Lunch: the most important meal of the day

Exploring the kitchen-table resilience of a mental health collective

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Hur köket bidrar till en psykisk hälsa kollektivs uthållighet och motståndskraft

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Abstract

Communities survive partly because of how members interact with each other at the micro level to maintain daily practices of common pool resource management. This factor contributes to their resilience, to the tendency of the institution to continue and to resist shocks.

This thesis is an investigation of a self-managed mental health community in Stockholm, seeking to understand how it maintains its own resilience in the face of the challenges its members face. These include health struggles and a lack of energy for coordinating and carrying out tasks.

Using an ethnographic method over several months I observe how members interact with each other to carry out tasks and make decisions in a 'low-threshold manner'. This is done in a patchwork way that can be analysed using the framework of institutional bricolage, where collective institutions are created from a range of existing practices and resources.

This case study examines a community that manages its common pool resources, including cultivated land, and also carries out administrative tasks. The kitchen and the rhythm of activity around daily preparation of lunch is seen as a crucial node which enables this pattern of resilience through institutional bricolage.

Keywords: Common pool resources, institutional bricolage, mental health, resilience

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Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
KDP	Kecamatan (subdistrict) Development Programme
SLU	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
SMI	Serious mental illness
SET	Supportive environment theory

1. Introduction

“Even if I can’t cook or know much about cooking I can contribute, because I can reach things [higher up] that others cannot.”

- Fountain House Sköndal member, 19 February 2026

The topic of how people can cooperate and make decisions collectively, even under conditions of great strain, is an urgent one. This thesis is an investigation of a community institution where people collectively organise the tasks needed to live their everyday lives. In the context of the study of Common Pool Resources it is an investigation of “how dynamics of persisting, adapting and transforming are enacted”, through the analysis of ‘daily practices’ (Haider and Cleaver, 2023, p.4).

To be more specific, it uses this analysis to shed light on the dynamics that hold together a community that is a member of the Clubhouse International movement. A Clubhouse in this organisational context is defined as a “community-based service dedicated to supporting and empowering people living with mental illness, known as ‘Clubhouse members’” (Clubhouse International, 2026).

This thesis analyses a Clubhouse near Stockholm, Sweden. It frames this Clubhouse as a collective that manages common pool resources. This is since each Clubhouse must be self-organised and members are responsible for carrying out critical tasks. “Clubhouse staffing levels are purposefully kept low to create a perpetual need for the involvement of the members in order to accomplish their jobs […] members and staff share the responsibility for the successful operation of the Clubhouse (Clubhouse International, 2026).

I observed and participated in the community for several months to gather qualitative data on dynamics of collective labour and decision-making. This data is analysed through the conceptual framework of ‘institutional bricolage’. This framework sees such a community as a collective institution, and as being constantly built and re-built through the active processes carried out by members of the community. This thesis analyses this process using the concept of ‘resilience.’

The concept of ‘institutional bricolage’ comes from the school of critical institutionalism, which is itself a development of the work of Elinor Ostrom (1990) on ‘governing the commons’. Ostrom’s work on ‘design principles illustrated by long-enduring CPR (Common Pool Resource) institutions’ seeks to

explain how common pool resource institutions such as ‘commons’ do manage to survive and successfully manage natural resources such as land.

1.1 Research Questions

The overriding questions for this enquiry are:

- How does this community reproduce itself, rather than falling apart? In other words how does it retain its resilience.
- Since the demand according to the Clubhouse constitution is for collective reproduction of the community resources how is this collective institution reproduced in the everyday at the micro level, through interactions between members?

Through several months of participant observation (November 2025-May 2026) I developed an ethnographic understanding of certain key dynamics which knit the community together and help it retain stability; dynamics rooted in daily practices that help it keep reproducing itself and hence contribute to its resilience. To be specific, I looked at how everyday actions and activities formed patterns of behaviour (daily, weekly, monthly and seasonal) that enabled decisions and distribution of labour to be negotiated between members despite the challenges of mental illness.

The quote with which I start this thesis is from an anonymous member of the community. It illustrates how people find their roles in the collective labour of the community. And crucially it situates this role-finding work as part of a physical embodying of the community.

2. Background

In this section I describe the background to my research. This takes several different sections:

- The Clubhouse as a model of institution
- Clubhouses in Sweden
- Swedish Clubhouses and management of natural resources
- The related topic of 'back-to-the land' and 'green waves'
- The related issue of 'green therapy' in Sweden.
- The related topic of 'back-to-the land' and 'green wave'.
- I also describe the case study location in detail to allow better understanding of where everything happens

This investigation into daily practices that create resilience through takes place through observation and participation in one main geographical location. This is the 'Fountain House' in Sköndal on the edge of Stockholm (official name, '*Fontänhuset Sköndal*'). It is situated in a historical house around 100 years old and near six plots of land (*kolonilottor*) the Fountain House community uses for growing food.

2.1 The Clubhouse as a model of institution

The international Clubhouse movement dates to one centre founded by mental patients in New York in 1948. It has grow to be a coalition of such centres across the world, all unified by sharing common rules and all using the 'Clubhouse model'. This model is a form of mental health care based on the explicit idea of community self-organisation and hence of members creating and maintaining collective institutions. It currently has 378 member houses and is seeing its fastest expansion in Sweden and Norway, according to a presentation I attended by Clubhouse International Senior European Officer Anita Brix.

In Sweden these institutions are known as Fountain Houses, after the initial centre in New York that is also named the Fountain House. In this thesis I shall use the term 'Clubhouse' as an umbrella term for all such institutions, while sometimes referring to the specific ones in Sweden as 'Fountain Houses'.

Clubhouses within this definition are constituted as communities of mental illness sufferers who rent or own properties. They run them as mental health care facilities. The work of running these facilities, as well as the decision-making, is based on the members. 'Members' are defined as those who themselves suffer from serious mental illness (SMI). In addition there are always staff employed to support a Clubhouse. Yet the main work of maintaining the Clubhouse must always be shouldered by members, and "an intentional community is created, where members and staff work together, side-by-side, to carry out all daily operations of the clubhouse", (Fountain House, 2026).

Institutions that exist within the Clubhouse model are therefore all, by definition, examples of collective management by the members, for the members. By definition a Clubhouse must always depend on the labour and organisation of the collective itself, rather than professionals or external actors. The need to keep the house going through carrying out the daily operations of the institution is one reason my theoretical framework focuses on 'daily practices.'

The first New York Clubhouse became the inspiration of many other similar centres. Eventually an independent umbrella organisation was spun off from the New York house: Clubhouse International. This organisation works to help develop new Clubhouses and also runs an accreditation process. A Clubhouse may only claim membership of the movement after it has been audited by a team from Clubhouse International and shown it is living up to the guiding principles of Clubhouses. Prospective Clubhouses may be assessed as entitled to a three-year accreditation if they have a strong record of work and results that align with the Clubhouse constitution. Ones which have a less solid performance may be accredited, provisionally, which in principle means for just one year. Others further down the compliance scale may be prevented from claiming to be Clubhouses. In Sweden the rate of compliance is unusually high. Around 58 per cent, as compared to around 40 per cent globally. No Swedish Clubhouse has been rejected: the remaining 42 per cent were all given provisional accreditation (Anita Brix, 2026).

2.2 Clubhouses in Sweden

The first such centre in Europe was founded in Sweden, directly inspired by the founding Clubhouse in New York: hence it took the name Fountain House. Swedish journalist Lis Asklund made a documentary on the New York house at the end of the 1970s, entitled 'Instead of a hospital: Fountain House.' After this

was broadcast on public television she was able to secure funding to open a Fountain House in Stockholm, in 1980. In other countries the Clubhouses are often known by local names, such as Suomen Klubitalot in Finland (Clubhouse Finland, 2026), or ‘Mosaic Clubhouse’ in the UK (Mosaic Clubhouse, 2026).

In Sweden these centres currently number 18 with two more about to open their doors. Sweden has four per cent of the world’s Clubhouses, (Brix, 2026) despite only having around one per cent of the world’s population. In addition half of all Europe’s Clubhouses are in the Nordic area (Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway). In the 48 months leading up to April 2026 new Clubhouses were established at an average rate of just over one per month (Brix, 2026).

As regards organisation between Clubhouses Sweden is also unusual in having its own umbrella coalition, the National Association of Fountain Houses, to coordinate work within Sweden.

2.3 Swedish Clubhouses and management of natural resources

Most Clubhouses in Sweden have gardens, or use nature therapy as part of their operations. My survey sent to all of Sweden’s centres shows that most Clubhouses in Sweden either have their own land, or plan to start gardening, using boxes of earth or local public land. Some use indoor growing behind glass or under lights.

According to the European Officer for Clubhouse International “almost every Clubhouse has its hands in the soil” and that use of gardening “seems to be built into the Clubhouse model (Brix, 2026). She notes that different Clubhouses organise the gardening work differently, with some anchoring it in the kitchen unit, some in the maintenance unit.

In the southern city of Lund the Fountain House has not only a large ‘green fingers’ gardening unit that feeds the kitchen, but also a parallel project specifically designed to offer green therapy through ‘low-threshold’ access to walks and hikes locally. This project is partly funded by the EU and developed in cooperation with the municipal social services and the Swedish outdoors activities association ‘Friluftsfrämjandet’. The Lund annual report states that at least 100 people participate in their gardening activities, although their yearly report

mentions that members want more structure and more support (Lunds Fontänhus, 2024).

The above context makes it clear to me that the collective model of Clubhouses fits well with an analysis based on Common Pool Resources research. Even though almost no Clubhouse is made up of people working the fields every day, there seems to be a tendency to want to work with soil and cultivation in a vast proportion of Clubhouses, if not in all.

In the Results section I present a discussion of how my case study, Fountain House Sköndal, was founded with a hope of being self-sufficient in agricultural produce, and at one point had extensive animal husbandry, including pigs, chickens and rabbits. And how this ended because of the difficulty of coordinating this work as part of their Common Pool Resources institution.

2.4 'Green waves'

Maybe Clubhouses tend towards gardening as an activity because of a widespread sense in popular cultural sense that gardening and contact with nature is an aid to healing. This popular belief can also be discerned in the 'green wave' movement where city dwellers seek a better life through a new life with greater contact with nature and rurality.

In Sweden there have been two green waves in modern times, in the 1960s and in the 2010s to the present day. Currently the urge by some 'green wave' urban dwellers to make a rural life is framed in terms of making a better and more meaningful kind of existence. The four narratives analysed by Sandström in the 'migration letters' of Swedish green wave participants consist of

> "(i) rebelling against payroll work and meaningless lives in the cities,
> (ii) reinvention and retrotopia,
> (iii) reconnecting with nature and cultivating resilient alternatives
> and (iv) resistance and silent revolution." (Sandström, 2022 p.550)

Research into green waves and intentional communities often focuses on what values and ambitions the participants express and places the communities and individuals in a political setting. But underlying the existential, cultural and political ideas about country living that Sandström identifies must also be a more rooted discussion about the reality of how people's bodies and minds interact with

rural environments. In other words, I think this green wave phenomenon is more related to the issue of mental health than is generally discussed.

