Hunter, Albert. „Contemporary Conceptions of Community“ in Cnaan, Ram A.; Milofsky, Carl (eds.): Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations. Boston, MA: Springer. 2008, pp. 20 – 33.

first sentence: Albert Hunter: the quest for comm is a continuing concern in social life

how does the community deal with threats, strangers, changes(e.g. earlier rural citizens coming to city, now Erasmus students)

basically, this chapter provides a sociological and anthropol.overview of how a community evolves throughout time - in urban space

...how do people live together

what do people do when they live together?

how do these people value their community

which exchanges occur?

the **community** in Hunter’s approach is: a local and context-dependent unit of analysis

it is in a way a gross constituent unit of a larger structure

* a community and its surrounding communities mutually inlfuence one and another
* a community is a type of social organization (like a class of student, a family, or colleagues at a job, but then mostly a bit bigger)
* within communities, people have shared beliefs, values or morals. often, members share a common language, but this is not always the case, while communities can share multiple languages (also think about common gestures, signs and signals).
* some communities share demographic characteristics, for example mostly consisting of elder people, with lets say an age between 60-80. this also has implications for the group's dynamics.

there are many varying **factors** creating **contradictions** or **similarities** between members of groups- or even groups **within** communities. in other words, a community is a **variable**. in fact, especially urban communities are a variable.

thus, attempting to reach one general formulation of a community will be a

**zero-one judgment or determination: Albert Hunter**

**and** leads to emperical generalization

better to look at the *degree of communityness*

cue you to were this part of the presentation is going: the question whether shared identity and culture in urban communities is alive or not, and what kind of live it had lived.

so Albert Hunter takes as through a kind of time-travel of paradigm shifts within the variable of urban communities

(community **lost**, community **found**, community **liberated**, community **mislaid**, the **silenced** of the community, community **limited**, BUT THEN BECOME SUCCESSFUL again the social construction community, (A Note on the **Vertical** **Dimension** ofConstructed Communities), From Community Organization to **Community** **Organizing**, The **Crafting** of **Community**, **Ideological** **Communities**: Merging Utopian Communities and Ideological Social Movements. CONCLUS

*3 dimensions*

**ecological dimension ‘physical realities of space an time’**

* th includes
* geographical location, local resources, shared physical fate (natural disasters, weather conditions, e.g. Australian communities BBQ culture)
* e.g. pandemic crisis as time, changes dimensions of the community
* spatiality and specialness of location makes the difference
* time can **also** be taken into account, generally, moreover specifically to an individual level of community members, where newness versus nativeness (erasmus cities,fact that we are erasmus here, native work even harder to emphasize localness, leading to strong pronunciation of cultural identity, dynamically vs. become increasing signs of metropolitanism)

**social structural dimension**

**divided into** 2 levels

→ interpersonal networks

 fot the … you can think about the fact that the social ties within a network can differ in number, in nature (open/closed), in density and complexity

→ institutional density

 how many local shops, churches, schools, bakeries, banks does the community share? how big are they, do they employ a lot of people?

 how are local changemakers influencing the space? so which role do different political spokesmen and decisionmakers have? and here we can maybe think about the real estate business.

**the last dimension in Hunters approach to communityness is cultural symbolic dimension**

this is linked to symbolic interactionism

he distinguishes two aspects:

* identity
* culture

identity is the individual, but identity is questioned in collectivity, in the culture of a community. the culture aspect *within the cultural symbolic dimension*  is shaped by co-creation, in other words, a product madeover history of time with the input of various elements by various actors. those various actors have various identities again.

→ I believe that the two aspects are inevitably connected, Hunter would not have to bother to distinguish the both.

more contemporary conceptions of community

Albert Hunter refers to Barry Wellman’s “The Community Question” of 1979 and his own “The Persistence of Local Sentiments in Mass Society” (1978). The titles in themselves already

LOST:

* 30/40’s
* related to **Chicago** School of ‘social disorganization’ & Urbanism as a Way of life by Louis **Wirth** (1938), who argued that urbanism resulted in increasing **complexity**/institutional **differentiation**/increasing **specialization**/divisions of labor, alienation
* in general, important overarching element of LOST COMMUNITY is the **loss** of social **control**: **disorganization** and the first signs of social **polarization**
* you can imagine how early urban settlements that **developed** into metropolitan areas underwent a **significant** **change**, and the impact of that might be positive for einzelgangers, or might stay covert to people, but I believe especially for elder people living in such communities it must be weird to recognize the constant flux of the city, but in a negative/chaotic way

FOUND:

* 50’s, 60’s : as researchers performed case studies on primary social ties in urban communities, they **optimistically** found that the ***loss*** of sociol control in society of the 30/40 resulted in **new**, **dynamic** and creative ways of maintaining relationships and actively participation in urban context: many articles were written about social participation specific **corners** of the suburbian streets
* Arts institutions (second dimension of Hunter) that invite people in Public space. these days, music played a prominent role in the promotion of subcultural exchanges. Detroit: motown label for example played the music on corners of the street, if people danced, they would release the song. it was the time of radio, white-middle class adolescants started listening to black music, new media and art forms helped introducing new trends into mainstream life.
* the important characteristic of urban communities in the 50/ early 60 was the *subcultural* *density*. subcultures in urban communities are like **patchworks** that **counterbalance** negative effects of **disorganization**

LIBERATED:

