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The Post-Place Community: Contributions to the Debate about the Definition of Community

Ted K. Bradshaw

One of the continuing theoretical debates in community studies is about the definition of community, especially whether the concept of community includes groups of people who share common interests and interaction but who do not share common geographical locality. Starting with the classic dichotomy of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, many scholars have described a weakening of traditional ties among community members due to urbanization and industrialization. Today, it is useful to define community in terms of the networks of people tied together by solidarity, a shared identity and set of norms, that does not necessarily reside in a place. This concept of community, what I call a post-place community, helps reconcile the fact that cities and suburbs may lack social involvement of Gesellschaft, while individuals find Gemeinschaft solidarity through global networks. This makes a lot of difference for how to plan, govern, and restore regions.

***Keywords**: community studies, suburbs, theory*

In 1964 Melvin Webber published a short section of a book chapter on urban planning in which he coined the term "community without propinquity" (Webber, 1964). This concept of community gained notoriety among planning scholars who recognized it as a creative revision to the view that communities exist only among people in a bounded geographical area such as a small rural town, a neighborhood, or even a city. The traditional view that Webber challenged is that community is where one lives and consequently where one finds meaningful community interactions and social relations. His article, and a growing chorus of community scholars (Bhattacharyya, 2004), have argued that place, e.g., the spatial location of residence, needs to be decoupled from the essential characteristics of community — the social relations that bond people.

Places are not necessarily communities. Suburbs and gated developments (Blakely & Snyder, 1999) continue to be criticized for their lack of community — bedroom

Ted Bradshaw was a tireless disciple of community development and, especially, was concerned about the theory underlying its practice. Having worked on several projects with Ted over the years and served CDS in several roles together, as well as sharing a substantial number of hours of conversation on the topic, I knew Ted to be a serious scholar in a field that needs serious scholarship to support the tremendously important work being accomplished by practitioners. Many of Ted's early works dealt primarily with the "development" processes and principles. More recently, Ted had begun to tackle the "community" part of the theory development challenge. This article represents some of his more recent thinking along these lines and is based on rather classical works from the sociological perspective. I think this is understandable since community is largely a sociological concept and the creation of community a social process. This article underscores this perspective and would constitute a basic starting point for anyone in the field of community development. The perspective here was to be Ted's starting point, and he had asked me for comments and reactions only a couple months before his tragic death. I have refrained from adding my own perspectives to this article, as I wanted this to be representative of Ted's work rather than another's, but he has directly tackled one of the more pressing problems in community development—whether to concentrate on the development of places or of communities wherever they may evidence themselves. Readers may not find this discussion satisfactory to their own way of thinking, but it should challenge all of us to think more systematically and clearly—as was characteristic of Ted's way of doing things—about this and other problems related to the theoretical basis for community development work. --Kenneth Pigg, University of Missouri

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communities that lack social cohesion and generate alienation (Kunstler, 1996). Sprawling metropolitan regions are criticized for automobile-centered design that creates areas with minimal social interaction, rapid turnover of residents, no walkability, few community meeting places, and people with divided loyalties. For some, this is evidence of the loss of community (Salamon, 2005). However, in the modern metropolis with well documented weak place identity, social relations are built around profession (scientific community), religion (Jewish community), sexual preference (gay community), or interest (stamp collecting, railroads, science fiction, music, art, environmentalism, or health--to list only a few examples), which are cited as evidence of community without propinquity.

Place communities such as rural small towns are typically heralded as model communities where social cohesion rules - strong patterns of social interaction based on long-lasting and deep personal relations. Place-based community continues to have strong advocates who argue that community is built around the formal institutions of a place such as government, economy, education, and religion. Moreover, place is important to government planners and developers who engage in programs such as community building, visioning, and conflict mitigation to help residents create identity and consensus within a geographical area to improve well-being for residents facing some challenges.

The purpose of this paper is to balance these perspectives, arguing for a concept of post-place community in which the essential characteristics of community are the social relations (solidarity or bonds) between people. Community so defined has historically shared boundaries with one's geography of residence (town, neighborhood, city), but today the loss of place identity does not imply the loss of community, since solidarity among people no longer needs to be tied to place. The purpose of this paper is to further the debate about decoupling the concept of community from place and to outline the theoretical and empirical foundations of a post-place theory of community.

