



## **SOCIAL NETWORK FORMATION THROUGH SHARED INTEREST COMMUNITIES IN URBAN AREAS**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the role of hobby-based communities in forming social networks within urban society through a qualitative literature review. The analysis reveals that these communities function as significant spaces for social bond formation through mechanisms of interest-based meeting, sustained interaction in shared activities, development of rituals and traditions, and provision of various forms of social support. Hobby-based communities are characterized by voluntary membership, focus on enjoyable activities, relatively flat structures, and capacity to accommodate varying levels of participation. Successful bond formation is influenced by informal leadership, interaction frequency, ability to manage diversity, and balanced use of technology. These communities contribute to identity development, interpersonal skills, mental health, and broader social capital. Sustainability requires attention to leadership regeneration, activity innovation, and resistance to excessive commercialization. The phenomenon demonstrates that amidst the decline of traditional social networks, urban populations discover new pathways to fulfill fundamental needs for connection. The study contributes to understanding how interest-based affiliations serve as alternative social structures in contemporary urban settings.

**Keywords:** hobby-based communities, social networks, urban society, social bonds, community dynamics.

## Introduction

Changes in the social structure of urban communities have created conditions in which traditional social networks based on geographical proximity or kinship ties have weakened. High population mobility, vertical housing patterns, and economic busyness cause individuals to lose regular contact with neighbors and extended family members who previously served as the main sources of social support. In this situation, the need for connection with others does not disappear but instead seeks new forms that are more compatible with the rhythm of contemporary life. Groups formed based on shared interests or hobbies have emerged as alternatives capable of meeting this need. Various communities such as sports clubs, art groups, cultural enthusiast associations, or hobby-based motorcycle gangs have shown rapid growth in urban areas. They not only serve as spaces to channel personal interests but also develop into social arenas that provide emotional support, practical assistance, and a sense of belonging that was previously obtained from residential environments or family networks. This phenomenon is also consistent with findings that community participation in various civic movements and local communities can strengthen social cohesion amid urban dynamics (Rojak et al., 2021; Nurmalasari & Nuraini, 2021). This shift marks a significant transformation in how modern society builds and maintains social bonds amid limited time and space for conventional interactions (Leander et al., 2010).

Hobby-based communities have characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of social associations. Membership in these communities is voluntary and based on individual choice rather than obligation arising from blood relations or residential proximity (Gates, 2017). Shared interests serve as the initial foundation that brings together individuals who were previously strangers, providing a safe starting point for interaction. In these communities, socioeconomic status or educational background becomes less relevant compared to competence or enthusiasm for the shared hobby. A young executive can easily interact with a retiree or an informal worker in a photography club because they share a common language regarding photography techniques or equipment used. The relatively flat and egalitarian community structure enables the formation of more equal relationships compared to the hierarchical structures

commonly found in formal organizations or workplaces. This shows that local communities, both formal and informal, play an important role in building social balance and reducing disparities within urban societies (Mardikaningsih, 2021; Fauzi, 2021). The process of integration into the community also occurs gradually, beginning with participation as an observer, then becoming an active participant, and eventually becoming fully integrated into the community's social network (Munshi, 2014). These characteristics make hobby-based communities inclusive spaces for various layers of society.

The process of forming social bonds in hobby-based communities occurs through mechanisms that differ from general social interactions (Hackney, 2013). Shared activities conducted regularly create a high frequency of interaction, which is one of the key factors in building social relationships. When community members meet regularly to engage in activities they enjoy together, the time spent does not feel like a burdensome social obligation. The positive experiences obtained from shared activities create favorable associations between participation in the community and feelings of enjoyment. In such situations, social interactions occur naturally without pressure to create deep relationships. However, over time, the high frequency of interaction and intense shared experiences gradually produce stronger bonds. Conversations that initially revolve around hobby-related topics expand into discussions about personal life, work, and the problems individuals face. This condition aligns with observations that consistent and meaningful interaction within communities can help individuals overcome social isolation and build stable support networks (Aidan Bin Abdullah, 2021; Eddine & Darmawan, 2021). This process occurs organically without external intervention, distinguishing it from community development programs that often feel artificial. The naturalness of this process makes the bonds formed within hobby-based communities tend to be more authentic and long-lasting.