* in the 70’s with invention of cell phones and the internet : compression of time and space, less time to cover longer distances, higher quantity of **intercultural** **exchanges**
* and a liberation of the **historical** **constraints** of space, this means, freeing the people of having to share the means of one community only
* but in some way, this can also be seen as non-liberating. own habitat without stimulus from increasing complexity of globalism (wirth) Hunter might have been a discover-junkie, for him the notion of liberation is promising, but not for everyone.
* as advancements in **infrastructure**/**technology** are **unequally** divided, both on macro scale as micro scale, the liberation of communities is no global phenomenon
* *we have to remember also that telephone communication does not fully replace face-to-face or oral transmission*

MISLAID:

theoretical shifts in thinking and methodological changes in the way that disciplines are researching a community

* researchers documenting the personal ‘sense of community’ persist, but in a way the **survey** methodology can be misleading.
* a community is not just a group of like-minded people, but also a network of institutions, network of roads, and more. Remember that Hunter states in the beginning it is a variable, so it can not be approached only with this **straight-forward** method.
* studies started to be focussed on **collective** actors, **organizations** and **institutions** as a whole with community **case** studies, and because of this, also the institutions and infrastructure of a community itself (as physical elements) were more important as means to improve the sense of collectivity among community members

SILENCED:

* after a period of methodological **misconceptions**, the idea of community gets overthrown by amongst others, professor **Schmallenbach** in 1961.
* Schmallenbach identifies the consciousness of communities as **communalism**. For him, theoretically analyzing communities leads to an **artificial** and discursively **organized** **construction** of those communities. In a way, he argues that labelling a community is senseless and makes urban communities too **nostalgic** or **hysterical**

LIMITEd

* then chain of articles that focussed on “community of **limited** **liability**”
* **Janowitz** first developed the idea to reflect the **varying** and **partial** commitment to local communities by residents in **their** social life space. noting that the local community is **but** one component of collective life **alongside** more **intimate** associations of family and friends and more **distant** linkages to occupations, formal organizations, **and** locally transcendent institutions of numerous kinds
* This paradigm in approaching community is based on the rational idea that not all individuals invest energy, time, money and effort in local communities.
* every individuals time/agenda is managed according to varying needs/responsibilities.
* researchers partially limited the notion of sustainability of a tight community, but this immediately led to a counterforce of researchers that came up with the term
* **the social construction of community**

Rise of the Phoenix

* with the ideas of **symbolic interactionism and ‘definition of the situation’,** arose the insight that a community is to be shaped by everyday interactions of participants
* members of the community make meaning **inside** and **outside** the community, so they are active agents within the continuing co-creation processes.
* Hunter’s ‘Symbolic Communities’ of 1974 proves that higher social class pay more attention to evaluations of local areas and investigate more resources to obtain desired outcomes of the community.
* merging together the theoretical products of the Chicago School and symbolic interactionism, mixed with time-space relatively, we arrive at a stage of what some call
* **symbolic ecology of community**

now, this symbolic ecology of community, with high attention to human agency, has to be nuanced by bringing the notion of ‘**vertical dimensions of community’** ,

local communities are namely **penetrated** by larger units of a social structure and dependent of institutions

From COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION to COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

* put simple, this boils down to: the way that things are, the way that things are done
* especially because local communities are penetrated by larger structures, community organizing is a political strategy to satisfy particular needs of local residents
* it was more of a **socialist** approach, with **belief** in **collective** power to make a change (provided the right **resources**)
* still, national corporations that also have a say in needs of specific geographical locations
* tool to solve specific social problems

CRAFTING

* instead of solely **organizing** the community, more specifically, **Stinchcombe** argues that communities are busy with **tailoring** of needs, rather than showing a mass-production process, it is variable to the communities 3D portrait
* this theory implies that members are craftman: they have a **skilled** input for the identification of the product, because they have been ‘learning by doing’ with an hands on approach
* *for example, the urban organisation TIMELAB in Ghent, Belgium…*
* *identification of inhabitants, their needs, in communication. people with resources take into account the vision of those who do not have the resources (migrant families) . stimulating social inclusion, readings and discussions, free soup for the neighbors on wednesdays, empowering the social economy. fashioning them in a unique pro*duct
* like Hunter says: the community then becomes **both** **utilitarian** and **beautiful**, with a beauty that reflects the value and tasted of the local culture and in which collective and personal identities are **fused**

as this occurs

* **utopian** communities merge (being a **manifestation** of **desire**) and varying success and failures are found.
* these failures and successes are developments in social **urbanism**, they are **experimental** in a way and they **carry** society to a new level.
* a given community might **realize** a specific **need** and **change** the ideology in another dimension, but while all communities are now vertically and even globally interconnected, such developments become **movements** at large.
* now we can ask ourselves if a community is an end or a means? can we all change the modern world at large, can communities still be tailored, and yes, in which ways?
* *could it be possible to arrive at a point of return where disorganization and loss of social control happening end 40’s is to be restored?*

conclusion

* urban communities seen in a holistic way
* Albert Hunter proposes urban sociologists to consider a balanced view of the intertwined complexities
* communities are inevitable bound up with natural physical factors, a time specific reality and shared human fates.

***Recommended literature:***

*Harvey, David. „The Creation of the Urban Commons“ in Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution. New York, London: Verso. 2012, pp. 67 – 88.*

*Bell, Colin; Newby, Howard. „Theories of Community“ in Community Studies: An Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community. New York: Praeger. 1972, pp. 21 – 53.*

*Hunter, Albert. „Contemporary Conceptions of Community“ in Cnaan, Ram A.; Milofsky, Carl (eds.): Handbook of Community Movements and Local Organizations. Boston, MA: Springer. 2008, pp. 20 – 33.*