Classical and Revised Concepts of Community

The classic concept of community is a story about the loss of community due to the processes of modernization. The best-known version of this is the ideal type Tönnies defined as Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (usually translated as community and society). The Gemeinschaft community is modeled on the historic village or small town which has inclusive social ties among members based on holistic views of individuals and families, sentiment, traditionalism, and stable or persistent social rankings that have developed over a long time. Trust and familiarity with others and viewing people as total persons who are significant in their own right provide a basis for core relationships in the community.

In contrast, Gesellschaft gets expressed in the urban or industrial city where people are interpersonally alienated, but they are linked to their community by their roles and their mechanistic contribution to the working of the whole society. Rational will and legal contracts replace more sentimental bases for relationships, and status is not fixed but is fluid based on achievements and role in the community. In developing the ideal type of Gesellschaft, Tönnies emphasized alienation and absence of the strong social ties among people, criticisms more fully developed by Chicago sociologist Louis Wirth (1938) in his seminal paper, "Urbanism as a Way of Life" Tönnies (2002, p. 234) summarizes his typology:

> The whole movement, from its primary to its subsequent manifestations, can also be conceived as a transition from an original, simple, family communism and village-town individualism based thereon, to an independent, universal, urban individualism and, determined thereby, a socialism of state and international type.

Family background and one's ascribed status are important in Gemeinschaft community, but in Gesellschaft, members are freed of their family history and traditional community

values, and they are valued for their competitive market achievements and rational works. Robert Nisbet (1966) points out how this definition of community transformation due to industrialization has become a core unit-idea in sociology.

For Tönnies, the ideal type transformation from community to society takes place as people move from tight-knit towns to impersonal large urban cities lacking community. The potential of non-place community seems not to have figured into Tönnies' theory. Tönnies (2001, p. 52) says that, "The theory of Gesellschaft takes as its starting point a group of people who, as in Gemeinschaft, live peacefully alongside one another…" He also says that in urban areas some people have strong Gemeinschaft "left over from still lingering earlier conditions" (Tönnies 2001, p. 52). However, he offers no additional insights into the potential for strong personal social ties occurring in non-place environments that are not based on traditional village social ties.

Parallel to the classic discussion of community, theories about the rural-urban continuum stress similar themes. Urban areas are modern while rural are not. There is ongoing debate about the validity of the rural urban continuum, but it persists because, like the ideal types Tönnies describes, it provides a model that articulates some rural characteristics. However, it also suggests that rural communities are on a single track toward modernization and with time they will develop to be more urban-like small places. Others see the influence of urban modernity in rural communities coexisting as was pointed out by Vidich and Bensman (1958) in their Small Town in Mass Society research. In reformulating this concept in rapid-growth rural areas as bifurcation where advanced industrial patterns overlay the traditional small-town community but do not transform it. Community studies focusing on rural tend to be very place-oriented (Bradshaw, 1993).

Suburban communities have emerged as an attempt by residents to capture a bit of rural even while the urban remains dominant. The names of many typical suburban housing developments (e.g., Willowbrook, The Meadows) tend to emphasize this rural character, but wide streets, traffic congestion, and proximity to large shopping malls characteristic of suburbia today counter the rurality that is being sought. Salamon (2005) is the most recent in a series of studies that document how suburbanization undermines traditional community.

Non-place Communities

Against this dominant perspective which equates community with place, scholars find increasing evidence that the concept of community is no longer useful unless it disentangles place and the institutions of place from the social relations that constitute community. In one form or another, those giving attention to non-place community argue that the process of modernization that produced Gesellschaft (typified by the industrial city) has continued (most significantly through cheap and rapid travel and communications) to create globally linked people with non-alienating social relations who happen to occasionally live in a place that is void of a significant amount of the social relations we think of as community. The industrial city is being displaced by global cities and mega-regions tied together not by the flow of materials and factories that characterized industrialization, but by freeways, airports, cell towers, and Internet backbones. The global city (Sasson, 2002) makes it possible for most business transactions and social relations to be uncoupled from place since people are not hampered by the need to live close to others in order to have meaningful relations—they come together in the city for meetings to make deals, but do not live there.

