

# Integral City Inquiry & Action: Designing Impact for the Human Hive

By Marilyn Hamilton

## What People are Saying

*Integral City Inquiry and Action* continues Marilyn Hamilton's (and her colleagues') rather unique exploration into the application and extension of Integral Metatheory (and related disciplines) into the entire urban landscape and all of its dimensions, aspects, functions, and qualities. The modern city is the most complex social structure that exists, as far as we know, anywhere in the universe, and as such it is made to order for an Integral approach. This is exactly what Marilyn and her team do. The results are illuminating, novel, insightful, extremely useful and urgently needed. What *Integral City* tells us, among numerous important specific insights, is that any approach that is less comprehensive or less integral is doomed to failure, because only an integrally pluralistic theory and practice will cover all the truly important bases. These important bases are carefully elucidated in 16 chapters, each one covering a significant ingredient of a genuinely integral approach to city planning, living, exploring, discovering, applying. My congratulations to the authors for another profound, timely, and superb work!

**Ken Wilber**— Philosopher, Integral Theorist, Author: *The Integral Vision, Sex Ecology & Spirituality, Integral Psychology, A Brief History of Everything*

The unusual and captivating hero of this book is the city. Not an inert mass of buildings, but a collective, a hive, a holarchy that brings people and processes of inquiry together in action. This human centered approach to systems of a city offers well chosen “sticky” concepts, grounded in practice and expressed with a simplicity that belies their complexity. What's more, the book offers tons of great questions and grounded frameworks that help us articulate *Gaia's reflective capacity*. It's a resource for action researchers in the field of urban planning and perhaps for all whole systems/integration oriented professionals.

**Hilary Bradbury**, Ph.D., Professor (OHSU), Editor Handbook of Action Research & Action Research Journal, Convener, AR+.

*Integral City Inquiry and Action* is a complex compendium of ideas and processes to bring about a new vision of the city. This approach is not about having one singular vision of our city win out, but, rather, the on-the-ground methods for achieving the illusive integration of many voices today's cities seek. It's about measuring and monitoring the performance of cities, yes—and also about the emerging form and order cities will take as expressions of designing them for our human experiences and expressing our collective values. The methods here tell us how to move beyond participatory design, how to transcend the gridlock of competitive pluralism, and how to evolve the collective urban consciousness to create the city we want. That city will manifest and take shape to solve climate change, to nurture our collective welfare, to connect us to nature and beauty, and to be a crucible for individuals' potentials.

**Prof. Mark DeKay**, author of *Integral Sustainable Design: Transformative perspectives*, Professor of Architecture, Director of Graduate Studies, College of Architecture and Design, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

After urban planning what's plan B? Given the scale, complexity and interdependencies of our global crises, 20th century urban plans and solutions are simply inadequate. This leading edge and thoroughly practical contribution to inquiry and impact on the crucial dilemmas faced by cities today, is a gift to next generation urban change workers. It's elegant and accessible structure, fresh models and integrating tools are the product of iterative testing over many years in contexts of place-based yet globally shared challenges faced by 21st century architects, planners, city managers, developers, designers, communities, investors and activists.

**Lisa Norton**, Professor of Design Leadership and Associate Dean, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

In *Integral City Inquiry and Action* Dr. Hamilton has made another significant contribution to showing scholar-practitioners how they themselves can apply integrative principles to our urban environments in effective and impactful ways. Integral practitioners will benefit from this book by seeing concrete practices they can do to transform integral theory into integral action. City specialists will benefit from finally having a comprehensive map and set of methodologies that can engage the many crucial dimensions of the city in an integrative way. Our planet urgently needs integral cities and Dr. Hamilton's book provides us with a clear and powerful roadmap of how we can work together to get there. Imagine living in a world where more and more cities are modeling how they can serve personal, civic, and global well-being. Start reading this book to see how you can transform this shared vision into shared action.

**Sean Esbjörn-Hargens PhD**

Founder and Chief Design Officer MetaIntegral Associates

Author *Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World*,

Co-editor *Metatheory for the Twenty-First Century*

Whereas “*Integral City: Evolutionary Intelligences for the Human Hive*” built the case for cities to be understood as integrated meshes of intelligences that create place, “*Integral City: Inquiry & Action*” is the practical playbook for leaders, disruptors, innovators, change-makers and networks of collaborators who work directly on the complex systems of city living.

As Hamilton reminds, this next phase of city transformation is not for the faint of heart. Through case studies, examples and evaluation tools, *Integral City: Inquiry & Action* moves city builders from whole system design ‘thinking’ right into integrated practice of dynamic conscious city ‘being.’

I really appreciate how the once ambiguous notions of place-caring and value creation cannot be ignored as Hamilton proves them to be both measurable and directly linked to the practice of place making and value realization – a key learning for building integral, smart and resilient cities. GIS mappables reveal city patterns in bio – cultural – social and psychological terms replacing the industrial economic matrix of “quadruple bottom line” thinking and takes open data and open gov to the next level – the pursuit of the truly networked, intercity & intra city collaborative. “

*Integral City: Inquiry & Action* brings together advances in community engagement, wellbeing, place making and a refined value creation process and measurement systems. It details the 12 Intelligences needed to assess opportunities for cities working in our global and digitally disrupted network. And it proposes tools and practices for change agents to communicate key changes effectively in the new terms of value-based language.

