

# Community-Forward Campuses: Fostering the Sense of Community at Universities Through Placemaking

Marketing

Master's thesis

Tuomas Sahramaa

2013

---

**Author** Tuomas Sahramaa

---

**Title of thesis** Community-Forward Campuses: Fostering the Sense of Community at Universities Through Placemaking

---

**Degree** Master of Science: Economics and Business Administration (M.Sc.)

---

**Degree programme** Marketing

---

**Thesis advisor(s)** Sammy Toyoki

---

**Year of approval** 2013**Number of pages** 142**Language** English

---

### Abstract

Which elements of the built environment contribute to the development of a sense of community? And how do these elements apply to the context of university campuses especially, such that stronger feelings of togetherness are cultivated amongst students?

All campuses are not created equal in their ability to connect users together and to inspire meaningful interactions amongst them. Certain characteristics of the physical structure of campus spaces – the built environment – deliver better results than others in terms of deepening the feelings of connectedness amongst users. In other words, some campuses are more “community-forward” than others. This thesis contributes to the understanding of how built structures contribute to the development of communities and a sense of togetherness in the context of university campuses, particularly through the practice of placemaking.

The study has developed a framework for “community-forward” campuses. This framework aims to recognize spaces or elements of the built environment specific to university campuses that most effectively engender a sense of community. This happens through delivering spaces that enable communication (the dispensing of information, narratives, brand values or mission statements), integration (the creation of interactions, cross-pollination, facilitation of introductions or mixing of members) and duration (the enabling of long-term stays, embedding or deep connectedness).

The main purpose of this study was to support the work of the Built Environment Services (BES) research group of Aalto University by identifying the components of community-forward campuses, using Aalto University as a case study. This study was conducted on the campus of Aalto University by applying qualitative methodology. Particularly, in-person interviews were used to gain key insights into the lives of Aalto students, and to build a framework around their needs.

Based on these insights, the created framework of spatial design principles aim to affect built spaces to better create and cultivate community bonds amongst the users of those spaces. Three main principles of community-forward campuses, which consist of three sub-principles each, were developed through the study of enrolled students on the current campus configuration of Aalto University, consisting of three formerly separate universities. Implementing this framework would help guide designers and users to co-create a more united and cohesive university campus for future classes of Aalto students.

---

**Keywords** community, sense of community, built environment, placemaking, place, space

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>09</b>
1.1	Background and Aims	09
1.2	Research Gap and Research Questions	11
1.3	Structure	13
<b>2.</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1	Communities	17
2.1.1	DNA of Communities	18
2.1.2	Sense of Community	19
2.2	Built Environment in Communities	21
2.2.1	Built Environment on Communities	22
2.3	Place and Placemaking	27
2.3.1	Place vs. Space	27
2.3.2	Placemaking	28
2.4	Community Building Through Placemaking	32
2.4.1	Placemaking for Universities	32
2.4.2	Examples of Placemaking in University Context	33
<b>3.</b>	<b>Case Study: Aalto University</b>	<b>39</b>
3.1	Introduction: Aalto University	39
3.2	Document Analysis: Considering Community in the Campus	43
<b>4.</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1	Research Frame	51
4.1.2	Action Research Approach	55
4.2	Case Study: Aalto University and BES Group	53
4.3	Data Collection and Research Process	54
4.3.1	Research Phases	55
4.4	Data Analysis	59
4.4.1	Affinity Mapping	59
4.5	Trustworthiness of Study	60

<b>5.</b>	<b>Findings + Discussion</b>	<b>63</b>
5.1	Student Soul: Stories and Engagement	63
5.2	Old + New: University History and Names	73
5.3	Live Aalto, Be Aalto: Practicing Multi-Disciplinarity	78
5.4	Density and Closeness	80
5.5	Creating Collisions: Integrating Groups and Individuals	84
5.6	Togetherness by Doing: Activities and Events	91
5.7	Interpretive Space for Students	93
5.8	Villaging	99
5.9	Work + Play: Professional and Social Spaces	102
5.10	Discussion	106
<b>6.</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>109</b>
6.1	Community-Forward Campuses Framework	109
6.2	Placemaking Potential on University Campuses	111
6.3	Practical Implications	112
6.4	Theoretical Implications	116
6.5	Evaluation of the Study	118
6.6	Future Research Possibilities	119
<b>7.</b>	<b>References</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Appendix</b>	<b>135</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Research context of the thesis study	10
Figure 2: Thesis structure and chapters	13
Figure 3: Outline of theoretical framework	16
Figure 4: Built environment factors affecting community	22
Figure 5: Benefits of place, derived from Project for Public Spaces	30
Figure 6: Placemaking resources, tools and methods used by PPS	31
Figure 7: Top trends impacting the teaching/learning experience	32
Figure 8: Case Western Reserve University central campus plan drawings	35
Figure 9: Duke University placemaking planning sketch	35
Figure 10: Aalto University campuses as of 2013	40
Figure 11: Aalto University research publications, front covers	43
Figure 12: Five fundamental principles of Aalto University	45
Figure 13: Thesis focus and sample frame	54
Figure 14: Empirical research phases	55
Figure 15: In-depth interview “creative kit” discussion guide sketch; sliders	58
Figure 16: Process of Affinity Mapping	60
Figure 17: Overview of the study’s main themes	63
Figure 18: Arabia and Otaniemi campus cafes	67
Figure 19: University name Facebook parodies	75
Figure 20: Otaniemi and Töölö campus locations of community	89
Figure 21: “This is anyhow my city” installation	96
Figure 22: Football game picture referenced by TECH 2	104
Figure 23: The Community-Forward Campuses framework	110
Figure 24: Comparison of factors; theoretical vs. empirical findings	117

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: PPS’ 11 Principles for Creating Great Community in Places	37
Table 2: Names and abbreviations for Schools of Aalto University	40
Table 3: Phase 2: In-depth interview respondents	57





*Aalto flags, Arabia campus*

*Photo: Tuomas Sahramaa*



# FORWARD

*“The word “campus” carries highly positive associations. We think of leafy public commons dotted with handsome buildings, alive with the energy of students engaged in invigorating discussions. College grads look back happily at their years on campus, remembering not just classes and friends but the physical surroundings with a deep fondness. The walkways they strolled late at night discussing politics or football with their roommates. The library steps where they relaxed between classes on sunny days. The tree where they first kissed their future spouse. Ever since the Middle Ages, the ideal of a university has been a lively setting where students gather in taverns, coffee shops, public plazas, and diners to discuss what they’ve learned in class as well as flirt and philosophize. But a lot of campuses today fall short of the mark in providing lively public places that are as important as classrooms in offering a well-rounded education.”*

– Jay Walljasper

Project for Public Spaces, 2009, p.1

My entire life changed in 2007 when I landed my dream job at a firm called Gensler. A symphony of professionals from all walks of design, my tenure taught me to see, respect, and advocate space and place. I became a believer in the *power* of design, and just how it can affect our lives, whether we realized it or not. It was also through Gensler that I learned about something called placemaking, or how to inject a ‘sense of place’ somewhere that probably really needed it. Then, when I arrived at the then Helsinki School of Economics in 2009 and explored each of the three campuses of what would become “Aalto University” a mere three months later, I was intensely curious about how the essence of “place” fared at my new academic home.

Furthermore, having spent my undergraduate days at a university in the U.S., I was even more curious about the level of community and school spirit present at Aalto. Plus, with Aalto University moving all together to a joint campus in Otaniemi, Espoo by 2015, the levels of sense of place and community stood to advance immeasurably. It was through the kind support of the Department of Marketing at the Aalto School of Business and the Built Environment Services research group at the School of Science & Technology that made this study possible, and allowed me to explore not only how design might help the new Aalto campus truly become a “place”, but also how to help foster a sense of community amongst the university population. In other words, how might we turn all together – into *Aaltotogetherness*?



# 1. INTRODUCTION

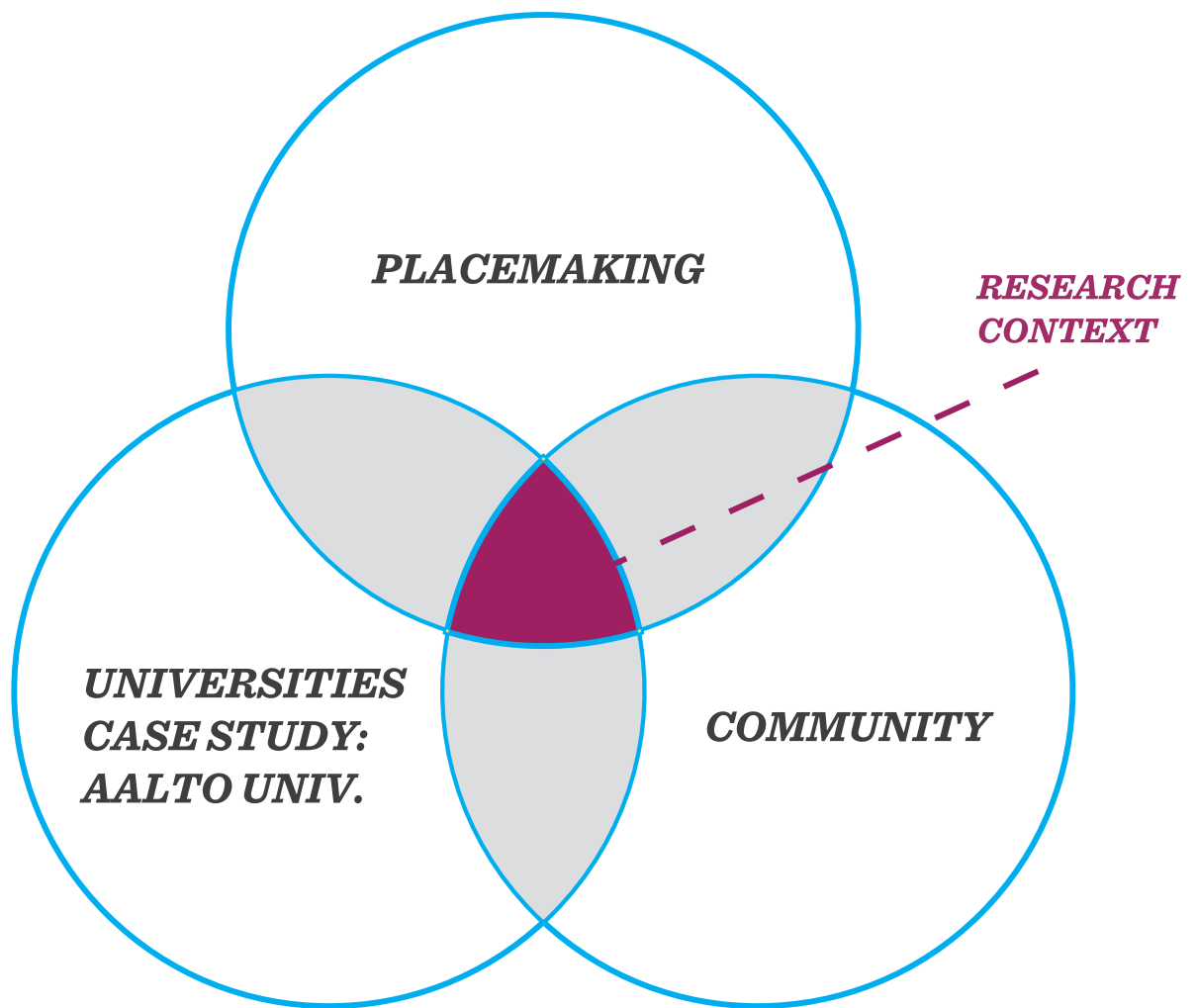
Anderson (1983, p.5), writing about origin and spread of nationalism as imagined communities, remarked that “members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” Anderson acknowledges that such nation “communities” *must* be imagined as each member will probably never meet one another face-to-face, yet despite this lack of actual contact, bonds form nonetheless. Can the same happen on university campuses as well?

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND AIMS

Aalto University near Helsinki, Finland is now an institution that has grown to over 20,000 students from all over the world (Aalto-www, 2012a). While many students many never meet face-to-face, a strong sense of community can act as a foundation for Aalto student life.

This thesis is a study aimed at investigating the practice of placemaking, describing the main factors of its influence on developing a sense of community in a place, and exploring the possibilities of placemaking’s implementation in the context of university campuses.

Figure 1 (next page) illustrates the study’s research context, which is an intersection between placemaking, communities and the built environment of university campuses, with a case study focused on Aalto University in Finland.



*Figure 1: Research context of the thesis study*



## 1.2 RESEARCH GAP AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research scope of this thesis is built around the understanding of the practice and philosophy of placemaking, in the context of university campuses. An extensive literature review has underscored the need for university campuses to engage in placemaking to develop stronger inter-personal bonds between students, and to deepen the sense of community and togetherness amongst them.

Beginning from the general emergence of placemaking (outlined in the theoretical part of the thesis), the research's practical phase then centers on a case study of the campus of Aalto University in Finland. The majority of the Aalto University campus, currently consisting of three separate campuses located around metropolitan Helsinki, will be relocated and combined into a joint campus in nearby Otaniemi, Espoo by 2015, and integrated into the existing Aalto School of Science & Technology.

Both academic- and pragmatic-focused research gaps have been identified which this study aims to address. First, in a more academic sense, there have been a number of valuable studies on the influence of place on the development of individual identity (Gieryn, 2000; Marquis et al., 2011; Lanham, 2007; Relph, 1976; Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995; Sargeant, 2009) and on the forming of community and sense of community (Beatley, 2005; Chavis & McMillan, 1986; Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978; Glynn, 1981; Gusfield, 1975; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Kwiatkowski & Buczynski, 2011; Nenonen & Kojo, 2013; Närvänen, 2012; Rappaport, 1977; Sarason, 1974; Theodori & Kyle, 2008).

All of these studies present evidence on a number of characteristics through which the built environment contributes to the propagation of society. However, little has been written about how these characteristics might apply to the specific context of university campuses. This study attempts to establish a link between existing place and community research to connect with the unique challenges and opportunities specifically present at university campuses.

Second, the core interest of the research rests on the practical implementation of placemaking at an existing university campus. In a pragmatic sense, a research gap was identified in relation to how a campus' existing built environment could be redeveloped according to placemaking practices such that a stronger sense of community would result.

To fill the gap of how university campuses could engage in placemaking practices on the practical level, the study is aimed at gaining deep insights into Aalto's student community and developing an understanding of which built environment factors most impact the sense of community and togetherness. Current perceptions of the sense

of community at Aalto and the effectiveness of the existing campus to inspire “Aalto spirit” will be researched. The study aspires to uncover ways to implement placemaking practices into Aalto’s forthcoming campus redevelopment plans.

The main objective of this thesis is to contribute to the development of a sense of community at Aalto University, by way of placemaking and through affecting the built environment. Aalto should encourage the redevelopment of its spaces to become a “community-forward” campus, by incorporating characteristics of communication, integration and duration.

The primary research question (1) and secondary research questions (A, B, C) posed in this study are the following:

(1) Which elements in the built environment contribute to the development of a sense of community on the site of a university campus?

(A) What is the current state of community at Aalto University?

(B) How does the current built environment of Aalto’s campuses (in Töölö, Arabia and Otaniemi) contribute to the sense of community amongst Aalto students?

(C) How might we develop the physical spaces of the new Aalto campus in Otaniemi to better build a sense of community amongst Aalto students?

Question (1) will be answered through an extensive literature review, and questions (A), (B) and (C) will be answered by conducting qualitative research on the student community of Aalto University.