Some green wave participants in the Basque Country explicitly see their new lives as better for their mental health, and "point to its advantages of working outdoors, the less stressful rhythms of work, greater autonomy and control of their lives, and a better work–life balance", (Calvario, 2017, p.411).

2.5 'Green therapy'

If the 'green wave' represents a political-philosophical view of rurality and how it can improve existential quality of life, the phenomenon known as 'green therapy' refers to a more limited and instrumental use of nature and rural work: as a form of medical intervention.

As a sector within the economy the practice of using gardening and nature as a treatment for stress, depression and other illnesses has become solidly established in Sweden during the last two decades, with patients being referred by doctors to farms in Skåne since 2012 (Stigmar et al, 2016). Equivalents in other countries include 'Inn på tunet' in Norway, that was formalised as part of a national strategy of green care in 2012 (Berget, 2012, p.17,)

Known variously as green therapy, green rehabilitation, nature-based therapy and other names as a modern sector in the economy and welfare system it can be based on research indicating clinical benefits, including that carried out by SLU in the Alnarp Rehabilitation Garden (Wissler and Palsdottir, 2021).

Green therapy is not only available through the healthcare system in Skåne, but also exists as part of municipal rehabilitation in other areas. The Swedish rural development association Hushållningssällskapet has certified 80 farms to offer these services, and there are even more which are not yet fully certified (Hushållningssällskapet, 2026).

A related issue is rural mental health communities as a form of treatment. Although often part of a move towards de-institutionalisation of mental health care (in other words, a move away from compulsory hospital internment) some have nevertheless also been accused of being authoritarian. For example some have forced members to take part in treatment. One such rural rehabilitation community in Italy that has been cited as a good example by US health secretary

Robert F Kennedy jr saw corruption, plus a crisis when it attempted to expand its model, and “five residents were held against their will when they tried to leave the program” (NPR, 2026).

The Clubhouse Model hence stands out as being both able to scale up and free of accusations of corruption, as well as being independent and non-confessional. Underpinning all this is how it is an egalitarian movement run by members. Unlike the rural example from Italy Clubhouses in Sweden are also non-residential. In general the Clubhouse aims to create a ‘work-ordered day’ that mimics a workplace (Association of Fountain Houses in Sweden, 2026). This means it is arguably the strength of the daily practices of Clubhouse members that contribute to the resilience of the worldwide movement as well. No area of a Clubhouse is sealed off from members and all are able to participate in bookkeeping and inspect the accounts, hence corruption is less lilkely.

Other important context which differentiates this particular case study is how the Fountain House in Sköndal is embedded in the Swedish model of publicly-funded health care by independent actors. In this model organisations and businesses compete for public contracts for providing services; in addition it is patients who have the power to choose their provider (Sveriges Riksdag, 2008). The Fountain House in Sköndal is hence one of many different rehabilitation service providers which people diagnosed in need of treatment can choose to participate in, based on a referral by their case worker at the Stockholm city municipal social office.

2.6 Physical description of the case study.

Fountain House Sköndal is a large detached building with its own grounds on a hillside sloping down to a lake. At the peak of this hill is the Sköndal church, opened in 1927 (Svenska kyrkan, 2016). The Fountain House dates to the same period, as it was first of all intended as the residence of the registrar of that church and later the residence of the chief minister for that church. I interpret the size of the residence as implying it was supposed to be used for events and for receiving and entertaining important people as part of a Swedish established church minister’s role. On the ground floor it has a hallway, now built into a reception area with a desk for the Fountain House. This opens onto the kitchen and onto a storage room but also onto a room that that faces the lakeside. Two similarly sized rooms also face this direction, and one has a large porch or covered veranda. This is the room the Fountain House use as their dining room. The kitchen also connects to this room, and between the two rooms are the steps down to the cellar

These lakeside views are now also views onto the plots of land the Fountain House uses, which are on the small plain just between the hillside and the lake.

I mention all this to underline the impression that the Fountain House gives for visitors. A visitor must walk through an urban centre, which becomes increasingly rural in character as one proceeds onto a lane, and then walks along a raised lane with view of the lake, until arriving at this large house which dominates the hillside, while at the same time sheltering under the shadow of the church higher on the hill.

One floor up the Fountain House has a large living room accessed via an open stairway, and it is here there is also a large open fireplace. During the coldest weeks of the year the rest of the old house is very cold, and house meetings are sometimes held up here with a fire. One large room, presumably the master bedroom, is access from a short hallway, and this is now used as the office room by the Fountain House. Two smaller rooms, probably bedrooms for children, or for servants, or a study room, are also on this floor. One of them is used for storing critical documents for the house. Each floor also has a toilet room and upstairs is a room with washing machine and a shower. There is no bath, and I speculate that the original residents would have taken a tin bath, with water heated up on the fire, in the upstairs sitting room.

This is hence a case study situated in a place which gives an air of rurality and also of being embedded in history and the central buildings of the community 100 years ago. It has elements which may seem uncomfortable for a modern visitor, such as poor insulation and a lack of power sockets. It can be seen as a setting that tends to lead participants in its premises to slower and more contemplative forms of association and work. It is, for example, very easy for a member to take a time-out upstairs or in one of the many sitting rooms if they feel overwhelmed, and during the warmer part of the year people can escape or wander outside. The furnishings are mostly old, wooden and worn. It feels like borrowing your grandmother’s holiday home.

I can illustrate how the Sköndal case study premises curate the experience of participants by briefly comparing it to the building housing the Fountain House in central Stockholm. I visited this other Fountain House several times and I am registered as a member of their student unit. This property is probably larger in terms of surface area, but vertical rather than horizontal. It has three floors, including a large kitchen and canteen taking up most of one floor, as well as several different meeting and conference rooms on the third floor. The ground floor has the main centre of daily activity, with an open-plan office environment

where people can work on computers. Sometimes people do just sit in the room and talk, or rest. But I would not say this Fountain House has any similar affordances that offer places to wander or to escape or ‘drift’ very much. Even if some rooms are empty, they are still set up as modernistic conference rooms with florescent lighting shining on white plastic-covered tables accompanied with large computer screens, whiteboards and clocks. The overall atmosphere is of a school, college or other institution with work as the underlying urge from the way the house is arranged.

3. Theoretical framework

Collective institutions, and human cooperation in general as a form of governance, cannot be taken for granted. Sabin et al. (2026) state that "[h]uman cooperation is widespread but fragile, with long-term outcomes ranging from sustained cooperation to collapse" (2026, p1). Their research looking at group lending in Sierra Leone observed that "decline in group outcomes was often driven by a reduction in cooperative motivation and effort", (Sabin et al., 2026, p5).

If we accept that maintaining collective endeavours requires a constant renewal of 'cooperative motivation and effort' then it is worth looking at how this happens in the daily practices of participants. It is also clear that the members of Clubhouses face additional challenges in carrying out these daily practices. The members, as stated in the constitution of the international movement, are defined as those who are "people living with mental illness" (Clubhouse International, 2026). Hence in addition to the normal challenges of common pool resource institutions a Clubhouse is also a place where members constantly face the strain of illness and disability. It is obvious that chronic illness reduces a person's capacity for motivation and effort.

Therefore I need to use a theoretical framework which can both a) conceptualise collective institutions, and also b) conceptualise the way individuals in collectives can experience particular challenges to their own ability to participate in daily practices.

Hence the concept of 'resilience', of surviving despite challenges and resistance, can be appropriate for an understanding of Clubhouses as institutions. It is not remarkable that a self-organised mental health community faces constant challenges: what is interesting to me is how the participants manage to constantly overcome these challenges, and how they nevertheless persist and by doing so cause their collective institution to persist.

Based on an iterative process discussed in my methodology chapter I arrived at a theoretical framework centred around the concept of 'institutional bricolage'. This is a framework derived from the study of commons or common pool resources. It is often combined with analysis of management of natural resources such as farmland. Therefore it is clear how it can be used for purpose a). It is also a version of this collective theory which analyses institutions in terms of the interactions of participants: it is focused on the micro level as nested within other

institutional forms, and also analyses the ‘bodiedness’ the physical ways people move through the world. Hence it is also suitable for purpose b).

Hence in this chapter I shall cover:

- The roots of the theory of institutional bricolage and how they fit with theories of resilience
- Criticisms of this approach
- Theories of participatory research

3.1 The roots of the theory of bricolage and resilience

“Resilience always involves choices and demands, even if the choice is to continue on current paths, perhaps perversely”, (Simon and Randalls 2016, in Haider and Cleaver, 2023, p.3).

This quote comes from an article that sets out the ‘Resilience Capacities Framework’ of L. Jamila Haider and Frances Cleaver (2023). This is a framework based on models of collective resource management (institutionalism) and also on analysis of how activity reproduces social patterns (structuration). These two aspects match with my aims a) and b) above. In this thesis I can apply Cleaver’s concept of institutional bricolage as a way to illuminate the fluid methods used by community members to assemble their daily life using their different social and intellectual points of references. The main questions Haider and Cleaver ask within their framework are “How do resilience capacities help foster locally appropriate deliberative change processes? And can the resilience capacities framework help enable resilience thinking to be better used in sustainable development practice?” (Haider and Cleaver, 2023 p.4).

The school of thought that analyses collective institutions in farming and rural life known as ‘institutionalism’ arose from a debate around ‘commons.’ During the development of modern agriculture these kinds of collective institutions were denigrated as inefficient and backward forms of land governance. During the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions commons as forms of collective land management were ‘enclosed’ in countries such as England. “Overall, between 1604 and 1914 over 5,200 enclosure Bills were enacted by Parliament which related to just over a fifth of the total area of England, amounting to some 6.8 million acres (UK Parliament, 2026).

This change was seen as part of an era of rational governance to take these collective resources out of the hands of the many, and into the hands of the few. By concentrating ownership and governance production would increase. This 'improvement' of common land was linked to an explicitly colonial mindset in the case of England. "Let us not be satisfied with the liberation of Egypt, or the subjugation of Malta […] but let us subdue Finchley Common; let us conquer Hounslow Heath; let us compel Epping Forest to submit to the yoke of improvement!" Sir John Sinclair of the Board of Agriculture told Parliament in 1803 (Cusson, 2024). Likewise in Sweden two hundred years earlier the government had looked to the Sami common lands as a colonial project (Samer, 2026).