**Ann Pappert**, former City Manager, Guelph, Ontario, Canada

Humans who get too far removed from their roots and their culture, often feel unearthed and soul-less. This situation particularly manifests as Africans, and people from other emerging economies, superficially adapt alternative ways of being instead of adapting to the new while simultaneously remaining anchored in a deeper level of knowing – the knowing of the soul. In *Integral City Inquiry and Action*, Marilyn Hamilton masterfully interweaves integral theory, spiral dynamics, constellation work with other inclusivity methodologies to not only ensure that a wealth of wisdom and knowledge are documented, but practical and application insights are shared. In doing so, she succeeds in creating consciousness on concepts such as place caring and place making that will ultimately lead to more functional human hives. And as one part of the hive heals, the rest will be impacted. This contribution of Marilyn will have far reaching implications, even for us here in Africa.

**Dr Rica Viljoen**, Managing Director: Mandala Consulting and Centre of Integral Development, South Africa.

We are living in a fast paced mode toward uncertain futures, Dr. Marilyn Hamilton, and her colleagues teach us how to converge the city's four voices +1 toward a common superordinate goal to evolve in an integral and harmonious way.

This book is what we were expecting in Mexico and Latin America, as a very comprehensive practitioner's handbook, to inquire about current realities and to design and build better futures for our highly diversity cities. I consider this research as a bright awakening call for measurable actions. It shows us the map of how to activate local intelligence and resources in an ongoing change needed for any human hive (aka city)

**Roberto Bonilla**, Organization Co-pilot and Social Innovator at Novarum Innovation Lab, Leon, Mexico

The World is changing. Not only by climate but also in society and way of living.

A new generation is looking for their future with their own skills and opinions, influenced by today's life and using the knowledge of the more experienced. In this process of lifelong learning, sharing and caring we need 'evolutionary intelligences for the human hive' in 'the integral city'. Not only in the 'top down' view from the 'over all' controlled theory but also from the 'bottom up' practical point of view and easy to understand examples about real life by the city activators. The link to the practice shows the thermometer in society and real needs from nowadays. In this process the 'City Embassies' that are recently organized in European cities could be the real translators of these actual needs and behaviour from citizens in a changing society.

**Cees Donkers**, Urban Designer (Retired), City of Eindhoven, Netherlands

Marilyn Hamilton is one of the clearest system thinkers I know. As a city dweller, I am delighted that she describes her pioneering exploration of how we can consciously evolve our cities as human hives – as places where we care for ourselves and each other, for our city and the planet at the same time. As a long-time associate of the Findhorn Foundation, I am delighted that she includes how she and her Integral City team have been working with the city's spirit, the nature beings and the knowing field to retrieve information on the shape of things to come. Time and again I experience that only when we dare move beyond the boundary of our mental capacities, we begin to gain sight of higher order solutions. Thank you, Marilyn and your Integral City friends, for experimenting all these years, for breaking new ground and sharing your invaluable findings with us.

**Lisette Schuitemaker**, Author, Chair of the Findhorn Foundation

For a number of years Hamilton's Integral City approach has been redefining the sociology of the city while her 'human hive' concept has opened up new avenues for social psychology. The delight in Hamilton's approach is that she takes the most advanced and sophisticated thinking from the likes of Ken Wilber and Don Beck and makes it eminently practicable. The connectedness of the Integral City concepts enables work at the macro, meso and micro levels to be joined up in a truly holistic way. The key to this is identifying and nurturing the Spirit of the City.

This is a 'how to' book for practitioners. From preparing yourself spiritually and attaining a state of integrated connectedness with fellow practitioners to practical on-the-ground community projects, this is a book about making a difference. It covers all the elements necessary not only for sustainable development of the city but also to give it enhanced life and nurture its wellbeing.  
**Keith E Rice** – Sociopsychologist, Master Practitioner, Professional Guild of NLP, York, UK

As the daughter of immigrant entrepreneurs, I have always been fascinated by how the ordinary citizen contributes to the well-being of their local economy and social context. The gift of Marilyn's work is in extending an integral and more holistic lens in how we see our communities develop, which has enlarged my capacity to see and to amplify the work of many average citizens who are making their cities a better place, yet are often invisible to the very systems they seek to shift. In my work with people co-making places that reflect their values, I see how people start to shape the world they envision possible - embracing a practice of inquiry in action that continually enriches a new culture in the making. I am grateful to Marilyn for her continued gentle but provocative guidance for us to notice the subtle while in pursuit of the pragmatic.  
**Tatiana Glad**, Co-Founder Waterlution, Impact Hub Amsterdam

This is a comprehensive hands-on guide to designing a city that works for everyone. Marilyn Hamilton helps you connect up the dots so you can take as much of the city into account as possible - in your research, decision-making and interventions. A must for all those working in the cities of today's world."