### 1.3 STRUCTURE

This thesis study is divided into seven (7) main chapters, as illustrated in Figure 2 below. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the topic through a presentation of the study's background, including its research questions and research gap. Chapter 2 covers the theoretical background of the study, including the emergence of placemaking and community-building factors based on the literature review. Chapter 3 introduces the primary case study based on the new joint Aalto University campus in Otaniemi. Chapter 4 details the field research description and methodology, plus the trustworthiness of the study. Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive review of the study's findings, divided into nine (9) sub-sections, plus discussion. Chapter 6 contains the study's conclusions, in the form of the Community-Forward Campuses framework. This final chapter also includes a discussion with practical and theoretical implications of the research, an evaluation of the study and opportunities for further research. Chapter 7 consists of References and Chapter 8 the Appendix (not pictured).



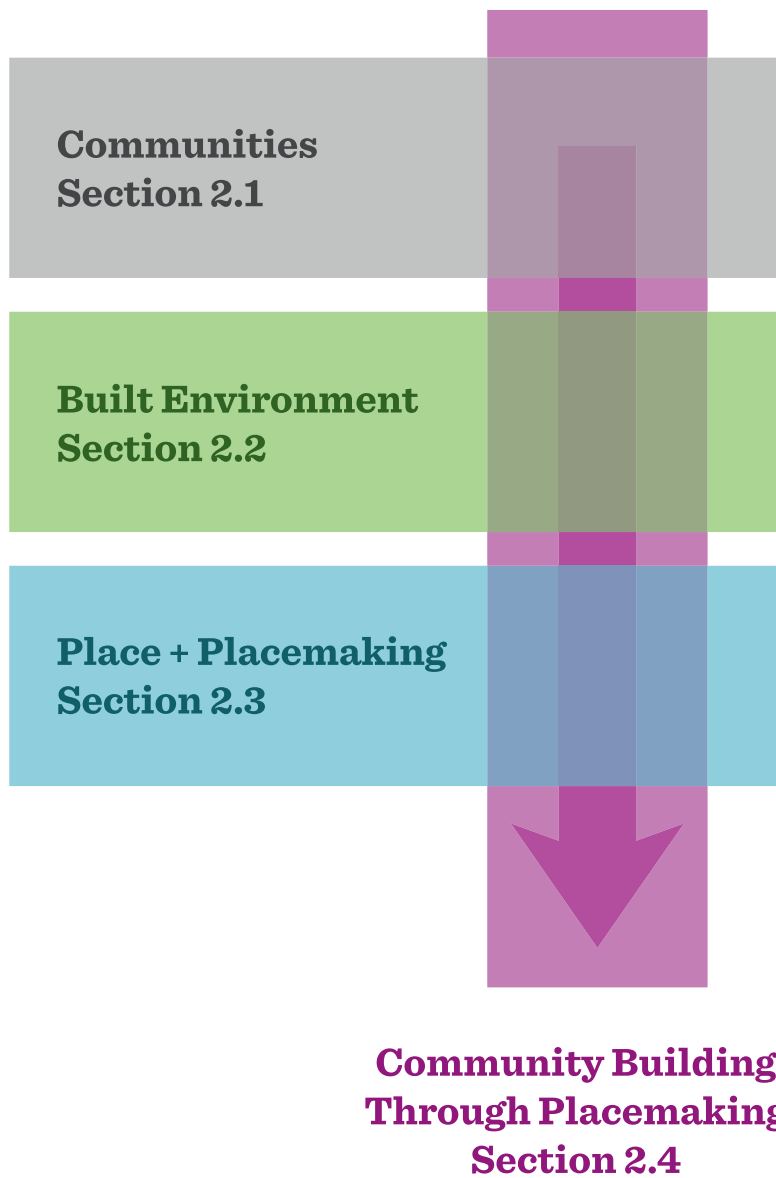
*Figure 2: Thesis structure and chapters*



## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

*This Chapter presents the theoretical background of the study. A comprehensive literature review was conducted and is separated into four sections: (1) Communities; (2) Built Environment in Communities; (3) Place and Placemaking; and (4) Community Building Through Placemaking.*

To act as a guide for the reader, Figure 3 (next page) presents an overview of the study's theoretical framework. In order to properly ground the study amidst existing scholarly works, the framework first introduces and defines community and sense of community. Next, drawing in the built environment into community development, a series of factors are presented that tie these two elements together. Following that an introduction and definition of place and the practice and philosophy of placemaking is presented. Finally, bridging the three aforementioned sections together, the last section demonstrates how placemaking aids in the strengthening of community, and also cites existing examples of placemaking projects in the university campus context.



*Figure 3: Outline of theoretical framework*



## 2.1 COMMUNITIES

Miriam-Webster (2012) attributes the term “community” to the Latin *communitas*, and old Anglo-French *communité*, with first known use in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, “community” has been used to label groups of various types of people interacting together, with shared values and interests that led to formed bonds between members.

Communities are a form of human association. As characterized by Tönnies’ (1897/1957) work on *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), individuals orient themselves toward different goals, or hold different priorities in terms of self- or shared-interest. While there is no idyllic example of either, *Gemeinschaft* describes individuals who make the group paramount over self, such as is seen in traditional families. It also represents social unity based on locale (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). *Gesellschaft*, in contrast, reflects most modern businesses in that individuals act in their own self-interests (collecting salaries), which incidentally benefits the group (the business can operate). Thus, according to Tönnies, these associations can be driven by different motivations, either in one’s self interest, or in the interest of the greater society. Tönnies’ work was also the basis for McMillan & Chavis’ (1986) elements of shared emotional connection.

The word “community” is used in contexts ranging from the international community to the communities in neighborhoods. The “online community” is growing steadily and gaining further social, political and economic impact (Marquis et al, 2011). Findings from a 2011 Pew Research study showed that nearly 60% of Internet users used some sort of social networking site in 2010 (up from 34% in 2008). Further, the report revealed that of users of the social networking site Facebook, 40% had “friended” all of their closest “confidants”, up from 29% in 2008. Plus, Facebook users who accessed the site multiple times a day reported scores of 8 points higher in total support out of 100, 11 points higher in companionship, and 5 points higher in emotional support compared to non-Internet users – this represents about half of the jump average Americans received from being married or having cohabitated with a partner (Pew Research, 2011).

Businesses have even taken a more aggressive approach by leveraging communities in marketing efforts, bringing community-oriented marketing to be considered as a new essential tool in attracting new customers (Bryan, 2004).

Gusfield (1975) split the definition of “community” into two halves: the first half linking to territoriality and geography – the neighborhoods, towns and cities with which we identify. However, neighborhoods, for example, based purely on shared territory or proximity cannot themselves constitute communities as a “relational dimension.” This

relational dimension – Gusfield’s second half for the term community – is concerned with the quality of character of human relationships, without regard to location. However, McMillan and Chavis (1986) note the 1964 findings of Durkheim where modern society places more emphasis on interests and skills than on geography when forming communities. To this point, students, for example, are a part of the “academic community” as students reflect persons with common interests – particularly professional (Merriam-Webster, 2012).

While community is intangible on its face, various scholars have set out to measure or bring about the strengthening of communities. Measurement tactics for community and sense of community have been proposed, such as the Sense of Community Index (SCI) (Chavis et al., 1986). Doolittle and MacDonald (1978) developed the Sense of Community Scale (SCS), a 40-point barometer of communicative behaviors and attitudes at the community level of social organization. Then, Hummon’s (1992) typology on the five types of sense of community looked at how people relate to where they live, that included both everyday and ideological rootedness, and sentiments of alienation, relativity and placelessness. Similarly, scholars like Shamai and Ilatov (2004) have also studied the various measurement of sense of place according to level of attachment.

### **2.1.1 DNA of Communities**

In *User Communities and Campus*, Elina Närvänen (2012) outlines core components of the concept of community, namely the perspectives from which community can be viewed, key features of communities, and the motivations for joining communities:

#### **Perspectives of community:**

Community can be viewed from three different perspectives: first, through *structure*, as with institutional organizations like family, government or other tribes; second, through *content*, namely shared personal experiences or identities; and third, through *networks*, such as the interpersonal relations and the social collective.

#### **Features of community:**

Three key components of communities also includes *structure*, this time referring to the density, hierarchy, geographical location or organizational continuity of a community; *experience*, comprising of the social collective feeling, emotional commitment, group values, rituals and moral responsibility; and *focus*, the thing or theme around which the group concentrates, such as a place, social aim, activity or brand.

**Motivations for joining community:**

Reasons for joining communities include *group inclusion*; concurrent development of *social relationships* and *know-how*; *fantasy* and *experiences*; and transactional *exchanges of knowledge* (Närvänen, 2012).

If these components are effectively assembled and a “strong” community is the result, members of that community will experience positive ways to interact, important events at which to gather and share experiences, opportunities to acknowledge positive contributions by others toward the community, as well as opportunities to invest in the community and experience a spiritual bond among members (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Finally, from the interactional perspective, Theodori and Kyle (2008) state four principles that trigger the process of community development:

- (1) Purposive; intentional consequence of actors and associations interacting to initiate and maintain community among themselves;
- (2) Positive; purposive intentions of the actors and associations revolve around a shared commitment to improving their community;
- (3) Structure oriented; above actions of actors and associations are direct attempts to establish, strengthen, and/or sustain the community as an interlinking and coordinating structure of human relationships; and
- (4) Exists in the efforts of people and not necessarily in goal achievement; essence of community development as an interactional phenomenon resides in the doing – the working together toward a common goal – not solely in the outcome.

**2.1.2 Sense of Community**

Separating from the tangible elements of community like structure or location, integral to this study are the *intangible* elements of community. That is, the experience and emotion of communities – the *sense* of community.

Sense of community is defined as a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together” (McMillan, 1976, as cited by McMillan & Chavis 1986, p.9). From a psychological perspective, sense of community is “the perception of similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain this interdependence by giving to, or doing for others what one expects from them, and the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure” (Sarason, 1974, p.157). Sense of community is also a vital contributor

to community satisfaction and commitment to that community, but is also dependent on the “strengths of interpersonal relationships” measured through different kinds of interactions between neighbors (Ahlbrant & Cunningham, 1979 as cited by McMillan & Chavis 1986, p.7).

McMillan and Chavis (1986, p.9) divided sense of community into four parts:

- (1) Membership: the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness;
- (2) Influence: a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members;
- (3) Reinforcement: integration and fulfillment of needs; the feeling that members’ needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group; and
- (4) Shared emotional connection: the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences; the feeling one sees in farmers’ faces as they talk about their home place, their land, and their families.

Further, McMillan and Chavis (1986, p.16) cite the university as an example to demonstrate the “interworkings” of these four elements of sense of community:

“Someone puts an announcement on the dormitory bulletin board about the formation of an intramural dormitory basketball team. People attend the organizational meeting as strangers out of their individual needs (integration and fulfillment of needs). The team is bound by place of residence (membership boundaries are set) and spends time together in practice (the contact hypothesis). They play a game and win (successful shared valent event). While playing, members exert energy on behalf of the team (personal investment in the group). As the team continues to win, team members become recognized and congratulated (gaining honor and status for being members). Someone suggests that they all buy matching shirts and shoes (common symbols) and they do so (influence)” (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.16).

Sense of community here is achieved in a linear fashion. As McMillan and Chavis contend, first individuals integrate with others in order to seek need fulfillment themselves. Then, boundaries are established by residence-mandated team selection. Valent events are created through a shared time and space of the game itself, and winning reinforces membership, thus engendering influence and conformity (McMillan & Chavis, 1986).



## 2.2 BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN COMMUNITIES

Buildings carry an obligation to perform a deeper purpose for the people they accommodate. On the role of buildings in society, Danish architect Jan Gehl said:

“Architecture is not about form, it’s about the interaction of form and life. Instead of saying what can this city do for my building, we certainly should force the buildings to raise the question: What can these building do to improve this city?” (Gehl, 2011).

If buildings represent the interaction of form and life, what impact then does the built environment have on developing community or a sense of community in places? Places give reason for people to gather, this interaction generates trust, care and engagement, and ultimately stronger communities, according to Timothy Beatley (2005, p.5):

“Places that provide the spaces, reasons, and opportunities for people to come together, to share their passions, hopes, and troubles, will be healthier, stronger places and places where people trust and care about each other. And the more involved and engaged we are, the more likely we are to care about our communities and to be committed to working on their behalf in the future” (Beatley, 2005, p.5).

McMillan & Chavis (1986, p.19) state that a “clear and empirically validated understanding of sense of community” can aid lawmakers and planners in preparing programs targeted specifically at strengthening and preserving community. The authors also cite Glenwick and Jason’s (1980) work to demonstrate that the “community psychologist” can develop tools and methods through which community-building behaviors can be fostered. Finally, the authors also state that through the understanding of how communities are formed, better maintained housing can be designed and thus provide for better use of surrounding areas, as based on Newman (1981). Also noted is Ahlbrandt and Cunningham’s (1979) work that asserted that neighborhoods with a “strong social fabric” include members who invest the most in home improvements (McMillan & Chavis 1986).

### 2.2.1 Built Environment on Community

The literature review also uncovered a number of built environment-related factors that may impact communities and community building, which are detailed below and also summarized in Figure 4. These factors serve as the foundational understanding of what impacts community building in the built environment context, such that the new factors specific to university campuses as defined by this study can then be compared and contrasted against this list in Figure 4.

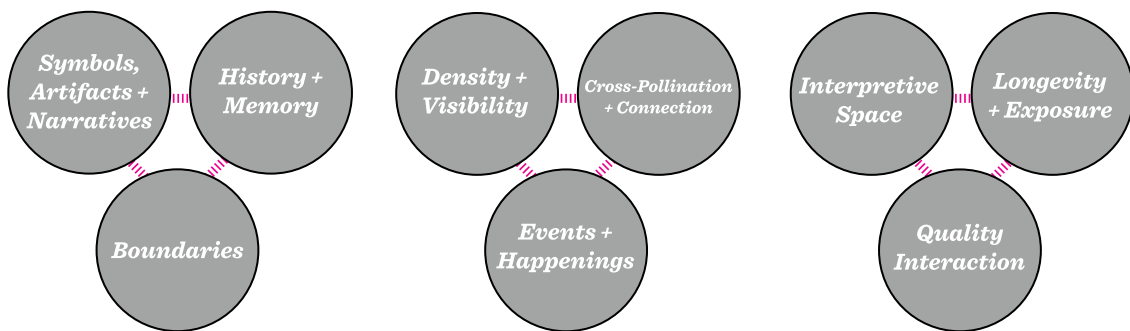


Figure 4: Built environment factors affecting community; as revealed through the literature review

#### *Symbols, artifacts and narrative.*

Common symbol systems act to maintain group boundaries in communities, and understanding these common symbols are necessary in order to understand the community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Examples of neighborhood symbols include names, landmarks, logos or architectural styles, and on the national level they include holidays, flag designs and language (Jung, 1912; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). *Narrative* is one dimension of experience of place as presented by Nenonen and Kojo (2013, p.7), citing physical artifacts as the most concrete part of expressing organizational culture, and as a means to establish an “indirect, or mediated, relationship between ourselves and the world” based on the findings of Schein (1984) and Lantolf (2000).

According to Mehrhoff (1990, p.12), places can also become symbols, especially in culture, as with the Jefferson Monument in Washington, DC that became a “repository of emotionally charged ideas” and an “important vehicle for the communication of meaning” about the newly forming American Republic. Other early American monuments like Monticello and the University of Virginia campus both in the US state of Virginia and designed by Thomas Jefferson, were constructed in the spirit of the new American government to “derive a sense of purpose and order for their unprecedented historical

experience” (p.13) that came from viewing these symbols. This happens as a result of the human mind functioning symbolically, which occurs when one component of the mind’s experience (the symbol) “elicits consciousness and beliefs about other components of its experience (its meaning)” (Mehrhoff, 1990, p.12).

Some sections of Las Vegas, Nevada, USA, according to Gottdiener (2000), are examples of multi-themed and multi-leveled symbolic environments created through the difference caused by new casino developments. The whole of Vegas is a sprawling symbol of consumption, where the “entire external environment creates its own system of significance through metonymical contrasts and has become an immense, themed consumer space” (Gottdiener, 2000, p.281).