Hobby-based communities also function as spaces that provide various forms of social support needed by their members. Emotional support arises from the understanding that there are others who share similar interests and with whom experiences can be shared (Duprez et al., 2015). In a running community, for example, members encourage one

another when facing difficulties during training and celebrate achievements when successfully completing longer distances. Instrumental support or practical assistance also frequently occurs, such as when members of an automotive community help repair a fellow member's vehicle or when members of a cooking community exchange recipes and food ingredients. Informational support in the form of knowledge and skills related to the hobby also becomes a significant added value. New members gain learning opportunities from more experienced members, while long-time members continue to update their knowledge through interaction with fellow enthusiasts. The role of this social support not only improves individuals' quality of life but can also contribute to the preservation of local values and integration with modern practices within communities (Halizah & Nuraini, 2021). The function of communities as sources of social support becomes particularly important for individuals who live far from their families or who have limited social networks in their place of residence. In urban environments often criticized for individualism and social isolation, the presence of hobby-based communities provides a much-needed oasis of connection.

The dynamics within hobby-based communities show interesting patterns in terms of social inclusion and exclusion. On one hand, these communities open opportunities for individuals who were previously marginalized for various reasons to find spaces where they can be accepted. Someone who struggles to build relationships in the workplace or residential environment may find acceptance within a community based on their interests. Painting communities, for example, often become safe spaces for individuals with introverted personalities to express themselves and build relationships with others who share similar interests. On the other hand, hobby-based communities may also develop subtle boundaries that distinguish core members from peripheral members. Knowledge of the community's history, mastery of specific terminology, or participation in certain activities become markers of status within the community. This resembles other social phenomena in urban settings, where differences in access, experience, and knowledge shape dynamic social structures (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021). The process of becoming a fully accepted member requires time and commitment that not everyone can fulfill. However, unlike traditional social structures that tend to be rigid,

the boundaries within hobby-based communities are more fluid and can be crossed by individuals who demonstrate genuine interest and commitment. The ability to balance inclusivity while maintaining community identity becomes a unique challenge in managing these groups.

The main problem in understanding hobby-based communities as spaces for social network formation is the lack of a systematic understanding of the mechanisms through which shared interests are translated into meaningful social bonds. Existing literature tends to separate studies of hobby communities as cultural phenomena from studies of social networks as a sociological topic, without adequately connecting the two. As a result, the transformation process from a mere collection of people with shared interests into a community with strong social ties remains a black box that has not yet been fully mapped. Previous research emphasizes the importance of local communities in supporting social, environmental, and economic sustainability in urban areas (Nurmalasari & Nuraini, 2021; Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2021). Existing studies also tend to focus on specific communities such as music or sports enthusiasts, while the vast variation of hobby-based communities has not received balanced attention. Differences in characteristics between communities based on physical activities, creative activities, or consumptive activities may lead to different dynamics in the formation of social bonds (Warren & Gibson, 2011). In addition, the role of digital technology in facilitating or even transforming the essence of hobby-based communities has not been widely examined. Online platforms enable the formation of communities with broader reach but also have the potential to replace face-to-face interactions that form the foundation of strong social bonds (Majchrzak et al., 2013). This knowledge gap hinders efforts to utilize the potential of hobby-based communities as a solution to the degradation of social networks in urban societies.

Another issue relates to the sustainability and transformation of hobby-based communities when facing various internal and external pressures (Miller, 2018). Communities that grow organically often encounter challenges when membership increases and structures that were initially egalitarian begin to require formalization. Conflicts regarding the direction of the community, division of roles, or the use of shared

resources may disrupt the social cohesion that has already been established. A deeper understanding is needed of how communities can adapt to change without losing their original goals and identity (Fauzi, 2021; Aidan Bin Abdullah, 2021). Communities that successfully overcome the early growth phase can develop into more stable organizations; however, it is not uncommon for communities to experience fragmentation or lose their original essence. External pressures also influence community sustainability. Commercialization that introduces business interests into communities may shift their orientation from togetherness toward transactions. Cooptation by political interests or other institutions can also damage the autonomy that is the community's main attraction. The dynamic changes in public interest also cause certain types of hobbies to experience fluctuations in popularity that affect the sustainability of communities built around them. The ability of communities to adapt to change without losing their core identity becomes a determining factor in their sustainability. Understanding the factors that influence the sustainability of hobby-based communities remains limited, even though such information is important for optimizing their role in building social networks.

