

Shift Happens: Fostering Third Places in a Transient College Town Through Communicative Strategies.

Ilyssa Mann and Myiah Hutchens
University of Florida



IlyssaMann114@gmail.com

Introduction

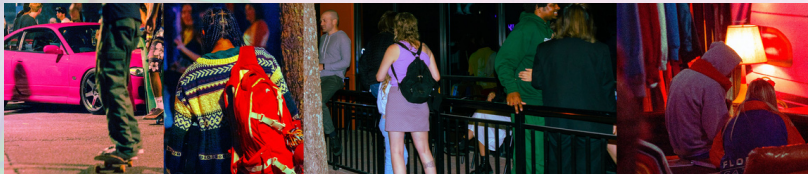
- This paper focuses on the communicative factors in fostering community, specifically in a transient college town.
- It examines the role of journalism, local media, and social values in fostering a sense of community for short-term and stable residents.

Research Questions

- How does strategic communication foster community ties?
- How does the local media influence the creation of a community?
- How does a transient college town affect residents' and students' ability to connect with the local community?

Factors Examined

- Individual: race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, and social values.
- Length of Residence: temporary or permanent.
- Communicative: local media, social media, and news consumption.
- Location: neighborhood and urban design.



Method

- Focus groups occurred in a local self-identified third place, How Bazar.
- How Bazar aided in recruiting focus group members by sharing graphics on their Instagram account's story with its audience of over 13,000 followers.
- The recruitment efforts split the focus groups into groups of temporary and permanent city residents.



Participants	Residents	Students
Number of Participants	7	6
Average Age	35-42	18-26
Average Length of Residence	7.8 years	2.4 years

Results

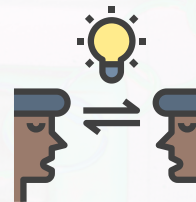
Individual

- "It is important to start teaching people within the community the tools to understand people with different values and still respect them, rather than feeling threatened and it leading to disconnect."
-Resident P2



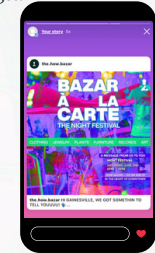
Length of Residence

- "Florence or Venice had that [constant flow of ideas] during the Italian Renaissance. It was a place where people came to learn and pass on new ideas from where they came. Gainesville is a place like that. We have the ingredients to be that hub of community and community-driven ideas."
-Resident P1



Communicative

- "Word of mouth is the best promotion these businesses and organizations can get."
-Student P4



Location

- "It can be tough to do the concept of third places in a city like Gainesville, which is sort of separated."
-Resident P4



Conclusion

- Community conversations held at a third place offer insights into how participants connect with, prioritize, and suggest improvements for community communication.
- Future Directions:
- The research highlighted social media as modern-day local media, focusing on an area that community engagement research has yet to address.
- Future research should extend its scope beyond midsize cities to include other transitory areas, such as large cities or areas with military bases, to provide a more comprehensive understanding and build upon the groundwork laid by this study.

Acknowledgment

Special thanks to How Bazar, specifically Laila Fakhoury, for hosting and facilitating the community conversations. The organization's commitment to the local Gainesville community and its arts and culture scene is invaluable, serving as a source of connection for so many people.



Full Paper QR Code