

A group of diverse people, including women and men of various ethnicities, are working together in a community garden. They are focused on tending to plants in wooden planters. The scene is outdoors, with a blurred background of buildings and greenery. The overall atmosphere is one of collaboration and community.

# Sense of Community

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Four Elements McMillan & Chavis (1986)

## Membership

- Boundaries
- Emotional safety / security
- Sense of belonging & identification
- Personal investment
- Common symbol system

## Reinforcement

- people gravitate towards groups that offer the best rewards
- rewards such as membership status, success of the community, competence of other members
- Ability of community to meet individuals undocumented needs fulfilled better with increased sharing
- In a strong community, people meet others' needs while meeting their own

## Influence

- People attracted to communities in which they feel influential
- Significant positive relationship between cohesiveness and pressure to conform
- Pressure to conform comes from the individual and the community as need for consensual validation
- Bidirectional and may be simultaneous

## Shared Emotional Connection

- Contact hypothesis - closeness from more interaction
- Quality of interaction
- Closeness to events - if there are ambiguous or unresolved tasks, it inhibits cohesiveness
- Shared valent event hypothesis - share crisis together
- Investment - importance of community history and current status
- Effect of honour and humiliation
- Spiritual bond

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# Colorado School of Mines





# Villa Santa Rita, Buenos Aires: sense of community through collective action



# Physical Design Solutions Kyttä (2004)

# Sense of Community Indoors

- The orientation of the windows and sound insulation between and within dwellings is important
- Tipping down the walls does not automatically increase interaction between people



# Sense of Community in Courtyard

- People attract people and action generates action
- Multi-purpose elements and the intersection of activities enables to spontaneous interaction
- Reasons to linger in the front yard





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# Sense of Community in Semi-Public Spaces

- Sense of community is often a by-product of other everyday activities and routines.
- Common areas in an apartment building with benches and greenery, rooftop terraces, saunas and laundries



# Sense of Community in Public Spaces

- Different seasons and different weather should be taken into account in the planning
- High quality design to please as many different residents as possible and bring them together





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# Hierarchy of Urban Communities Kusenbach (2008)

# Three basic components that have dominated definitions of community

1. The presence of a shared territory
2. Significant social ties
3. Meaningful social interaction

# Four dimensions of place-based communities

1. Residents' individual routines and practical uses of the environment
2. Their sentiments, often called place or neighborhood "attachment"
3. Their neighborly interactions and relationships
4. Their collective rituals and representations

# Hierarchy of Urban Communities

Various socio-spatial urban zones  
(block, neighbourhood, district etc.)

Hierarchical community patterns might  
be difficult to generalize

Different functions and depth of social  
interactions

Different spatial, social, and cultural  
contexts





# Finding new ways to measure communities

Communities occur as zones that are divided around home based on emotional, social and emotional nearness.

Divided into four dimension zones: Microsettings, Street Blocks, Walking distance Neighborhoods and Enclaves

**TABLE 1.** Zones and Dimensions of Local Community

Dimensions Zones	Practical Use	Sentiments	Neighborhoodly Interaction and Relationships	Collective Events and Representations
Microsettings	Mutual visibility of private and semi-private routines	Trust, dependency	Passive contacts, sociability, proactive neighboring, friendships	Informal gatherings, nicknames, "reputation" of places
Street Blocks	Leaving and arriving, short outings, children's play	Tolerance, responsibility	Friendly greetings, sociability, reactive neighboring	Block-based social events, defense in emergencies, block captains
Walking Distance Neighborhoods	Recreation (walking), daily needs	Familiarity	Recognizing others, nodding relationships	Formal organizations, newsletters, neighborhood events, names or nicknames
Enclaves	Lifestyle necessities, shopping, errands, leisure	Comfort, belonging	Identification of peers, assumed connection and understanding	Holidays, festivals, landmarks, area names or nicknames

# Microsettings

- Small scale communities within street blocks.
- Could be defined as face-to-face social groups
- The community is built around similar patterns of routine: taking out the trash, smoking on the balcony etc.
- Design features of the houses (balconies, laundry room etc.) impact random encounters.
- Includes social norms such as greeting your neighbors or watching over their pets if they need you to.