The weakening of social ties in recent decades has created new vulnerabilities in urban life. Individuals lose access to social support that was previously obtained from their residential environment or extended family. The absence of adequate social networks contributes to increasing mental health problems, loneliness, and a declining collective capacity to face various challenges (Thoits, 2011). The presence of hobby-based communities can serve as a means to strengthen citizen participation and build social capital that benefits urban society more broadly (Rojak et al., 2021; Halizah & Nuraini, 2021). In this situation, hobby-based communities demonstrate potential as promising alternatives for rebuilding strong social networks. However, this potential has not yet been optimally utilized due to the limited understanding of the mechanisms through which these communities operate. This research is important to fill this knowledge gap by providing a comprehensive analytical framework on how hobby-based communities function as spaces for the formation of social bonds. The contribution to the development of social sciences, particularly urban sociology and community studies, is a major

consideration. The results of this research are expected to provide a foundation for developing policies and programs that support the growth of hobby-based communities as urban social assets.

The research problem in this study is how hobby-based communities function as spaces for the formation of social bonds through mechanisms of interaction, the development of a sense of belonging, and the provision of social support within urban societies. This research aims to systematically describe the mechanisms of social bond formation in hobby-based communities, including the initial process of meeting based on shared interests, the development of sustained interaction through shared activities, and the transformation of relationships into social networks that provide various forms of support. This study will also explore factors influencing community sustainability as well as the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion occurring within them. Theoretically, this research enriches studies in urban sociology and community studies by providing an analytical framework for the formation of social bonds outside traditional structures. Its practical contribution is in the form of recommendations for policymakers and community organizers in supporting the development of alternative social spaces in urban environments.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature study design aimed at synthesizing knowledge about hobby-based communities as spaces for the formation of social networks. This approach was chosen because it allows a comprehensive exploration of various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings that are scattered across different academic disciplines. Baronov (2015) explains that social research using a qualitative approach requires a deep understanding of the conceptual foundations that form the basis of analysis. The procedures applied in this study refer to the principles of social research proposed by Crano, Brewer, and Lac (2014), which emphasize the importance of a systematic approach in collecting and analyzing secondary data.

The literature search was conducted by identifying scientific publications relevant to the topics of interest-based communities, social network formation, and informal group dynamics. The sources reviewed include books, journal articles, and research reports published in the last

two decades in order to capture developments in the phenomenon alongside social changes. The process of selecting sources was carried out by considering topic relevance, author credibility, and the quality of the research methodology used. Singleton and Straits (2018) emphasize that approaches in social research must take into account the complexity of the phenomena being studied and use multiple sources to build a comprehensive understanding. The analysis was conducted using a thematic approach to identify major patterns in the literature on hobby-based communities. This approach enables the identification of consensus and debates within the literature while also revealing areas that still require further development. The synthesis of findings from various sources was conducted to build a comprehensive understanding of how hobby-based communities function as spaces for the formation of social bonds.

## Result and Discussion

Hobby-based communities emerge as a response to the human need for connection that can no longer be fulfilled by traditional social structures in urban societies (Hite et al., 2019; Kobayashi, 2010). Shared interests function as an effective organizing principle because they provide a safe starting point for interaction among individuals who were previously strangers. In urban environments characterized by diverse backgrounds and values, shared interests become a bridge that transcends other social differences. Someone can easily start a conversation with a stranger in a book club about a novel they have just read without needing to know the other person's occupation or social status. This principle creates a space where social identities that often become sources of tension in everyday interactions become less relevant. A shared focus on enjoyable activities provides a clear structure for interaction, reducing the uncertainty that often becomes a barrier in initiating new relationships. In a running community, for example, the routine of training together creates situations in which interaction occurs naturally without pressure to immediately build deep relationships. New members can join simply by following the running schedule without needing to explain their background or motivations. The naturalness of this process distinguishes hobby-based communities from other forms of associations that are more formal and often feel artificial. The community's ability to accommodate various levels

of involvement, from casual participants to core members, makes it inclusive for different types of individuals.