#### *History and memory.*

Architect Daniel Libeskind, architect of both the Jewish museum in Berlin and the competition winner for the new World Trade Center site design in New York City, spoke of the need to “resist the erasure of history, the need to respond to history, the need to open the future, that is, to delineate the invisible on the basis of the visible” (Libeskind, 1999, p.127). Additionally, in *Power of Place*, Dolores Hay similarly proposes using urban landscapes to “preserve and celebrate the social histories embedded in them” (vanMeter & Murphy, 2012, p.2).

#### *Boundaries.*

In McMillan and Chavis’ (1986, p.9) *membership* component of community, boundaries act to define borders and thus the “people who belong and people who do not” belong to communities. Elements used to create these boundaries vary, ranging from non-built elements like deviants, such as heretics or witches during Puritan times (Erikson, 1966), or language, dress, rituals or symbols (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Nisbet & Perrin, 1977). Gang graffiti can even mark territory as it can only be interpreted by the members themselves (Berger & Neuhaus, 1977; Bernard, 1973). Such boundaries are established to protect personal space (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), or to protect against threat (Park, 1924; Perucci, 1963).

#### *Density and visibility.*

McMillan and Chavis (1986, p.13) present “contact hypothesis” as part of their work on shared emotional connections. Drawing from the work of multiple scholars, the pair surmised that “the more people interact, the more likely they are to become close”.

Proximity, proposed by Jacobs (1961), facilitates such interaction especially in the case of mixed-use buildings (combining residential, commercial and institutional elements). Also proposed by Jacobs, setting mixed-use buildings close to one another strengthens the economy of a place and allows people to travel shorter distances for their daily needs; this is also connected to triangulation and the grouping of disparate components together (Whyte, 1980). Jacobs (1961) also linked the diversity that mixed-use buildings bring to the strengthening of the identity of a place for its residents.

Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) showed that “increased population size and density do not significantly weaken local community sentiments”, adding to McMillan and Chavis’ (1986, p.14) understanding of non-location bound communities.

Whyte (1988, p.129) added that “sight lines are important. If people do not see a space, they will not use it.” Connecting to community, Whyte (1980, p.19) said “what attracts people most, it would appear, is other people”, linking both the use of space and the interaction in social settings or community to visibility. Of food, Whyte (1980, p.50) said “if you want to seed a place with activity, put out food.” Thus, food is a factor in attracting other people and giving life to a space. Whyte (1980) also uncovered tendencies of people using high traffic areas to stop and converse and be immersed in the “mainstream”, regardless of whether that action prevents others from moving freely.

#### *Cross-pollination and connection.*

The mixing and connectivity of members, also linked to permeability, manifests itself through practices like co-working and triangulation. In permeability, Jacobs (1961) holds that roads and pedestrian routes should be well connected and intersect often such that users can navigate cities and urban environments with ease. Co-working involves a social-oriented working environment in a shared space between members with shared values or interests. The co-working setup aims to foster a sense of community and allow for cross-pollination between users of the space (Wagner, 2011 as referenced by Kojo & Nenonen, 2012). The five values of co-working are community, collaboration, openness, sustainability, and accessibility (Jones *et al.*, 2009; Kwiatkowski & Buczynski 2011 as referenced by Kojo & Nenonen, 2012). The social element built into co-working spaces facilitates the blending of social and professional connectivity between members. Collaboration is a result of co-working, which refers to the willingness to cooperate with others to create shared value (Kojo & Nenonen, 2012).

McMillan and Chavis (1986, p.13) also note interpersonal attraction and competence as another “reinforcer” of community. Citing works by Hester *et. al* (1976), Zander and Havelin (1960) and Rappaport (1977), they found that “people were attracted to others

whose skills or competence can benefit them in some way” and that people seem to be attracted to others who offer them the most rewards, known as “person-environment fit.”

Whyte’s (1980) phenomenon of triangulation is where some “external stimulus” provides a linkage and social bond between strangers. Modern placemaking practitioners like the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) regularly use triangulation to achieve a stronger sense of place for their clients, calling it the act of clustering activities together to create busy, dynamic places for many different types of people at different times of the day (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e).

#### *Events and happenings.*

McMillan and Chavis’ (1986, p.14) shared valent event hypothesis states that “the more important the shared event is to those involved, the greater the community bond.” As posed by the authors, an example of an event in the university context is a dormitory basketball game, where a successful result (a win) brings players and fans of the winning team closer together.

#### *Interpretive space.*

Personalizing space, or modifying it according to individual interpretations, alters the meaning of ‘space’ and facilitates the evolution to ‘place.’ Personalization is the “act of modifying the physical environment and an expression of claiming territory, of caring for and nurturing the claimed territory” (Mehta & Bosson, 2009, p.781). Advantages to personalization include modifying an environment to meet individual needs and specific activity patterns and making territory “distinctive and identifiable”, thus providing “psychological security, a symbolic aesthetic, and the marking of territory” (Lang, 1987; Edney, 1976 as cited by Mehta & Bosson, 2009, p.781).

Nenonen and Kojo (2013) propose *importance* as another dimension of experience of place, such that spaces “feel like one’s own” and supports users’ identity and values. This dimension of importance is tied to a sense of belonging and a sense of territory. According to Nenonen and Kojo (2013, p.8), “appropriation and belonging are psychosocial aspects expressed through territoriality at work” and that a sense of territory is “associated with feelings of belonging and ownership.”

Intimacy can also be associated with interpretive space and is a form of investment. Achieving a level of intimacy – or the extent to which a member opens up to others in the context of emotion and psychological pain – with community members affects

the general sense of community (Aronson & Mills, 1959; Peterson & Martens, 1972 as referenced by McMillan & Chavis, 1986).

A proponent of free, flexible space, Whyte (1980, p.57) said “a good plaza starts on the street corner” where the transition between street and plaza “should be such that it is hard to tell where one ends and the other begins.” His contention was that street-facing seating is preferred as the life and activity of the street corner is attractive for users of the plaza. Whyte discounts objects that are designed to be immovable or inflexible for users, such as benches, referring to them as “design artifacts the purpose of which is to punctuate architectural photographs” (p.116). Flexible space affords choice, where fixed individual seats do the opposite, according to Whyte. “The designer is saying you sit here and you sit there. This is arrogant of him. People are much better at this than designers” Whyte said (p.121).

#### *Longevity and exposure.*

Glynn (1981), writing of the strongest predictors of actual sense of community, stated the three following factors: (1) expected length of community residency, (2) satisfaction with the community, and (3) the number of neighbors one could identify by first name. Glynn’s work also uncovered a positive relationship between sense of community and the ability for members to function “competently” in that community (McMillan & Chavis, 1986), such that members need not leave the community to complete basic functions. Combining these findings with McMillan and Chavis’ “contact hypothesis” as well, they point toward a temporal aspect in communities where bonds and sense of community strengthen with time, and the duration of contact with a community.

#### *Quality interaction.*

Positivism associated with interactions aids in the strengthening of bonds, such that the “more positive the experience and the relationship the greater the bond” (Cook, 1970 as cited by McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p.13). Elder (1998, p.14) found that the establishment of a sense of place is essential to establishing a sense of community. The exploration of cultural aspects of a community, like the inter-relationships of teachers and students at different educational levels or different generations in a town, affirms “human history is integral to the natural history of a landscape”. Thus the quality of interaction of people in a place will affect the sense of community there, and the performance of the space can be a factor in the quality of the experience.

The perceived level of safety has a direct impact on the preference for neighboring (a

safe neighborhood is a “good” neighborhood) (Doolittle & MacDonald, 1978). Jacobs’ (1961) tenet of natural surveillance states that when the built environment is constructed at a “human” scale, specifically with buildings bordering public spaces, this brings those buildings into the normal backdrop of everyday activities, such that this creates safe urban environments where people will feel welcome. These active, urban places that result foster a strong community.

## 2.3 PLACE AND PLACEMAKING

### 2.3.1 Place vs. Space

Distinguishing between “place” and “space”, Nenonen and Kojo (2013) contend that through links to works by Lefebvre (1991), Massey (1994), Soja (1996) and Casey (1998) the distinctions between terms *space* and *place* have become major questions in the last decades. Additionally, Seamon and Sowers (2008, p.1) ask: “what exactly is place? Is it merely a synonym for location, or a unique ensemble of nature and culture, or should it be more?”. Beyond presenting the origins of the word “place” from Aristotle or the Romans, Sime (1986, p.49) further pondered about the degree to which a place can be created through “physical artifacts” on “behalf of building users”.

A “third place” is one that acts as a place of refuge outside of the home or workplace, where people can regularly visit to socialize with friends, co-workers or strangers. Ray Oldenburg, who coined the term “third place,” describes them as a welcoming and comfortable place that is visited by regulars, and a place to meet old friends and make new ones. Examples of third places are small businesses, cafes, pubs, restaurants or retail stores (Mehta & Bosson, 2009).

This study aligns itself most closely with Sime’s (1986 p.50) presentation of the difference of space and place, demonstrated through his comparison between how architects who “design spaces” and those who “create places.” According to Sime, to simply design spaces is to overly concentrate on “properties of geometric space” while paying “insufficient attention to the activities and experiences” that the space will host. In contrast, creating places focuses further on the “meaning of the spaces *behind* the walls” [emphasis added], not simply the walls themselves. In short, ‘places’ for Sime are simply ‘spaces’ that the “architect[s] and/or potential users of the ‘spaces’ actually ‘like’” (p.50). Gieryn (2000) adds three necessary and sufficient features for place, which are (1) geographic location; (2) material form; and (3) the investment with meaning and value.



Finally, Sime also refers to Venturi's work (1966) where 'place' implies a strong emotional tie, temporary or more long lasting, between a person and a particular physical location. For Sime, the goal for any 'place' is to be a physical location that delivers a positive or satisfactory experience – a goal to which all of the “best” architecture should aspire (Sime, 1986).

### **2.3.2 Placemaking**

Placemaking is a theory dating back to the 1960s, and is considered both a philosophy and a process. First, as a *philosophy*, it is the desire to unite people around a larger vision (or narrative) for a particular location. Once this vision is in place, it allows people to look at their physical environments with fresh eyes, and as potential vehicles for delivering that vision. Second, as a *process*, it is the tools, strategies and methods to help achieve a successful sense of place in a given location. In other words, it is the “how” of actually realizing the aforementioned vision in a place (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e).

The genesis of placemaking can be traced back to the 1960s when Jane Jacobs' 1961 *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* and Holly Whyte's similar efforts while working with the New York City Planning Commission were redefining the meaning of cities around a focus on people, and creating lively neighborhoods and inviting public spaces. Jacob's ideas like *eyes on the street* worked to promote life on sidewalks and citizen ownership of streets, thereby seizing control away from speculative urban planners (Fraser, 2009), while Whyte underscored the “essential elements for creating social life in public spaces” (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e). Through these pioneering steps to link people and cities, these two thinkers serve as the foundation for the practice of placemaking.

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has been a visible authority on placemaking since 1975 and was founded largely on Whyte's methods and findings. The New York City-based nonprofit planning, design and educational organization describes itself as “dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities” (Project for Public Spaces, 2013a). Related to the aforementioned discussion between the meaning of 'space' and 'place', PPS also hold those terms as distinctly different – space is a “physical description of a piece of land”, while place “connotes an emotional attachment to the piece of land” (PPS, 2000).

Due to PPS' extended and intimate exposure to placemaking, it is regarded as an expert practitioner of the discipline and a key resource for this study.



*Placemaking defined.*

Several definitions of placemaking exist. Schneekloth and Shibley (1995, p.1) define it as “the way all of us as human beings transform the places in which we find ourselves into the places in which we live.” The Metropolitan Planning Council of Chicago define it as “a people-centered approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces” that involves “looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover needs and aspirations” (Placemaking Chicago, 2008, p.5). Armed with such information, those insights are then used to “create a common vision for that place” that can evolve into an implementation strategy of actions big and small, bringing benefits to both the public spaces and the people who use them. Much like a common vision provides, the “Genius of a Place” can also guide placemaking efforts, which is the set of unique characteristics that define a certain locale, where this understanding can be used to either preserve those characteristics, or to drive them towards change (vanMeter & Murphy, 2012).

Placemaking has also been described as the “art of creating public places of the soul that uplift and help us connect to each other” (Placemaking Chicago, 2008, p.5). Placemaking creates places where people are “kissing and taking off shoes” (Fullenwider, 2010). Placemaking is often referred to as a component of the practice of urban design, which is defined by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) Urban Design Chapter (Sargeant, 2009, p.2) as:

“[Urban Design is] the way places look, how they work and how they connect people to the environment. Good urban design aims to unite the needs of nature, the build environment and the community. It recognizes the concerns of people and the environment and the possibilities of planning and architecture to deliver innovative, attractive, functional and sustainable places” (Sargeant, 2009, p.2).

*Implementation.*

Placemaking seeks to improve spaces where communities gather, such as streets, sidewalks, parks, buildings, etc., such that they “invite greater interaction between people and foster healthier, more social, and economically viable communities” (Placemaking Chicago, 2008, p.5).

The primary outcome of placemaking is the creation of “places”. Further, users are at the center of placemaking practices, where urban design seeks to meet the needs of the users of places as determined by the benchmarks identified by the users themselves (as opposed to designers). Central to placemaking is public participation and generating

lively, genuine communities, thus any process labeled as placemaking devoid of this element “dilutes the true value” of the philosophy (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e). Placemaking also extends outside of cities alone and is applicable to suburbs as well as towns and other centers (Place Focus, 2012).

The benefits of place, as proposed by PPS, are outlined in Figure 5 below (Lanham, 2007, p.19). Key resources, tools and methods for placemaking used by PPS include the Place Diagram, the Power of 10, place evaluation, triangulation and Place Games. Examples of these are shown in Figure 6 (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e).

