

COMMUNITY CHANGE

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Community Change*.

Community Change is an online, peer-reviewed journal that explores multiple approaches to democratic development and change. We have conceived of *Community Change* as an interdisciplinary space in which graduate students and emerging scholars from multiple academic backgrounds and approaches can explore ideas related to theoretical conceptions of “community change” - its strengths and aporia - as well as practices and projects orientated around impacting communities.

In our inaugural issue’s call for papers, the editors sought works which explore notions of community change in light of complexities, transformations, and challenges in recent decades of intensified economic, environmental, and political instabilities. Titled “*Community Change Revisited*,” the articles in the first issue critically interrogate various community building initiatives. These works aim to locate where change is (or is not) happening, why, and in what ways. The authors and articles explore a range of conceptions, issues, and locations relating to community change including transportation, hunger, and health.

Opening the issue, Lyusyena Kirakosyan takes a conceptual look at the idea of community. She situates empirical analysis of contrasting conceptions of community change through individual and collective stories among speakers at Virginia Tech Institute for Policy and Governance Community Voices initiative with theoretical framing of “social imaginary” drawing on Charles Taylor and Paul Ricoeur.

Edgar M. Hollandsworth explores organizational complexity with a case study of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority’s Metrorail system. Hollandsworth considers interactions between federal, state, and local agencies and ways in which this vital public service might be more effectively delivered.

Taking a social cognitive approach, Lisa Juckett delves into the issue of hunger among senior citizens in the United States. Juckett reviews community-based government nutrition programs with the intention to uncover ways to enhance self-efficacy of food insecure communities, hence, foster healthy community change.

Moving to a case from Entonet, Kenya, Joseph Ayers-Johnson et al. considers “The Exchange Project” as an experiment for enhancing communities’ internal capacity for change through physical design. Situating this project in theories of Public Interest Design and Social, Economic, and Environmental Design, the author investigates a range of changes in Entonet from building social structures for a productive dialogue to design interventions with physical space.

Putu D. Aprilliani reviews the recently published book: “*No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age 1st Edition*” by Jane F. McAlevay. *No*

Shortcuts explores developments in labor organizing, comparing and contrasting “traditional” models typified by the Congress of Industrial Organizations with more recent approaches. Aprilliani argues this work is well placed to build understandings for organizers to move away from shallow advocacy and return to “deep” forms of organizing.

Last but not least is a short themed section that draws upon an interview with Ethan Kent, Senior VP of Project for Public Spaces, titled Transforming Your City with Place-Making. This interview was conducted as part of Virginia Tech’s Community Voices Fall Seminar Series. A follow-up reflective piece, co-authored by Vanessa Guerra M and Vera Smirnova, views placemaking through a lens of critical urban geography and situates creative urban design in the context of production of space in the time of neoliberal capitalism.

The authors in this issue bring to light themes of participation, complexity, and agency that emerge in projects of community development, engagement, and transformation. We hope that these pieces make contributions to scholarship on varied approaches to community change. Future issues will continue to examine, critique, and expand theories, projects, and practices of community change.

Thank you,
Vera Smirnova and Jared Keyel
Community Change Editors-in-Chief