The high frequency of interaction in hobby-based communities becomes a key factor in the formation of strong social bonds. Unlike social interactions in workplaces or educational environments, which are often mandatory and structured by hierarchy, interactions in hobby communities are voluntary and based on shared enjoyment (Garrett et al., 2017; Steinberg & Simon, 2019). Community members choose to spend time together because they enjoy the activities involved, not because of obligation or instrumental necessity. This condition creates a more positive foundation for the formation of interpersonal relationships. When individuals meet regularly in enjoyable settings, the association between the presence of fellow community members and positive feelings becomes stronger over time. This process occurs gradually, beginning with surface-level introductions related to the hobby that serves as the shared focus, and later developing into more personal conversations about life outside the community. In a photography community, for example, discussions about lighting techniques may evolve into conversations about life journeys, valuable experiences, or challenges faced by members. This shift in topics does not occur by force but emerges naturally as comfort among members increases. The high frequency of interaction also enables various shared events to occur, both enjoyable and challenging, which become the binding elements of the community's collective memory (Wood, 2020). These shared experiences create collective narratives that strengthen the sense of togetherness.

Rituals and traditions that develop within hobby-based communities function as important mechanisms in strengthening social bonds among members (Heley & Jones, 2013). Rituals may take the form of routine activities such as weekly meetings, collective celebrations at certain moments, or initiation processes for new members. Although they may appear simple, these rituals have significant sociological functions in creating a sense of togetherness and continuity. Participation in rituals provides shared experiences that become collective references for community members. When members share memories of how they celebrated the community's anniversary or how they collectively faced challenges during certain activities, they are building shared narratives that

reinforce collective identity. Traditions also create predictable structures within community life, providing a sense of stability amid the rapid changes of urban living. In cycling communities, for example, the tradition of riding together every Sunday morning becomes a ritual that members look forward to, giving structure to weekends that often feel unstructured for urban workers. Traditions also function as mechanisms for transmitting knowledge and values from senior members to new members, creating continuity of the community beyond individuals. New members who successfully pass certain initiation rituals will feel more fully accepted into the community. This process creates gradations of membership that provide a sense of achievement and increased commitment to the community (Collins, 2004; Knottnerus, 2010).

The role of informal leaders or key figures within hobby-based communities greatly influences the dynamics of social bond formation. These figures are usually individuals who possess high competence in the hobby that becomes the focus of the community or have strong social skills in facilitating interaction among members. They are not formally appointed but gain recognition from other members through consistent contributions and concern for the community. The presence of key figures provides stability to the community because they become reference points for other members. In situations of conflict or uncertainty, key figures act as mediators who help resolve problems. They also function as connectors who introduce new members to long-time members, accelerating the integration process. In a painting community, for example, a more experienced painter may informally become a mentor for members who are just learning, helping them not only with technical skills but also with understanding the norms and values of the community. Key figures often become drivers of new initiatives that keep the community dynamic and relevant. They may propose new activities, establish collaborations with external parties, or organize events that strengthen community cohesion. However, dependence on key figures can also become a vulnerability because when they leave, the community may lose direction. The community's ability to regenerate leadership becomes an important factor in its sustainability (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006; Mehra et al., 2006).

Social support available within hobby-based communities has characteristics that differ from the support obtained from family or the

workplace. Support in hobby communities is based on voluntariness and equality rather than obligation or hierarchy. When someone in a running community experiences an injury, other members may voluntarily offer assistance to take them to a health facility or simply provide advice on recovery. These actions do not arise from a sense of compulsion but from concern that grows from the bonds that have been formed. This voluntary nature makes the support received feel more genuine and does not burden the recipient with a heavy sense of indebtedness. Support within hobby communities is also often specific and relevant to the needs of members. A new member in a cooking community will receive informational support in the form of recipes and techniques that are highly useful, while in a parenting community they may receive emotional support from other parents facing similar challenges. This specificity makes the support provided more effective than general support that might be offered by people who do not fully understand the problem. In addition, support in hobby communities is often reciprocal without strict calculation. Someone may become a recipient of support at one time and a provider of support at another, creating a cycle that strengthens reciprocal bonds within the community. This pattern differs from patron-client relationships often found in traditional social structures (Thoits, 2011; Uchino, 2009).

