricacies, in both disaster and non-disaster contexts, of conceptualizing community as marked by the tensions among structure, agency, place, symbolism, affect, actuality, and abstraction. On one hand, the mutual solidarity in the immediate disaster aftermath is paralleled with Turner's (1969 [1995])

concept of communitas as liminal anti-structural unity (Matthewman and Uekusa, 2021; Oliver-Smith, 2020). It is found creating utopias and extraordinary communities locally, nationally, and globally (Morris-Suzuki, 2017; Schuller, 2016; Solnit, 2009). Although spontaneous communitas is momentary, as a modality of social relationship it exemplifies the idealized affective aspects of community as a feeling of togetherness (Blackshaw, 2010; Cannon, 2008; Turner, 1969 [1995]: 132). On the other hand, disasters do not always produce social solidarity and can erode it (Erikson, 1976; Matthewman and Uekusa, 2021). Hence, disasters are presented as disruptions, revelatory moments, or as potential forces of change (Curato and Ong, 2015; Hoffman, 1999, 2016; Oliver-Smith and Hoffman, 2002). This reproduces the idea of the pre-disaster community as a valued static, place-based social structure perceived to be threatened also by macro forces, such as globalization (Hyland and Bennett, 2005; Keller, 2003). Social relations within this kind of immediate, spatially confined social structure has been long contrasted with the more complex social arrangements of industrialized and individualized societies (Durkheim, 1933; Redfield, 1956; Tönnies, 1974).

Both the idealized tight-knit local community and the immediate post-disaster solidarity are increasingly valorized to legitimize various policies and social practices (Barrios, 2017; Cannon, 2008; Yoshihara, 2013). Through these policies and as a lived, immediate social reality, community can have strong actuality. As a concept, however, it has been criticized for its extensive abstraction, which has distanced it from actualized, everyday interactions (Amit, 2002, 2010, 2020; Gordon, 2012; Neal and Walters, 2008). The critique has also highlighted the concepts' vagueness, romanticization, and analytical uselessness (Bauman, 2001; Blackshaw, 2010; Cohen, 2002). This all has led to fading of academic interest in the concept of community (Amit, 2020). Meanwhile, community often remains as an unproblematized unit of analysis or an orienting device meaning "everything and nothing," one that is used more often as the explanation than as the explained (Alleyne, 2002: 608; Blackshaw, 2010: 2, 9–10; Scollon, 2001: 143).

I argue that it is precisely this paradoxical position of community at the intersection of conceptual vagueness and an unproblematized yet powerful valorization that calls for its critical reconsideration. The global environmental crisis, increasing disasters, polarized political atmosphere, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic have made it imperative to develop our understanding of the dynamics of social life, the unprecedented legitimacy and conceptual potential of community, as well as the social significance of collective aspiring amid future uncertainties. Moreover, we fail to recognize the continuous joint future orientation of community reflected in the opening quote of this article, if we maintain community as, for example, idealized yet fleeting sentiment of togetherness, structural "outcome, a result of a shared past" (Oliver-Smith, 2005: 54), or an individual quest for security (Bauman, 2001).

In this light, I propose a recalibration of the analytical focus of the concept of community to its inherent future-oriented temporal dimensionality, which is always circumscribed by social practices. Thus, community is not perceived here as a definition or particular categorial identity, but as an analytical working model to understand the processes of various forms of sociality with all their ambiguities (Amit, 2010, 2020). I argue that the conceptual lens of collective aspiring can serve as an analytical tool with which to

understand these forms of sociality emerging in the present process of striving toward the desired futures. Thus, this article does not offer a comprehensive theory or definition of what community is, but rather an analytical toolbox to explore its contingent, contextual, and dynamic nature and the role of the future as it is constituted within it.

I first discuss the scholarly debates over the concept of community. Previous studies have argued that both practices and a common cause, goal, or commitment are central in community formation (Amit, 2010, 2020; Halperin, 1998; Hyland and Bennett, 2005; Keller, 2003). Yet, these are often left unpacked, and their interconnected temporal dynamics remain understudied. Orientation toward the future through planning, dreaming, or hoping is a significant aspect of social life that is, nevertheless, understudied because of the analytical emphasis on shared past and collective memories and traditions (Bryant and Knight, 2019; Munn, 1992). Futurity refers here not to linearity, but to a temporal dimensionality of present human activity in the social, which are evolving, organized manifold arrays of human activities embedded in their material environments (Pandian, 2012; Ringel, 2016; Schatzki, 2002: 70–87).

I argue next how future orientation of collective aspiring enables us to analyze community in terms of continuous social dynamics of striving *toward* the desired futures within the mesh of social practices. As such, the meaning of community emerges not from difference or sameness but, rather, "*actuality:* actual relations among entities, and what these entities actually do" (Schatzki, 2002: 57) when pursuing desired futures. This practice approach to community addresses both human finitude and subjectivism (Santos Alexandre, 2022). Thus, it enables an analysis of community as actualized, embodied, and materially grounded but also simultaneously symbolical and discursive on the same ontological level of practice (Ortner, 2006; Reckwitz, 2017: 114; Schatzki, 2016).

Lastly, I discuss how collective aspiring can be explored from the perspectives of action-oriented pursuing, affective yearning, and shared objectives, which are all inherently connected to ambiguities, conflicts, and power. Throughout the article, I illustrate the proposed analytical approach with some observations and reflections from ethnographic fieldwork in Yamamoto between October 2014 and May 2015. I draw from the participant observation and interviews with residents directly and indirectly affected by the disaster. Although community studies have been criticized for focusing on extreme or polarized circumstances that disasters undoubtedly are (Amit, 2010), disasters are also argued to "provide an extraordinary window into [the] social desire and possibility" present also in non-disaster situations (Solnit, 2009: 6). Thus, I use the examples to highlight the ever-evolving kaleidoscope of social life within which disaster and community are mutually emergent in the process of continuous reinterpretation of the disaster experience not only as a part of individuals' interconnected life histories but, more importantly, in relation to their desired futures (Hastrup, 2011).