Some of the evidence that is frequently mobilized to describe these non-place global communities shows that social relations associated with community work just as well across geographic boundaries as they do within. For example, Mel Webber in his description of community without propinquity illustrates his idea with a biological scientist who is part of a global community where he exchanges his most important social relations among people

across several continents, but he does not necessarily have community with his residential neighbors. Communities of interest or virtual communities based on intense relations developed via the Internet (Rheingold, 1994) continue to be an example of the potential for important social experiences to be conducted without even face-to-face contact. Work situations that are transcontinental are illustrated by people who have houses both in Silicon Valley and Taiwan (Chang, 2006). In a community without propinquity, social control, values, status, and rewards are not tied to the reciprocal relations between people in a place, but to a network of people who mostly live outside the place.

Suburbs are often considered the fullest expression of Gesellschaft with high impersonal alienation and minimal involvement of people in things that matter to place—neighborliness, participation, common goals, and identity. However, it could be that although suburban communities are conducive to widespread social alienation between their residents, community there is taking a new form characterized by social relations liberated of place, and in these post-place communities the essence of community is the solidarity and social control that resides in overlapping virtual networks transcending time and place. Of course, even if the people in suburbs are not as isolated as Tonniës' Gesellschaft typology suggests, something is lost in places that are not also communities, especially collective action and bonding social capital. Ironically, many individuals having post-place community ties are far more networked than traditional residents of small towns. The local vacuum is not so much a lack of community as a lack of civic interaction.

A number of authors have tried to articulate the way contemporary communities differ from the ideal type Gesellschaft community. For instance, Bell's (1973) theme of the "post-industrial society" and Toffler's Third Wave are illustrations. Edge cities as defined by Garreau (1991) show how traditional metropolitan regions get redefined when suburbs become employment centers. A review (not attempted here) of this large literature would agree with most of these definitional characteristics. What is key is that the processes of modernization that created community change and Gesellschaft are continuing in new forms. We can conceptualize this shift in thinking as seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

Dimension of community	Gemeinshaft	Gesellschaft	Post-Place Communities
		Issues of Place	
Geography	Rural and small town	Urban neighborhoods	Virtual and global
Participation	One community	Larger community	Many communities
Stability/ change	Stable	Transitional	Fluid/dynamic transformative
		Issues of Social Relations	
Bonding/bridging social capital	Strong ties/bonding social capital	Mixture of strong and weak ties	Weak ties/bridging social capital
Community structure	Individual/family	Group	Network
Interaction	Face to face; propinquity	Usually face to face supported by mail and phone	Largely electronic with occasional face to face; propinquity not necessary
Identity	Residence/place	Residence and work	Relationships in networks

Lyon (1999) catalogues different variations of "post-Gesellschaft" thinking by different authors that capture some of the major differences and the explanations for them. He presents a chart that shows the transition from Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to what he calls "post-Gesellschaft." The chart summarizes change from community based on family and small town as the locus of most social interaction to social networks, the economic transition from agriculture to factories to an automated economy as a characteristic of post-Gesellschaft community, and he notes that it is also identified with electronic communications and interurban (rather than rural-urban) transportation links. However, I interpret these largely economic and technological changes as largely consistent with the social transformations that Tonniës theorized would create the contractual and impersonal social relations of Gesellschaft. In other words, the concept of community in the Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft tradition readily accommodates changes in economy, communications, transportation, and city form that are mentioned by Lyons and others. By themselves these trends continue the process of modernization and do not fundamentally constitute a new conceptual dimension to community.

What really is different about many of the examples of communities tied to the high-technology world that extends the old models is that these new forms of community are not anchored in place. Post-place or non-place communities have a large following in the common descriptive language such as when we discuss the "scientific community," the "Jewish community," the "gay community," or even the network of family that came from a traditional community and now live all over the world. In a highly mobile society where people are linked by interest rather than traditional hometowns, it no longer makes sense to tie community to place. These post-place communities need to be taken seriously not as an aberration of language but as a potential conceptual insight into the essence of relations that constitute community.