The process of integrating new members into hobby-based communities occurs through stages that reflect the gradual dynamics of social bond formation. In the initial stage, individuals interested in a particular hobby observe the community from the outside, perhaps by following social media accounts or occasionally attending activities that are open to the public. This stage is important because it provides individuals with the opportunity to assess whether the community aligns with their expectations and values. Once they feel confident, they begin to participate in activities as ordinary participants. At this stage, interactions are still limited to the core hobby activities and have not yet expanded into personal domains. New members learn the community's norms and values through observation and limited interaction. The next stage involves fuller acceptance when new members begin to be invited to participate in more exclusive activities or start building relationships beyond routine activities. This process can take varying lengths of time depending on the openness of the community and the activity level of the individual. In highly open

communities, integration can occur quickly, whereas in well-established communities with strong social structures, integration may require more time. Factors such as similarity of background with dominant members, frequency of attendance, and contributions to the community influence the speed of integration. A successful integration process results in a change of status from a new member to a fully accepted member, with access to broader social resources within the community (Moreland & Levine, 2001; Levine & Moreland, 1994).

Hobby-based communities also function as spaces for the development of social identities that are important for individuals' psychological well-being (Pöllänen & Weissmann-Hanski, 2020). In urban societies characterized by high mobility and rapidly changing roles, stable social identities become increasingly difficult to obtain. Frequently changing jobs, non-permanent residences, and fluid relationships cause individuals to lose the identity anchors that were previously provided by traditional social structures. Hobby-based communities provide alternative sources of identity that are relatively stable and meaningful. Being a member of a cycling community, for example, provides a social label that individuals can use to recognize themselves and be recognized by others. This identity is not merely a label but also carries a set of values, norms, and practices that provide direction in daily life. Members of a running community not only develop the habit of exercising but also adopt healthy lifestyles, environmental awareness, and solidarity with fellow runners. This collective identity becomes an important source of meaning, especially for individuals who feel a loss of orientation in the fast-paced environment of urban life. Communities also provide recognition for individual contributions through various forms of appreciation, both formal and informal, which strengthen a sense of self-worth. This recognition is often more meaningful because it is given by people who understand and value the field in which the individual is engaged.

The openness of hobby-based communities to the diverse backgrounds of their members becomes both a strength and a challenge in the formation of social bonds (Kharicha et al., 2017). On the one hand, this openness enables interactions across class, age, and educational backgrounds that rarely occur within conventional social structures. A retiree can have an equal relationship with a university student in a

photography community because they share the same language regarding image composition or lighting techniques. Encounters between people from different backgrounds enrich the perspectives of members and reduce stereotypes that may have existed previously. On the other hand, differences in background can also become sources of tension when the norms and values brought by various groups collide. Communities that are homogeneous in age may unconsciously make members from other age groups feel uncomfortable. Differences in access to economic resources may also create unofficial hierarchies when certain hobbies require expensive equipment. Communities that successfully manage this diversity usually have mechanisms that emphasize shared interests as the primary identity, while other differences are positioned as variations that enrich the group (Condorelli, 2018). They also develop practices that reduce barriers to participation, such as lending equipment to members who cannot yet afford to purchase their own or organizing activities that do not require high costs. The ability to manage diversity becomes an important factor in maintaining the appeal of the community as an inclusive social space (Chen et al., 2016).

Digital technology plays a dual role in the development of hobby-based communities, both as a facilitator and as a challenge (Martínez-López et al., 2015). Online platforms such as social media groups, specialized forums, or location-sharing applications make it easier for individuals with similar interests to find one another and coordinate activities. A broader reach enables the formation of communities on a larger scale with greater diversity. Technology also allows interactions to continue between face-to-face meetings, strengthening the bonds that have already been formed. Community members can share photos of activities, discuss hobby-related topics, or simply greet one another through online groups every day. However, excessive reliance on technology can shift the focus away from face-to-face interactions that are central to the formation of strong social bonds. Communities that rely too heavily on online communication may lose the essence of physical togetherness that forms their primary attraction. Members may feel part of the community virtually without ever experiencing the deeper relationships that can only develop through direct interaction. Achieving a balance between utilizing technology to facilitate interaction and maintaining meaningful face-to-face activities becomes a

particular challenge. Communities that succeed usually use technology as a tool to strengthen existing interactions rather than replace them (Hampton, 2016). They use online groups to coordinate activities and share information while still making physical meetings the core of community life.