The Benefits of Place		
<b>Builds &amp; Support the Local Economy</b>	<b>Nurtures &amp; Defines Community Identity</b>	<b>Fosters Frequent &amp; Meaningful Contact</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small-scale entrepreneurship</li> <li>• More quality goods available</li> <li>• Higher real estate values</li> <li>• Local ownership, local value</li> <li>• More desirable jobs</li> <li>• Increased currency velocity</li> <li>• Greater tax revenue</li> <li>• Less need for municipal services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater community organization</li> <li>• Sense of pride and volunteerism</li> <li>• Perpetuation of integrity and values</li> <li>• “Mutual coercion, mutually agreed upon”</li> <li>• Less need for municipal control</li> <li>• Self-managing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves sociability</li> <li>• More cultural exposure, interaction</li> <li>• Exchanges and preserves information, wisdom, values</li> <li>• Supports barter system</li> <li>• Reduces race and class barriers</li> <li>• Feeling of interconnection</li> </ul>
<b>Creates Improved Accessibility</b>	<b>Promotes Sense of Comfort</b>	<b>Draws a Diverse Population</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More walkable</li> <li>• Safe for pedestrians</li> <li>• Compatible with public transit</li> <li>• Reduces need for cars and parking</li> <li>• More efficient use of time and money</li> <li>• Greater connections between uses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visually pleasing</li> <li>• Generally stimulating</li> <li>• Sense of belonging</li> <li>• Greater security</li> <li>• Better environment quality</li> <li>• Feeling of freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More women, elderly, and children</li> <li>• Greater ethnic and cultural pluralism</li> <li>• Encourages a range of activities and uses</li> <li>• New service, retail, and customer niches</li> <li>• Variation and character in built environment</li> <li>• Encourages community creativity</li> </ul>

Figure 5: Benefits of place, derived from Project for Public Spaces (Lanham, 2007, p.19)

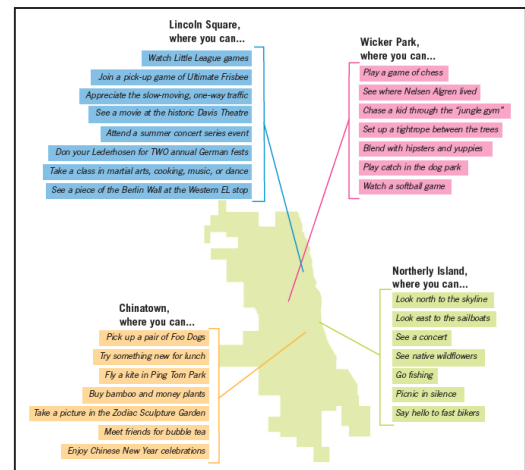
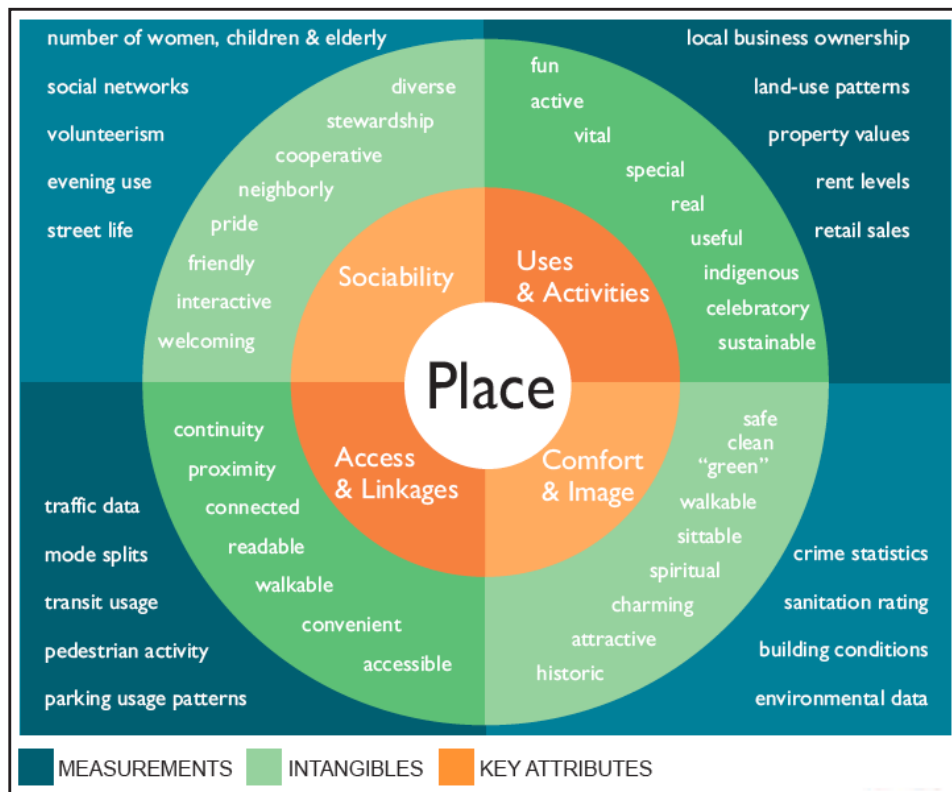


Figure 6: Placemaking resources, tools and methods used by PPS (Project for Public Spaces, 2013)  
Top: Place Diagram; Bottom, left and right: Power of 10

## 2.4 COMMUNITY BUILDING THROUGH PLACEMAKING

### 2.4.1 Placemaking for Universities

On the current state of university campuses, PPS has worked to address an apparent need for change with how many have been designed and their effectiveness in building a sense of community and connection:

“...Many campuses lack quality squares, commons, or other places that bring their community together for interaction and fun. Attention and money is lavished on facilities, rather than the critical spaces between buildings. Even in strict financial terms, this approach doesn’t make sense when you consider that it is the special places on campus that alumni best remember, and it is very often these places that play a strong role in attracting new students” (PPS, 2005).

Accomplishing this, according to PPS, calls for building initiatives designed to affect not only the needs of academic programs, but also to encourage non-academic activities through a collection of distinct gathering places and the like that foster a “greater sense of connection” (PPS, 2005).

Through studies conducted by global architecture, design and planning firm Gensler, building a sense of community is also couched as essential to the success of university campuses. Gensler’s studies (2011) found that creating a sense of community was one of the most important trends impacting the teaching/learning experience (see Figure 7 below). Findings show that while university administrators recognize the pervasiveness of social networks, and according to one administrator, “the students need to feel a pattern of community and Facebook isn’t going to cut it” (p.2). Findings also revealed a wish for pedagogy to incorporate collaborative learning, and educators want campuses to integrate traditionally separated academic disciplines (Gensler, 2011).

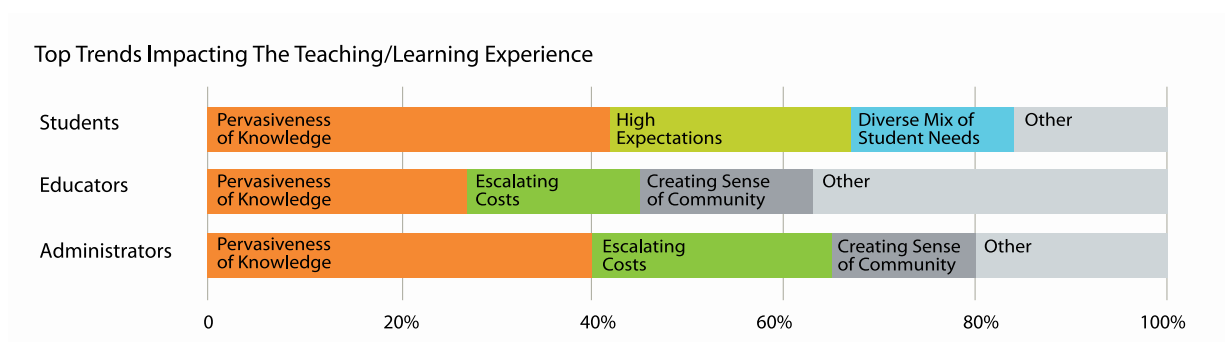


Figure 7: Top trends impacting the teaching/learning experience  
(Gensler Education Roundtables, 2011, p.4)

### 2.4.2 Examples of Placemaking in University Context

The Project for Public Spaces has initiated multiple examples of placemaking projects in the context of university campuses. Two of those examples are detailed below.

#### *Case Western Student Master Plan: Ohio, USA (2002).*

Case Western Reserve University wanted a campus where students could learn and participate in the nearby community. An initial vision for the desired environment included adjectives like welcoming, safe and interesting. To uncover the site's potential, PPS held a placemaking workshop to develop ideas and a new vision to address an area of the campus known as the "heart of campus." In the workshop a mix of stakeholders – including students, professors and other University staff – developed a set of short- and long-term small-scale improvements, plus a plan to implement them (Project for Public Spaces, 2013b).

Key issues the workshop addressed were the perceived absence of student engagement or fun being had on campus. PPS also uncovered the need for better gathering places and a priority on improving several facets of the pedestrian environment. Opportunities were then identified for outdoor eating places, increased retail options and kiosks, and improved signage and wayfinding, transit, landscaping and pedestrian experiences (Project for Public Spaces, 2013b).

The resulting plan following the workshop avoided removing all contrasting elements from the existing campus, opting instead to "draw disparate parts into a rich and unique composition that unifies and spatially interconnects the elements as a dynamic mosaic, representative of the Case Community" (Case Western University, 2010). See Figure 8.

#### *Duke University Central Square, West Campus: North Carolina, USA (2002).*

Duke University commissioned a study in 2002 that revealed that while an open plaza at the center of the campus area was designed to be a focal point and gathering place for students, it was in fact greatly underused. The University then sought to redevelop this space to create a central, democratic space to serve as a "public forum for student activities, a place for casual encounters, and a space for the entire student population to unite as a whole." The vision for the space was to transform it from a physical gathering place to a "spiritual, emotional, social and intellectual crossroads for the entire Duke community" (Project for Public Spaces, 2013d).

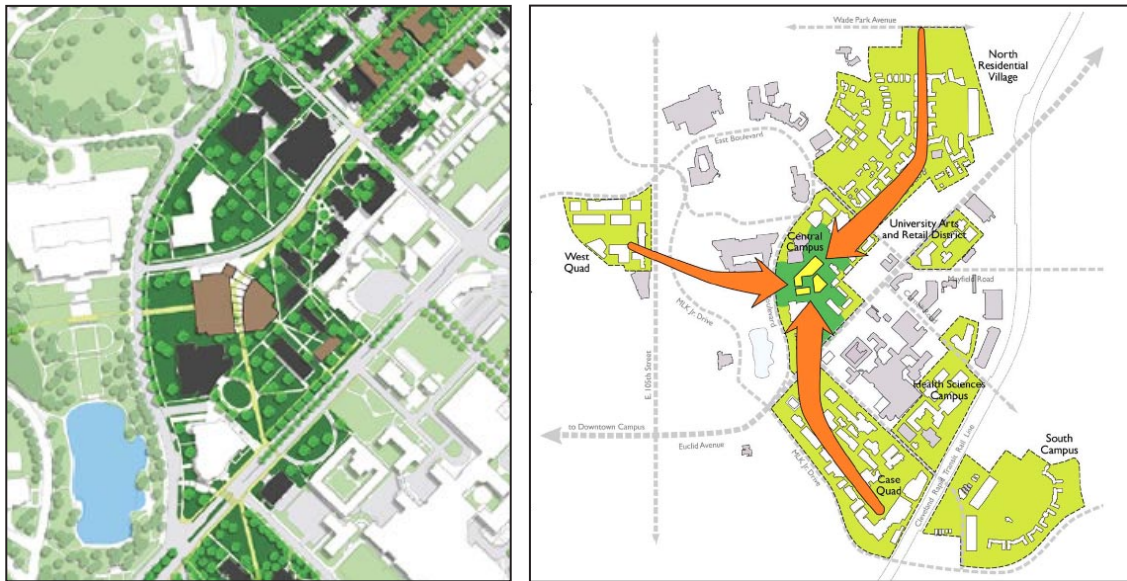
Architecture firm Hargreaves Associates partnered with PPS, and PPS soon analyzed the current state of the campus through student, faculty and staff surveys, interviews

and community workshops. Those studies revealed the need for a range of activities, amenities and events to be made available at the location. In particular, the students wanted a “comfortable, inviting space with places to sit, places to eat, places to play and gather — all the while feeling as though they are in a connected place that is uniquely “Duke,” and that reflects the diverse and active student body.” The data gathered uncovered needs including a flexible space that could host celebrations and performances on top of everyday activities like studying and eating, plus unique activities like outdoor movies, games and student activity advertisements (Project for Public Spaces, 2013d).

In response, PPS recommended the building of proper amenities to address the needs uncovered, such as a variety of “movable seating options, café tables, shade structures, temporary stage areas for exhibiting student art, flexible outdoor furniture, gaming tables, and seasonal plantings.” Many of the recommendations were incorporated into the new design and construction of the plaza was completed in late 2006 (Project for Public Spaces, 2013d). The plaza has become a central outdoor space for the campus, with various food carts, outdoor eating spots and spaces for parties and rallies as well as studying and socializing (Duke University, 2013). See Figure 9.

In an article for PPS, Jay Walljasper (2009) reported on the state of college campuses and the effect that placemaking could have upon them. “A lot of campuses today fall short of the mark in providing lively public places that are as important as classrooms in offering a well-rounded education” he said, “and today there is a dawning realization that making our campuses better places for public interaction enhances the creative atmosphere for students, professors, staff and companies that partner with colleges. University officials are becoming more aware of how the look and feel of a campus influences the overall educational experience” (p.1). He further reports that organizations like PPS have taken up the cause to instill placemaking on university campuses as “admissions departments increasingly realize that a lively, welcoming campus makes a good impression on prospective freshmen and their parents. Even alumni donations depend in part on keeping the campus vital and attractive for potential benefactors coming back for a visit” (Walljasper, 2009, p.2).





*Figure 8: Case Western Reserve University central campus plan drawings  
(Case Western University, 2010)*



*Figure 9: Duke University placemaking planning sketch  
(Project for Public Spaces, 2013)*

### *Placemaking and its role in building community.*

Various scholars have studied the connection between place and community. Edward Relph's *Place and Placeness* is a significant work towards understanding place and its nature and meaning in people's lives. Through phenomenology – the interpretive study of human experience – Relph came to the conclusion that place is a “fundamental aspect of people's existence in the world” as places are “fusions of human and natural order and are the significant centers of our immediate experiences of the world.” Further, “regardless of the historical time or the geographical, technological, and social situation, *people will always need place*, because having a place and identifying with place are integral to what and who we are as human beings” Relph said (Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p.8).

In another example, Theodori & Kyle (2008, p.87) make a link between place and community:

“No local community exists nowhere; every local community exists, in fact, somewhere. Accordingly, the local community has geographic location. In and around this locality is material form, both natural and man-made. The physical locale with a compilation of material form is invested with varied meanings and sentiments by its residents. The meanings and values of a community are imagined, felt and understood in varying degrees by the people who live there. These meanings and values are often expressed and perpetuated through public discourse, collective representations, and rhetorical devices, including heritage narratives and community typifications” (Theodori & Kyle, 2008, p.87).

Theodori and Kyle (2008) also cite Wilkinson (1991) and his two additional attributes of (1) “a more or less complete local society”; and (2) “place-oriented collective actions among a local population” that bring place to be an “essential element of community” (Theodori & Kyle, 2008, p.87).

PPS has developed the *Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places*, a set of 11 key elements to transform public spaces into thriving community places (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e). Based on PPS' list, the 11 points have been summarized and grouped into Table 1.



Category	Title	Description
<b>Users/ Input</b>	Community Is The Expert	Identify community experts for insights; tap them to collect meaningful elements or critical issues, especially at the beginning of process.
	Look for Partners	Partners provide support and momentum; i.e. local institutions, museums, schools, etc.
	You Can See a Lot Just By Observing	Look at how people are using existing public spaces; learn from likes/dislikes.
<b>Strategy + Approach</b>	Create a Place, Not a Design	Go beyond design; make physical elements that enable comfort, empowerment, activities and effective synergies.
	Have a Vision	Establishes overall direction for the project; goal is to instill sense of pride in people living and working in the area.
	Form Supports Function	Use stakeholder needs and roles of existing assets to set guidelines for a future place vision.
<b>Execution</b>	Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper	Start with short-term improvements, test and refine; no need to do everything at first.
	Triangulate	Develop external stimuli that produce linkages between members; arrange elements together and add other supplemental amenities.
	Money Is Not the Issue	Broaden understanding of value of place; many improvements are inexpensive; costs savings can come from partnerships, etc.
	They Always Say “It Can’t Be Done”	Encountering obstacles is inevitable; demonstrate importance of “places” at first through small-scale, community nurturing improvements.
	You Are Never Finished	As needs evolves so must places; be open to need for change and have management flexibility in place.

*Table 1: PPS’ 11 Principles for Creating Great Community in Places (Project for Public Spaces, 2013e); List summarized for the purposes of this study*



Factory view, Arabia campus

Photo: Tuomas Sahramaa



### 3. CASE STUDY: AALTO UNIVERSITY

*This Chapter describes the structure of Aalto University, its history and strategy for the future. Also included is a review of select publications issued by the University that note the cultivation of the Aalto community, especially with respect to the new campus configuration.*

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION: AALTO UNIVERSITY

Aalto University was founded in January 2010 in order to strengthen the Finnish innovation system through integrating expertise in science and technology, business and economics as well as art and design (Aalto University, 2011c). Aalto was created through a merger of three universities: the former Helsinki University of Technology in Otaniemi, Espoo, the Helsinki School of Economics in Töölö in downtown Helsinki, and the University of Art and Design Helsinki in Arabia. Aalto University not only builds on Finnish values, but also the strengths and accomplishments of its founding universities with hopes to achieve world-class status by the year 2020. Aalto's 2010 mission statement read: "Aalto University works towards a better world by promoting top-quality research and interdisciplinary collaboration, pioneering education, surpassing traditional boundaries, and embracing renewal" (Aalto University, 2011d, p.7).