During the 20th Century Green Revolution when modern models of industrial agriculture were exported globally similar attitudes persisted with regards to collective forms of resource management, seeing them in terms of land that needed 'improvement'. Among theorists of this view Garret Harding was prominent. He described a 'tragedy of the commons' where a lack of governance of a resource such as a meadow led to it being over-exploited based on the rational self-interest of actors seeking to gain maximum value from the resource. This model seeing commons as inefficient and destructive nature of was problematised by later research. Notable for the understanding of collective reosurce management was Emilie Ostrom, who "dedicated much of her career to demonstrating how commons in the real world had not led and do not inevitably lead to tragic ruin, as Hardin had insisted" (Frischmann, 2019, p.212). She was awarded the Swedish Central Bank Prize in Memory of Alfred Nobel in economics for her work on collective resource management in 2009, giving the seal of official approval to this view of collective resource management and showing how views on the potential of commons had shifted in the 200 years since Sinclair exhorted Parliament to enclose as much as possible

Ostrom's comparative study of the practice of collective resource management compared a number of case studies and drew up a table of which characteristics tended to be present for a collective system that functioned. These characteristics included 'clearly defined boundaries' and 'collective-choice arrangements' as well as monitoring of the collective behaviour plus sanctions for abuse of the common pool (Ostrom, 1999, 'Table 3.1. Design principles illustrated by long-enduring CPR institutions,' pp69-70).

A development of this framework on common resource pool institutions is the field of critical institutionalism. It emphasises the fluid and contingent

characteristics of such institutions. This means a focus on how the collective is constantly re-produced by its members. Within critical institutionalism researchers including France Cleaver have developed the concept of institutional bricolage to describe how "Institutional bricolage is a process through which people, consciously and non-consciously, assemble or reshape institutional arrangements, drawing on whatever materials and resources are available, regardless of their original purpose." Central to this concept is how "[i]nstitutions are not necessarily designed for a particular purpose, but borrowed or adapted from other working arrangements", Cleaver and de Koning (2015, p.4). Likewise for Cleaver and de Koning "practical action is often exercised in taken–for–granted ways, which people rarely consciously scrutinise" (p.8).

This analysis of group dynamics is hence very useful for studying how a community such as the Sköndal Fountain House reproduces itself. Through ethnographic observations I was able to gain insights into exactly how this practical action was exercised in this kind of taken-for-granted way. As one of the participants told me, their working day consists of "work a little bit based on what I feel like doing, what I think is fun in the moment, or something that pops up when you meet and talk with others." (Johan).

Another element which fits institutional bricolage to this case study is how Cleaver and other researchers acknowledge the role of physicality and how humans exist in the world through their bodies. "A critical institutional approach however, might also focus on the ways in which agency is enacted through physical bodies, and in relation to material structures and physical phenomena." They go on to link this explicitly to a disability perspective. "It could be argued that able bodiedness is key to the exercise of agency in participatory natural resource management (Cleaver and de Konig 2015, p11). By situating an analysis of something abstract, 'the institution' in how bodies navigate the world, the concept of institutional bricolage helps me to observe and analyse how disabled and ill people co-create their common institution.

3.2 Criticisms of this approach

Such an everyday analysis can have the problem of ignoring power dynamics, however. Drawing on research by Agrawal Cleaver and de Konig note how "[p]oor and marginalized people often find it difficult to shape the formal rules and the rules in use, to negotiate norms, and experience the costs and benefits of institutional functioning differently to more powerful people" (2015, p.10). This

framing is based on a perspective that sees many institutions run according to a view of the world based on control of resources, a ‘governmentality’.

Using a similar theoretical framework Tania Murray Li warns against romanticising ‘community’ as a form of governance of resources, since such seemingly grassroots institutions can in actual fact be extended forms of a wider picture of elite governance.

‘Community’ in Li’s reading is a loaded word. In neo-liberal discourse ‘community’ has emerged to represent a form of idealised self-governance, yet a form which above all creates a field for intervention by experts and policy makers, “[c]ommunities have the secret to the good life (equitable, sustainable, authentic, democratic – however the good is being defined), yet experts must intervene to secure that goodness and enhance it”, (Li, 2011, p.101). The focus of the criticism here is hence on how a framing of community creates something technical for experts and decision makers to manipulate.

But one section from Li’s criticism underlines how the framing of institutional bricolage can help avoid a ‘technical’ framing of communal interactions:

“The exchange between two people chatting informally about a water distribution problem as they walk home from the fields, approaching the topic indirectly and in a joking manner because they are kin and want to avoid a fight, may be critical to the management of water in their village. However, informal practices of this kind, embedded as they are in finally calibrated and intimate relationships, can barely be described, let alone improved.” (Li 2011 p102).

In my view this is exactly the kind of everyday in-passing and taken-for-granted interaction which bricolage as a conceptual tool attempts to foreground in an analysis.

At the same time, Cleaver and de Koning do also describe their kind of analysis as helping to make the meaning of such interactions ‘intelligible’ for policy makers – something which fits very well with the criticisms that Li and others have about the technicalisation of such complexity.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that if I, as a participant and as a researcher, with to help Sköndal Fountain House to become more intelligible for the participants – to increase community self-understanding it seems that institutional bricolage is the most useful theoretical framing. In this understanding bricolage is a form of institutional creation and reproduction that is, for example, most accessible for

those with least energy in their physical bodies. This is dealt with by the concept of low-threshold activity that I define in section 6.2.

My use of the concept of 'resilience' is also not without its own problems and internal contradictions. A major criticism of this approach centres on how it is "the importation of naturalistic concepts and metaphors to the social sciences", (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012, p.254). In terms of my case study this criticism would refer to how I present the existence of this community as a naturalistic fact, rather than situating it within dynamics of social power and distribution of various forms of capital. One such context could be how the Clubhouses in Sweden are funded. Using a more structural analysis, possibly using political ecology as its main focus, I could have analysed how the Fountain House is dependent on a flow of financial capital from the state and of legitimacy from the health system. I could have analysed how this relates to the Swedish model of tax-funded pseudo-markets in healthcare and education. It would indeed be valid to analyse the current rapid growth of Clubhouses in Sweden as an element of the decentralised and deregulated governance structure brought in as part of neo-liberal changes starting in the 1990s.

However I think there are valid reasons for me to not use these critiques of resilience as my main focus. Using a political ecology lens would not involve me closely enough in understanding the processes of collective organisation that happen in a Clubhouse at the micro level. With my limited time for field work I wanted to focus on how people take action to reproduce collective institutions - hence I choose to set the macroeconomic and national political context to one side. So rather than my use of 'resilience' as a concept being intended to further an "apolitical ecology" that "privileges established social structures" (MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012, p.254) my use of resilience is as part of a particular detailed examination, to understand the persistence of a particular social structure through everyday interactions. This means I acknowledge that my investigation is partial as well as being particular, and that it answers certain questions while leaving others open for other work and other researchers.

3.3 Frameworks of participatory research

My theoretical framing is also based on an aim to use this work of investigation as a form of self-investigation of the community, and to aid the work of creation of self-organised subjectivity and help people understand better the process of play and bricolage they (we) are engaged in, This means I choose to to work with

the community, rather than perceiving them/it at arm's length. Given that this research involves the activity of vulnerable people in a community I see this kind of working with rather than writing about, as a key way of addressing issues around ethics and consent. By making the community participants co-creators of the data as much as possible I try to give them a degree of ownership over how they are presented in this thesis. A thesis which focused on patterns of structural inequality and conflict would risk damaging the lives of individuals in the community and their own rehabilitation. This decision on my part fits with the advice given in Robson & McCartan (2016), to make sure that research with vulnerable people tries to make sure that a participant "is likely to benefit from undertaking the research and the benefit is not disproportionate to any burden in taking part", (p.228) and likewise my ongoing engagement addresses their advice to not "just disappear at the end" (p.401).

My framing of this research also draws on the tradition of Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR). The original Fountain House in New York has developed its own research unit based on CBPAR. It "starts with the principle that all aspects of research should directly involve the contributions of the community of research interest within all research activities", (Rice, 2024, p.220). This research unit not only creates data analysing the outcomes of the Clubhouse Model but it also serves as a way for members of the community to develop skills as researchers, in line with the work-ordered day that is at the heart of the Clubhouse Model.

3.4 Therapeutic theories

The field of green therapy is often described as being underpinned by theories stemming from evolutionary psychology. According to Roger Ulrich humans are prone to 'biophilia': our enjoyment of nature is genetic because we are evolutionarily adapted to it.

Meanwhile Steven and Rachel Kaplan frame it in terms of Attention Restoration Theory: People feel good when allowed to participate in 'soft fascination' rather than 'directed attention'.

This term 'soft fascination' fits well with another concept that I have encountered in my study of the Clubhouse model as practiced in Sweden, namely 'low-threshold activity'. In conversation and at conferences Clubhouse people speak about how they aim to create a community that offers the chance to work in a 'low threshold' way that is accessible for those who might otherwise not be able to

participate in workplaces due to mental illness. In this framing the fact that gardening and growing is a constant feature of Clubhouses is due to the fact that seeing plants grow and taking care of them offers chances for ‘soft fascination’ of the intricate and yet simple patterns of the flora (Sveinsdottir et al, 2008).

A related theory underpinning green therapy is that of Harold Searles. It is not an evolutionary one, rather a relational one. Searles says that human relationship to water, stones and plants is healing because it is ‘non-demanding’. In other words, the existence of these natural features and ecosystems does not engage us in demands in the same way that a more purely human-built environment might. Once again, this has clear resonances with a framing of activity in terms of accessibility due to lower thresholds of demands on activity (Sveinsdottir et al, 2008).

4. Methods and materials

In this section I shall cover

- Research design
- Development of specific methods
- Criticism and reflexivity
  Related issues: access and consent

As earlier stated, my aims are to understand

- How does this community reproduce itself, rather than falling apart? In other words how does it retain its resilience.

• Since the demand according to the Clubhouse constitution is for collective reproduction of the community resources how is this collective institution reproduced in the everyday at the micro level, through interactions between members?

In addition my theoretical framework in section 3.3 above implies using a methodology that enables me to further my understanding while also doing so in a way that involves and benefits participants, and it also implies I should take up the element of 'low-threshold' activity as a key way that bricolage becomes the favoured way of reproducing the institution through everyday practices.

My methodological framework hence flows from my research questions, as channelled through the particular direction offered by the particular theoretical framework. This means that in order to understand the everyday I need to situate my data-collection in the everyday as much as possible. In order to understand the 'often unspoken' interactions that create institutional bricolage I need to use forms of data collection that do not rely on people speaking.

All of the above aims led to my empirical research following a methodology of ethnographic observation.