*'I know my neighbors here: Greg, Brent and Tim, and Jennifer. They're very nice. We protect each other. Do we socialize? No. But we're neighbors! And we'll help each other if we need to help each other.'* (Kusenbach 2008, 234)

# Street Blocks

- Island-like segments cut off by streets..
- Refers to the idea of ‘my street’ or ‘my block’.
- Residents feel a shared responsibility for the people and the environment on their street block.
- Space to create events for the community.
- Might incorporate a ‘block captain’.



# Walking Distance Neighbourhoods

- Generally smaller and less logical than how they're officially designated.
- Each one different.
- Often defined by patterns of walking - most often due to walking dogs.
- Typically includes neighbourhood organisations which represent the different blocks in the area, could be a newsletter in the area like Kamppi-Eira in Helsinki, for example.

# Enclaves

- Community that services needs of people from a shared background.
- Serves as spaces where people can express their particular social identities more freely compared to more formal spaces.
- Serves as a unit for kinship within communities - meeting communities particular needs: for example through providing places of worship.
- Different ways to signal belonging to the community for example through dressing in a certain way.
- Specific holidays and ceremonies are celebrated within the communities on this neighbourhood unit level such as gay pride parades.





# Interesting Findings

The commitment to the different neighborhood sizes differ between residents: some are committed to the microsetting and others to the enclave etc.

An important recurring theme: Generally residents were attached to only one particular size of community unit.

If one particular zone was important to a resident, the other zones usually were seen as less valuable.

Model helps to fine-tune research and understanding of urban communities from a plan- to a social perspective.

Sense of Community and Neighbourhood Farahani (2016)

# Place-Based Communities



Place

Interests

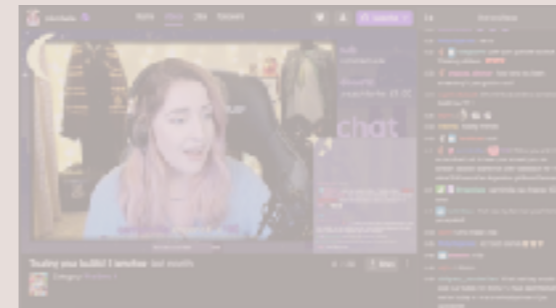
Identity



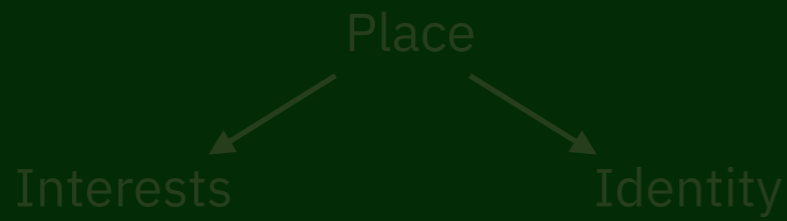
# Place-Less Communities



Interest or networks



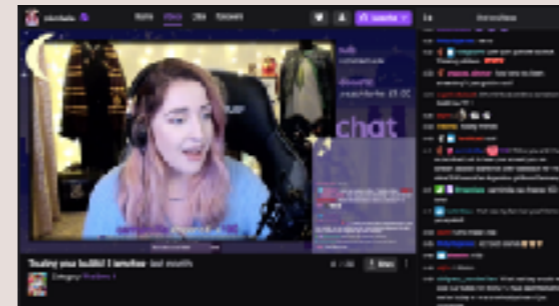
# Place-Based Communities



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Interest or networks





# Proximity of Members

- Feeling of safety and security.
- Residential satisfaction.
- Place identity.
- Local organisations and civic participation.
- Health and wellbeing.