From definitional debates to practices and temporality

Scholars of anthropology and other social sciences have made numerous efforts to define the concept of community (Amit, 2002, 2010, 2020; Amit and Rapport, 2002; Anderson, 1983; Bauman, 2001; Cohen, 1985; Tanabe, 2008). Consequently, "few concepts in the

social sciences have undergone such a remarkable transformation than has that of 'community'" in only a few decades (Blackshaw, 2010: 5). The contemporary concept of community has roots in early anthropological perceptions on social life that reflected the sociological structural and functional approaches contrasting what was considered "primitive" and more "complex" industrialized society. For example, Durkheim considered solidarity as the explanation for continuity and sustenance of societies. He distinguished undifferentiated mechanical solidarity, based on similarities of values and functions in archaic societies, from organic solidarity, based on autonomy and interdependence of individuals within the diversified division of functions in complex societies (Durkheim, 1893 [1994]). Tönnies differentiated *Gemeinschaft*, or the unity provided by personal and intimate social relations, from *Gesellschaft*, or a society of impersonal, calculating contractual relations in the context of modernization (Tönnies, 1974).

Concurrently, the early anthropologists (e.g., Boas, 1911; Malinowski, 1922; Mead, 1930) focused on culture and treated it as a separate entity, with specific structures associated with particular (isolated) people (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997: 1–2). Community later emerged in the research vocabulary to replace culture after modernization theories directed researchers toward urban environments in which solidarity and affective belonging beyond the immediate socio-geographic group became the focus of inquiry (Amit, 2002). The connection between a particular location and a community remained nevertheless strong in studies exploring "little communities" (Redfield, 1956) and their "local social systems" (Bell and Newby, 1971). Hence, community was associated with both structured social relations within bounded territorial settings and the acting, feeling subjects of the modernizing society.

Coinciding with anthropology's self-criticism for contributions to exoticism, colonialism, and the representation of the social and spatial integrity of ethnographic subjects, community came to be approached as imagined abstractions, symbolic systems, and categorial identities (e.g., Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985). In this process, community became analytically detached from face-to-face socialization and place, which contributed to its further abstraction (Coleman and Collins, 2006; Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). However, this trend is argued to contradict anthropology's efforts to understand quotidian lives, which has led to calls to reunite the abstracted and actualized aspects of community (Amit, 2010, 2020; Amit et al., 2015; Gordon, 2012; Neal and Walters, 2008). Meanwhile, the notion of community has come to enjoy increasing legitimacy and, consequently, actuality in various practices and policies, of which disaster recovery is a case in point. However, the dominant recovery paradigms, such as resilience, often neglect the emergent nature of community and rely on implicit presumptions of community as a predefined static, territorially bounded unit (Barrios, 2014). This idea of community often includes extensive collaboration, coherence, harmony, and "neighborliness" (Cannon, 2008; Faas and Marino, 2020). This romanticization of statically defined "local" community also has political power when it is appropriated to promote neoliberal recovery policies that divert the attention away from social inequalities and structural problems (Barrios, 2014, 2017; Faas, 2018; Faas and Marino, 2020).

This critique of the romanticization of community complicates its conceptualization (Blackshaw, 2010: 1–2; Cohen, 2002: 169). Some argue that its usage also merely

signals the individual quest to seek security from belonging amid the insecurities of the modern world (Bauman, 2001). Accordingly, community is ultimately perceived as a construct of an individual's interpretations in the chosen context, despite being propagated as a coherent, separate entity (Amit and Rapport, 2002: 15). Romanticization and individualization reflect how community has become located largely within the subjective self. As "a structure of feeling" (Williams, 1954, 1978), it has been differentiated from actualized communities as a phenomenological property of social life (Appadurai, 1996: 181). This resonates with the recent subjectivist and reflexive turn in anthropology focusing on the self, bodily experiences, and affect. However, overtly emphasized subjectivity may ignore human finitude and the way in which peoples' modes of being are always enabled, constituted, and conditioned by the world (Santos Alexandre, 2022). Community is, therefore, more than the sum of individual free choices. This facet of community becomes a very tangible experience when someone struggles to enter or is excluded from it (Gordon, 2012). Therefore, community is about not only unity and belonging but also exclusion and power, making it necessary to consider equally individual agency, affect, and social structures.

This article is connected to a wider practice turn in social sciences that has addressed the relation of abstracted and actualized social activity, agency, and structure, as well as methodological individualism also in anthropology (Hastrup, 2005; Ortner, 2006). Contemporary practice approach has analyzed the mutually constitutive relation of these aspects of social life through concepts such a social fields and forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986), structuration (Giddens, 1984), and cultural schemas (Ortner, 2006). However, these practice-based concepts offer limited tools to analyze the temporal tensions between enduring social structure, momentary togetherness, and constant emergence that characterize the conceptualizations of community. Therefore, in this article, I draw from the work practice theorist Theodore Schatzki and his depiction of time-spaces opened in social practices to address an essential aspect of social life, namely temporality (Schatzki, 2009).

Anthropologists have addressed the question of time and particularly local temporalities for a long time (see review e.g., Bryant and Knight, 2019; Vargas-Cetina, 2007). Furthermore, the intersections of space, time, and also practice have been explored extensively, particularly in relation to displacement and mobility (Amit and Gardiner Barber, 2015; Çağlar, 2018; Glick Schiller, 2018; Harvey, 1990; Massey, 1999; Ramsay, 2019). However, the future dimension of social life is often left in the shadow of the past–present relationship (Appadurai, 2013; Bryant and Knight, 2019; Collins, 2008; Munn, 1992). The context of disaster not only showcase contrasting approaches to the concept of community, but also highlights the linear temporal understanding of social life. On one hand, community is detached from temporality when post-disaster communities are depicted as Turnerian liminal moments of communitas "in and out of time" as affective togetherness (Turner, 1969 [1995]: 96). On the other hand, according to both Durkheim and Turner, the anti-structural moments renew and maintain social structures (Olaveson, 2001). These are wishfully envisioned to be more resilient and solidary based on extended communitas (Oliver-Smith, 2020). These representations are often based on past experiences, collective memory, and memorialization or "communities of memory" (Bellah et al., 1986: 152–155; Moulton, 2015; Ullberg, 2010).