Toward a concept of post-place community

The problem with proposing to define what constitutes a useful concept of community is that it is elusive—George Hillary (1955) identified some 94 definitions of community in his seminal categorization in Rural Sociology and there are heated debates about definitions of community. The criterion for defining a concept like community is that it must be useful and distinguish things called community from other things that are not community. The reason for this effort is that place-based communities no longer encompass all the manifestations of community that we increasingly encounter when doing community development. What then is community?

Bhattacharyya (2004) identifies the essence of community as solidarity, which implies a common identity and set of shared norms and values. A common identify means that people need to be able to identify whether they are part of a community or not, that becoming (or remaining) a member of a community is a significant act, and that others recognize the claim to membership. Community is typically associated with a sense of belonging (Webber, 1964 p. 108). Community identity is not permanent or exclusive, and individuals may have varying degrees of identification with their community.

Secondly, community has shared norms and values or some of the attributes of culture. Community involves a network of friendship (Wellman, 1999) or at least weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) where Tönnies' rational will can exercise itself. Community is about social control around these norms, involving shared values and beliefs about some things that are important to the maintenance of the community. Shared tolerance for diversity is as important as shared commonalities. A large group of people at a community event do not constitute a community because, outside of civility and good manners, the group does not enforce values and norms. A large group of employees

or followers of a faith might participate in a similar event as a community because they are not strangers to each other and they share normative structures that shape involvement and behavior. A group of people that forms a community is stronger when that group of people shares multiple areas of interest and norms, rather than single ones. While people in a community do not need to like each other, they do need to be bonded in a common enterprise.

Kempers (2001, p. 8) summarizes a useful concept of community, describing it as the "sum total of how, why, when, under what conditions, and with what consequences people bond together." That is another way of saying the essence of community is solidarity. If bonding or solidarity are keys to community, it is clear that bonding can take place in any space. Propinquity was necessary for bonding when travel and communications were slow and costly, but today this has been opened to vast distances between groups of people sharing a common bond. Community is now separate from place.

Bonding is clearly reciprocal and networked. Many studies of community look at the individual and their feeling of involvement and participation in a community, but few of these studies look at how the community reciprocates the feeling. A community is more than the sum of its parts, in the same way that social capital is a generalized characteristic of a group of people (usually a community) that changes the group as people become more trusting and reciprocal with each other. When most individuals trust each other (there is a lot of social capital), it changes the dynamics of a group, because an individual can assume that their community participation will be reciprocated; but in groups with low social capital, feelings of distrust and suspicion lead to corruption or conflict. Bridging and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000) are valuable extensions of this concept, showing how these similar processes can both focus on internal links to a group or place, or link the group or place externally.

Multiple communities in virtual time-space

People participate in multiple communities. While a person usually belongs to only one residentially based place-community at a time, one can easily belong to many regional and international post-place communities. For example, people can be active in their neighborhood community, but also be a fully involved member of regional communities trying to protect a wildland, or statewide communities of alumni from one's college, or national/international communities based on profession or special interests such as a particular musical style or artist (e.g., Dead Heads).

The virtual communities of the Internet provide a fascinating case study of an extreme non-place community. From early stories of the first Internet community in California—the Well (Rheingold, 1994)—people became very intense participants in sharing and responding to crisis and success, even developing romantic relationships with a group of people who had never met face-to-face.

Webber conceptualized community without propinquity schematically as a set of local places, laid out along a horizontal axis representing where people find community. Many people are involved in only their local community which is represented by dots or short dashes as a first horizontal line. Other people have community at a regional scale represented by longer dashes on another horizontal line lying above the first. Gradually some people have state interests which are longer, or national interests which span most of the graphic, or international interests which become a solid line across the whole spectrum of local interests. People may participate at more than one level at a time and they do not have to be involved in all the local places as they move in global circles. What this illustrates is that any place may be influenced by people having contacts at a local or global scale, and individuals at the global scale also participate at the local.

Evidence of involvement in multiple communities is well documented. For example, immigration studies have shown that migrants participate in multiple communities --both in the community where they now live as well as in the community they left, often sending large remittances and participating in hometown associations in the US that are linked to community activities in Mexico. The transnational experience is one of community involvement in several places and, according to Smith and Guarnizo (1997), involves participating in organizations explicitly designed to recruit immigrants and keep them linked to their sending community.