4.1 Research design

My overall research design was to approach the issue through a process of iterative theorising where methodology is constructed through an emergent process. This is a flexible research design with "a repeated revisiting of all of the aspects as the research takes place [...] the detailed framework of the design emerges during the study (Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.73). This approach was also influenced by the work of Bowen on 'grounded theory' where "continual interplay between data collection and analysis" produces the theoretical framework at the same time as data is created (Bowen, 2006, p. 13).

But first of all, I can situate ethnography within the broader context of qualitative methodology. As described by Rachel Horowitz qualitative research usually involves looking at things such as "'What is really going on' in such groups and communities? How do people make sense of their social worlds? How do they strike a balance between group membership and wider social participation? And finally, what limits and what helps create the social worlds of the people? (Gerson and Horowitz 2002: 202, quoted in Bryson 2012 p.450). My use of qualitative methods flows from my general need to understand interactions in terms of how people participate in everyday activity. A quantitative measure of activity at the Fountain House, for example a statistical mapping of where people spend time and what they do, would not capture the interactions nor the meaning people attach to their activities.

Due to using a flexible research design I had only a vague idea of what I was looking for at the beginning, only that I wanted to explore certain sensitised topics with qualitative methods, namely:

- mental health
- communal labour
- communal resources management

My initial position was similar to that of Anderson's as mentioned in Bryson (2012 p.449) "Anderson says that, at the outset of his fieldwork, he 'had absolutely no idea where the research would lead' and had 'no explicit sociological problem or question'". He knew he would study a drinking joint called Jelly's but did not already know what his research questions would be. My method was to likewise start doing what Anderson described himself as doing, and start 'hanging around' in the location of the case study in Sköndal and 'see what was going on'. Months of my initial work concerned immersion in the case study for long periods of time, and using that experience to develop closer and closer forms of coding and conceptual framing.

Because my initial sensitised topics were to look for dynamics of labour and management within a communal setting and how they interact with issues to do with mental health I constantly looked at who was carrying out tasks, how decisions about what tasks to be made were formed and also what meanings and motivations people attached to these actions, and what I could say about how health and ability affected these issues.

4.2 Reasoning behind choice of specific methods

During my research I used semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and observation as well as one questionnaire. Eventually the process of research design made it clear that the observations were the key body of data that I would be using. However, the presence of the other forms of data allowed me to cross-reference my observations and also embed them in a broader reality

Even within qualitative research interviews are usually seen as an unproblematic way to gain insights into how participants understand their own situations. I have already mentioned how using the spoken utterances of community members is both difficult in this case and also offers only a partial understanding of how daily practices are enacted. I am trying to understand and represent people who, by definition, have difficulty expressing themselves and who, by definition have little energy or interest in taking part in formal interviews. Research suggests that speech production involves significant effort. Expression can be seen as "cognitively, emotionally and temporally 'costly' for subjects but inexpensive for researchers", (Wasow, 2026. p.1). I would argue that oral speech production should be considered in the same category. Speech expression likewise presents a 'cost' of effort demanded for participation. Hence a series of interviews of participants would lead to not only a limited sample (of participants) but also a limited form of data (the speech expressions of the participants). Instead I want to use all senses ans forms of empirical data. And also to be able to observe how people behave and compare that with what they verbally express: to me and to each other. This criticism of more formal data collection fits with my concerns to not be exploitative of the vulnerable people who make up most of the participants in the case study.

4.3 Criticism and reflexivity

By making this theoretical-methodological choice in order to prioritise safeguarding of the vulnerable and to minimise power imbalances I am, of course, also creating new and different forms of distortion and problems. In this research design my own senses and interpretations become a far bigger factor in how the community dynamics are interpreted and expressed. Hence throughout the research I constantly looked for ways to introduce greater rigour into my process: to test myself with new angles and to see whether I could challenge my iterative findings. For example, I sent a survey regarding collective gardening labour out to all Fountain Houses in Sweden. I made one formal interview with the head of the staff at the Fountain House. I kept a daily field diary from November 2025 to May 2026. In addition I made more detailed observation protocols to closely analyse certain forums and themes, including a close analysis of some days in the kitchen. Through mapping these different forms of data I developed an analysis of what themes could be discerned in this particular Fountain House and also how they fit with how participants in other Fountain Houses framed their work. My aim is to make sure these forms of data avoid a confirmation bias and avoid motivated reasoning. For example, if a majority of Fountain Houses had answered that they do not care about gardening that would have collided with my assumptions and forced a rethink. Using my observations I could also made a comparison of how daily practices are enacted in the forum of the kitchen and of the garden, and that led to a surprising insight: that gardening work was far harder to organise and had far higher barriers to entry than kitchen work.

I am also faced with the dilemma of how to both represent the community activity in a valid way, while at the same time respecting the trust and the integrity of the people who are participating. In order to avoid doing harm I worked with an awareness of the way academic and other reports about communities interact with processes of ‘government’, understood in the broadest sense, as “the attempt to act on actions, setting conditions to direct conduct along approved pathways” (Murray Li 2011 p2). For example, a public version of this masters thesis is available for policy makers, controllers of capital and other powerful actors within ‘government‘ who may want to act on the community to engineer it into certain outcomes. Hence if during this thesis I should expose vulnerabilities or the personal integrity of community members can put individuals and groups at risk or feed into a ‘technical understanding’ of these communities.

4.4 Related issues: access and consent

Not only do I have ethical concerns about my research but my care for the participants of Fountain House Sköndal was also tied up with two concrete research tasks: gaining access to the case study and also gaining informed consent from participants. “One of the key and yet most difficult steps in ethnography is gaining access to a social setting that is relevant to the research problem in which you are interested”, (Bryman 2012, p.433). This is where my reflexivity is crucial as self-critique and also as an asset which allowed me to gain greater access. As someone who has similar mental health needs to an average member of a Clubhouse/Fountain House I participated in the case study in the same way as any other participant. This means my perceptive was enabled but also constrained. Enabled because my experience was unfiltered and authentic to lived membership, and constrained because I see the Fountain House dynamic as an insider.

This also brought its own challenges, of researching in a naturalistic setting. From field notes, February 23rd

“Personal note, it is really tiring to ask spontaneous questions as it breaks informal social codes. This is probably why focus groups and interviews are so popular.”

This also brings with it a problem often discussed under the term ‘going native’. “Going native is a potential problem for several reasons but especially because the ethnographer can lose sight of his or her position as a researcher and therefore find it difficult to develop a social scientific angle on the collection and analysis of data.” (Bryman 2012 p.445)

An example from my field notes, January 29th

“Meeting got intense, If I had not established trust and consent already would have been impossible [to be present and observe].”

Since this study involves gathering data from vulnerable people the major aim was to above all do no harm. My process for connecting with participants, informing them and gaining informed consent was hence the earliest part of my process to be formalised.

Informed consent is hard to achieve even in the best settings, with indications that “the amount of information that can be conveyed, and absorbed, prior to consent, is limited” Robson & McCartan, 2016, p.212). In the case of vulnerable

people this issue is even more acute. Having a strategy for ongoing or ‘re-consent’ is hence important (Fisher and Anushko, 2008, p.100). During my flexible methodology it was especially important for me to create a process for continually re-gaining consent, rather than assuming a signature on a sheet could be seen as the end of that process. My process involved raising the issue several times in different conversations with members and staff to gain insights about what kind of consent process would be relevant.

For example, from my field notes on February 19:

“As I sat at 0953 to write a small group collected around me and one asked me about my research and so we naturally had a meta-conversation about what I was interested in, namely how social settings, norms and rules can affect how people act, and how kitchen is different to garden and why one is considered more complicated than another. Hence this quote which a member said unprompted. Then I asked if I could write it down anonymous and response was ‘självklart’” [of course].

“That day, at the morning meeting, I stood up when it was my turn to take on work and explained why I was sitting and tapping away on my laptop all the time. I said, ‘I am a member of FH, with experience of mental illness, but I am also writing my thesis on how FH works with gardening. And right now I’m doing observations of each weekday how we work with kitchen. I won’t mention any person or names, and that’s why I wiped off the name before taking a photo, but I might write for example how many people were doing different things. Above all I don’t want anyone to feel like they are under surveillance.’ I then paused for questions.”

Observing with sensitised topics and emergent iterative design also meant I started to constantly problematise my experiences and observations at the same time as noting them down. For example,e I realised at one point that the seemingly obvious term ‘task’ needed to be problematised. If someone comes into the kitchen, washes one cup, and then leaves, have they performed a ‘task’? If ‘do the washing up’ as a line written on the white board at the morning meeting can be considered a ‘task’ then has the person performed a fraction of that task, or a different task?

5. Results

The data I shall present in this section come from a range of separate methods, which could be placed on a scale from least structured to most structured:

1. My own field notes, based on my participant observation, They are written in the moment when they happened or straight afterwards. They follow a descriptive-analytical style where I note down ‘events’, such as where someone was, what they did and what they said, together with my impressions of events, and my snap analyses.

1.1 A subset of these notes are records of what people said or did at the national conference for Sweden’s Fountain Houses, 27-29 April 2026. These notes are different in that they are based more on statements from conference speakers, and also in how they are not recorded in the environment of the case study.

2. Structured observation protocols. These are pre-coded to record data on certain themes. In this case they are aimed at closer scrutiny of the dynamics of daily work, with a focus on the morning meeting and kitchen work.

3. One formal interview with the head of operations at the case study Fountain House. I carried this out in order to get some basic facts on-the-record and to explore the perspective of the one person who has been present in this case study for all of its 18 years.

4. Results of a survey sent to all Fountain Houses in Sweden. This survey asked seven questions. In order to increase the probability of responses I emphasised in my reminder emails that it would be acceptable to only answer Question 1: namely whether the Fountain House worked with gardening or cultivation at all. This means some results are fairly detailed, with long paragraphs reflecting over how the Fountain House uses cultivation, or why not, and what it means for them, and other replies are simply binary answers. I complemented this survey with publicly-available data on their websites to get a full answer to Question 1. I also add information based on their online reports to fill out details of cultivation at the particular Fountain House.

I discuss all these sets of data in terms of the three main elements of my theoretical framework:

- ‘Institutional bricolage’. Patterns of everyday activity by participants that shape and create institutional structures.
- ‘Institutional resilience’. How these institutions hold together in the everyday despite the everyday demands and challenges face by participants.

• ‘Low-threshold activity’. The energy and effort required to participate in a given everyday activity and hence be part of reproducing the institution.

These three elements interact with each other: the deployment of fluid and contingent bricolage as a form of activity can be seen as the way that people overcome the activity threshold. Likewise the interplay of strategies that are deployed in this way are what contribute to the persistence of the institution that can be called ‘institutional resilience.’’

In all cases these elements are also discussed in terms of their opposites, and their absences, as well as in terms of evidence for their existence. Situations where bricolage is not used, resilience does not persist, or people do not meet a threshold for activity are all useful situations for understanding what is needed to exist in order for these elements to exist.