Hobby-based communities also play a role in building broader social capital that extends beyond the boundaries of the community itself. Members often carry the relationships formed within the community into other aspects of their lives. Cooperation established within a sports community can develop into business collaborations or joint social projects. Friendships formed within an arts community can become sources of broader emotional support when one member faces life difficulties (Hampshire & Matthijsse, 2010). The networks formed within communities can also serve as channels for information about job opportunities, housing, or needed services. Social capital developed within hobby-based communities is often bridging capital that connects individuals from diverse social backgrounds, in contrast to bonding capital formed within homogeneous groups. This characteristic makes social capital from hobby-based communities particularly valuable in urban settings that require cross-sector connections. Communities can also serve as bridges between individuals and larger institutions, such as when environmental communities connect residents with city governments, or when cultural enthusiast communities link artists with audiences. On a broader scale, hobby-based communities contribute to urban social cohesion by creating meeting points for residents who might never interact in their everyday lives. The accumulation of cross-boundary interactions gradually builds a sense of togetherness that transcends specific group affiliations.

Resistance of hobby-based communities to commercialization and co-optation becomes an important factor in maintaining their integrity as spaces for the formation of authentic social bonds. When a hobby becomes popular, commercial interests often emerge that see business opportunities within the community that has formed. Sponsorships, endorsements, or even attempts to turn the community into a marketing channel can shift the community's orientation from togetherness to transactions. Members who join with commercial motivations can alter the social dynamics that

were previously built on voluntariness and shared enjoyment. Communities that successfully maintain their integrity usually have mechanisms to manage the involvement of external interests without losing control over the direction of the community. They may accept support from external parties while still maintaining autonomy in decision-making. Clear boundaries between commercial activities and community activities also help preserve the clarity of identity. Co-optation by political interests or other institutions also poses a similar threat. When a community is used as a vehicle for interests outside its original purpose, members who joined because of their interest in the hobby may feel that they have lost the space that once belonged to them. The ability of a community to maintain focus on the core activities that justify its existence becomes key in facing external pressures. Communities that lose this focus often experience declining participation and internal fragmentation (Ishimaru, 2014).

The long-term sustainability of hobby-based communities requires attention to aspects of leadership regeneration and activity innovation (Heley & Jones, 2013). Communities that are built on the contributions of certain individuals will become fragile when those individuals are no longer active. A process of cadre formation that occurs naturally or in a structured manner is needed to ensure continuity when key figures reduce the intensity of their involvement (Heberer & Trappel, 2013). This regeneration is not only about replacing positions, but also about transmitting the knowledge and values that form the foundation of the community. Younger or newer members need to be given opportunities to gradually take on greater roles. Innovation in activities is also necessary to keep the community relevant to the interests of members, which may change over time. Communities that rely only on the same routines without variation may lose their appeal. However, innovation must be carried out without losing the core identity that distinguishes the community. The balance between consistency, which provides a sense of security, and innovation, which brings new energy, becomes a challenge in itself. Communities that succeed in maintaining sustainability usually have flexible structures but strong core values. They are able to adapt the form of their activities to changing times without losing the essence that makes members feel they are part of something meaningful. This adaptive

capacity becomes a distinguishing factor between communities that endure over time and those that only survive temporarily.

Hobby-based communities also play a role in building the resilience of urban society in facing various crises (Matlon, 2016). When natural disasters or other crises occur, communities with strong networks often become one of the most effective sources of first response assistance. Members who already have personal relationships can more easily organize aid because a sense of trust has already been established. Running communities, for example, can quickly mobilize their members to assist with evacuation or aid distribution because they are already accustomed to coordinating in routine activities. In more personal crises such as job loss or health problems, communities also become a source of support that is no less important than family. Members who may not have family in the city where they live gain a substitute network that can be relied upon. The function of communities as providers of social support becomes increasingly important given the weakening of extended family networks in urban society. In prolonged crises such as pandemics, hobby-based communities that successfully adapt to online activities continue to maintain their function as psychological buffers for their members (Darmawan, et al. 2021). They provide a space for individuals to remain connected and support one another when other forms of social interaction are limited. The ability of communities to transform during crises demonstrates the flexibility that becomes one of their strengths.