**Peter Merry**, Chief Innovation Officer, Ubiquity University

This book is truly a feast of insight, innovation and second simplicity on the other side of urban complexity. I wholeheartedly recommend it to anyone who is involved in urban or community development. If we are going to help bring about an unprecedented flourishing of humanity and nature, then we must consciously develop our cities and towns. There may be no one else on the planet who has spent as much time thinking about and working on optimum, whole system urban development than Marilyn Hamilton. The Integral City approach she offers in this guidebook is applicable for any scale and any aspect of urban development. Not only does it provide powerful practical steps and innovations, but more importantly this approach supports the reader to upgrade the internal operating system used to engage in urban development. That is, the very process of inquiring about the city the way Marilyn and her colleagues invite us, will result in cognitive, emotional, ethical and even relational development, helping to unlock the advanced capacities we need to lead urban transformation. As a result of engaging in this work, the reader should be able to make even wiser and more timely decisions in the complex and rapidly changing landscape of urban development. The bottom line is that if you feel in over your head regarding catalyzing cities to thrive, then upgrade not only your head but also your heart and skills by reading and using this book.

**Barrett C. Brown**, PhD, Executive Coach and Author of *The Future of Leadership for Conscious Capitalism*

In what could only be described as an official desk reference for the design of the future of cities, Dr. Hamilton and her colleagues have penned, what I consider the most authoritative work on the subject. In an intelligent and easy to follow format, the authors offer a true whole systems approach in crafting solutions for the greater human hive; the living, breathing city with all its current and future complexities. The book relies on many diverse concepts that take us from the linear endeavors of urban planning all the way through some of the most advanced evolutionary concepts in integral philosophy, social psychology, biomimicry and sustainability. Essential to this model of sustainable cities, is the placement of the community back at the center of all actions that empower family, personal development and human relationships to produce resilient institutions that can handle humanity's increasing challenges. Much like my own work with complex evolutionary systems, this book and guide point to a future that is paradoxically like nothing we've seen; it takes the most advanced concepts created by the global brain, and creates a system of distributed intelligence that empowers each and everyone of us to have a voice in shaping the future of humanity.

**Said E. Dawlabani**, Author, *MEMEnomics, the Next Generation Economic System*

Marilyn's latest literary offering brilliantly breathes life into integral theory. Her newest meticulously engineered book is perfect for the new age city manager trying to shift city organization and city works delivery to multi-spectrum approaches that prepare our cities for a quantum future.

**Linda Shore**, Director of Human Resources - Retired, Metro Vancouver, Canada

The poetry in this book is palpable and invisible. Maybe this is how Rumi writes when reborn as a designer, architect, or metaphorical bee herder. There is sufficient detail, protocols, patterns, design, questions, tables and more to test the limits of even the most complex of minds. Yet, under, or is it through, this workbook on creating happy, healthy cities, there is a fragrance woven of joy, service, promise, affirmation, love. Perhaps Marilyn Hamilton IS in love with cities, and that is why this affection and respect bleeds thru in every sentence. This is truly a masterful intellectual, how-to mapping, of the greatest experiment human collectives have ever attempted. And, I finished the book, not with the energy of a new idea, but with that rising tide in my heart that says, "Maybe we really can be as great as this." Thank you Marilyn

**Tom Christensen**, Broker, Realtor, ABR, GRI, CRS, SRES, RECS, Editor, *Innovative Development, Developmental Innovations*

As we move out of the Age of Problems into the Age of Solutions, guidebooks are compulsory. Participants are required to not only know, but also to know how. *Integral City Inquiry and Action* is the 'know how' complement to the knowing presented in *Integral City: Evolutionary Intelligences for the Human Hive*. As the title claims, skills of Inquiry are the training ground for those who seek to be a part of the solution and let go of being "apart" in the problems. This shift demands a new mindset, to unify diversity at the human scale, local and global. This book emerges through the ongoing prototyping experiences by Marilyn and her team, of an evolutionary Hive Mind.

Innovation includes using linear mediums to guide non-linear processes, and Marilyn takes a giant step forward in overcoming this challenge bringing a book resource to bear where a single question on a single page can be as useful as digesting the book, whole, in total. Start where inspired and let You guide you through the territory.

The light shines bright into the cities of our planet as the organizational core of what comes next in the march of human civilization. Integral is a platform to develop self awareness, a container to collect the pieces, and a space for transformation in the realization of "the next grandest version of the greatest vision we have about who we are." Integral City calls all practitioners, catalysts and meshworkers to the fore.

**Cherie Beck**, Integral City Meshworker, Columbia, Maryland, USA

Great work, Marilyn. I am working with members of the House of Lords to design a new "British" around the 7th code. Just returned from 11 days in London. Your new book will really help. We can start with London... or Dallas ... or Plano ...or...

**Dr. Don Beck**, Founder Center for Human Emergence-Global; co-author *Spiral Dynamics: Mastering Values, Leadership and Change*