I shall start by presenting and discussing the semi-structured interview with a founder of the Fountain House, Johan. His answers give more historical background to the Fountain House, as well as lifting certain key issues that the community has encountered over the years, namely the recurring difficulty of communal agreement on how to manage natural resources.

5.1 Results of semi-structured interview

The Sköndal Fountain House has been going for 18 years. Johan told me they took over an old church building that had been housing for the church minister (*prästgård*). Next to it there were six abandoned plots of land (*kolonilottor*).

“It was a thoroughly overgrown garden that we decided to reconquer and start cultivating again. We started from square one with fencing it off again […] and we took it back as land for cultivation.” (Johan)

“We had an idea I suppose of growing our own food there […] a vision of being a gardening house and being able to eat our own plants. I know that on the beginning early on I said we should become self-sufficient.” (Johan)

This sizeable area of land was run as its own work unit for around 13 years. A few years after the start the work became more structured and this we linked to which members were involved, and which staff had knowledge about growing, with money applied for to build things like a greenhouse, and at times there were

animals, chickens and rabbits and even pigs. Around four years ago the gardening unit became part of the kitchen unit instead.

"There was a vision that since the house is where it is, in a kind of rural context, with cultivation but in the beginning we had a lot more […] At the start we were pretty ambitious." (Johan)

In this interview I see themes of a dream of what a rural livelihood could be like, similar to Bauman's retrotopia. Similarly to participants in the 'green wave' there was an idea that self-sufficiency was something to aim for. In the context of a community for those with serious mental illness this also implies a belief that gardening and working with animals is an obvious part of a healing process. However work with animals has since been abandoned. This is not mentioned as about about the workload or labour demands but rather situated in the sphere of social organisation (people did not agree) and also mental well-being (people were upset and emotional about disputes related to animal care).

As I show in other quotes even work with the land is described as being prone to conflict. This underlines how it is above all a social and organisational challenge to have a self-sufficient house like this, rather than an issue of people being 'too ill to work.' This leads me to focus even more on the kitchen as a forum of successful bricolage, to understand why this activity is so successful, while the work with animals and land is more fraught with difficulty. (move to discussion chapter?)

5.2 Results of structured observation protocols

Next I present and analyse the results of the observation protocol for the morning meeting/kitchen activity. The observation is already relatively structured based on themes and is a natural way to discuss the case study in a thematic way.

These observation results are edited versions of my observation notes, expanded for clarity. They are presented in terms of an 'event', a more-or-less concrete situation I describe, and then an 'analysis' paragraph where I consider the implications according to my theoretical framework.

Monday 23 February

Monday is different: it is a day when lunch is not cooked from fresh, rather it is based on leftovers from the previous week. This structure is designed to allow Mondays to have a focus on cleaning. This underlines how important it is to have observations from a range of weekdays, since some have particular characteristics. On this Monday some cleaning tasks that had been missed last week were brought up at the morning meeting.

• Analysis: This structure is an example of elements of the construction of the institution that are not shaped by bricolage. Although choice of Monday as leftovers day and cleaning day has been made at a group meeting, this structure is not itself constantly (re)-negotiated and (re)produced through bricolage or structuration. Rather it generally exists for participants as a received structure that they operate within, and which cannot usually be challenged (however see Wednesday discussion). It could also be argued that this form of structure, which persists whether or not people choose to reproduce it through bricolage, is another important contribution to the resilience of an institution. Since members do not need to actively choose what is on the agenda on a Monday they can save energy for other issues. It is possible this is exactly why Monday is structured in this way – to make sure everyone starts the week in an 'easy' way, with food already there, and a focus on cleaning. This does hence play into the concept of 'activity threshold', because paradoxically a lack of bricolage could at the same time be seen as enabling a lower threshold for activity by members.

A member arrived at 0935, in other words after the meeting has ended, and so they had no chance to participate in that form of decision-making forum. They were asked by staff what they would do that day. They said "nothing" and sat silently in the hallway. Yet a few minutes later they came into the kitchen, put on an apron and started taking ingredients out of the fridge. They suggested making salads and sauces to go with the leftovers (in other words, that day's lunch would not usually have included a salad from fresh ingredients, only re-heated leftovers). In addition, this participation is despite this member not eating lunch at the house today. After chopping some vegetables they went to sit silently in the hallway again.

• Analysis. This incident made a great impact on me and helped me towards a better understand of the dynamics of the case study. It is a clear example of how interview data would not have captured the real mechanisms at work in this case study. Neither would observations of the meetings have given me an understanding of how decision-making works. The person in question stated their aim to do 'nothing', and yet they did something. I was so surprised I later on asked the staff personnel who was present whether I had heard correctly. Moreover, the participant in question caused the main task of the morning – cooking lunch – to change in character. Their suggestion to make a salad was taken on board, not in a meeting or other formal setting, but because they went to

the fridge, grasped the vegetables and made a suggestion ‘in passing’. I also have the impression that the participant understood the action of chopping vegetables for a salad to be a low-threshold activity for them: something they were used to doing and which was concrete.

A member who had decided to work in the office unit (upstairs) that day came downstairs to the kitchen. They asked about the list of meals that were planned for the week, to print the list on the office equipment. I observed how this discussion in the kitchen about the already-existing list slowly turned into a discussion about what should be on the list. Through the work of printing the list the list became changed and certain items changed.

• Analysis: Weekly meal planning can be seen as a ‘strategic’ task. It has to take into account various long-standing policies, such as whether meals can include meat, and which day they should be gluten free. Yet through this micro-level interaction I saw the list changed. I think it is no accident that the change happened where the work of physically handling the list, making it into paper, was happening. The production of the list was not just something that happened in a focal moment of a meeting, but rather more like a production that was passed through many hands, each person adding or changing something. At the same time I am not idealising this form of decision-making. It is arguable that decisions taken in formal meetings should be respected, allowed to stand, and should not be amended by those who have most hands-on contact with, for example, a meal list. Yet this observation drives home the point about how institutional bricolage happens in spaces, and between people. Those who are not there, in the kitchen at that moment, for whatever reason, may feel denied a voice, just as much as those who are not in the meeting for whatever reason. My analysis of bricolage is not to say it is a model for more democratic decision making or direct democracy, but rather an analysis that lays bare how decision making happens outside of formal meetings. Any measures to safeguard democratic decision-making must hence take note of this, and find ways to make sure that deliberation is respected, even if it happens outside of meetings.

At the morning meeting one member declared their aim that day was ‘taking it easy’.

• Analysis: I wonder to what extend this kind of ‘non-participation’ is still reproducing the Fountain House. Being present in the space, talking to others, eating lunch together could all be seen as ‘tasks’ that contribute. If lunch and the kitchen are the heart of a process of bricolage then those who ‘only’ eat lunch are still contributing to the resilience of the house.

The garden mentioned at the 1300 meeting. There was a reminder that we had agreed in an earlier meeting to do inventory. The next garden meeting has already agreed for 10 March. Several of those who are most interested in gardening have been away for a while and some commented that this has led to less activity. In-

passing there was a lively conversation about the topic of the garden. During the height of the exchange one member threw in, “you seem scared. Do you think I’m too negative?”

• Analysis: this is a concrete example of what was also mentioned by other participants: how the issue of gardening is endowed with strong emotions and potential for conflict in a way that, say, cleaning and kitchen tasks are not. See later interview discussion for details.

Wednesday 25 February

This was an unusual day with more tasks that normal. The Fountain House is soon hosting people from another Fountain House, the one situated in central Stockholm. It will be an outdoors activities day (friluftsdag) for spring break (sportlov). Sköndal Fountain House is preparing winter games on the frozen lake (curling), walks in the nearby forest, etc.

At the meeting we planned for around 15 people to arrive tomorrow Thursday.

Because of the extra amount of tasks there were not enough members to make up the necessary three people in the kitchen, so one staff person moved to that unit to make up for it.

• Analysis: this shows how employed staff have a role of a reserve body of labour that can backstop and support the more variable labour of Fountain House members. In other words. It is important not to exaggerate how self-organised and self-supporting this collective is, since paid staff may form a critical element.

During this day members and staff all concentrate their energy on two categories of tasks: making the day’s lunch, and getting ready for hosting the event on Thursday. This means those present decide that cleaning tasks and others shall be abandoned.

• Analysis: this is an example of decision-making on the fly in response to the changing day.

The issue of decision making in meal planning was highlighted when the day’s lunch was confused because the person who had suggested the meal was not present at the morning meeting. They eventually arrived after 0930, missing the meeting, but in time for joining in with the lunch as planned.

• Analysis: This again shows how the day’s activities and decision making must always flex based on who is there and when they arrive. Everyone feels different on different days.

Thursday observation (19 February)

This day I was concerned with a close observation of the details of labour deployment.

The very first few minutes after the morning meeting ended were characterised by people milling around in the kitchen wondering what to do. For example, wondering where the aprons were, wondering where they could wash their hands. “I suppose we should look at where we can help [bidra]” said one person, standing and wondering.

“As I am writing this I can see one member who was attached to kitchen [unit] wandering around the dining room and doing other things (just like I am, of course). Meanwhile kitchen is quite full at four people.” Direct quote from my notes.

Analysis: What I see here is an initial stage in the daily formation of the house. From opening at 0900, to the meeting at 0915 and then a period 0930-0940 that I could characterise as ‘place-finding’. People seek a role and a place for their activity for the day, or at least until the next meeting at 1300. In other words, they seek to match their current ability to engage with the threshold for various tasks. However, many people arrive later and miss the morning meeting, or even arrive during the second part of the day. So the process of place-finding is one that happens constantly, rather than being accomplished during a formal moment or scheduled meeting. In order to deal with this ‘churn’ of people the Fountain House must have iterative processes to keep integrating people into activities, and this is why bricolage seems to fit as a theoretical framing so well.

“Now it is 0953 and I update my notes. The staff person is always in the kitchen while two of the members are in and out, moving through the house, upstairs and downstairs, and then returning to kitchen to do task. Something is started, such as washing up, and then left and then returned to.” Direct quote.

• Analysis: This is an example of what I see as somebody navigating a ‘threshold’ for their labour. of tasks, that people can drift in and out. The threshold and the energy are not static, rather they exist in relationship to each other. This is why accomplishment of tasks can be seen as done on a contingent basis: people take on work that they are able to in a given moment, consisting maybe of only a few minutes. Then as their energy declines they are no longer able to meet the threshold, or maybe the kitchen gets too noisy and overwhelming and its threshold rises, so they absent themselves from the scene, and return when there is possibility for a successful threshold negotiation once again.

“At 1007 once again I see people taking up tasks, leaving them. Adding small particles of work and pausing.”