Aalto consists of nearly 20,000 basic degree and graduate students, plus a staff of 4,700, of which nearly 350 are professors (Aalto-www, 2012d). There are now a total of six schools, the School of Business, and the School of Arts, Design & Architecture, and the School of Science & Technology consists of the remaining four: the Schools of Chemical Technology, Electrical Engineering, Engineering and Science (Aalto-www, 2013a). The School of Science & Technology accounts for more than 70% of the student population, while the School of Business accounts for nearly 20%, and the remaining 9% are from the School of Arts & Design (Aalto-www, 2012d). Figure 10 (next page) further illustrates the configuration of Aalto as of 2013 (Aalto University, 2012, p.15), and Table 2 (next page) shows the names of the schools as they appear in this study.

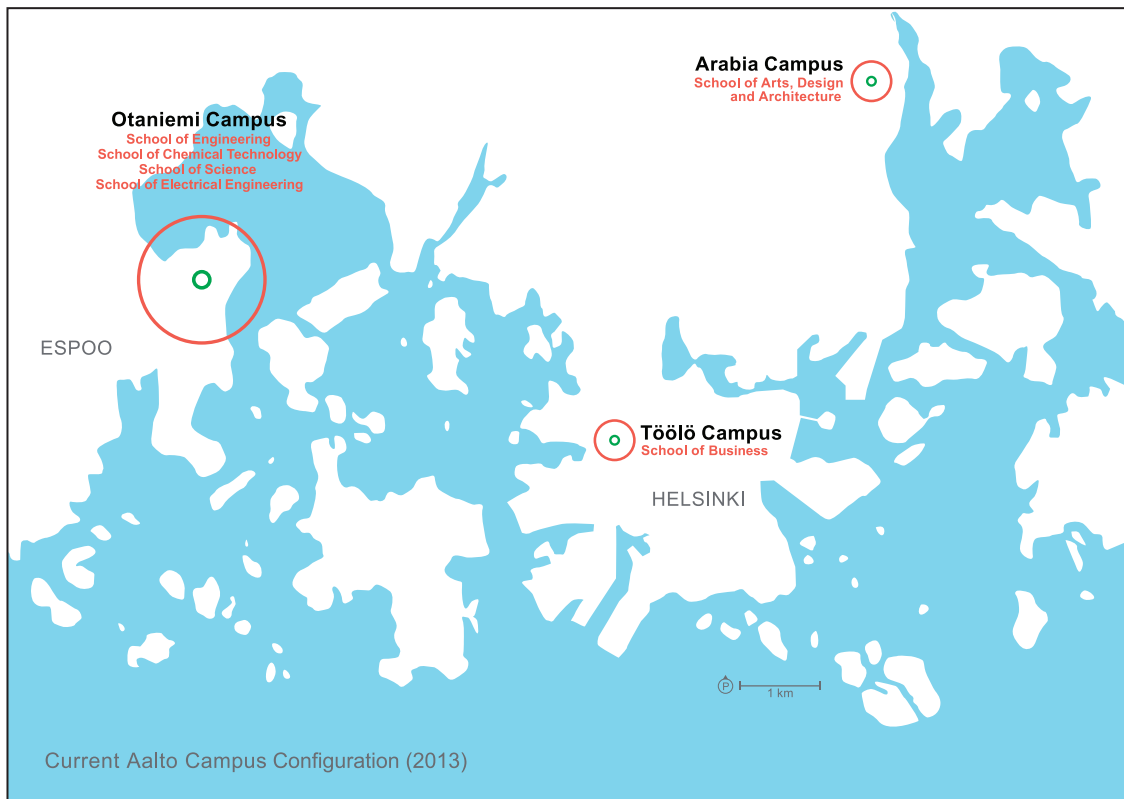


Figure 10: Aalto University campuses as of 2013; Modified from Official 2015 Campus Competition Programme area (Aalto University, 2012, p.15)

School Name	Abbr. in Study	Location	Other Names Used in Study
Aalto School of Business	BIZ	Töölö, Helsinki	Helsinki School of Economics, Aalto School of Economics, HSE
Aalto School of Arts, Design & Architecture	ARTS	Arabia, Helsinki	Helsinki University of Arts and Design, Aalto School of Arts, Design & Creativity, TaiK
Aalto School of Science & Technology	TECH	Otaniemi, Espoo	Aalto School of Engineering, TKK

Table 2: Names and abbreviations for Schools of Aalto University as appearing in this study

*Strategic foundations.*

From the University's published strategy, one of Aalto's strengths is its approach to multi-disciplinarity. Through such interdisciplinary cooperation, Aalto is striving to improve the quality of its activities and to exploit the opportunities provided by its multi-disciplinary profile. This deliberately engineered climate of multi-disciplinarity is primarily driven by a premium based on research goals, where scientific breakthroughs and innovations derive increasingly from multi-disciplinary research cooperation as one discipline of science studies and explores the borders of another (Aalto University, 2011c).

Given that the University is principally dedicated to long-term, high-quality research of high scientific value and impact on society, Aalto's "unique profile" of combining science, art, technology, economics and design reportedly stimulates interdisciplinary collaboration and facilitates the birth of new innovations. Plus, multi-disciplinarity can best help combat the world's great global challenges through intensive collaboration between many different fields of interest (Aalto University, 2011c).

In addition to Aalto's focus on research, special attention is paid also to evolving student services. According to Aalto's strategy, student services will be organized in a "flexible and accessible way" with special attention paid to the wellbeing of students and to their academic progress. Stated routes to wellbeing include an inclusive environment and positive atmosphere, with sports facilities and cultural activities on hand to support the "physical, psychological and social abilities of the students" (Aalto University, 2011d, p.27).

*One campus to Otaniemi.*

Following the drafting of a new, visionary strategy for Aalto and a survey of the University's portfolio of facilities and built assets, the "campus question" arose of "how these fundamental ideas and core competencies be supported in practice by spatial and campus design?" (Rytkönen, 2012, p.44). In short, Aalto began to envision a future where the three currently detached campuses in Otaniemi, Töölö and Arabia would eventually migrate to one, single location.

After fervent debate amongst Aalto's administration, student population, student unions, media and the public (Rytkönen, 2012), Aalto's Board decided on June 17, 2011 to develop the current facilities of the School of Science & Technology in Otaniemi into a central hub for Aalto University. This decision effectively moved the University of Arts & Design wholly to Otaniemi from Arabia, plus all Bachelors' studies programs from the School of Business to Otaniemi as well. This new, single campus model was favored



as it fed into Aalto's mission of being a multi-disciplinary and creative university. In an interview for this study with Rebecca Piekkari, Vice Dean at the Aalto School of Business in Research and International Relations, she attributed much of Aalto's future model to what had been witnessed by members of the Aalto board in North American universities:

(Piekkari): "The whole idea comes very much through the American Board Member Bengt Holmström who has made his career in the US, he had a very influential role in insisting that at least all of the bachelor-level education should be centralized to Otaniemi, and that's in line with our [University] President's vision as well. And now the graduate [Business School] education will stay here [in Töölö]."

A notable exception to this new joint solution was the retention of the School of Business' Master's studies programs currently housed at the Töölö campus, in order to maintain some advantages stemming from that campus' central location in downtown Helsinki (Aalto-www, 2012b). Piekkari acknowledged the resulting solution as a mix of physical and mental spaces, with an achievable sense of shared community despite still remaining fractionally co-located:

(Piekkari): "Our vision, the School of Economics vision of the campus, in terms of developing this [Töölö] location on a long-term basis, our take to this is that it's not all about the physicality, the physical location, but rather creating a sense of community through other means, and through joint successes and different ties, and so on.

We very much conceptualize this idea of a learning and teaching environment to contain things and activities happening outside the classroom, so both the learning spaces inside the classrooms, but also both the physical and the mental space, and the feeling to the University, regardless whether we are all co-located or physically a little scattered around."

Aalto's Board also decided to incorporate the Department of Architecture, formerly a part of the School of Science & Technology, to the School of Arts & Design, which began operations at the beginning of 2012 (Aalto-www, 2012b). By 2015 Aalto University will be split into two primary locations – the majority in Otaniemi and the rest in downtown Helsinki.

### 3.2 Document Analysis: Considering Community in the Campus

While Aalto's official strategy contains relatively little about the development of the campus towards goals other than promoting research and learning, a few mentions of community or student life were uncovered in the analysis of documents published by Aalto. Shown in Figure 11 below, the key documents analyzed for this study included: *Aalto University: A Campus Vision for a Thriving Learning Community* (February 2011), *Aalto Life Manual* (June 2011), *Campus 2015 Competition Programme* (April 2012), *A Vision for Aalto University's Campus* (June 2011), and *Campus Committee: 'Sharing: Spaces for Learning and Teaching – and the Student Experience'* (May 2011). This document analysis was conducted in order to act as a source of background data and pre-understanding into the University's approach toward building a sense of Aalto community.



Figure 11: Aalto University research publications, front covers (Aalto University, 2013)

### *Campus vision.*

The vision for the new Otaniemi campus is mentioned in several documents, but most notably in *A Vision for Aalto University's Campus* published in the summer of 2011. Considering the “moment of birth” of this new university, spaces must be created that communicate its values, the document explains. It further insists that the new joint campus offers an opportunity to rethink the “physical level of our campuses, imagining new, powerful ways to work and to engage the world,” and while developing world-class facilities the Otaniemi campus will be “re-thought to stimulate interactions, provide better services and develop a sustainable environmental footprint.” The document recognizes the power of design as a “distinctly-Aalto University, overarching principle through which meaningful spaces that give us identity and empower us to act can be developed,” with supporting principles of sustainability, connection and distinction (Aalto University, 2011e, p.4-5).

Crucially, this campus vision document acknowledges the role of the built environment on society. Quoting University President Tuula Teeri in the document, she adds:

“Where we work, the buildings that give shape our activities, the resources we have access to – and perhaps most importantly – the people with whom we share these spaces, affect us deeply. Our potential to create, engage, learn and discover are a direct result of the types of places we have access to” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.7).

This document points towards a higher purpose for the new campus, one that goes beyond buildings that simply accommodate lecture halls alone. Rather, an ideal campus design “gives expression to the very idea of a university, expressing its core values and visions and contributing an ideal physical frame for achieving the goals of the organization” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.9-10).

Five key trends in the development of University campuses are also identified. Of these five, a *Campus of Values* and *The Open Campus* are most relevant to this study. A *Campus of Values* involves making an “explicit link between their institution’s strategy and its campus design, the plan and buildings of the university becoming a physical symbol of the values of the university” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.10). Now, Aalto’s newly stated values like “a passion for exploration” and the “freedom to be creative and critical” (Aalto-www, 2013c) may now begin to come alive as expressions of designed, physical elements of the built environment. The trend of a *Campus of Values* also places increased emphasis on the development of casual meeting and working spaces for students, especially in under-used spaces like corridors or lobbies, or even student-

designed buildings (Aalto University, 2011e).

The *Open Campus* draws on work by Jane Jacobs as it states that an open campus should “aim to serve more than one purpose, build a density of people and mingle buildings of different use and cost” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.12). Open campuses include multiple universities, corporate organizations other cultural and social actors, in addition to living facilities like housing and shops so that campuses are “populated and used around the clock” (p.12). They increasingly feature on-site student accommodation that is complemented by leisure facilities and services. Finally, cafés, restaurants and shops are prevalent in order to promote living and social interaction for both the student community and townspeople alike. By also integrating housing for families and retirees for example, open campuses are now expressed through a “campus village” concept, there the university is “integrated in a real-life society and every-day living” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.12).

*The identity and connection of Aalto’s campus solution.*

In the document entitled *A Vision for Aalto University’s Campus* (2011), a set of five principles intended to guide the University’s efforts with a sense of unity and direction are presented. Seen in Figure 12 below, these principles are (starting from the center and working out): *Identity*, *Connection*, *Sustainability*, *Design* and *Distinction* (Aalto University, 2011e, p.27). However, in the context of this thesis study, the first two segments of *Identity* and *Connection* proved the most relevant.

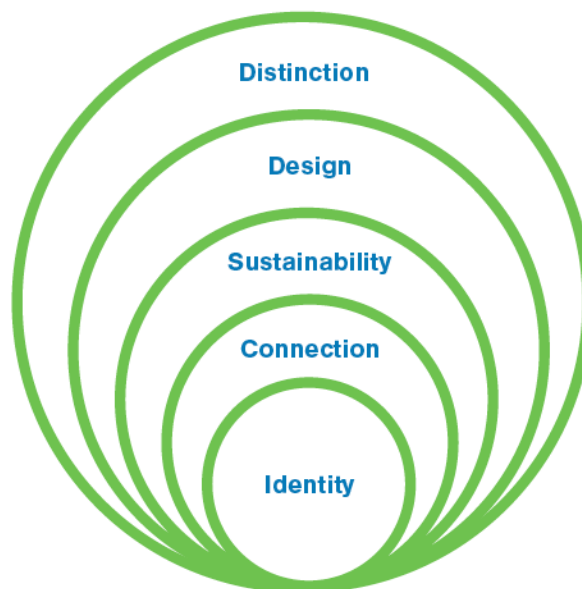


Figure 12: Five fundamental principles of Aalto University  
(Aalto University, 2011e, p.27)

### *Identity.*

First, in the *Identity* principle, the campus will give identity to Aalto University and making it possible to realize the mission of the University. The campus' look, feel and behavior will be that which is expected of Aalto, and the campus will create a unique "Aalto Spirit" through spaces and places that "support activities that enable the idea of Aalto University to be made real in practice" (p.27). In addition, the campus should make members of the university community feel like they are working for a "new, unified university with a bold and exciting mission" (Aalto University, 2011e, p.27).

### *Connection.*

In the principle of *Connection*, Aalto's campus planners see connections as the "very fabric upon which Aalto University is based: connections between people, connections between disciplines, connections to the community and connections around the world" (p.27). On top of connecting students with researchers, and researchers with businesses, etc., the campus will also connect to the outside world and the occasional visitor – thus increasing "serendipitous encounters" and links to the "surrounding community" enabled through specifically designed solutions (Aalto University, 2011e, p.28).

Additionally, connections can be enabled through shared services like unique, inviting restaurants designed not only for the Aalto, but the broader community as well. Likewise, more explicitly through the built environment and "connective spaces" for interdisciplinary activities can enable connections through the linking of existing buildings together. Corridors can be rethought as conduits for "catalyzing informal contact" and new lab spaces can blur the lines between labels like "student," "teacher" or "researcher" as already seen in the successes of Aalto Design Factory and Startup Sauna (formerly Aalto Venture Garage) (Aalto University, 2011e, p.28).

### *Co-working and ever-changing space.*

Shared or co-working spaces also feature prominently in the *Connection* principle, such as the Aalto University Learning Centre – a building that is also cited as a key tool in providing possibilities for "living in an Aalto University way" (Aalto University, 2011e). In her thesis work entitled *Ever-Changing Space: Spatial Design Guidelines for Aalto University Learning Centre*, Valeria Gryada (2012) suggests that through the application of the concept of "ever-changing space" to the Learning Centre, both actual and perceived spatial openness can be achieved, allowing the space to "be, look and feel easily approachable" (p.61). Plus, ever-changing space enables environments to allow



flexibility and to offer a mix of open, semi-open and closed spaces of different sizes, and offer new opportunities for “unexpected and unplanned use” (Gryada, 2012, p.61).