A fascinating version of living in multiple communities is the trans-Pacific commuters studied by Chang (2006). Executives and electronic engineers from Taiwan and Silicon Valley are able to live in both places by re-creating nearly identical house forms, landscape types, and even shopping centers where they move between continents with unbelievable frequency. Within this community, which continuously bounces back and forth across thousands of miles of ocean and vastly different ethnic cultures, a transnational identity which is formed in which one's cultural memories, norms, and social relationships might be:

> changed, rearranged, reformed, or completely transformed in interaction with the one other or many other cultures that these commuters experience in their "go-between lives." (Chang, 2006 p.168)

In Taiwan, for example, suburbs for high-technology commuters have been built with Silicon Valley-style shopping centers and stores, all with blatant symbolic copies of what they value. In California, the commuters seek suburban homes where they have easy access to shopping centers where they can get Chinese food, novels, and services. Describing the commuters, one says:

> Inevitably, their residential experiences from the two places blend together. They enjoy their Hsinchu Science Park homes because, when they are there, they feel as if they are in their suburban American homes. They apply their specific Taiwanese habits when running daily errands at the Ranch 99 market in Silicon Valley. Moreover they encounter the same friends at both locations, while their individual family lives remain separate on the two sides of the Pacific.

This case is so interesting because it is clear that these trans-pacific commuters share a common culture, but place has become irrelevant as interpersonal relations, status, and symbol get transplanted, adapted and reshaped, separated by 12-hour flights. This is not alienating cultural homogenization, but it is community-building at a global scale.

Survey data show strength of post-place communities

To get a sense of the strength of post-place communities, data was obtained from the University of Chicago General Social Survey by National Opinion Research Center. These data from national surveys have been collected since the 1970s and include some relevant questions that provide background to the discussion of the social foundations of community. While these data do not fully amplify the questions we address in this paper, they provide useful data to frame the issue and support the solid examples from experience and literature.

Figure 1 shows clearly that people are socializing over a broader geographical area. In this figure, the data show the proportion of people who spend social evenings with people in their neighborhood daily or weekly, up to several times a month over time. The same question was asked at different periods of time, and the data show that neighborhood visits are declining while those outside the neighborhood are increasing.

Figure 1. Spend a social evening with someone in neighborhood and elsewhere, daily or weekly, by date of survey

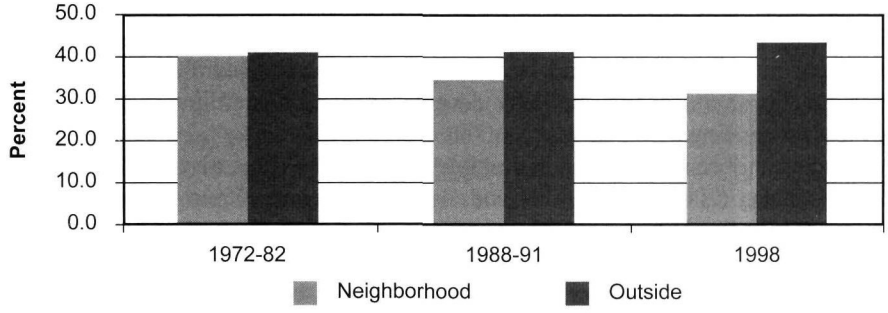
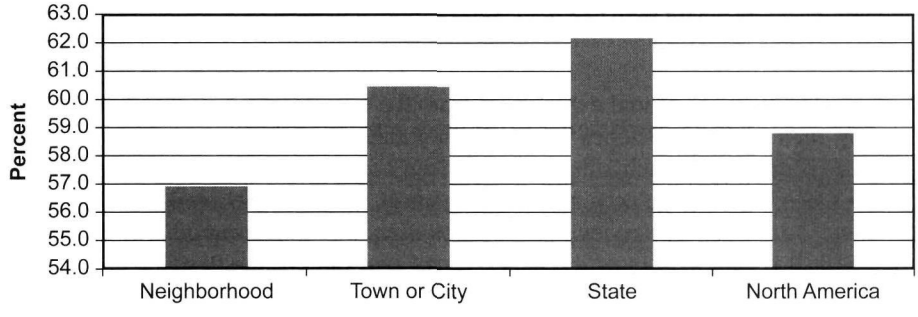