Differences in characteristics among types of hobby-based communities influence the patterns of social bond formation that occur. Communities based on physical activities such as sports tend to have stronger bonds because shared experiences in overcoming physical challenges create intense connections (Vermeulen & Verweel, 2019). The pain experienced together during training, the euphoria after reaching a target, or the concern shown when one member is injured create deep emotional experiences. Communities based on creative activities such as art or crafts may have different dynamics, with a focus on appreciation of works and the exchange of ideas (Balfour et al., 2018). The bonds formed may be more intellectual and aesthetic in nature, with a depth that is no less significant but exists within a different spectrum. Communities based on consumptive activities such as fans of certain products face their own

challenges because the identity of the community is closely tied to consumption that may be cyclical. When trends change, the community may lose the unifying object that forms the foundation of its existence. Communities based on productive activities such as crafting or gardening may have better sustainability because they focus on creative processes that continuously evolve. The size of a community also influences the dynamics of social bonding. Small communities allow for more intensive and personal interactions but are vulnerable to the loss of key members. Large communities have broader resources and reach but risk losing the intimacy that makes hobby-based communities attractive. Understanding these variations is important in appreciating the complexity of the phenomenon of hobby-based communities.

Hobby-based communities also function as spaces for the development of social skills that may not be obtained in other environments. For individuals who have difficulty with social interaction, hobby-based communities provide a relatively safe environment to practice because there is a shared focus that reduces the pressure to keep talking continuously. Someone who feels awkward in general conversations may feel more comfortable when discussions are focused on topics they are knowledgeable about. Positive experiences in these limited interactions can become the foundation for developing broader social skills. Communities also provide role models in the form of members who are more socially skilled, indirectly teaching norms and techniques of interaction through example. For younger generations who grow up with the dominance of digital communication, hobby-based communities can become an important space to learn face-to-face communication skills that are not obtained through online interaction. They learn to read nonverbal cues, take turns speaking, and respond appropriately in direct conversation. These skills are very valuable in various aspects of life, from personal relationships to professional contexts. Communities also teach conflict resolution skills because differences of opinion in hobbies that are not heavily loaded with personal interests can become good practice. Members learn to express disagreement without damaging relationships, seek compromise, and maintain bonds despite differences. The development of these social skills becomes an added value of communities that is often not realized (Putnam, 2000; Stebbins, 2015).

The relationship between hobby-based communities and individual mental health has become an important aspect that is receiving increasing attention. Participation in communities has been shown to correlate with lower levels of stress because the activities carried out provide positive distractions from the pressures of daily life. Time spent doing something one enjoys together with others who share similar interests creates a much-needed space for recovery. The sense of belonging obtained from community membership also counteracts feelings of loneliness, which have become a common problem in urban societies. For individuals experiencing transitional periods such as moving to a new city or retiring from work, hobby-based communities can become an anchor that provides stability and a sense of belonging. They provide a new social identity that replaces identities that may have been lost due to changes in status. The social support available within communities also functions as a buffer against the negative impacts of stress. Individuals who have strong social networks tend to be more resilient in facing various life pressures. In supportive communities, members can share emotional burdens and gain new perspectives that help them overcome problems. Communities can also become places for early detection of mental health problems because familiar members may be quicker to notice behavioral changes that indicate potential issues. The role of communities as spaces for maintaining mental health becomes increasingly important amid limited access to professional mental health services (Haslam et al., 2018; Cruwys et al., 2014).

Hobby-based communities also play a role in preserving and developing various forms of knowledge and skills that may be marginalized within formal education. Knowledge about traditional crafts, for example, is often passed down through enthusiast communities consisting of multiple generations. Older members transfer knowledge gained from years of experience to younger members who are just beginning to learn. This process of knowledge transfer occurs organically through participation in shared activities rather than through rigid formal instruction. Traditional music communities ensure that instruments and repertoires that may not be taught in schools remain alive and continue to develop. Urban gardening communities develop knowledge about plant cultivation adapted to the limited spaces in cities. The knowledge that

develops within these communities is often practical and applicative, differing from academic knowledge that tends to be more theoretical. Communities also become spaces for innovation because members with different backgrounds bring diverse perspectives. A member with an engineering background may provide ideas for improving the tools used, while a member with a design background may offer suggestions about aesthetics. This cross-disciplinary collaboration produces innovations that might not emerge if individuals worked separately. The role of communities as spaces for knowledge production becomes important in situations where knowledge relevant to practical life often does not receive a place within formal education systems (Wenger, 1998; Brown & Duguid, 2001).