Gryada also highlights a dimension of control in such spaces. Traditionally, educational spaces impose a high degree of control over how spaces can be used, but Gryada implores the opposite. She suggests that such spaces avoid excessive orderliness in favor of freedom and creativity, such that occupants perceive it as their own and feel “empowered to re-shape it” for their own needs. This can include creating designs that communicate “unfinished-ness” and welcome users to inject their own personalities into the space. This way, Gryada suggests, the space is truly “alive” and is in a state of constant evolution and transformation (Gryada, 2012, p.63-65).

#### *Other factors.*

Finally, considerations are stated relating to the clustering of activities, increased connections, density, and spaces that span both conditions of work and play. On clustering, the campus vision sees that each Aalto School will have a “front door” to welcome visitors, and act as a central heart where members of the Aalto community can gather. Plus, activities of each school will be clustered to promote the “informal contact between research and students” (Aalto University, 2011e, p.36). Connections will be further addressed through the use of “passive spaces” like corridors and lobbies in order to “enable conversations and interactions” (p.37). Increasing density is envisioned, both within and between buildings, while the motivation behind such a strategy is not mentioned. “De-zoning” the Otaniemi campus in an “intelligent manner” is also cited, such that areas are developed to be multi-use and “combine working and living elements”, as well as adding more shared services like restaurants, cafés, shops, and leisure facilities that are slated to be “re-thought, expended and improved” (Aalto University, 2011e, P.38).

### *Social master plan for Aalto Life.*

In *Aalto Life Manual: Social Master Plan for Aalto Campus* (2011), this document sets out to detail the vision of “Aalto Life”, or the social master plan upon which the University’s newly imagined student experience will be built. Through a critical investigation about current “life” conditions at Aalto followed by a number of suggestions for creating something better for the future. With that, this document acts as an official record of how Aalto’s administration thinks the social fabric of student life is now, and how it should be in the future. Several points are encouraging as they indicate taking the physical structures of the built environment into consideration, while few explicitly stated a goal of increasing the sense of community or place at the campus. For example, the document offers “20 practical steps to improve Aalto Life” (Aalto University, 2011a, p.10-11), where several steps can be influenced by the built environment, such as:

- (1) Heart: Create central ‘heart’ of campus; key meeting place and center of student activities with restaurants, cafes, lounges, etc.; campus as living room for community;
- (2) Architecture: Build new inspiring spaces to foster change of key processes of learning and living;
- (3) Renovation: Renovate and reuse existing buildings to stimulate creativity, human interconnectedness and innovation;
- (4) Student center: Facilities including wide range of restaurants, cafés, clubs, meeting places, etc.;
- (5) Activities: Find ways of opening up the campus more to the outside world through on-campus events like performances and fairs; and
- (6) Tradition: Respect history and tradition and use it to innovate the future.

Finally, the new Aalto campus is addressed directly, stating that “in order to create a unique university social fabric, Aalto needs an environment that supports dreams, aspirations, and the open exchange of ideas. Planning of Aalto environment and spaces should be as visionary as Aalto itself” (Aalto University, 2011a, p.13). Other considerations for the campus include the use of sustainable and ecological materials, and a “connective urban fabric” that is sensitive both to pedestrians and the frequently cold weather. Also mentioned is an aspiration for a visible and accessible “active 24/7” urban center to “facilitate vibrant ongoing use” that also connects to the surrounding community and has a distinctive architectural style. The campus is said to also possibly feature mixed housing with improved services like cafés and ateliers, plus a more dense campus center with “all key functions located within 10 minute walking distance.” The campus is also

said to aspire to be more “town-like and urban” (Aalto University, 2011a, p.15).

While such references to a more active and inclusive campus plan are extremely short and succinct and lack any plans of action, they do point toward a desire to elevate the new campus to have a sense of place. More encouraging still is that many of these recommendations came through a campus committee made up of a multitude of Aalto community representatives, including students. Of the campus planning, in her interview for the study Piekari added:

(Piekari): “We are very much at the stage now of implementing the ideas that came through the campus committee work, the proposal and the suggestions, in terms of these public spaces, 24/7 open doors for students, all of this. Except for the campus issue, which was very poorly done and managed, I think that there are huge, positive opportunities for making something very interesting and unique to happen. I think that if I were a student at this time it would be fantastic to study and pick and choose from different areas. I think that it’s really very exciting.”







## 4. METHODOLOGY

*Chapter four details the empirical side of the study, namely the methods by which the data was collected and analyzed. First, the research frame is introduced, followed by an introduction to the case study approach used for the study. Then, a description of the data collection methods and research phases used are presented. Last, the trustworthiness of the study is presented in addition to the methods used to ensure the study's validity.*

### 4.1 RESEARCH FRAME

The aim of the study was to uncover the catalysts for creating a sense of community through the built environment, with a focus on university campuses. As such, the primary research question in this thesis study was:

- (1) Which elements in the built environment contribute to the development of a sense of community on the site of a university campus?

To answer the question above, other related elements were investigated to not only better understand how the built environment affected a sense of togetherness, but also to frame this question in the context of Aalto University. Thus, answers to the following sub-questions were sought as well from the study's respondents:

- (A) What is the current state of community at Aalto University?
- (B) How does the current built environment of Aalto's campuses (in Töölö, Arabia and Otaniemi) contribute to the sense of community amongst Aalto students?
- (C) How might we develop the physical spaces of the new Aalto campus in Otaniemi to better build a sense of community amongst Aalto students?



For the study, these sub-questions provided texture to the ecosystem of “community” at Aalto University, plus acted as a core structure for the in-depth interviews (Research Phase 2).

The study employed qualitative research methods. As presented by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.3), applying qualitative research methods enabled the study of respondents in their “natural settings”, and attempted to understand or interpret phenomena “in terms of the meanings people bring to them.” The authors also define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). Here, the situated nature of the activity implies that the subject matter is context dependent, and that the role of the observer – or researcher – is relevant.

Qualitative research – as opposed to quantitative research – is primarily used in cases involving discovery, where additional understanding or in-depth information is needed to understand the phenomena in question. While quantitative research is based on measurement and numerical data, qualitative research seeks to answer the questions “why” and “how” (Williams, 2007). Thus, conducting the study through quantitative methods would not have been possible in order to gain such in-depth understanding.

Finally, underlying the study is a constructivist perspective, in that the study uses several meanings of individual experiences in order to develop a theory or pattern (Creswell, 2007). Further, the study employs an interpretivist epistemology, attempting to understand the socially constructed phenomena of community in a specific context of university campuses (Carson et al., 2001).

#### **4.1.1 Action Research Approach**

As detailed in Section 1.2, this study aims to fill research gaps that are both academic and pragmatic. Specifically, due to the practical problem-solving motivation behind the study and its applicability to an existing university, plus the active role in which that university’s community played in the conduction of the study, it meets the criteria of action research. This breed of research is described as “looking at your practice to check whether it is as you feel it should be” (McNiff, 2013, p.23) or a practitioner “realizing things could be better” (Stake, 2010, p.158) who is usually acting alone and examining their own immediate surroundings. Action research is an especially appropriate approach when the research question at hand relates to “describing an unfolding series of actions that are taking place over time in a certain group, organization or other community” (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p.194).

As mentioned before, the relevant role of the researcher is a key part of the study design of qualitative approaches such as action research, in which the role of the researcher is

not purposefully minimized, but rather expected to be involved in the activities under study (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Creswell, 2007). As the Researcher was a member of the Aalto community throughout the entirety of the study, some extent of self-study was involved by quite literally looking at “one’s own place” (Stake, 2010, p.163) – that is, the Researcher’s own university campus.

## 4.2 CASE STUDY: AALTO UNIVERSITY AND BES GROUP

The study was conducted as a part of larger research initiative through the Aalto University Built Environment Services (BES) research group. Specifically, this study sought to address creative spaces and services at Aalto, in order to transform them into “learning and new knowledge creation arenas” that also promote user wellbeing and productivity (BES Group, 2012). The BES Group operates under the Department of Structural Engineering and Building Technology at Aalto, and specializes in research in the field of construction and real estate businesses (BES Group, 2012). The Group is also guided in part by the Aalto University Real Estate and Campus Development & Facilities Management team.

In order to fully explore the possibilities of the role of the built environment on community development in the context of university campuses, a case study approach was chosen. Narrowing the study to a single setting, collecting empirical data from one university community would result in the development of a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989). Built around the evidence of “why”, case studies often combine multiple data collection methods spanning both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including surveys, in-person interviews, or internal or external documents review (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Case studies also aim to provide description, test theory or generate theory (Eisenhardt, 1989) through exploring new alternative solutions, explaining the process and improving problem-solving processes (Holmström et al., 2009). Case studies are particularly strong through their ability to uncover previously unknown “social, cultural and political factors” related to the phenomenon in question (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p.40).

With the study under the purview of the BES Group, the primary case study chosen was Aalto University and its transition to a centralized campus in Otaniemi in 2015. Through this qualitative, case study-based approach, studying facets of the Aalto University community in its natural settings was considered as a central characteristic for conducting the research.

### 4.3 DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH PROCESS

As a qualitative research approach was a valid method as in-depth information and understanding was needed (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), selecting an appropriate sample was important in order to generate knowledge. Inspired by C.K. Prahalad and Venkat Ramaswamy's concept of co-creation (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000), the study brought in Aalto community members themselves – predominantly Master's level (M.Sc.) students – to address elements of their own community and engage them in the value creation process.

Benefits of the co-creative approach include turning traditional research into a far more dynamic and creative process that taps into the creativity of users or consumers (Stern, 2011). In other words, the approach aimed to take the intimate knowledge users had about the environment around them, and apply those insights toward making their experiences better. This approach was also aligned with acknowledged placemaking tactics in that the community itself was tapped into creating and shaping shared spaces (Fullenwider, 2010).

Figure 13 below illustrates both the focus and the sample frame of this thesis study. Note that the population target for this study is only a small representation of the entire Aalto student community:

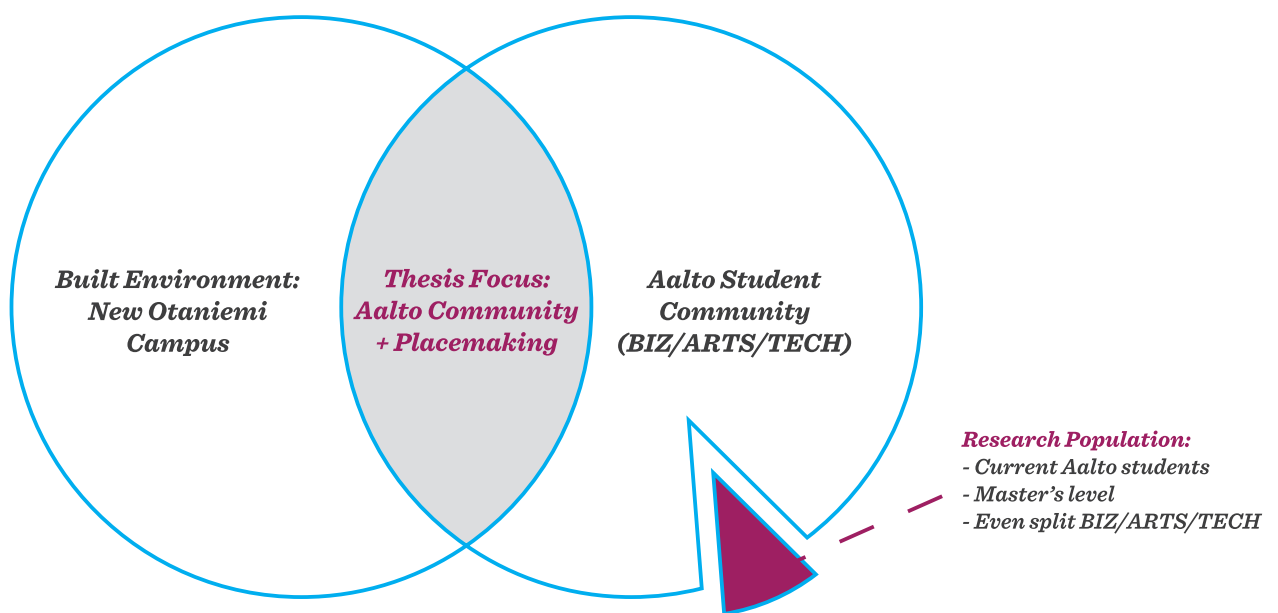
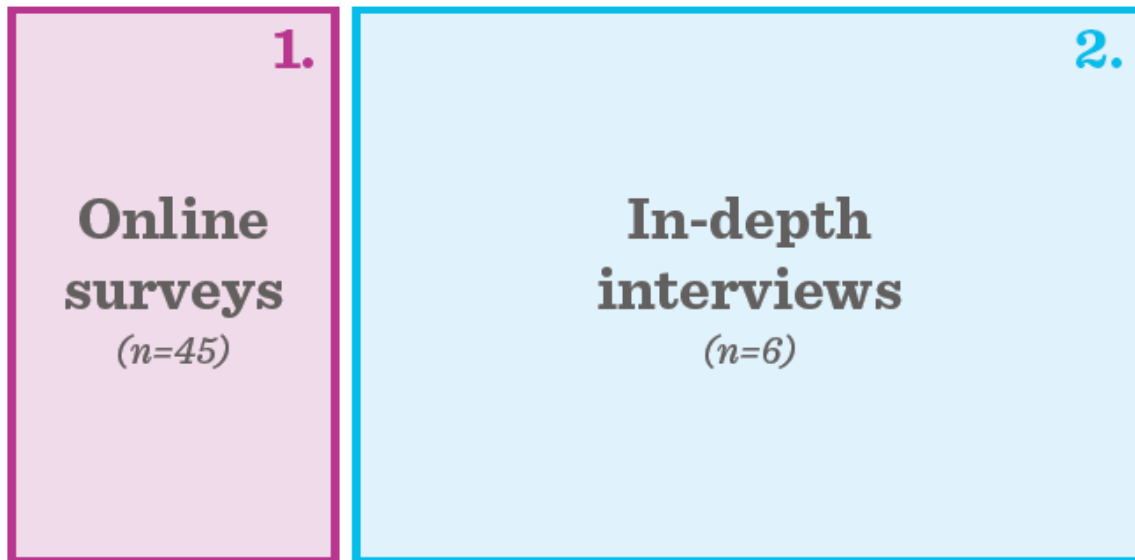


Figure 13: Thesis focus and sample frame

#### 4.3.1 Research Phases

Empirical data for the study came from various sources. The combined use of data from multiple sources enabled the focus of the study to turn toward result validation. Thus, as shown in Figure 14 below, data collection for the study consisted of two main research phases: Phase 1: online surveys, and Phase 2: in-depth interviews.



*Figure 14: Empirical research phases: (1) online surveys, (2) in-depth interviews; Phase 2 appears larger as the bulk of the data used develop the study's conclusions came from the in-depth interviews*

##### *Research phase 1: Online surveys.*

Phase 1 consisted of a short online survey to probe about the current state of community or “Aalto spirit” at the University. Created with Google Forms and distributed via Facebook.com, this survey acted as a primer of sorts to establish whether or not the issue of community at Aalto would elicit any sort of response from current Aalto students. It must be noted that as the survey was distributed through Facebook only, the responses likely came from users of that social networking service (while respondents were not asked to confirm how they had come to answer the survey). As such, the responses cannot be seen as representative of non-Facebook users as well.

While the relatively low number of survey responses received did not allow for proper quantitative analysis ( $n=45$ ) and acted more as inspiration for further data collection, the data *did* however provide a useful snapshot about the current level of community spirit at Aalto. The survey also provided some additional, short-form insights into which aspects of the school’s built environment did, or did not contribute to the building of Aalto spirit. The survey (full version in Appendix) also acted as a recruiting vehicle for the primary research exercise: the in-depth interviews (Phase 2).