Figure 2 shows that people have a weaker sense of place through their neighborhood while they feel stronger toward their city and state. This question asked how close they feel to their neighborhood and more distant places. Interestingly, over 40 percent of the respondents indicated that they were not close to their neighborhood but showed greater closeness as they broadened the scale of placeness. (data from 1996 survey, 1537 respondents)

Figure 2. How close do you feel to places



Respondents to the general social survey for the most part are fairly long-term residents, as shown by Figure 3. While there is some mobility of people in the first few years, the majority of US residents are fairly stable and have lived in their communities for ten or more years.

Figure 3. How long have you lived in your community (In years) (1996 data)

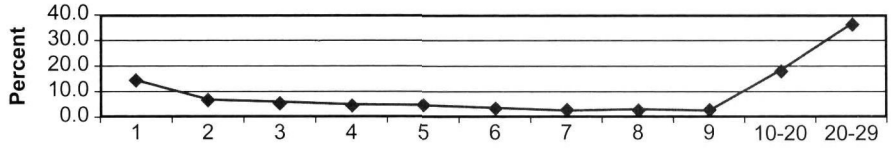
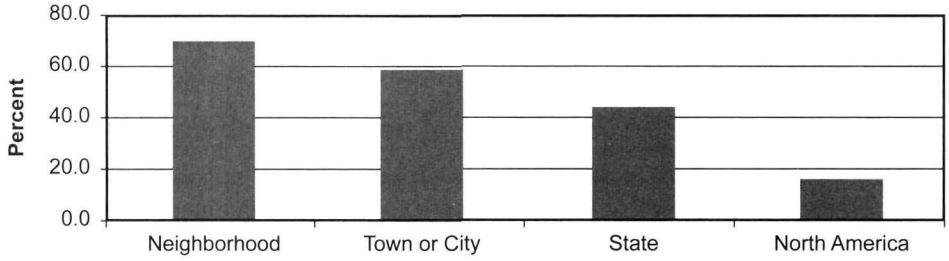


Figure 4 finally shows that a majority of people would be glad to move to improve their work or living conditions, but most want to stay where they are, presumably because they have social networks and have build work opportunities that would be difficult to transplant. However, were 45 percent still were willing to move outside their state.

Figure 4. Would you be willing to move to another place in order to improve your work or living condition



In sum, the data show that people are well rooted in their place, do not want to leave it, and are generally happy, but that they feel increasingly close to people who are not in that place. Place is useful for people because it solves their housing needs, but people look at greater and greater distances for the social closeness that is the core of the post-place community.

The social foundations of community

The essence of community based on the examples given above is not local Gemeinschaft, but is in the wider networks of friendship extending beyond neighborhood. It is useful therefore to separate place as a geographical concept from community as the basis for social networks in which solidarity or bonding are characteristic. In post-place communities, people find that a growing proportion of their social relations of solidarity involve them in a network stretching outside their place of residence.

A key way to understand the social relations in community is through network analysis. Networks track acquaintance as well as types and intensity of relationships. Granovetter (1973) gave emphasis to the importance of weak ties in these networks and one could argue that there has been a steady growth in weak ties spread over a larger area as communication and transportation have increased. The notion of a network is that not all people are connected to all others, but the connections are at a high density with multiple and varied connections, or the network may be uniform and relatively sparse.

A key feature of the solidarity-based community as opposed to the place-based community is that community becomes a concept that is variable rather than either-or. If we define community on the basis of physical boundaries, then a resident is either in or out. If we define community in terms of social ties characteristic of solidarity, then it can scale from low to high. The question is not if you are in a community but how much community you have (Brown, et al., 2000). Consequently, from a community development perspective, community solidarity (identity and norms) can be nurtured, protected, and increased. Community identity and norms can be built around place and place can be built around a common gathering place for people who share common identities and norms, but this relationship is variable and researchable, not assumed.