Local communities and the internet era **network communities**

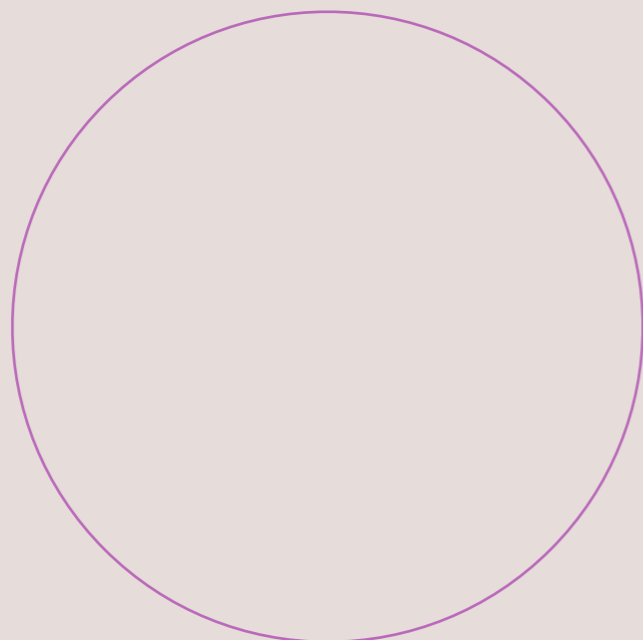
# Communities in the Digital Era

Sense of Community

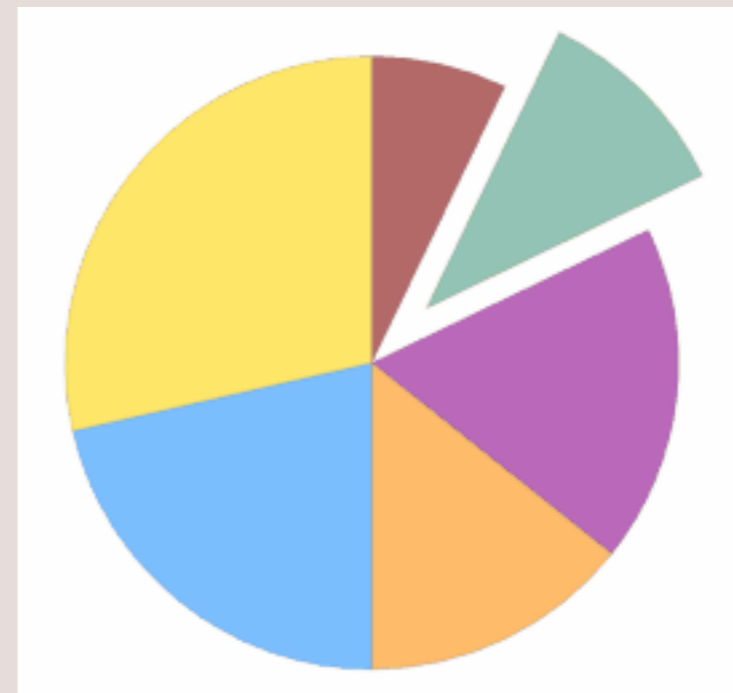


Identity

1. Shared Experiences: Before digital technology communities there were groups of people with a common interest who would come together in person and connect with one another about a common interest.
2. Identity: Identity is experiences. As intersectional beings, we are made of different people, places, stories, memories, that all come together in a little personal world we build for ourselves.