### *Research phase 2: In-depth interviews.*

The core empirical data used in the study came from Phase 2, the in-depth, in-person interviews. Longer and more focused, these interactions represent the bulk of the data collected, building on the primer from Phase 1.

Again, as gaining deep understanding of the phenomenon was sought, the sample was chosen carefully. However, the sample was intentionally selected to ensure increased understanding rather than delivering a generalizability of results (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Plus, the number of participants was intentionally small as the aim of the research was to understand people (Koskinen et al., 2003). The selection of a small, intimate sample size was also in keeping with Nielsen's usability model that beyond the fifth user the same findings repeat themselves and thus uncovering of new learning ceases (Nielsen et al., 1993).

In total, six respondents were interviewed – two each from the three main schools of Aalto (Business, Arts & Design and Science & Technology) to ensure equal representation from each school's perspective. Initially, the format of Phase 2 was to be a joint workshop-style session with all six respondents, resembling a focus group. Such a focus group, moderated by the Researcher and following a set agenda to build a holistic understanding of the phenomenon at hand, would have met common recommendations for size at six respondents. Plus, the exploratory nature of the research, as opposed to explanatory or descriptive, would have fit the desired conditions (Bhattacharjee, 2012). However, in the end only the Arts & Design and Science & Technology were interviewed concurrently due to last-minute cancellations by the Business students. The Business school students were interviewed individually one week later.

Rather than taking a random sample of students, respondents had to represent a purposeful, criterion-based selection process. Thus, in order to limit the scope of the study a list of pre-determined characteristics were required from each interviewee in Phase 2 in order to qualify for the in-depth part of the study. Those characteristics were: (1) Enrolled as a current Master's degree student; (2) Representative of an even distribution of students from each primary Aalto school (TECH, ARTS and BIZ); and (3) Proficient in English as the interviews would be conducted in English.

All in-depth interviews ranged from 55 to 100 minutes. To maintain a campus context to the interviews, the Arts & Design and Science & Technology students were interviewed in the Otakaari 1 building on the Otaniemi campus, and one School of Business students was interviewed at the Töölö campus in Kesko-sali. The other School of Business student requested to have the interview off campus.

To ensure data integrity, each interview was recorded with the permission of the



interviewees – granted that the interviewees’ true identities would remain confidential – and field notes also supplemented the recordings. Transcriptions were made within one week of each interview, and interviewees were given names like “ARTS 1” or “TECH 2” in the transcripts to keep responses anonymous while still indicating their school affiliation. Table 3 below outlines the M.Sc. students interviewed in-depth for Phase 2. Again, these in-depth interviews stand as the bulk of the empirical research data of this study.

Moniker	Home School	Student Status*	Study Area
“TECH 1”	School of Science & Technology	M.Sc. student	Product Development
“TECH 2”	School of Science & Technology	M.Sc. student	Electrical Engineering
“ARTS 1”	School of Arts, Design & Architecture	M.Sc. student	Textile Design
“ARTS 2”	School of Arts, Design & Architecture	M.Sc. student	International Design Business Management
“BIZ 1”	School of Business	M.Sc. student	International Business
“BIZ 2”	School of Business	M.Sc. student	International Business

*Table 3: Phase 2: In-depth interview respondents*  
*\*Denotes current student status at time of study (June 2012)*

#### *In-depth interview setup and execution.*

The purpose of the interviews was to record the perspective of a particular interviewee fully and fairly (Quinn, 2002). Taking on a semi-structured approach, the interviews included a set of open-ended questions, which then afforded opportunities to vary questions and shift the discussion based on an interviewee’s particular experiences or perspectives (Bailey, 2007). Within a conversational, causal setting, interviewees were put at ease in order to give as insightful, honest responses as possible, thus allowing comprehensive and in-depth discussion about the topic (Hirsjarvi & Hurme, 2001). As semi-structured interviews are interactive in nature, this approach also allowed the asking of follow-up questions based on individual responses to the core questions and gain additional information (Silverman, 2006). All but one of the in-depth interviews was conducted on Aalto’s campuses in order to immerse the respondents within the


context of the University's built environment.

Before the start of each interview, the main goals of the research were summarized and a rough outline about possible conversation topics was given. Each interview traversed through the same four segments shown below, aided by following an interview discussion guide and a “creative kit” sketch (see Figure 15, and additional materials are available in the Appendix):

- (1) ‘About you’ sliders survey that aligned Aalto’s campus characteristics against a series of opposing adjectives, also in Figure 15;
- (2) Favorite and least favorite parts of Aalto campuses. Campus maps of the TECH, ARTS and BIZ used to help guide discussion;
- (3) Define “community” for you, and in which places has a sense of community been most apparent. Images were used to help guide discussion; and
- (4) Linking (2) and (3) together, which places on Aalto campuses had strongest sense of community, and how did built environment affect this; brainstormed around new ideas for Alvarin Aukio.

### AALTO CAMPUS/COMMUNITY CREATIVE KIT

①




TECH HSE TALE

#### ABOUT YOU

Tell about yourselves:  
What's your typical day?  
Studying? Working?  
What annoys/inspires you  
about Aalto?

②




HSE TECH TALE

#### ROUTES & FAVORITE CAMPUS PLACES

Find out which campus places at Aalto new  
resonate with students, where do they  
socialize, work, feel sense of community, etc..  
Draw on maps and tell stories.


③



#### BENCHMARK CARDS: PLACES WITH COMMUNITY

Create "outside-the-box" feeling by showing  
with benchmarks of public spaces, institutions (schools),  
concert venues, etc. Focus on where community  
happens.

④



#### BRAINSTORMING: ALVARIN AUKIO

At the center of the new campus, how can  
this place be specifically used as the gear  
for community building + placemaking efforts?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Once you graduate, how long do you expect  
to stay in Helsinki? Circle one:

6mos. 1yr 5yrs 5+yrs Don't know

On the sliders below, draw a dot anywhere on the scale  
closest to the word that best matches your experience  
at Aalto campuses:

Modifiable	<----->	Rigid
Not Included	<----->	Included
Low Tempo	<----->	High Tempo
Branded	<----->	Unbranded
Familiar	<----->	Unfamiliar
Not Functional	<----->	Functional
Alive	<----->	Dead
Like Office	<----->	Like Home

Figure 15: In-depth interview “creative kit” discussion guide sketch (left) and “sliders” survey (right)

## 4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

The complete set of empirical data was analyzed to reveal key insights, which were then organized into themes and cross-referenced against each other in order to develop findings and conclusions (Quinn, 2002). As the data included findings from both research phases one and two, this large amount of data was analyzed from two perspectives, first on an individual campus level (i.e. Otaniemi, Arabia, Töölö) and then on a university level (combining all Aalto Schools together).

### 4.4.1 Affinity Mapping

Analysis was conducted through a method called Affinity Mapping (Koskinen et al., 2011). The method is applicable in cases of large issues and unorganized and diverse data. Affinity Mapping imposes order on complex data, organizing chaotic sets of insights and ideas into linked groups to uncover themes, patterns and other similarities. It is also commonly used in project management practices (Keinonen, 2011). “Insights” within the data were elements that emerged and were considered as “revelations – the unexpected things that make you sit up and pay attention” (IDEO, 2009, p.94).

Affinity Mapping for this study involved the following seven key steps:

- (1) Interview transcripts: All online survey responses and interview transcripts were printed out and combined to focus on validating different methods; insights relevant to the study were highlighted or underlined;
- (2) Displaying insights: Separate insights were documented and displayed on individual Post-it® notes and spread out to aid in visibility and clear analysis;
- (3) Identifying similarities: Related data points were identified and patterns were noted;
- (4) Creating clusters: Notes were moved and clustered together according to the similarities and patterns uncovered in step (3);
- (5) Naming clusters: Clusters were given descriptive titles that clearly conveyed meanings;
- (6) Identifying opportunities: Opportunities were identified to address the clustered insights gathered (see Section 6.3, Practical Implications); and
- (7) Combining opportunities: Opportunities were moved into a separate list and combined in the case of any overlapping.

The online surveys were created by the Researcher and administered through a Google Forms spreadsheet. The Researcher alone conducted all of the in-depth interviews and all were recorded and transcribed within one week of the interview date. All empirical data

gathered was combined to focus on validating different methods and then the Affinity Mapping was conducted. This study's process of Affinity Mapping is further detailed in Figure 16 below.

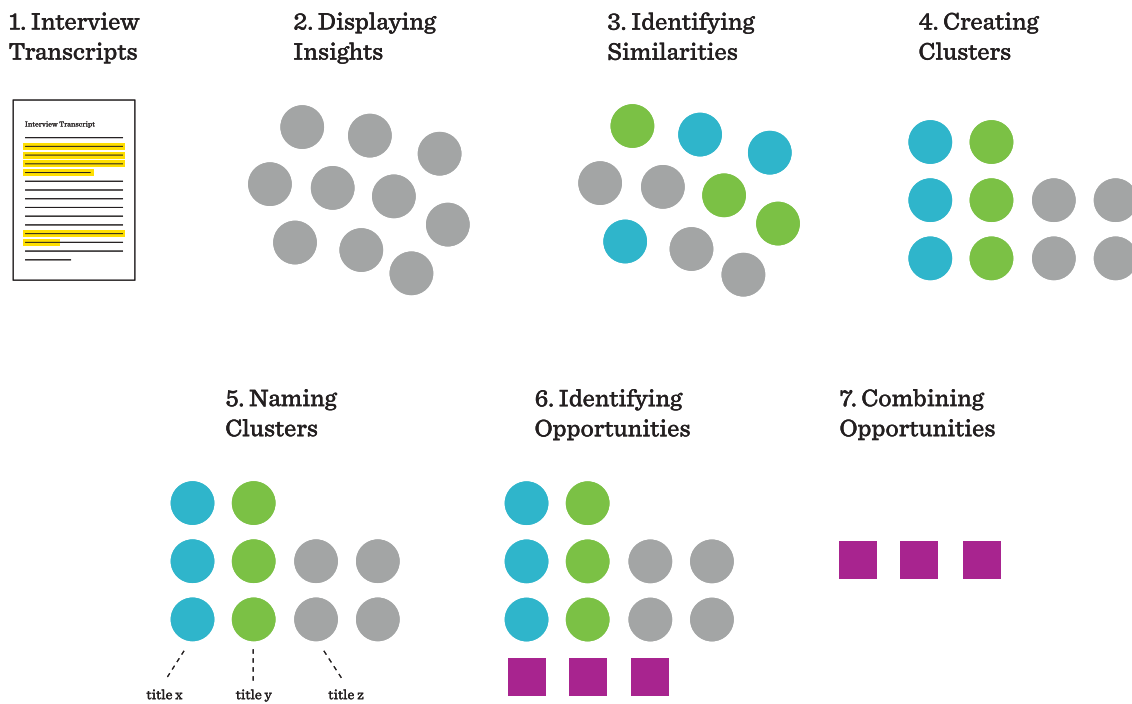


Figure 16: Process of Affinity Mapping (modified from Guseynova, 2013, p.73)

## 4.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Elements that contribute to the trustworthiness of a study are reliability, dependability and validity. While these measures are typically associated with quantitative research methods, other methods have been employed to this study to ensure its trustworthiness.

Reliability refers to the degree to which a study can be replicated, while dependability refers to the accountability on behalf of the Researcher to catalog, retain and protect comprehensive and complete records from all stages of the study such that they are traceable and well documented (Eisenhardt, 1989; Bell & Bryman, 2003; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). To ensure reliability, strict standards were set throughout this study around the data collection and analysis processes to help deliver reporting of sufficient detail. Additionally, information on the sample and the data collection processes are

described in comprehensive detail such that they are transparent and can be replicated in the future (Eisenhardt, 1989). However, as the built environment of the new campus will evolve over time and affect the sense of place and community there, the results of replicated studies may vary.

Internal validity or credibility also contributes to the trustworthiness of the study, as strong logical links between the data and the interpretations of that data are present, and demonstrate specifically how the study's conclusions were drawn and substantiated. Plus, during the interviews it was noticed that the respondents were producing similar insights, leading to the consideration that the six in-depth interviews lead to a saturated data set (Bell & Bryman, 2003; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

External validity or transferability refers to the degree to which the findings can be generalized across different contexts and into other settings (Eisenhardt, 1989; Bell & Bryman, 2003). Qualitative studies such as this tend to be unique in their context due to the research sample, and as such more research is needed to determine whether the presented findings may extend to campuses outside of the university context (such as corporate campuses, for example). Additionally, international and cultural perspectives must be weighed if transferring the findings outside of Finland as the approach to university life may vary greatly from country to country.

Transparency was also provided on the representative nature of the study's sample such that the findings would be properly placed within the prism of the respondents alone, rather than making generalizations about larger populations. Trustworthiness was further enhanced through regular reviews of the study's structure, interview outlines and data collection methods with researchers from the BES group. As the BES researchers are well versed not only in scientific methods, but also matters related to the built environment, these discussions with trusted researchers constitute "peer debriefing" (Bailey, 2007) and thus contribute to the trustworthiness of a study.

Objectivity was practiced in order to prevent the Researcher's personal values from influencing the data collection process. Conformability was further ensured through the data and interpretation being linked in an understandable and logical way (Bell & Bryman, 2003; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Finally, with respect to all respondents in the study, anonymity was guaranteed in exchange for honest and open conversations about the research topic in order to avoid receiving simply socially acceptable answers. As a result, it can be assumed that the responses were indeed honest and reliable. The semi-structured interviews were also designed such that misinterpretation of questions was minimized, and after the first round of interviews the questions were assessed in order to validate their clarity.





Helsinki, after winning the 2011 Ice Hockey World Championship

Photo: Tuomas Sahramaa

## 5. FINDINGS + DISCUSSION

*This Chapter gives a comprehensive review of the study's results, as well as a discussion around those results. The study's results are organized into nine main themes that were created by grouping related pieces of data together through the Affinity Mapping process detailed in Section 4.4.1.*

In order to guide the reader through the study's findings, Figure 17 below shows the names of the nine main themes that will be discussed next, in order from left to right.

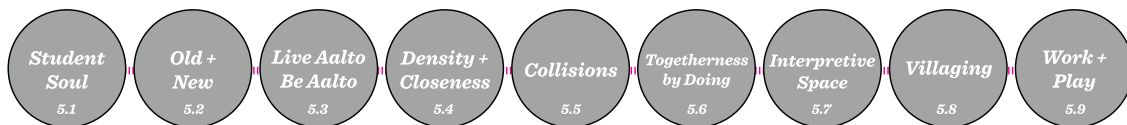


Figure 17: Overview of study's nine main themes

### 5.1 STUDENT SOUL: STORIES AND ENGAGEMENT

Whether the colorful walls of Kipsari in Arabia, or the student housing at the Teekkari Village in Otaniemi, the study suggested that places designed by students for students – or those that heavily feature student presence – positively contribute to the scripting of a campus narrative. This narrative then acts as part of the foundation upon which a sense of community identity and spirit is built, representing a kind of “student soul” or essence in a certain built environment.

Further, some respondents wanted to feel under the ‘spell’ of the university experience – that is, a state of enchantment about life at Aalto. Thus, the study revealed that as spaces or events seem overly shaped by sponsors or outside figures, this tended to break this university spell for some of the respondents. Several respondents’ comments further revealed that by showing how students had shaped the spaces around campus, the incorporation of this sense of participatory design into spaces helped students to



feel more connected to them, such that the respondents could identify with those spaces more readily. In other words, for some respondents self- or peer-involvement aided with the buy-in to a narrative in a space, or it aided in that narrative to be scripted in the first place.