Community solidarity may not directly lead people to act collaboratively or to even congregate as a whole. In traditional communities, people feel compelled to do many collective things such as attend parades and help at barn raisings because of their involvement in place. However, these community actions diminished with modernization leading to concerns of alienation and isolation. In the non-place community, solidarity is less often demonstrated collectively through attendance at something and more in communication or virtual celebrations. Sharing pictures of one's grandchildren over the Internet may be replacing a baby shower. Another example might be the communication leading up to a dog breeders convention when one of the members has a particularly

exceptional litter. Tenure or becoming a member of the Academy of Sciences generates academic communications expressing solidarity through the Internet nearly as warmly as a celebration at the faculty club. In short, our traditional measures of community have a hard time reflecting the bonding of a post-place community even though these social bonds are just as strong.

Place matters: The conundrum of post-place communities

The previous sections have made a case for taking post-place communities seriously and for arguing that propinquity is not necessary for the formation and sustenance of communities not linked to residential area. However, one should not overstate the case. There is overwhelming evidence that propinquity counts perhaps especially in those cases where the greatest post-place networking occurs—high technology clusters such as Silicon Valley. There organizations such as Joint Venture Silicon Valley are powerful examples of social action to increase the public good through the creation of public spaces and programs that protect the commons. Collective action in communities transforms them from alienating to attractive places to live. Indeed, Richard Florida's (2004) Creative Class includes people who congregate in certain creative areas because it provides a hospitable place to base their international interests. Creative cities and regions are the motors for change, and they stand out as the economic engines with new technologies and firms.

Similarly, research in economic development has stressed the importance of industrial clusters for regional growth and well-being (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002; Bradshaw, King & Wahlstrom 1999). Geographically based clusters of concentrated and competitive firms that are interdependent with specialized suppliers and infrastructure show strong growth and employment. For example, the firms in Silicon Valley benefit from the competition and sharing that takes place due to the proximity of related firms, as well as the direct ease of working with specialized suppliers and specialized infrastructure including universities that supply the technology supported by a density of venture capitalists, product lawyers, and marketing programs. The cluster idea suggests that place-community matters.

So the conundrum of the post-place community is that at the same time community is more frequently defined in terms of non-place orientation, place may have huge advantages because of the collective action that gives it a reputation. In these places, people are part of expansive international, networks yet they also need a place to be centrally located where certain transactions can take place or where they will have the highest chance of reducing some transaction costs because of propinquity. It will be argued that these special places are not equivalent to historic small-town communities, but exist because of the post-place community of which they are a node.

Network concepts and complexity theory can help us resolve this conceptual problem. If we think of a community as a densely connected (but potentially widely dispersed) network of people organized around shared identities, norms, and bonding, then we know that these networks tend to generate nodes such as Silicon Valley. Or to use complexity theory, networks self-organize into moderately sized clusters. If the concentrations get too large, then the system tends to stagnate, and if it is too diffuse it tends to fall apart. Silicon Valley and creative cities are nodes in the post-place world where relations tend to organize but remain fluid as the rest of the network comes to the nodes from time to time to bring in new resources and ideas, and to take away new opportunities.

The key issue in terms of community is that the creative people or leaders in the electronics industry occupy a non-place network that is a prototype post-place community. In the electronics industry case it includes firms in Singapore, factories in Ireland, software developers in India, and marketing offices in Europe. The electronics industry probably better than any other is known for its networked and non-place capacity to be effective. Many people in the industry

live and work outside of Silicon Valley and they move frequently around the world as part of a community of engineers and specialists who constitute a global community. However, Silicon Valley is the most important hub in a far-flung network. The community really is not local, but the Valley is important because it is such an important hub.

Conclusion

Douglas Henton and his colleagues (1997) have championed an idea of the civic entrepreneur. The civic entrepreneur is a bridge maker in the way we have been discussing it. The role of the civic entrepreneur is to connect the resources and capacities of economic systems and the various competencies in the community that support community and economic values, and to help them act to improve the community quality of life. The civic entrepreneur is engaged at a regional level to make place, not by defining the place in a geographically limited way, but to make the place the must-visit part of the node of very interconnected individuals who can make a difference.

Community developers as civic entrepreneurs work effectively in a post-place environment. Their main function is brokering and networking to link those whose community links extend no further than their neighborhood with others who work on a national and regional scale. Finding commonality and creating the context for identity around whatever scale makes sense for the common good remains a high priority for the maintenance of community.

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