• Analysis: This is yet another example of the process I described in the earlier analysis.

This is the day I heard the quote used at the start of this thesis. In Swedish: “även om jag kan inte laga mat eller kan mycket om matlagning så kan jag bidra för att jag nå saker [högre upp] som andra inte når”. Other comments this day included how good it is that people can work together and do what they can, and how they can move around as well. In other words, how people are able to constantly negotiate thresholds themselves under their own control and based on their own evaluations of their ability.

By 1023 there were essentially no people in kitchen any more. The pasta sauce was simmering on the stove and work had ceased as all tasks for food had been completed. There was ccleaning work still to do.

“Writing now at 1257 the time since lunch has been even less structured. People taking on different tasks spontaneously. For example making decorations for friluftsdag. A lot of sitting around and talking, people wandering around from room to room.” Direct quote.

• Analysis: These two paragraphs related to two themes. The first shows how the reproduction of the institution follows a pattern of energy and work, and then rest and recuperation. In this way the resilience of the institution is preserved because no one is expected to work flat-out at any moment. Then this pattern of rising and falling structured activity (such as making lunch) allows room for people to take this unstructured time and work on them based on general agreements. For example, there may have been a general agreement about making activities for the activity day the next day, but how the work was carried out and which exact tasks happened was left under the control of the day’s participants.

5.3 Results of field diary observations

I shall now present some quotes from my field diary, with brief analysis of how these findings fit with my theoretical framework.

From field notes March 25th

“I sat in on a food planning meeting. About seven people present, lots of energy and discussion about what food to make. Reflection: this is because it is so easily connected to an activity that all are involved in. Lots of recipe books out on the table, cross-discussion about how this fits with e.g. lactose free days.”

As soon as I visited the Fountain House in later November 2025 I started to be involved in the kitchen-lunch dynamic. My first exploratory visit was 24th November 2025 and as soon as 26th of November I was already cooking in the kitchen and eating lunch with other members.

Meanwhile, from an almost equally early point in my observations I heard people say that the gardening activities had issues with different levels of commitment and differences of opinion over issues such as how to take care of the animals that once were at the Fountain House. Although there are some (literally) organic connections between the kitchen, such as some potatoes from the harvest used in cooking, and compost from the kitchen needing to be taken outside, I noted that there were only some people who wanted to be involved in this. Those who liked this kind of link really liked it, while others felt little or no connection. As the topic of gardening came up in one of the regular meetings one member even remarked to me in an aside that "this was mostly [a particular group]" who were involved.

So this quote from my field diary was striking to me, because it showed how a meeting could be much more energetic and inclusive, if it was connected to the kitchen unit. I think this reflects how the kitchen is an example of dynamics I have been analysing thematically. The kitchen is a place where low-threshold activity takes place, as supported by my own fast participation there, and by my observations. It is also a place where lots of decisions are taken in-passing as well as at formal meetings; in other words it is a site of intense and constant institutional bricolage. It is likewise, precisely that, a defined 'site' or node or forum where all of these processes overlap and reinforce themselves; and as I observed from the kitchen meal planning meeting, this intense activity can spill over to infuse related meetings with more energy. I see this as contributing to the overall persistence of the institution – in other words it is part of how resilience is re(created).

These quotes illustrate how kitchen tasks exist as low-threshold activity.

From my field diary January 23, 2025

"Some people, [less energetic members] tend to drift in and out of the kitchen and do occasional tasks, retreating to the living room to sit on their phones and talk. Meanwhile [a different group] are in the kitchen all the time, steering the work and hence allocating tasks for those who drift."

From my field notes February 4th

"Sit in living room with [member] who does not participate either. But later on he 'drifts' into the kitchen and exchanges some words with those cooking at least."

As well as being accessible by nature of being low-threshold and clearly framed by a particular room the kitchen tasks are closely connected to critical tasks which the entire house depends on. If the Clubhouse rules state that members and staff must share such 'critical tasks' then the kitchen is an example of this which cannot be beaten. The kitchen tasks are closely related to the daily lunch: everyone needs to eat. Even those few who do bring packed lunches will eat in the same large dining room, and need to use facilities that are part of the kitchen unit (for example to store their food in fridges which are cleaned as part of kitchen routines, use communal microwaves and use cutlery and plates). Lunch is hence a daily social ritual that binds together all those present on any given day. Cleaning tasks are also a large part of the kitchen routines, and that creates natural links between the kitchen and all other cleaning tasks. Someone who is filling up the kitchen with paper towels and liquid soap will usually be filling up the two toilets upstairs and downstairs as well. Laying the table and clearing away the food also connects the kitchen to the dining room.

From field notes February 17th

"Prospective member expressed concern, I can't cook. Staff doing introduction to the Fountain House] was instantly reassuring, it will be fine, no knowledge needed. Cf ratatouille, everyone can cook! But that attitude lacking as regarding gardening.

This links back to my point about cooking as the classic example of a critical task. And how if everyone must eat, it is easy to develop a culture where everyone can (must) cook.

This pattern of communal cooking, eating and cleaning extends throughout the house even to those who may not consider themselves part of the kitchen unit per se. People may chop a few onions and then leave the kitchen, or wipe a few tiles and then leave, or bring in some shopping and then go up to the office to post on social media. This creates an in-passing churn of contexts where bricolage takes place through people seeing each other and reacting to each other. So each low-threshold in-passing contact of this kind is also an occasion where the

reproduction of the organisation of labour and management of resources of the Fountain house takes place.

It is this kind of thick weave of constant bricolage that the gardening activities lack during my period of observation, and which I think leads to a difference in engagement in the two spheres of activity. Inversely a meeting situation is often higher-threshold and can lead to people not saying what is on their mind, as illustrated by this quote:

From my field notes February 11th

"Not many people spoke up at meeting, and no comments about complaints, but when I pushed [member] afterwards about how he felt to [take on formal task] since he said he didn't like [this kind of task]) he said he needed more clear guidelines and clarity about what the role means. This tells me something about (non)participation in decision-making at the house."

5.4 Results of survey questionnaire

I will finish this section by considering these results about Sköndal Fountain House in a broader context. As I mentioned in my methodology chapter I am aware that I am taking a worm's-eye-view of this particular case study. This is in order to gain a thick ethnographic understanding and to avoid rendering the community technical. This is what allowed me to pick up on subtle signals and use my knowledge of who the person in the above quote was, to follow up with a private question that illuminated a reality of that meeting. However, in order to avoid drawing general conclusions that are inaccurate I want to cross-reference with what I know about other Fountain Houses in Sweden.

One major data point that must be taken into account when analysing my results about the Sköndal kitchen is that not all Fountain Houses operate in this way. Sköndal is a large free-standing house with rarely more than 20 participants on any given day. In contrast the Fountain House in central Stockholm exists in a dense urban environment and has hundreds of members. In this house the kitchen unit exists more as a canteen separated onto just one of the house's three floors. Cooking takes place in a room away from all other activity and is not subject to the same flow of people through it. Likewise people in this unit do not drift in and out of other activities in the same way and so it is probably not a site of bricolage

in the same way. Members of the Fountain House queue and buy their meals at this canteen much like they would at any other lunch restaurant.

To take another example, the Fountain House in Lund has over 100 people involved in its gardening unit, 'green fingers'. This carries on working all through the year and has a high level of engagement by members.

In other words, there is nothing automatic about a kitchen being a site of institutional bricolage. Nor is there anything which automatically makes a gardening unit higher threshold and unable to sustain a process of bricolage. On the other hand, themes which I have observed at Sköndal do seem to be relevant to understand other Fountain Houses. At the national conference of Fountain Houses I spoke to someone from the Lund Fountain House. They described how their large gardening unit green fingers functions. This person said the gardening unit spends most of the year outside (Lund has a warm climate, compared to most of Sweden); but that the garden organisers yet found it important to have an indoor place for people to gather; otherwise the group lost cohesiveness. They used the term 'node' (nave) for this place where people can gather. I interpret this as supporting the idea that physical-social 'spaces' act to curate and host dynamics of bricolage. I do not mean that a physical room must always been the 'node' or forum for bricolage. In an even warmer climate the outdoor water station place where people go to get hydrated could also be a 'node' for people to have encounters of bricolage in-passing since it shapes people to tend to be passing each other. The rural road where König and Cleaver REF describe people passing each other can also be seen as a physical-social space that curates people towards tending to be able to have conversations or other encounters with each other.

In order to gain a wider understanding of the context for Fountain House management of natural resources I hence sent a survey to all houses.

Of the 18 operating FH in Sweden 10 replied to my survey. Nine said they do have gardening, and one other I can confirm from their website. The answers also suggest that the garden tends to be connected to the kitchen unit. The answers from Gothenburg and Falkenberg (in the far south of Sweden) indicate they have gardening activity basically all-year round. So say Lund on their website.

To return to the issue of general dynamics that can be seen across Fountain Houses I would say the issue of how nodes and forums for bricolage are created and maintained through cooking and gardening is central, and something which

affects this, and hence affects the potential for resilience, is how climate interacts with thresholds of activity.

The most northern Fountain House, in Östersund, told me "[t]here is a lot of unused land up here, so we do not see it as a hindrance for gardening even if there is a lack of allotments or they have long queues. I myself live on a farm and so do several of out members as well, so there will be opportunities for gardening if there is interest." Yet they also noted that at time of writing (March) it was minus 22 Celsius. In other words this is a situation where natural resources are abundant, and the key question is mobilisation and organisation of labour, yet this mobilisation must happen within a geographical context that people must adapt to. Conversations with Östersund members at the conference showed me they are building many shelves indoors to grow plants in front of their long windows. And a leaflet from Motala Fountain House shows they are experimenting with indoor growing during the winter, based on hydroponics (see appendix leaflet photo).

Further study would be needed to properly compare these different Fountain Houses, but I would suggest that in all cases the work units will need to have some form of 'bricolage curated by a node' dynamic at play, in order to unify the needs of low-threshold activity to create resilience.

6. Discussion

I will now discuss what I see as the most important elements of the data I have presented in the previous chapter.

This discussion proceeds from my research questions:

- How does this community reproduce itself, rather than falling apart? In other words how does it retain its resilience.
- And since the demand according to the Clubhouse constitution is for collective reproduction of the community resources how is this collective institution reproduced in the everyday at the micro level, through interactions between members?

- In addition my theoretical framework also gives me direction for how to further this understanding: through as much cooperation with the participants as possible.

And the issue of 'low-threshold' activity has become a key element that I use as part of my conceptual framework.

I will start with a meta-discussion about my data gathering process, to explain why I think my methods and results are valid for this particular investigation, I then proceed to a discussion structured around the three core elements of my theoretical framework, namely activity thresholds, institutional bricolage and resilience.