Me



The community that makes me

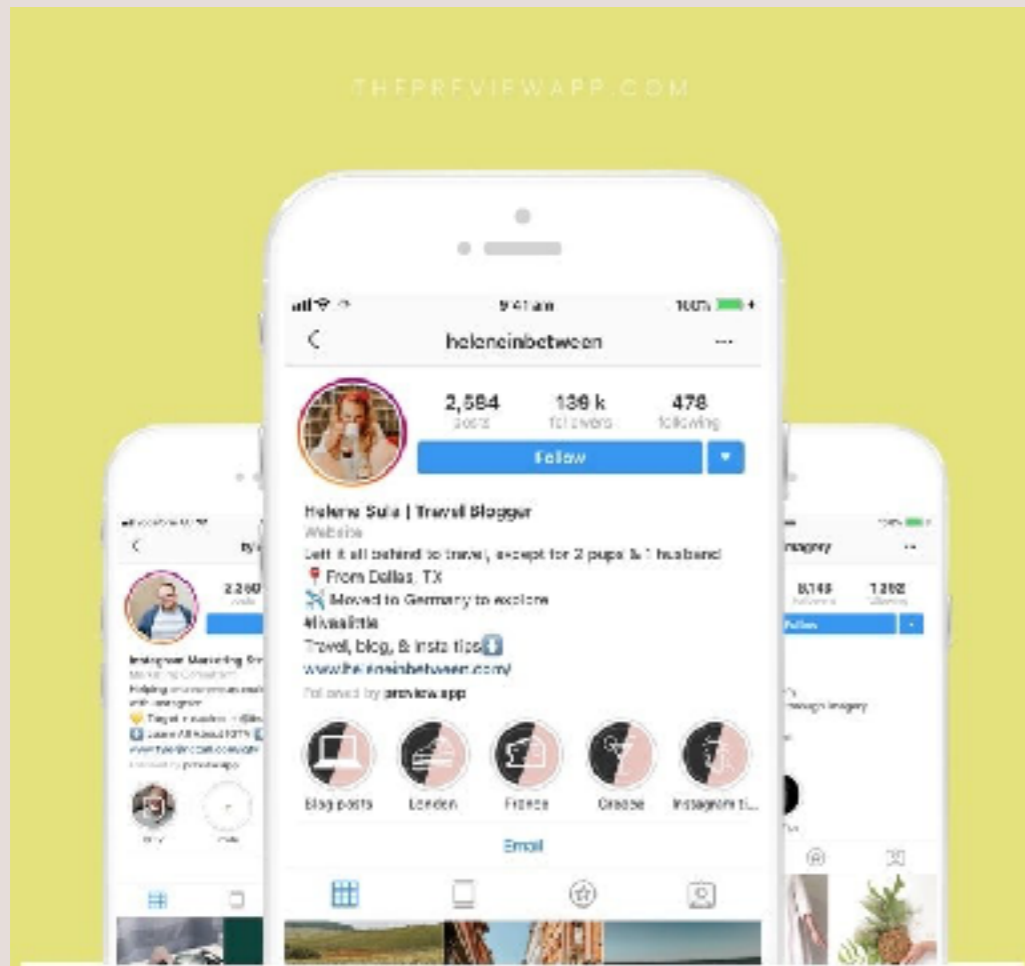
# Virtual Spaces Maintenance of Community vs Creation of Community

**1. Shared Places:** Components of community include specific place, common ties and social interaction. Virtual communities are missing the component of place (Farahani). Driskell and Lyon found that virtual communities are spatially liberated, socially ramified, topically fused and psychologically detached, with a limited liability.

**2. Emotional Integration:** Koh, Kim and Kim (2003) argue that sense of virtual community has three dimensions: membership, influence and immersion. The immersion that people feel in virtual communities may not allow a sense of integration and emotional connections among members.



# What does this means in a digital world?



**Success Stories:**  
How to Build a  
Strong Community?

**What?** The development of technology in the digital era has created millions of different ways to instantly communicate with other people, the question is whether this has belittled our sense of community. The difference between “real” communities, and “online” communities are not seen by most in our postmodern world today. Many people of today's society don't see online reality as anything different from real reality itself.

**Why?** At this point in the postmodern era it is almost impossible to talk about communities without talking about the internet, we've shifted completely from what our old sense of community really means and it's having negative implications on our society.

**How?** In online communities we create relationships with other people, but these are relationships without responsibility.