Gender dynamics within hobby-based communities show interesting patterns related to the formation of social bonds. In general, interactions among individuals within a group are often influenced by how members understand social roles and behaviors within their environment (Darmawan, 2013). Some types of hobbies are traditionally dominated by one gender, such as automotive activities that are often considered masculine or knitting that is considered feminine. In such communities, members of the non-dominant gender may face additional barriers to integration. However, communities can also become spaces for individuals to challenge gender stereotypes through their participation. A woman who joins an automotive community not only learns about engines but also asserts that such knowledge is not limited to men. In communities that are more gender-diverse, interaction dynamics may differ. Communities that successfully create safe environments for all genders usually have a high awareness of these issues and deliberately establish inclusive norms. They may have clear codes of conduct regarding acceptable behavior and mechanisms to handle violations. In more open communities, gender becomes less relevant because of the shared focus on the hobby that members enjoy. Members are evaluated based on their competence and contributions rather than their gender identity. However, structural inequalities in wider society still influence community dynamics, for example in terms of access to resources needed to pursue certain hobbies. Communities that are aware of this issue may develop special programs to encourage the participation of underrepresented groups, such as

scholarships for women who wish to learn skills that are male-dominated (Ridgeway, 2014; Kane, 2012).

Hobby-based communities also play a role in building solidarity that transcends national and cultural boundaries in the era of globalization. Shared interests can become bridges that connect individuals from different parts of the world who may not share other similarities. Fans of certain sports, for example, can easily establish relationships with supporters from other countries who support the same team. Online communities based on shared interests enable intensive cross-border interactions, creating global social networks that complement local ones. In migration contexts, hobby-based communities become important spaces for newcomers to rebuild social networks that may have been lost due to relocation. A migrant who joins a running community in a new city not only gains new friends but also gains access to information and support that helps with adaptation. These communities can also serve as bridges between cultures of origin and new cultures, because shared activities create spaces where cultural differences can be negotiated without losing individual identities. On a broader scale, hobby-based communities contribute to cross-cultural understanding because the interactions that occur are based on shared interests rather than stereotypes or prejudices. Members learn about other cultures through authentic personal relationships, which are often more effective in building understanding compared to formal education about diversity (Delanty, 2018; Hampton & Wellman, 2018).

## Conclusion

Hobby-based communities function as spaces for the formation of significant social bonds in urban society through mechanisms such as gatherings based on shared interests, continuous interaction through collective activities, the development of rituals and traditions, and the provision of various forms of social support. These communities possess characteristics that distinguish them from other forms of social associations, namely voluntary membership, a focus on enjoyable activities, relatively flat structures, and the ability to accommodate different levels of involvement. The success of a community in building strong social bonds is influenced by factors such as informal leadership, frequency of

interaction, the ability to manage diversity, and balance in the use of technology. Hobby-based communities also contribute to the development of social identity, interpersonal skills, mental health, and broader social capital. The sustainability of communities requires attention to leadership regeneration, activity innovation, and resistance to excessive commercialization. This phenomenon shows that amid the degradation of traditional social networks, urban societies find new ways to fulfill the fundamental human need for connectedness.

The implications of this study indicate that hobby-based communities need to be recognized as important social assets in urban development. One recommendation is the need for public policies that support the development of space and time for hobby-based community activities, such as the provision of public spaces that can be used for community gatherings, flexible licensing for community activities, and recognition of the contribution of communities in the development of social capital. Educational institutions and workplaces can facilitate the formation of hobby-based communities as a means of developing social skills and the well-being of their members. Further research is needed to understand the dynamics of hobby-based communities in various socio-cultural contexts as well as the effectiveness of various interventions that may support their role in the formation of social bonds. Urban communities should be encouraged to actively participate in hobby-based communities as a strategy to rebuild social networks that may have eroded due to the dynamics of modern life.

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