The future has, however, come to have a more prominent role in anthropological analysis recently. In disaster studies, futurity inherent in memorialization is acknowledged (Kanayama and Ogawa, 2020; Littlejohn, 2021) and disaster recovery is perceived as a contested arena in which people join together to advance and contest competing visions of societal advancement (Barrios, 2014). The anthropological research agenda has focused more generally, for example, on interpreting contemporary ways in which the future is pictured (Wallman, 1992). Imagined communities were extended toward the future, as when a nation has been presented as an imaginary community, akin to a fantastical projection of a utopia (Wegner, 2002). More recently, studies of the future have been increasingly colored by the insecurities created, for example, by growing precarity, terrorism, financial crises, and the looming threat of climate change. Accordingly, people are perceived as responsible and active future-makers molding the trajectories of life in response to the uncertainties (Appadurai, 2013; Pink and Salazar, 2017). This is believed to create agency, which enables people to navigate toward their visions of a good life (Fischer, 2014). However, people are nevertheless restricted by a socio-political capacity to aspire or even trapped in their unachievable fantasies within the present socio-political conditions (Appadurai, 2004; Berlant, 2011).

This highlights the role of temporality in constituting collectivities and social divisions. Even in the disciplinary history of anthropology, the focus on the past long served to differentiate it from sociology, which was preoccupied with modernity and progress (Bryant and Knight, 2019: x). However, it is still challenging to escape these future's value-laden associations with progress or, more recently, neoliberal ideals (Bear, 2014). Moreover, while recognition of multiple temporalities is important, epistemological reflection is also necessary in order to not reproduce divisions and power relations between the separate temporalities of the anthropologists and their research participants (Greenhouse, 1996: 3; Ramsay, 2019; Vargas-Cetina, 2007). It is also critical that we avoid constructing of a hegemonic narrative of a shared human future based only on the socio-political developments and priorities in the Global North (Valentine and Hassoun, 2019: 245–246).

Thus, while the dynamism of communities and the significance of the future are recognized, their analytical potential remains to be explored and community remains elusive, both as a concept and as an experience (Brent, 2004). This was also the case in my fieldwork in Yamamoto. I set out to study the recovery of *a* community, but I soon found myself in the middle of communities *of* recovery in their innumerable, situational, and even contradicting forms that left me puzzled. However, this article does do an anthropology *of* the future or *for* the future (Collins, 2008: 125). Instead, I focus on how the future component of temporal dimensionality helps us to understand how people connect in the present through sharing futures.

Community and the future orientation of social life

The question remains if we need an exhaustive *definition* of community in order to study it. Vered Amit (2010, 2020) answers no. She proposes community as an analytical working model with which to study *the processes* of interlinked forms of sociality in

their various qualities, contexts, scales, durations, comprehensiveness, degrees of formalization, mediations, and, particularly, ambiguities and disjunctures (Amit, 2010, 2015). However, sociality, or intersubjective human engagements, is a trait of all human activities and cannot be an analytical category in itself (Toren, 2013: 46). Therefore, the task is to analyze how its various forms, meanings, interpretations, and associated feelings come to be and are challenged and altered (Hastrup, 2005; Long and Moore, 2013).

Community is argued to be dynamic "series of day to day, ongoing, often invisible practices" (Halperin, 1998: 5). I draw from the practice theory approach to understand the processuality of community as forms of sociality in situated everyday activities (Pink, 2012; Tanabe, 2008). These human activities constitute social practices that are the organized manifold array of human activities, or, simply, the organized doings and sayings that are connected to their material arrangements (Schatzki, 2002: 71–77). All social phenomena are constituted by complex and compound webs of practices, forming the "overall site of the social." Thus, it is not the structure nor the individual but, rather, the organization of practice that constitutes human coexistence characterized by both stability and change (Schatzki, 2002: 147, 2016: 30–40).

However, the interconnectedness in social practices, or, simply, doing things together, does not automatically mean interdependence or lead to an idea of community, let alone an affective sense of belonging (Amit, 2010: 360–362; Schatzki, 2016: 31). This also requires constant envisioning of a social whole characterized by a shared anticipatory sense of a plot (Hastrup, 2004). Accordingly, here, community is approached as emerging through mutually constitutive and enforcing processes of enacting ("doings"), as everyday activity and envisioning ("sayings"), and as reflective abstract imagination circumscribed by the structure of the practice (cf. Neal and Walters, 2008; Posio, 2019a).

As a part of my fieldwork, I participated in various meetings, events, and activities in Yamamoto. These constituted an important aspect of social life, as it offered opportunities for interaction "while eating, playing, doing things together" (*tabenagara*, *asobinagara*, *shinagara*). The founder of a community space explained how performing bodily activities was embedded to the rural residents' habitual modes of being and understood as an essential cornerstone of community, wellbeing, and disaster recovery:

> Because people here are ordinary farmers, emotional care is done by gathering everyone together in a meeting place […] Gathering, like this, people who want to communicate gather, they eat, to communicate […] If there is not communication between people, no bonds between people […] It is not a thing, right? That is why people chat here while doing various kinds of handicrafts.