I also discuss a major new element that emerged in my analysis: nodes/forums.

6.1 (Meta)discussion: methodology

In the results section I have presented and analysed data based on central elements of my theoretical framework. While I present the data organised according to these concepts, I was generally not aware of them while I was gathering/assembling the data. Rather I was operating based on sensitised concepts such as 'labour', 'decision-making', 'disability'. Through my observations and my conversations with participants I started to cluster these sensitised concepts and develop them into a more sophisticated analytical

framework that could reflect the uniqueness of the case study and respond to my overarching research questions.

During my process of observation and iterative theorising I came to see that role allocation in the context of institutional bricolage in this Clubhouse can be seen as happening 'in passing'. That means that decisions are made and roles negotiated between members in the 'margins' of the community life. People pass each other in the corridor and stop and exchange a word. Somebody struggles with a task and someone gets up from a chair, wordlessly helps them, and then sits down again. During lunch planning someone comes into the kitchen and makes a request for a certain kind of food, maybe helps with it, and then leaves. All of this forms a dense fabric of exchange and tiny acts of deliberation, rather than the community's organisation being centralised to defined and formal points of coordination such as scheduled meetings.

This interacts strongly with the issue of chronic illness I already mentioned as being central. In this everyday situation of decision-making 'in passing' how a particular practice is carried out can be based very much on how someone feels and their physical and mental characteristics. Whether someone is, in that moment, the one who is tall enough to reach a shelf, or whether they happen to have the energy or focus to take the lead on a particular task, or whether they must sit this one out because they are having a bad pain day. This is why my approach is rooted above all in observation and in my own participation. It is in order to gather a whole-body understanding of how the collective reproduces itself. An investigation into this same community that used only the reported statements of participants based on interviews would not gain the same form of fully rounded understanding. And in addition most participants in this collective are not eager to share their understanding of the situation to a stranger. These factors mean that such an investigation would lack validity according to the lived experiences of community members: they may not all recognise themselves in such a reported narrative.

6.2 Discussion of the 3 core elements: thresholds, bricolage, resilience

In this section I shall discuss how these three conceptual elements build towards a general conceptual understanding of the case study institution. Thresholds for activity lead to bricolage becoming the most natural form of

institutional reproduction, and then this leads to the particular form of resilience being created.

Thresholds for activity and labour

Although my initial focus was on collective management organisation, an insight I came to was that the most interesting aspects were the tacit dynamics which structured the daily routine, rather than the formal 'management' or 'organisation' as could be observed from formal data such as meeting protocols, records of white boards or even from interviews where people describe the organisation,

Key to understanding these dynamics of daily practices is hence how they overlap with an analysis of labour. This is an analysis of bodies and minds in motion and exerting effort to get things done. The aim of a Clubhouse is explicitly to create a 'work-ordered day' in order to facilitate rehabilitation. "Clubhouses are organized around a belief that work, and work-mediated relationships, are restorative and provide a firm foundation for growth and important individual achievement (Beard, Propst, Malamud, 1982), and the belief that normalized social and recreational opportunities are an important part of a person's path to recovery", (Clubhouse International, 2026).

This means a Clubhouse is always designed around tasks. It may often be designed to be as much like a 'workplace' as possible. In addition however it is designed a Clubhouse is always a place of real work (the work to make the food, the preparation and cooking and cleaning tasks are real, the members' participation in financial administration is real, and so on.). Hence when I analyse "how dynamics of persisting, adapting and transforming are enacted", through the analysis of 'daily practices' (Haider and Cleaver 2023, p4) what I am also doing is analysing forms of daily labour. This is why I am constantly attempting to articulate an analysis that can conceptualise how mental illness and other disabilities interact with the performance of labour.

One key concept I hence developed for this analysis is the idea of a 'threshold' for activity. This is developed based on mental health and rehabilitation theory. In the 'supportive environment theory' (SET) pyramid a person is seen as moving from a lower level of executive functioning where they mostly focus inwards on themselves to eventually reach 'outgoing involvement' where their energy is directed to external tasks (Palsdottir et al, 2014. p.7097). So a person with, for example, less energy, or who is facing chronic pain, depression or burn-out is seen as at a lower level of this pyramid and rehabilitation helps them get higher. I adapt this framework to instead see the process as cyclical, since I have witnessed

people behaving according to different levels of the pyramid at different times. I call the different levels of the pyramid ‘thresholds’ to emphasis how I am using them not as stages but as different modes of activity that are linked to how the person feels and how much they are suffering at any one time.

The theories of Searles and others mentioned in the green therapy section also contribute to my understanding of threshold as a suitable concept for this analysis. The ‘low threshold’ of labour or decision making in-passing is in this sense analogous to the ‘undemanding’ or ‘soft fascination’ element that is seen as enabling green rehabilitation.

Using the concept of activity thresholds I can see that different people are differently able to get over a given ‘threshold’ at different times. This allows me to theorise why I observe varying forms of participation, even from the same person, from day to day. This also allows me to theorise why different kinds of activity in the Clubhouse may be attended by different people, and how this also varies. The aim of the Clubhouse model can itself be theorised as helping people to rise towards the top of this SET pyramid. Yet at the same time there is no finish date set for members in a Clubhouse, since by definition of the international guidelines membership is always both voluntary and without time limit (Clubhouse International, 2026a p.2). The rehabilitation work in a Clubhouse is hence based on building meaningful relationships through common activity, and relationships that can last a life time.

Moreover the idea of low threshold activity is expressed by the Clubhouse movement when it states its core aim of offering meaningful activity based on what the member themselves feels they can do. “In this way each individual can adjust their participation and rehabilitation at their own pace,” (Fountain House, Our Organisation, 2026, translated from Swedish). This seems to be a model of work that also offers ‘low-threshold’ activity. The member participates in the ways they are comfortable with and which match their energy, and this is decided upon through negotiation and agreement democratically. Supporters of Clubhouses also describe the model explicitly in terms of thresholds. Sweden’s Minister for Social Affairs and Public Health calls the model a system that offers “low-threshold support” (Forssmed, 2026).

To take one example this means a lot of decisions are taken ‘in passing’ through micro-interactions between participants as individuals, rather than only happening in the forums of formal meetings. By being able to negotiate such decisions together without meetings this lowers the threshold for participation for disabled members. This hence offers the community members forms of

participation where they are able to contribute and to shape outcomes even if they are not able to participate in formal meetings.

Institutional bricolage

If I see the activity described in my results as showing a constant process of low-threshold activity then it is also clear that this looks like a work of bricolage. The term itself literally means to piece together something from different parts, to create a mosaic or collage. Likewise during my observations I saw members of the Fountain House bring different things to their everyday interactions.

For example in the case of a member who says they are not going to do anything, and then later gets up and makes a salad. The salad was not planned, and earlier the person had not felt able to say they could participate in the task of making lunch. Yet after a period of waiting the member in question offered to contribute using knowledge and skills that were most familiar to them.

Similar forms of piecing together the work day can be seen in the preparations for the outdoors day (friluftsdag). Some members concentrated on making equipment for the winter games, some on making sure there was enough coffee for the guests. The most obvious example comes from the quote I used at the start, where someone who did not feel confident in their cooking skills was nevertheless able to bring a piece of the collage to contribute simply by being tall enough to reach something from the shelf.

To turn this issue on its head, however, it could also be argued that the issues with the earlier attempts to become self-sufficient and have many animals also failed because of a process of bricolage. The different members who were involved in the process brought too many different experiences and personal investment to the work. Based on what I heard I could speculate a process of failure of bricolage in this case: if one member is skilled at animal care, or has a particular emotional investment with the animals, it is hard for other people to contribute in ways that allow the different pieces of the institutional bricolage to merge into one common institution. The work hence also becomes high-threshold because there are such high personal stakes. A certain amount of this process I observed during the gardening discussions, with land and plants becoming the focus for different ideas about what should happen and likewise different levels of emotional commitment, with some members choosing to opt out rather than participate.

Resilience

Hence institutional bricolage can be seen as contributing to institutional resilience, under the right circumstances, but it is not a panacea. The ways that my results show bricolage functioning are in the situation where everyone participates in a low-threshold manner. For example a very low threshold is simply to sit down and eat lunch. By doing so a member reinforces the status of lunch as the key event that the community's day pivots on. It is this general participation which gives all the other lunch activities their own important status. If most people brought packed lunches or went out for take-away food the cooking of daily lunches would cease to be a community task and instead become a specialised activity for a few people, like a knitting group that produces wooly hats that most people do not wear. Useful, but not one of the 'critical tasks' stipulated in the Clubhouse rules.

My results hence show me patterns of where processes of bricolage contribute to institutional resilience and – just as importantly – they show me patterns of where it does not do so.

This leads on to the next section where I discuss an element I see as contributing to successful resilience through bricolage.

6.3 The fourth element: node

Through a discussion of my observations, my interviews and other data in terms of the three main themes of bricolage, resilience, and threshold, I also came to realise that there is a fourth important element that links to all three themes: the idea of a 'node' or a 'scene' for this kind of institutional reproduction. The patterns of successful bricolage I observed seem to be connected to the presence of this clear node.

A node can be conceptualised as the physical-social 'location' that is the 'place' where the other three elements exist. For example, in the case of my daily observation protocols the kitchen is the 'forum'. As a physical room it hosts the activity which makes up a certain kind of institutional re-making. As a designated form of activity it also shapes people's interactions outside the physical room of the kitchen: two people who meet on the way to, or the way from the kitchen, and speak about kitchen tasks, have also been hosted by the kitchen as a 'place' although they are standing outside of it. And as I mentioned in the previous

section this ‘place’ is invested with significance because it is linked to the pivotal event of the day: communal lunch.

In this framing the node is hence a physical-social framing that is shared by participants who are both physically close to each other and also on the same page as far as the significance of the place goes. The existence of this frame curates the activity and directs or shapes it towards certain outcomes. In the most basic sense, the fact people are physically standing close to each other in a room directs them to tend to speak to each other more, but the fact that lunch is invested with certain communal meanings also means people are empowered to speak to each other. Compared this to, for example, a lunch in an open plan office where people may eat fast, not look each other in the eye, and then dash back to work at their desks.

7. Conclusion

In this thesis I show that collective action and collective resource management in a Fountain Houses in Sweden can be seen as happening through micro-interactions that persist throughout the day. This represents a form of continuous reproduction of the social institution that makes up the Fountain House.

This form of cooperation through encounters and constant bricolage seems to be suited to the needs of a community where members above all need to be able to access collective structures in a 'low-threshold' way.

This form of collective management through micro-interactions also takes place in a context where most Clubhouses are engaged in gardening and cultivation of various kinds.