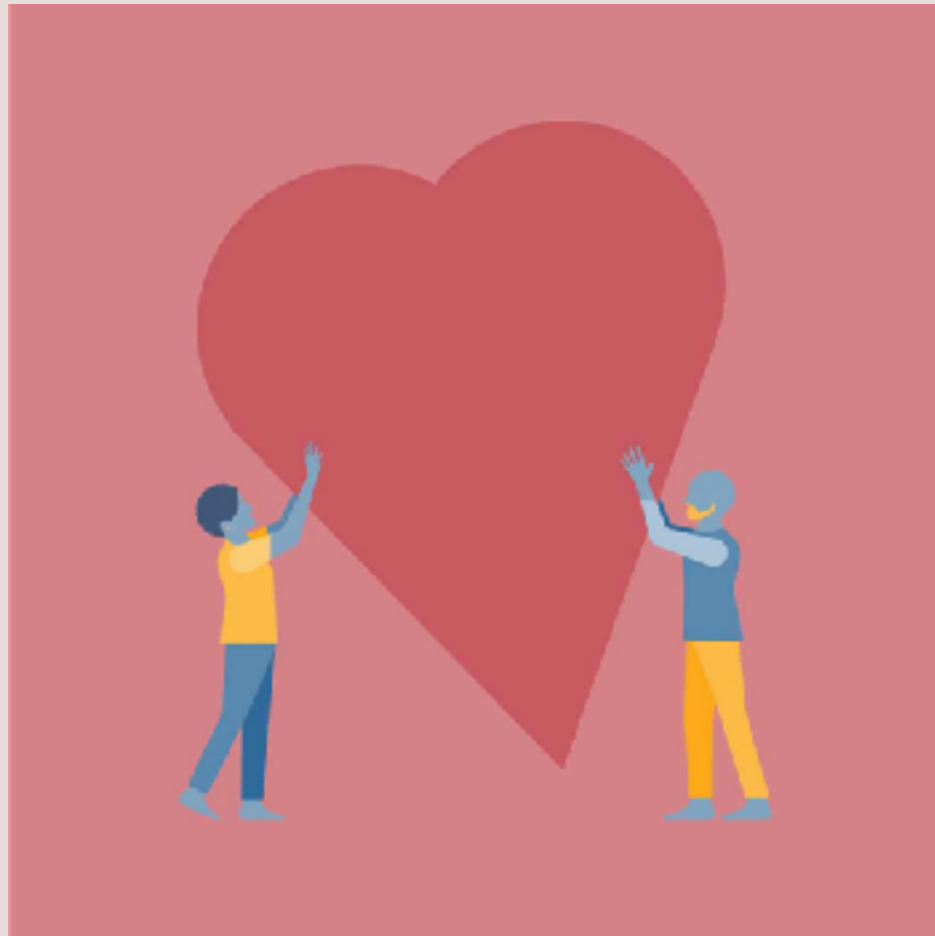
## *You have a New Friend Connection*

1. One of the significant reason we all communicate online is to connect with one another to fulfill the human needs for interacting with others. In the digital age, we express this by liking people's photos or statuses, and favoriting their posts, this isn't exactly communicating with other people, but it's a way of keeping in contact with people in a simplistic way. Interacting through digital media has diminished our sense of community and redefined our definition of relationship.

2. There are many aspects of digital media that are more related to community in the traditional sense than others, for example the PRX podcast talks about this program that virtually has dinner with people across the world via Skype.



# Enhancing Sense of Community at Home and Online in a Digital World



**1. Sharing Knowledge and Resources:** Sharing Positive impacts of your communities with others at home. Communities are rich in resources.

**2. Mentor:** Lend Help to develop someone in your social circle or professionally who would benefit from your skills, knowledge and experience.

**3. Relationships:** An Online Community is a Safe Space to develop relationships and deeper our sense of belonging.

**4. Encourage:** Encourage your Co-Livers to help more, to be kinder to each other and reinforce a sense of togetherness by small actions.

**5. Passions:** Have an outlet for passions, spreading confidence and encouragement to others.

Thank You  
Kiitos  
Gracias  
Dhanyavad