For example, regular weekly exercise clubs for the elderly were already organized before the disaster. However, the participants explained that the groups had increasingly become forums for laughter and chatting and there had not been such a sense of collectivity and social significance before the disaster. This reflective re-envisioning of sociality was enforced, for example, in discussions between the participants, local newspaper articles, and narration offered to me. This reveals not only a creative resignification of practices but also the way in which practices shape the texture of emerging social relations. For

example, it was mainly the women in post-disaster Yamamoto who were able to draw on their daily practices, such as cooking or handicrafts, which were embedded in their gender role traditionally associated with household maintenance and motherhood, and transform these into collective activities that enhanced their social connections in post-disaster settings (Imamura, 2010; Posio, 2021).

However, what I am delineating in these examples of collective activities does not refer to definitional "communities of practice" (Wenger, 1998). Rather, I highlight the dynamic reciprocal relationships among individual agency, discursive objectivization, and imaginative capacity. These relationships can constitute the experience of an ontologically distinct whole as a structural reality for actors in social practices (Hastrup, 2004; Scollon, 2001: 155, 170). In this process, the organization of the practice always circumscribes but does not fully dictate the subjective experiences of sociality (Schatzki, 2002: 27–28; cf. Santos Alexandre, 2022).

Although social practices and community may appear enduring, they are processual and constantly evolving, which indicates future-oriented temporal dynamism. Here, the future is regarded not as specific objective, social, or cultural time. Instead, it is considered as an aspect of existential temporality constituted by the *dimensionality* of past, present, and future as opened up in human activity within a particular practice. These all manifest simultaneously in present human activity and exist as long as a person acts (Schatzki, 2009: 35–37). This dimensionality constitutes the indeterminate, open-ended teleological character of human activity that is directed *toward* an end (the future dimension) while departing *from* the state of affairs (the past dimension), and the present is the acting itself (Schatzki, 2009: 38). Thus, past and future are not ontological properties, but they have significance only in relation to the present activity of the practice (Pandian, 2012; Ringel, 2016). Although an in-depth discussion of spatiality is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to note that this temporality is intrinsically connected to the teleological character of the "lived" space that shapes human activity (Schatzki, 2009: 36–38). For example, social relations are shaped not only by the collective interpretation of shared experiences in a place, but also by the envisioned emplaced interactions and collective futures enabled by the place (Milligan, 1998).

The intertwining of the individuals' dimensions of existential temporality forms the essential infrastructure for any social phenomena (Schatzki, 2010: 52, 77–88). Thus, social phenomena, such as community, come to be in a setting in which the temporal dimensionality of the teleology of human life is inherent in quotidian action in lived space. Rebecca Bryant and Knight (2019) introduce the concept of *future orientation* to offer an ethnographic hold on Schatzki's theorization of the teleological character of human life. They define the future orientations as the ways we continuously "orient ourselves to the indefinite teleologies of everyday life" (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 19). As such, they encompass the full spectrum of the affective dimensions of temporality as "the flux of experience, the rollercoaster of aspirations and fears" (ibid.: 149). Exploring the future orientations inherent in quotidian action relies on the irreversible logic of temporal dimensionality, in which the present is the effect of the future (Anderson, 2010; Bryant and Knight, 2019; Pandian, 2012). In other words, the analysis of community is presentist but starts from the future: People are perceived to act in the

present primarily in relation to the imagined future, which, in turn, shapes the future's imagination and interpretations of the past (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 15–16; Miyazaki, 2004: 157; Ringel, 2016).

To summarize, I propose that the analytical attention on community should be directed at the constant collective future orientation in everyday social practices as part of the larger constellations of practices (Schatzki, 2016). This enables the analysis of community as individually performed yet shaped by the structure of social practices while being constantly reproduced and re-signified by self-reflective actors. For example, the strong association of community with one's administrative district (*gyōseiku*), area (*chiiki*), neighborhood (*kinjo*), or village (*shūraku*) among the exercise, handicraft, and cooking activity practitioners should not be taken merely as given territorial definitions of community. Instead, the interpretation and experiences of "local community" (*chiiki komyuniti*) should also be analyzed in relation to, for instance, historical national socio-political governance practices based on district neighborhood associations, government's community development practices that originally introduced the Japanese loan word *komyuniti* (community) and various rural revitalization practices emphasizing local community goods, skills, culture and belonging (Dilley et al., 2017; Komeda, 2001: 55, 58; Pekkanen et al., 2014). These interconnected practices are directed at certain ends, such as reinforcing the national state community and fostering prosperity amid regional and national decline, which intertwine with the immediate ends of everyday practice being performed. Thus, the continuous envisioning and enactment are propelled by future orientation in these webs social practices that facilitate and condition various emerging forms of sociality.

From anticipation to collective aspiring

One of my encounters during my very first visit to Yamamoto in the autumn of 2014 gave me a glimpse to the analytical potential of future orientation in shaping social life. I met an elegant lady in her 60s, who was writing a letter to her friends in the English class that regularly gathered at the local community center, and she requested my help in translating her Japanese sentences into English: "I hate tsunami. What is my life for? My dream is once again to open a beauty shop." The intensity with which the lady expressed her future desires struck me because it created a stark contrast not only to her sorrow, hatred, and questioning of the purpose of life but also to the dim overall prospects of the town. Yamamoto had faced not only the devastating 3.11 disaster but also the silent the long-standing everyday tragedy of population aging and decline in rural Japan, which further complicated community recovery (Matanle, 2013). An essential aspect of this quotation, however, was its social component of communicating her future desires to others.

Future-oriented joint activity also characterized the soba noodle workshops arranged regularly in the disaster victims' temporary housing. The individuals gathered to learn the craft of making the noodles, and this goal intertwined with joint endeavors to produce and enjoy freshly cooked meals together. Affective affirmation for these joint efforts was given as guidance and praise and the first bites of the soba eaten together around the table were accompanied by shouts of "*oishiiiiiiii ne!?*" ("Delicious, isn't it!?")

encouraging communication. Soba-making practice in the workshops, thus, offered an immediate shared sense of achievement, comfort, accomplishment, and togetherness.

