

**Holy Land of Aliens:
Formal Governance Mechanisms in
Israeli Alternative Communities**

by

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ABSTRACT

Literature of participatory democracy in STS has reached a point where most works are either speculation from specific academic theory traditions or they focus on one small technology or policy that is isolated from the larger context. This work aims to move beyond this, by providing an alternative avenue for exploration via the study of democracy in alternative communities. The research and analysis are intended to have implication at the local, regional, national and global governance structures.

This work examines Israeli alternative communities and their governance structures. Much can be learned about participatory democracy in general, and citizen panels specifically by utilizing real life examples of governance as manifested in alternative communities. Data were collected by conducting interviews with individuals in governance or management positions in 38 alternative communities and by conducting site visits to those communities. The study revealed a variety of democratic methods that include general committees, agenda-setting committees, formal appeals processes, creative information dispersal mechanisms, demographic control of committee membership, tiered voting systems, and controlled campaign processes. Some of the mechanisms have analogues in democratic theory spanning several academic fields, and some are completely original. All are potentially instructive to the development of democratic theory.