

Sale argues that living in bio-regions fulfils in one principle that greens admire – getting close to nature – another that they frequently advocate – self-sufficiency. He believes that bio-regions contain within their own boundaries all the resources that their inhabitants could require: energy, food, shelter, etc. As I have already mentioned greens like self-sufficiency because it cuts down on the environmental effects of transport and trade and the impact of growing infrastructure with increasing scale. Green analyses of the third world see dependency as being at the root of economic, social, political and environmental problems and so they also value self-sufficiency as a solution (Schumacher 1973). They argue that autonomy cuts communities off from the dictates of external political forces and economic circumstances. Autonomy and local-scale can foster the conditions for community and democratic participation and control. It can provide for simplicity and accessibility of tasks that go against bureaucratic expert monopolies. Most importantly, on specifically environmental reasons for preferring decentralized community, it allows for a sensitivity to local environmental circumstances and the importance of sustaining the environmental base of development.

#### *Social arguments for decentralized community*

This brings us on from mainly environmental reasons for preferring self-reliance, appropriate scale, decentralization and bio-regionalism to social reasons which coincide with the environmental ones but are separate from them.

Goldsmith et al. (1972) argue that small-scale communities where everyone knows one another foster communal responsibility while in mass communities people are more anonymous and feel less cohesion and responsibility to one another. Small-scale can lead to an increased sense of citizenship, membership and belonging to a community, and of integration and obligations to it. This is good for individuals as well as the community. Individuals feel less atomized, anonymous and required to defend and assert their individuality through competitive individualism. In small communities relationships are deeper and less superficial. All these factors are seen to add to our spiritual life and compensate for the loss of material luxuries and consumerist satisfactions which the sustainable society demands.

Politically, decentralized communities are small and homogeneous enough for people to participate in decision-making and negotiate common agreements relatively harmoniously and unhindered by