Appadurai (2013) has noted that although *achieving* is characteristic of many human activities, "anthropology has been substantially preoccupied with what societies fear and therefore seek to *avoid*" (2013: 293, emphasis added). As a result, the future is either problematized or framed as *uncertain* and unpredictable in many fields (Kleist and Jansen, 2016). This uncertainty, as an affective dimension of time, produces fear, anxiety and insecurity in the face of an anticipated threat and danger (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 19, 26–30) that can be mobilized into collective anticipatory action to avoid these unwanted scenarios (Anderson, 2010; Appadurai, 2013: 293–295; Bryant and Knight, 2019: 37–38) or to relieve anxiety and fear for normalizing the present (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 42–43). Accordingly, perceived, constructed, or politically imposed shared dangers, risks, and insecurities have been prominent in studies of social life and community (Baehr, 2005; Boholm and Corvellec, 2011; Douglas, 1966, 1992; Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983; Weldes et al., 1999). Baehr (2005) refers to the collectivities constituted not by altruism or communitas, but by common danger and uncertainty, as "communities of fate."

What I observed in the letter of the local lady or in the soba workshops was hardly based on anticipation, avoidance, fear of uncertain futures, or even mere passive hope. Instead, socialization took place largely in relation to an activity oriented *toward desired futures*: communication of one's desired futures, objectives of learning new skills, efforts to create a serving of noodles to be enjoyed together and passing on the traditional culinary craftmanship. These futures inscribed and opened in this practice both enabled and conditioned the interactions. Furthermore, the participants also reflected on the meaning of the practice and futures opened in the workshops and re-signified their activities in relation to their post-disaster socio-material context much like exercise club members. For example, the soba-making practice served as social recovery, as the workshop teacher noted, observing that "the sorrows go away for a moment when [we are] eating together." These desired futures, thus, shaped not only the participants' sense of place and community, but also the future potential of community in relation to it (Halperin, 1998: 302; Milligan, 1998). These were reflected in the participants' other activities outside the workshop, forming an ever-evolving social phenomenon of interpreted, experienced, and felt community in the compound webs of social practices.

Thus, the point here is not whether this kind of connectedness is community or not. Instead, I suggest refining the analytical focus to the ways people interconnect through continuous enacting and envisioning of the collectively negotiated *desired* futures rather than uncertain or possible futures that are feared or avoided. Hence, the alleged social connectedness created by uncertainty, fear, threats, or anticipatory action can be analyzed, instead, as joint endeavors to achieve a desired future with a sense of security. Accordingly, I argue that this teleological character of social life is best approached through the conceptual lens of the future orientation of *collective aspiring* as the active process of striving *toward* the desired futures.

Aspirations are understood as future-oriented, conscious, or unconscious motivations indicating commitments to a particular trajectory or endpoint (Hart, 2016: 326).

Although aspirations are often associated with the domain of the individual, they nevertheless have an inherent social dimension. They are always "formed in interaction and the thick of social life," derive from larger cultural norms and system of ideas and, as such, relate the future of "the self or the agency of the self in relation to goals concerning others" (Appadurai, 2004: 67; Hart, 2013: 76). In this process, hope is considered to balance the future risks and uncertainties as the potential for alternative futures and the willingness to act for them (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 157; Kleist and Jansen, 2016: 379; Miyazaki, 2004). The significance of shared aspirations as a dynamo of enacting and envisioning can be observed also in the concerns of a strawberry farmer in Yamamoto: "If there would not be a desire to make this town once more reborn, reconstruction could not be done." In this light, hope is the passive affective level of the future's potentiality, which fuels active aspiring (cf. Crapanzano, 2003: 100–101); one can have high hopes or lose one's hope, but that does not mean that one is not aspiring.

While community is argued to be a powerful yet elusive aspiration (Bauman, 2001; Brent, 2004). Here, however, I argue that it is rather aspiring as a process, an active endeavor, and state of doing that best contributes to the analysis of community (Hart, 2013: 76). Aspiring is separate but interconnected with anticipation and imagination (Appadurai, 2013). The goal- and self-orientation of aspiring differentiates it from the popular but vague term imagination (Hart, 2013: 76). Therefore, I refer here with collective imagination to *possible* futures, which is argued to form the quotidian energy vital in all social processes (Appadurai, 1996, 2013: 287). The possible future does not present endless opportunities or constitute overarching uncertainty, but rather evolving fuzzy horizons of the future shape, direct, and delimit our present-day perceptions and actions and, as such, also the imaginative process itself (Crapanzano, 2003). This creative imagination thus enables the inventive imagining of alternate, less uncertain futures and social wholes (Hastrup, 2004; Rohrer and Thompson, 2022; Samimian-Darash, 2022). In contrast, aspiring implies the formation and directionality of these social wholes proceeding toward these constantly reimagined fuzzy horizons.

This is not to suggest an organized rational act of drafting a vision together and proceeding linearly toward it. Neither am I claiming that communities are *a result* of aspiring produced by any objective, past or future (Ringel, 2016). Rather, collective aspiring focuses on the analysis of the social relations formed in actors' experiences of the temporal dimensions that unfolding together as they are continuously reinterpreted in future-oriented action (Munn, 1992: 115; Nielsen, 2011). Within this perspective, the expression "aspired communities" is not yet another definition or descriptive label of a specific type of community. Instead, it denotes both, a practice-based research approach in response to abstracted imagined communities, and a reference to three aspects related to the temporality of social life: the continuous process of collective aspiring in itself (aspir*ing*); the subjectively experienced, ontologized communities (aspir*ed* community); and community as an objective (aspiration).