This investigation has proceeded from my research questions:

- How does this community reproduce itself, rather than falling apart? In other words how does it retain its resilience.
- And since the demand according to the Clubhouse constitution is for collective reproduction of the community resources how is this collective institution reproduced in the everyday at the micro level, through interactions between members?
- In addition my theoretical framework also gives me direction for how to further this understanding: through as much cooperation with the participants as possible.

In the Sköndal Fountain house I identified through ethnographic observation two different dynamics of organisation of labour and management of natural resources.

The first is centred spatially on the kitchen and lunchtime. It is characterised socially by a high degree of participation by all those present on any given day. Decisions are made constantly and in-passing as well as at regular meetings which are well-attended.

The second is linked to the plots of land outdoors and the work room indoors where seeds are sprouted (as well as a cellar room sometimes). It is characterised socially by participation through occasional meetings and by working outside, both of which have far lower levels of participation. Decision-making happens

outside of the daily rhythm of the house and is accessed by only a small proportion of those present on any given day.

Based on identifying these two patterns I link their success or difficulty in establishing successful processes of bricolage to the presence or absence of 'nodes' for bricolage to happen through everyday interactions.

However, due to my intent to avoid making this 'community technical' I frame this insight as something which only the community itself can work on. Since a node exists due to a shared physical space and also a shared understanding of the significance of the node it cannot be imposed from the outside. A Clubhouse that has lunch in more of a canteen, as does the central Stockholm one, may have its nodes elsewhere. The particular characteristics of the Sköndal Fountain House, as a large detached house in a rural setting, also contribute to the suitability of a slow communal lunch being its pivotal node point.

Although I would encourage communities to think about where their nodes and potential nodes for bricolage could be, I cannot tell them the answer, only suggest that I offer certain insights helping them to identify their own processes of everyday reproduction.

In Li's analysis of the ethnographic participation in the KDP in Indonesia she describes how even though ethnographers often understood a more nuanced version of the local situations, their work nonetheless fed into an instrumentalisation of the people they studied. This is for two reasons, partly that their brief was to find scenes of interventions. So even if communities were discovered to exist and have capacity for self-governance this needed to be framed in terms of deficits which the World Bank could remedy (2011, p.114). Secondly the focus of the ethnographic teams in the first place, the non-conflict areas, were driven by a desire of their employer to avoid calling out the government for its role in conflict. So even methodologically good and sensitive ethnographic work contributed to a de-nuancing rather than the opposite because of the framing of the brief, and because of the instrumental suppose that it needed to fill.

"The Bank social development experts were fully aware of the limitations presented by their positioning on the 'practitioner' side of the scholar/practitioner divide. They acknowledged that their interventions did not 'replace in any way the need for a more fundamental restructuring of state-society relationships in Indonesia' (Guggenheim 2004: 33). Yet they proposed no strategies to accomplish that 'more fundamental restructuring'. Instead, they focused on the conduct of villagers and their capacities to plan and demand better 'development'." Li p.116

In this conclusion I cannot not propose fundamental strategies either. Partly because I suffer from a similar problem of framing and partly because I think a discussion of these fundamental strategies belongs above all inside the communities.

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Popular science summary

Sometimes lunch is not just lunch. This research shows how cooking and eating the midday meal together every day is crucial to the survival of a self-managed mental health community in Stockholm: Fountain House Sköndal. Through carrying out tasks, and discussing these tasks every day, members are able to contribute to the community and shape how the community functions in a 'low-threshold' way.

This form of creating and shaping a community organisation is analysed according to the theory of 'institutional bricolage', where people construct a collage of meaning and activity by bringing different things to the project.

In this research 'lunch' and 'the kitchen' are seen as central places that exist in the community, and also in the hearts of the community members. For this reason the constant work to make sure everyone is fed every day binds together the participants in a shared activity that reaches even further than just those who carry out cooking work.

This work of 'institutional bricolage' is analysed according to how it helps the community hold together, how it contributes to community 'resilience'. The role lunch performs in the community is compared and contrasted with another important activity, namely gardening and managing the community land. The ways in which this is a more difficult task are used to illuminate the processes that make lunch such a successful common activity.

This research has implications not just for people involved in similar mental health communities, but for all people who want to understand how to improve activity that will increase community resilience and help self-organisation, and it also has implications for gardening as a form of therapy.

Appendix 1 Initial observation protocol

Observation protocol after Cresswell and Creswell p266

Sensitised topics:

Gardening
Natural environment
Management of natural resources
Group interaction
Social inequality
Social conflicts
Labour mobilisation
Work enthusiasm
Livelihood benefits

Updated protocol Feb 2, recording attendance at meetings and where members and staff are generally

Appendix 2 Kitchen observation protocol

Observation scheme kitchen FH Sköndal

Day of week

Date

Photo of whiteboard tasks:

Factual observations of people’s movement and work

Reflective comments

Appendix 3 Survey form sent to all Fountain Houses

(in Swedish)

Hej Fontänhuset i XXXX!

Mitt namn är Loukas Christodoulou.

Jag är masterstudent på Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet (SLU) och sitter på Fontänhuset Sköndal och skriver min uppsats. Det blir en rapport om hur folk här jobbar med trädgårdsarbete och odling.

Skulle du kunna svara på några frågor? De är för att jag ska få en överblick om hur de andra Fontänhus i Sverige ser på trädgårdsaktiviteter och odling.

De ska ta max en timme att svarar på. Viktigaste av allt är första frågan.

Tack!

--

Fråga 1:

Finns det trädgård eller odling på ert Fontänhus?

JA/NEJ

[Om ni har inga aktiviteter relaterade till trädgård eller odling kan du hoppa direkt till Fråga 6.]

Fråga 2:

Kan du beskriva kort vad det är för aktiviteter som är relaterade till trädgård eller odling som finns på ert hus?

Fråga 3:

Kan du uppskatta grovt hur många personer det är som deltar på trädgårds- eller odlingsaktiviteter under en vanlig dag när de relevanta aktiviteten hölls? Och vilken andel personer på huset handlar det om? (Jag behöver både antal och även andel för att förstå omfattningen för aktiviteten för huset.)

Fråga 4:

Om ni har trädgårds- eller odlingsrelaterade aktiviteter hur viktigt skulle ni säga att aktiviteterna är för ert Fontänhus?

Utvärdera hur viktiga de är på en skala från 1 till 5 där

1 betyder att aktiviteten kunde försvinna utan att huset förändras så mycket

5 aktiviteten är centralt och viktigt för huset och sina medlemmar

Fråga 5:

Skulle ni vilja förändra eller förbättra arbetet med trädgården eller naturen? Om ja, skriv gärna några ord om detaljerna.

Fråga 6:

Om trädgårdsarbete eller naturaktiviteter finns inte på ert Fontänhus finns det anledningar varför som du kunde nämna?

Fråga 7:

Fritext. Här kan du skriva vad som helst, om jag har missat att fråga efter något som du anser är relevant!

Och sista frågan - Finns det någon på ert Fontänhus som skulle vilja prata med mig på telefonen eller på Zoom om detta? Om ja, skriv gärna kontaktuppgifter här:

Tack igen!

Appendix 3 Prepared interview questions

Questions in square brackets are optional, based on time available and direction of answers.

[klargöra samtycke] [check in, mående]

Hej mitt namn är LC, jag är student på SLU och gör en rapport om hur FH-s arbetar med trädgården som mitt examensarbete. Jag vill informera dig att du har rätt över hur jag publicerar vad du säger. Jag kommer skicka citat till dig för granskning innan jag publicerar. Genom att delta ger du samtycke till att jag använder dina ord, men du får alltså dra tillbacka samtycken när som helst.

Innan vi går vidare vill jag vara säker att du förstår och att det är okej att prata om detta? Det kommer ta kanske en halv timme. Om du vill avsluta när som helst, säg till, eller bara gå härifrå

Vilket namn skulle jag använda för dina citat?

(Du kan vara anonym.)

Vad skulle det vara för pronomon för namnet?

Hur länge har du varit engagerad i FH Sköndal?

Beskriva din engagemang

Hur skulle du beskriva vad FH-s betyder för dig?

Hur fungerar dina dagar på huset? Vad brukar du göra? En vanlig dag?

Hur länge har du varit engagerad inom trädgårdsenheten?

Vad betyder trädgården på huset för dig?

När brukar du vara engagerade på trädgården?

[Tider under dagen] [Med vilket syfte]

På trädgården odlar man och gör olika arbete. Vad finns det för andra saker du gör på trädgårdsområde? Till exempel en trädgård kan vara en viktig plats för att sitta och vara i lugn och ro.

De flesta medelmmar på Fontänhuset har erfarenheter med olika svårigheter i våra liv. Och om du skulle relatera arbetet till svåra saker du har upplevt vad skulle du säga? Till exempel om man skulle ha någo diagnos som gör det svårare.

Ibland säger man att trädgårdsarbete är god för hälsan och kan hjälpa man bli rehabiliterad. Vad tycker du? [Till exempel om du skulle välja att rangordnar det på en femsiffrig skala där 1 är obetydlig, 5 är livsviktigt och 3 är bra-att-ha?]

[om inte redan med]

[Vad tycker du bäst om att vara med i trädgårdsenheten?]

[Och vad skulle kunna bli bättre?]

Appendix 4 Consent poster

Hej, mitt namn är Loukas.

Jag pluggar på Lantbruksuniversitetet (SLU).

Jag vill göra intervjuer och observationer på Fontänhuset Sköndal.

Det är för att skriva en rapport om hur folk arbetar med trädgården.

Jag kanske frågar att prata med dig om detta.

Jag kommer endast använda dina ord eller ditt namn om du säger att det är okej.

Jag kommer endast ta bilder eller spela in film eller ljud där folk ger samtycke för att vara med.

Om du inte svarar räknas det som ett nej!

Mer information:

Jag gör en masters på SLU. Det jag skriver är mitt examensarbete.

Jag kommer skriva om hur man arbetar med trädgården på Fontänhuset och även jämföra det med andra platser i Sverige och världen.

Det som krävs för att jag kan skriva om människor är at jag har deras samtycke.

Dessa skyltar finns för att informera er om vad jag gör och för att berätta om vad man har för rättigheter.

Till exempel, om du har sagt ja någon gång så får du ångra dig och säga nej när som helst. Jag kommer aldrig fråga varför.

Jag kommer låta er granska vad jag skriver för att ha chans att säga nej i efterhand. Och ge er chans att säga om jag har beskrivt dig eller återgivit dina ord fel på något sätt.

Fråga gärna om du har funderingar om detta och jag svarar så gott jag kan.

Tack. Loukas Christodoulou.

Appendix 5 Declaration regarding AI usage

During preparations the following AI tools have been used:

- No AI tools have been used.

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X YES, I, Loukas Christodoulou, have read and agree to the agreement for publication and the personal data processing that takes place in connection with this.