Pursuing and yearning for shared objectives

Let us return, for a moment, to the soba workshop to consider these aspects of collective aspiring. In addition to the final product (the meal), important aspects of this soba-making activity and its accumulating interactions were the initial drivers that led individuals to join and continue to participate. These included the joint activity of cooking itself, sensing and sharing smells and tastes, and feelings of comfort, togetherness, and accomplishment. In addition to these activities in temporary housing, I also observed a soba workshop at a community festival arranged at the town hall. This cheerful event gathered many participants in activities such as making flower art displaying the slogan "one town, one heart" or carving funny faces in locally produced strawberries. The event was organized by an active residents' group established after the 3.11 disaster to support Yamamoto community development in cooperation with volunteers and organizations in and outside Yamamoto. In this context, soba making not only served as a method of preparing a delicious meal, but also contributed to the desired future town community, which was envisioned and enacted in the practices characterized by a shared longing for togetherness.

Whether the aspiration is a noodle meal or town community, the notion of collective aspiring emphasizes processual collective activity and affects toward these ends instead of perceiving categorial sameness or identity as the grounding of community. To operationalize this multifaceted nature of community, I propose dividing collective aspiring for analytical purposes into three interrelated aspects: *aspiring as action-oriented pursuing*, *affectively charged yearning*, and *aspirations as shared objectives*. Such a categorization allows us to analyze sociality in relation to the desired future of both the minute bodily (inter)actions that encompass acts, activities, affects, and objectives and the larger contextual social fabric and webs of practices, including, for example, the governance and revitalization practices discussed above.

The first, *aspiring as pursuing*, denotes action, acting, and agency. It is action-oriented, referring to the processes of negotiating and aligning desired futures and, particularly, to the mobilization of these into social (inter)actions. As noted, the interconnectedness does not automatically mean interdependence but also requires the coordination and alignment of desired futures. The individual existential futures can be seen as intertwined and common or shared to various degrees and durations (Schatzki, 2009, 2016). Similarly to what has been called as relational joint commitments or domains of commonality, this alignment forms the basis for social relations and a new motivational force according to which those sharing the aspirations seek to act while experiencing various states of affective solidarities (Amit, 2010, 2020; Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2016; Glick Schiller, 2022). Furthermore, pursuing is connected not only to future orientation in this (inter)action but also to agency within it. People engaging in social practices can be perceived as reflexive and self-aware "knowing subjects," who are always connected to social relations and power (Glick Schiller, 2023; Ortner, 2006: 110, 126–131). Thus, instead of approaching community either as social structure or individual endeavor, practice theory posits these as mutually constitutive. Change is

perceived as creativity that is intentionality inherent in individual actors, yet always circumscribed by social practice (Schatzki, 2002: 234; Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016: 66).

Pursuing highlights also the significance of a subjective *sense* of agency in relation to others when aligning desired futures and acting for them. Social movement studies acknowledge the shared identities created in formally organized intentional activities (Hunt et al., 1994). However, pursuing refers more generally to a constantly ongoing process of maneuvering the interdependence of social relations in relation to the desired futures within the enjoined ends of the social practices. This process is never complete, and it is this incompletion that enables us to analyze community as a dynamic process constituted by this activity of sharing temporalities (Brent, 2004). In Yamamoto, this perspective helped me to understand, for example, the interplay of present sociality and the futures during the preparations for a local illumination event: The joint preparation of lightworks was equally important as the actual event itself because it created opportunities for interaction and a sense of participating in joint efforts for the community's future. Those engaged in these preparations and the event also hoped to generate a feeling of fulfillment understood as "affluence of the heart" (*kokoro no yutakasa*). Hence, collective pursuing can be associated, for example, with sentiments of capability, a sense of subjectivity and collectivity, empowerment, but also with disempowerment when striving to "do together."

Here, I use the notion of *aspiring as yearning* to address particularly the affective aspects of collective aspiring, that of feeling the future together. Affect functions as an analytical term for feelings, emotions, and various other sensations that arise from future orientations and their discursive reflection and transmission (Skoggard and Waterston, 2015; Vainio, 2020; Wetherell, 2013). Unlike "emotion," the term "affects" refers not to qualities or properties but, rather, to relationships between entities and to affectivity directed toward something of significance (Reckwitz, 2017: 118–121). Therefore, yearning is an active state, an affective social activity. As such, it is inherently connected to pursuing because agency can be understood to reside in discursive reflection on the emotional significance of practices outside of their actual performance (Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016: 69–70). In turn, the structure of practice delineates the repertoire of expected emotions that individuals may feel to varying extents (Reckwitz, 2017; Schatzki, 2002: 80–81, 130).

Thus, affects are a foundational part of social life and community and are continuously produced by them. The allure of community is often created by its association with positive feelings (Bauman, 2001; Brent, 2004). However, affects should not be reduced only to idealized sense of belonging or togetherness. While affective yearnings are often geared toward, for example, achieving a sense of belonging, togetherness, and security, aligning futures may result not only in a harmonious sense of togetherness but also in ambiguities, contradictions, and conflict, as well as indifference, insecurity, despair, disappointment, and frustration (Amit, 2020: 54; Bryant and Knight, 2019: 199; Schatzki, 2009: 43–44, 2010: 44). I elaborate on "the power of aspiring" in the next section. This ambivalence of affects blurs the lines between us and them, inclusion, and exclusion (Amit, 2010). Therefore, affective yearning directs the analyst's attention not only to belonging but also to a myriad of other sentiments and the ways these situational,

relational, and interdependent affects are expressed, related to, distributed as well as enforced and sanctioned in relation to desired futures.

Aspirations can be perceived also *as shared objectives*. Now that I have highlighted the significance of the social process of collective aspiring, the reader has likely begun wondering exactly *what* is being aspired. Appadurai outlines "a good life" as a universal aspiration (2013: 239). However, this overarching objective ignores the dynamic, situational, and relational nature of collective aspiring as a feature of the teleology of social practices. The objectives may be very practical and immediate or general and abstract at the same time, as in the soba workshop at the community festival. Thus, shared aspiration is not an explicit static goal, willed end, a project to be completed, or a positive value-laden objective (Schatzki, 2002: 81). Rather, it is a situational and continuously emergent and evolving in the course of collective aspiring as the more-or-less explicitly defined and striven for ends.

This relation of aspiring and aspirations is illustrated in the gathering of the participants of the above-mentioned community festival to listen and sing the song "In this Town," which was composed after the disaster by a local band. The lyrics convey not only a feeling of loss and the important temporal markers, such as "that day" (*ano hi*) of the disaster, but also attachment and a wish to proceed together toward the future:

> Although I lost my precious things on March 11th, that day, I will not forget you. I will remember everything.
>
> My thoughts cannot reach you. I want to tell you how I feel. This town is a place that always feels warm.
>
> Let's work together for the future. Let's live together in Yamamoto town.
>
> I live in this town. I will keep on living in this town. Let's walk toward the future once again in this town.

The aspiration of future together in and of Yamamoto depicted in the lyrics is significant, but what actualized the community were the acts of composing and performing the song and its repeated joint singing in various events that reinforced affective yearning. This is not *re*building the past lost town community, but rather a reinterpretation of it in the light of the similar desired future community. Similarly, some residents yearned for their nostalgized neighborhood ties and acted on this yearning by rebuilding their district shrine and holding community festivals, making their district community as their "wished-for former state" (Oliver-Smith, 2005: 54, 57; Posio, 2019a).

Furthermore, the *sense* of having a desired future and acting for it is at least equally as important as what is aspired to. Losing a sense of the future leads to a sense of crisis and disorientation and this collapse of the teleological nature of human life makes the present feel uncanny in its overwhelming presentness (Bryant and Knight, 2019: 42–43). This kind of disorientation and sense of loss is characteristic to the immediate post-disaster crisis period, the liminality of which is also argued to produce solidarity

(Oliver-Smith, 2020; Silver and Grek-Martin, 2015; Solnit, 2009). Aspiring shifts the focus of the variation and function of liminal experience within social practices. For example, continued post-disaster neighborhood activities in Yamamoto are not perceived as a result of extended liminal post-disaster solidarity, but as activities fueled by an aspiration to regenerate it. Moreover, other research has found that liminality created social isolation instead of solidarity in disaster evacuees during the prolonged temporary housing period in Tohoku (Gagné, 2020).

Thus, essentially community disaster recovery concerns regaining the teleology of life founded in quotidian social practices. This aspiration characterizes the formation of post-disaster social life as has been observed in the joint efforts to re-establish hygiene practices in Tohoku disaster shelters (Steger, 2015). This was also noted in recovering Yamamoto by a community center staff member:

> The sense of loss has affected how they feel the need to connect with others. If you were already in the community and you had certain responsibilities as a member of the community [before the disaster], you were already doing the trash [recycling], cleaning or sending out letters or, you know, some kind of work for the community […] So, community should be there, but because it's not, they search for it and even go out and try to connect with others.

These examples highlight how the co-constitutive and reciprocal relationship between yearning, pursuing, and objectives in everyday practice provides analytical insight on how community envisioning generates enactment in quotidian material settings that generate both more tangible community feelings and contribute to its further collective aspiring (Neal and Walters, 2008).

The power of aspiring

Desired futures can be contested, contradicted, or imposed on others, and these ambiguities in aspiring allow us to analyze how and if community emerge or drift into conflict (Amit, 2010, 2015, 2020). Conflict and power divisions arise when people are "acting in partly shared and partly conflicting spatialities" and "pursue incompatible futures fueled by divergent pasts" (Schatzki, 2010: 44). This becomes acutely present in the post-disaster context process of re-establishing rules, moral orders, reinterpretations of pasts, and future trajectories after the drastic disruption of the social and material worlds. These worlds are intertwined because the material environment is constituting and constitutive of social practices in place (Schatzki, 2009: 46). This makes the reconstruction plans and planners particularly powerful in shaping the post-disaster social life.

Exploration of the seemingly apolitical practice of soba-making at the community festival illustrates how divergent or conflicting futures shape sociality in multiple and overlapping ways. The festival was very cheerful and focused on creating positive emotions and togetherness, but these local activities also had a more critical nuance. The core members of the organizing group explained that they had to complement town policies, which they felt were ignoring social recovery and the residents' sentiments. An even harsher critique of

the town reconstruction policies prioritizing massive material rebuilding projects in inland areas was expressed by other active coastal resident-initiated community development groups (Posio, 2019b). This kind of criticism expressed by many current locals can be perceived as a feeling of being excluded from the future of the reconstructed Yamamoto, as reflected in a complaint by a resident: "The mayor is acting for the future, but the support should be directed to those who are suffering now and who are here now."

This helps to understand the simultaneous fracturing and connecting effects created by divergent desired futures in Yamamoto: The reconstruction vision was perceived to divide the town into prioritized areas and victim categories that excluded some resident groups from that future, while the residents initiated community activities to realize their envisioned inclusive town and district communities (Posio, 2019b). In turn, this shaped the locals' perceptions of the temporality of reconstruction dependent on the completion of infrastructure and homes, after which community recovery could truly begin (cf. Vainio, 2020). Thus, the town policies and their discrepancy with the experienced temporality of the residents were agentive in formulating new aspirations in the community building both in the everyday practices in their immediate neighborhoods and in the extended imaginary town community.

People, with their overlapping and simultaneous aspirations, are always connected to others. Therefore, the social dynamics of collective aspiring involves the power to impose desired futures on others by structuring social practices and peoples' actions and temporalities within them (Schatzki, 2010: 95–96). These created opportunity structures, socioeconomic position, and resources enable or limit the realization of aspirations and shape the capacity to aspire (Appadurai, 2004; Fischer, 2014: 6). Thus, not everyone can participate in the process of collective aspiring on equal terms. This structuring of practices creates clusters of interrelated shared, hegemonic collective aspirations defining socially sanctioned normative expectations of being and belonging, which reveals in a Gramscian sense "the ambivalence, the dilemma, and the complicity involved in everyday life, desires, and aspirations" (Gramsci, 1971; Streinzer and Tosic, 2022: 389).

This was echoed in the divisive yet officially imposed future defined by the Yamamoto reconstruction plan that expected not only unity, but also affectionate dedication when stating that "it is essential that each town resident shares this future vision, concentrating the power of participation in community development with love for one's hometown and with passion" (Yamamoto, 2011: 6). As the concept of resilience shows, this kind of aspirational rhetoric of community may also serve as "a diversion from the reality of increasing social exclusion and inequality" and structural socio-political problems (Barrios, 2017; Unterhalter et al., 2014: 140). Moreover, the power of the outlined future was not only in this envisioning in the plan, but also in its enactment of the hegemonic reconstruction aspiration through established practices of governance and community building (*machizukuri*) (Posio, 2019a, 2019b).

The affective aspect of aspiring is a particularly effective tool with which to exercise power and mobilize action by defining or shaping the futures of others (Barrios, 2017; Dilley et al., 2017; Schatzki, 2009; Weldes et al., 1999). Futurity is embedded in collectively held norms, beliefs, and values, which operate through their emotional resonance (Appadurai, 2004: 61; Weenink and Spaargaren, 2016). Being a part of a community

also means being subjected to them, whereas the fear of losing a social bond is particularly compelling because norms set the moral boundaries of the group and define a worthy member (Bauman, 2001: 4–5; Scheff, 2003).

Hence, although community does not exist as an independent entity with its own agency, as a collectively shared and reproduced ontologized social reality, it can appear compelling and tangible in subjective experience and behavior (Amit and Rapport, 2002: 15; Gordon, 2012). These normative expectations, which shaped socialization through sanctioned interaction practices, were prominent not only in official reconstruction practices, but also in the newly build residential districts in Yamamoto. The district community building committee pursued their aspired community with an expectation that all new residents, despite their individual preferences, would "show their face" (*kao awaseru*) in the district's gathering places. Quotidian practices, such as garbage disposal at collection points, were harnessed for achieving the desired level of mutual trust and acquaintance based on self-introductions. However, this posited the less forthcoming residents implicitly as outsiders constituting an unwanted social risk and insecurity and, hence, hindering the realization of the aspired community. This illustrates how aspiring and aspirations are not merely a positive individual effort communicated to others but always a relational multivocal process based on power relations within social practices.

Conclusion

In this article, I have introduced the analytical tool of collective aspiring to enhance our understanding on how forms of sociality in their varying qualities, scopes, durations, intensities, and ambiguities may come to be interpreted, felt, and propagated as community. Anthropology has largely focused on the past–present relation and anticipation of uncertain futures has become the prominent frame for understanding shared temporalities (Bryant and Knight, 2019). In contrast, collective aspiring starts the analysis from the desired futures to capture the teleological character of human activities and temporal dimensionality of experience. Simply put, we need to think community through practices and focus on not uncertain or possible, but desired futures and the ways people connect in the present when continuously pursuing and yearning for these desired futures and reinterpreting their past based on them.

When using community, aspiration, or future as analytical concepts, it is nevertheless challenging not to reduce them to idealized sentiments of togetherness, positive lifegoals, or progress. Furthermore, communities in post-disaster context and beyond are often portrayed either temporary feelings of utopian togetherness or stable, spatially confined social structures. These associations are prevalent not only in research, but also in its appropriations in various policies, commercial practices, and social relations. I have argued that the practice theory approach that anchors community to future orientation in quotidian social practices within the larger constellations of webs of social practices and relations of unequal power helps us to navigate analytically in this intersection of subjective experience, social arrangements, and power dynamics. As such, it enables overcoming the dichotomies of agency and structure, actualization and abstraction, as well as affect and rationality that have been characteristic to the conceptualizations of community.

Thus, while community as emerging, dynamic social phenomena or solidarity, togetherness or belonging as aspirations are not new insights, exploring the future orientation of aspiring provides an ethnographic hold on community as a "paradox of desire," something that never fully reached but always desired (Brent, 2004). I have highlighted in this article that communities do not just emerge as ontological entities with inherent positive value. Rather, they are presented here as being molded in the future-oriented process and agency *towards* the desired, enjoined ends of the performed practices. Hence, "it is the desire for community, not its achievement, which is itself community" (Brent, 2004: 221). As such, this recalibration of perspective to temporal dimensionality and practices does not exclude prior conceptualizations or attributes of community, such as belonging, solidarity, communitas, or security, but challenges us to reconsider them in the light of future orientation.

The interpretations and experiences of community are varying in duration and intensity, multilayered, blurry, contradictory, and sometimes conflicting. It is precisely this ambiguity (Amit, 2010, 2020) that allows the analysis of the dynamics of sociality and temporality in which both multiple simultaneous individuals and shared desired futures may align, overlap, or clash. The examples from Yamamoto in this article offered glimpses on how collective aspiring shapes social life when the immediate, everyday aspirations of making soba noodles or opening a beauty shop intertwined with, for example, the objectives and power dynamics of ambitious but controversial reconstruction plans and national revitalization practices. I must note that my fieldwork reached the more active residents, while the temporalities and aspiring of those secluded in the temporary housing for prolonged period may be quite different. Therefore, I hope these observations inspire applications of and further analysis of the multifaceted nature of collective aspiring both in other disaster and non-disaster contexts.

Disasters, pandemics, wars, or other forms of devastation in particular highlight how unpredictable the future is and what we can imagine in its horizon. In this realm of uncertainty, collective aspiring is a dynamo, setting envisioning, and enacting community in motion toward the desired futures. In this process uncertainty is not that of the future, but in the ambiguity of how these futures are aligned. Thus, the future and community are both desirable and empowering but also elusive, messy, and abundantly powerful. This article is an invitation to continue exploring collective aspiring to complement our understanding of community, particularly in these times of uncertainty, polarization, and anticipation.

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Note

1. Kanji are the Japanese logographic writing characters originally derived from Chinese.

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