*Re-coding: Building a narrative and value.*

In a June 2012 lecture by Thomas Ermacora, Director of Clear Village, a UK-based charitable trust that acts as a design Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) for community development, he spoke of a process called “re-coding”. Ermacora co-ran a three-day workshop called “make.helsinki” in coordination with DEMOS Helsinki and World Design Capital, focused on staging urban interventions to help communities flourish. Given this workshop’s focus on community building by way of the built environment as well Ermacora’s extensive experience in the practice, Ermacora’s expert insights were deemed pertinent to this study. Speaking about transforming spaces to develop better defined local identities for inhabitants, he said:

(Ermacora): “[Clear Village] comes from a school of design thinking but applied to places...how do we make places more vibrant, or how do they have a culture for becoming more interesting to themselves and having a strong local identity? ...This is people-driven. It’s not about making something strictly artistic, or aesthetic. It’s about making something that means something to people.”

Crucially, he presented the activity of design from the standpoint of value creation, and introduced the process of re-coding. On describing a social housing project in Germany, he spoke of the role of the group/collective in building value for a certain area through transforming service layers to create community spirit, in this case for the real estate owner of the housing project:

(Ermacora): “So when you’re looking at it, how could we leverage the capacity of participatory design and thinking to bring people together and rethink their neighborhood, so that they create community spirit, which was absent. And then make value [for the real estate owner] so [that] this is a win-win – a handshake between the different parts.

This type of work we call re-coding. It’s like I said in the beginning, finding the software that guides what is the sense of place, the sense of belonging. And many places that are built today from the architectural, urbanistic point of view are devoid of sense – they basically are a stack

of buildings. And it's not necessarily the intent of the architect to make bad places; it's just that they are not given the appropriate mandates."

Perhaps this statement crystallizes what has occurred with many of the areas on Aalto's campuses. While talented architects, designers and planners had built the campuses, those areas now require new "software" in order to be "re-coded" to use Ermacora's words, or to be re-tooled with a more appropriate mandate that better fits the current needs and expectations of a new generation of users. Further, Ermacora implored building upon "existing assets" and avoiding working from a "blank canvas" in order to grow organically from what is already there. "You see that there is a story there, that either needs to be unearthed, or told in a different way, or simply rewritten," he concluded. Therefore, Ermacora inspired further questions about whether or not the re-coding of the built environment could aid in the development of a new story or narrative for Aalto's spaces – spaces that are not 'artsy' for the sake of being artistic, but that rather spaces that carry a deeper, more poignant meaning for an increasingly profound result.

Ermacora shared one additional example about the power of a built environment's design in delivering value to stakeholders, lending credence to a sort of return on investment from such design activities:

(Ermacora): "...Brixton village [UK], where there was a village that was completely abandoned and this team of people started rewriting the story for it, and they got a free lease to occupy this disused space. And then, a year after, they had 100% occupancy and the whole village of Brixton around it started having daughter projects, and it became also people now thanking the space makers and the agency that did this, for having maybe contributed to rising value of the real estate of the whole area by 20% in a year. So it's an incredibly powerful thing."

Finally, Ermacora said that spaces not only create intangible value, but also memories that are "extremely powerful for the local identity." This inspires a question of Aalto's spaces: can the transparency of student involvement, action or engagement be increased? As a result, what impact would this have on uncovering, reinforcing or cultivating the local identity of the Aalto community?

### *Revealing ‘Student Soul’.*

The in-depth interviews of this study revealed that when students are involved in decorating a space it is noticeable to others in the student community. Through this action, a sense of ‘student soul’ is injected into spaces as student designers and builders leave small pieces of their personalities behind through what they construct. Thus, according to this study’s respondents, this student soul can become apparent in the essence and feeling of a space, and change the user’s impression of what that space means to them. For example, this is revealed through discussions about the primary student cafeterias at the School of Science & Technology, called Cantina (Figure 18, top), and School of Art & Design, called Kipsari (Figure 18, bottom). Several respondents mentioned both student cafeterias as examples where student integration had either been successfully or unsuccessfully displayed through the built environment.

In the in-depth interviews, these two campus locations were displayed either as integral contributors to the student experience (as was the case for Kipsari), or as missed opportunities for delivering something more meaningful to student life (as was the case for Cantina). Examining the following exchange between respondents ARTS 1 and TECH 1 revealed supporting evidence:

(TECH 1): “I want to have something like Kipsari here [at the School of Science & Technology]. Like not only a restaurant, but a bar where you can go for beers, and something...well there’s Cantina in Dipoli but it’s hidden. Not even half of the people even know that it’s there. There should be something like that.”

(ARTS 1): “And I feel that the point why Kipsari is the heart of Arabia is that the student union owns it and we have decorated it ourselves, so it’s not a commercial place really.”

(Researcher): “Did you personally help decorate it, or just knowing that other students like you decorated it...”

(ARTS 1): “Just knowing and seeing it because it’s really artsy. If we are talking about Cantina... just thinking about these opposites. Cantina is a commercial place. It doesn’t show the feeling you have amongst Teekkarit.”

(TECH 1): “Yeah, they have the circuit boards on the wall, but it doesn’t have this feeling that [ARTS 1 is] describing, that you instantly recognize that it was decorated by other students.”

Statements such as those above showed how each cafeteria was seen by several of the respondents. Cantina, located in the Dipoli building at the School of Science & Technology, was seen as too commercial and lacking a sense of student integration or soul. Conversely, Kipsari, located in the main building of the School of Art & Design,





Figure 18:  
Top: Cantina, student cafeteria at the School of Science & Technology in Otaniemi  
Bottom: Kipsari, student cafeteria at the School of Arts & Design in Arabia

was seen as the “heart” (ARTS 1’s words) of that campus and a space that delivered meaningful, student-specific experiences.

In ARTS 1’s last observation regarding the student union, AYY, this comment revealed the role that this organization can play in the development of Aalto’s built environment. While it is unclear whether or not ARTS 1 directly participated in the decoration of Kipsari, in the least this respondent closely identified with the work through the use of “we” and “ourselves”. Also, in this respondent’s view AYY is not a commercial entity and as such, the decoration projects in which it participates are not considered “commercial”.

Turning to the perspective of BIZ students, Kipsari was also recognized by the respondents for its student-inspired décor during the in-depth interviews. Here, Kipsari was contrasted against the main building on the School of Business campus which was seen as “clinical” according to BIZ 1, who expanded further about what clinical meant in this context:

(BIZ 1): “I think that TKK and HSE [Science & Technology and Business school campuses] had more of a similar vibe, or they were more clinical.”

(Researcher): “What does clinical mean?”

(BIZ 1): “Clinical...like, maybe plain isn’t the right word either, but somehow very generic somehow. Like HSE, the campus, and the main building, it has a very specific style and architecture, but all the surfaces are similar, wooden. The colors are not specific.”

(Researcher): “Is that good or bad?”

(BIZ 1): “I don’t know if it’s either. I don’t think it’s a boring building, but it is a bit plain. And then if you go to TaiK, or at least the [Kipsari] cafeteria, it’s very decorated, like the bathrooms are covered in pictures.”

Through these statements, BIZ 1 seemed to create a link between the way in which campus spaces are designed, and the message that those spaces then send about the users’ characteristics. The mention of Kipsari’s decorated character – seemingly expected from a space within the School of Arts & Design – perhaps conveys a more creative and experimental spirit that aligns with the respondent’s characterizations of ARTS students. Then, the plain styling of the Otaniemi and Töölö campuses perhaps point to the respondent’s impression of how students at those campuses were more calculated and uniform.

*Commerciality.*

Pondering further about commerciality as mentioned by ARTS 1, this phenomenon had a compounded impact on other facets of student life. For example, both ARTS respondents revealed that the greater the feeling of commerciality of a place or event, the more this detracted from the sense of student soul there. For the ARTS respondents, commerciality was observed most often in association with the Business School, and in particular at the parties or other events it hosts. For example ARTS 2 stated during the in-depth interview:

(ARTS 2): “I’ve been to parties organized by HSE...but there was no sense of community, at all. I don’t know why was that. The place [of the party] was very commercial. And people were hanging out only with their friends. And they were in their own small companies, and didn’t really even communicate with each other. I think that some parties could also work, they just need to be organized so that the atmospheres wouldn’t be formal. Because in those parties organized by HSE they felt a bit formal and too commercial.”

Thus, for the ARTS respondents, commerciality and a manner of formality seem to impede the forming of a sense of community, even in a party setting when the mood is likely more festive and celebratory than usual. Probing about this sense of commerciality further during the interview, ARTS 2 added that:

(ARTS 2): “[Something] that made the parties at HSE feel a bit formal and a bit uptight was that they also had some special nights, like they were introducing some new brand of champagne and it was all about that, and it felt just too commercial, like you are somewhere like in some lounge bar, not in some university’s event, where everybody are actually students or professors. Yeah, it was a bit commercialized. Like, why are you introducing some brand to me? This is a student party! ...But that event felt like [an] advertisement. Like this whole party is organized for [sponsors], not the students.”

From this additional texture about commerciality, when sponsors were very visible the purpose of hosting the party in the first place becomes muddled for the ARTS respondents. Instead of the event being about creating an occasion through which to deepen the connections and feelings of community between students, for the ARTS respondents the event was perceived as simply a marketing channel for a paying brand. As ARTS 2 said “it feels like [an] advertisement” once brands were too involved and student bonding was seen to be a low priority from the perspective of the attendees.



However, ARTS 2's observation could reveal a distinctly different approach to such events compared to BIZ students. While BIZ students may learn about sponsorships or other corporate integration during classes, parties or other events may seem like natural occasions for BIZ students to get brands involved. Conversely, this corporation-friendly approach may seem foreign to ARTS students for whom securing sponsorships are not likely part of their typical course curriculum.

#### *Students in residence.*

Another factor for the respondents in injecting more student life onto campus was having students residing on the campus itself. Concerning the Otaniemi campus, the site differentiates itself from other Aalto campuses through its integration of student dormitories, known as the "Teekkarikylä" Student Village, which houses over 2,000 students (Aalto-www, 2012a).

Statements in the in-depth interviews included that having students living so close to classrooms caused that campus to feel more "real", as seen in the following statement by ARTS 1:

(ARTS 1): "It's positive that people really *live* [at the School of Science & Technology]. That's why I asked [TECH 1] "do you live [at the School of Science & Technology campus]" because that's really different in Arabia. No one lives there, and that's why it's not a real campus. Probably you have here some kind of nightlife, and maybe parties in some apartments, then it feels like a real campus. Where in Arabia we mostly just sit in our own departments."

In other words, according to this respondent a true campus feel (and the feeling of community therein) cannot be delivered without students in residence. The likely effect of students living on campus is that when they go home, they are not vacating the physical campus area and thus continue to contribute to the area's liveliness. This aspect indicated a distinct advantage of the Otaniemi campus versus the Arabia and Töölö campuses in delivering a sense of community, as the latter two locations do not include on-campus dormitories. However, questions remained for further probing regarding whether or not the students who actually live on campus feel more of a sense of community as a result, or if this was just an assumption made by outsiders. That is, how much of an influence did having students living on campus truly affect the feeling of a sense of community? Then, if the Arabia or Töölö campuses had student dorms on campus, would that change anything?

*Showcasing student works.*

Another component related to the telling of student stories uncovered in the study was the presence of student work. As heard in the in-depth interviews, while some student work was already displayed especially at the School of Arts & Design, the school still felt empty. Recalling a visit to the School of Arts & Design, TECH 1 described the experience as the following:

(TECH 1): “There were a lot of cool works, a lot of cool things that the students had done, but I only met the person [helping me with printing] there. I felt like “where is everybody!?””

From this, the discussion led to the expressed desire for something more like a social workspace for students, such that work would not only be on display, but also the creators would be present there as well. Building on TECH 1’s insight, while ARTS 1 spoke highly about the machinery and studio spaces available in Arabia, the campus lacked equally effective areas where socializing was possible:

(ARTS 1): “That is something that should be solved. That we would have some kind of a social working place. Which is open to all the students. So that you could have your own table there. And a piece of wall or something where you could hang your inspiration material. Because that’s something that I saw in Danish Design school [Copenhagen] where I was in exchange. And that was really nice to see the projects that the other students have, and especially in the visual design world it’s really good to see what the others are doing. And it also brings the feeling of community.

...and also it’s work going on. Work in progress. That you can see, in the tables. And that’s something that was really good. Inspirational. And it also teaches you a lot, when you see how the others work with their projects.”

Further, a point to which TECH 1 had already alluded, the work being displayed in the halls at School of Arts & Design was seen as static and unattended. A more effective approach for ARTS 1 was one similar to that which was observed in Denmark while on an exchange semester there, where art students had dedicated, personal space at their disposal:

(ARTS 1): “...in TaiK, it’s just exhibitions you see on the walls. And in Copenhagen...it’s your own table where you can work all the time.”



From this statement it appears that while perhaps the spaces in Arabia tried to contribute to the sense of student presence by making student work more visible throughout school buildings, such efforts have little impact in delivering a sense of student community for some respondents.

*The opportunity for AYY, the Student Union.*

For students of the School of Business, vocalization for more student soul came through discussions about the Aalto Student Union, or in Finnish the *Aalto-Yliopiston Ylioppilaskunta*, abbreviated as AYY. Before Aalto formed, each university had its own Student Union, and in the case of the Business School it was called the *Kauppatieteiden Ylioppilaaat*, or KY (Aalto-www, 2012e). Through the in-depth interviews with the BIZ students, both respondents spoke of AYY's only noticeable presence as during the first few weeks of the school year. Of this the respondents said the following:

(BIZ 1): "Mostly [the BIZ friends made] were from the orientation events, organized by the Student Union in the first few weeks. There was first getting to know the buildings. Then we had some department specific hangouts where I met a couple of people, but mostly it was the little get-togethers in your [orientation] group."

-----

(BIZ 2): "The Student Union is pretty active for [creating interactions amongst business students]. All the parties and all of the events they organize. And all those sports clubs, and all of these things you can do, and hobbies. And for me, most of my friends are people who started their masters at the same time."

(Researcher): "From your orientation group?"

(BIZ 2): "Yeah, yeah. And from those first two months. They are the people who stick with me. And then people you've met in classes and stuff. So I haven't really met anyone randomly."

As seen above, it was during this crucial time that the respondents formed their most enduring personal networks and foundations of what would become their sense of community at Aalto. As revealed by the respondents, the first few weeks of school was when the Student Union and the University's clubs and other social elements were most visible on campuses and were recruiting new members. These recruiting efforts and other orientation events, also known as "mursu" days, attracted many new students and also offer them opportunities to meet each other and form friendships. From then on the "random" making of new friends was more rare, as BIZ 2 observed, and the presence of AYY began to fade rapidly from everyday student life. So, not only did these statements

underscore the role of AYY for these respondents in forming early relationships between students, but also the need for AYY's presence on campus to be less sporadic and more sustained throughout the school year. BIZ 2 continued:

(BIZ 2): "I don't know that the student union is so present in these school buildings [at the Business School], because [KY] has their own building."

BIZ 2's comment showed the impact of the AYY's current use of the built environment in being visible at the Business School campus. The respondents see KY and AYY's presence as largely detached, both literally and figuratively, from the student experience. Further, from BIZ 1's perspective, whereas KY was the dominant force behind creating community connections amongst the students, Aalto's administration was seen as doing little towards building up the sense of community for this respondent:

(BIZ 1): "I think that the one ingredient that I don't think was necessarily present when building the community is that the school didn't really help that much, or HSE didn't really do anything for it – or that much that I could see. Maybe they do behind the scenes, but I think that what most enabled or helped me in my network or my community was KY, what they did."

But while studying there and while working on my school things, there was nothing to tie me into anything. Like if I hadn't been active in the parties, or active in the student union activities then it would have been very easy to just go to the lectures and then leave, and never meet anyone really. Just do your group work."

## 5.2 OLD + NEW: UNIVERSITY HISTORY AND NAMES

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Aalto University is a newly formed entity built by combining three existing Helsinki-area universities in 2010. As a result, easily the most noted obstacle to building a true Aalto spirit or community uncovered in the study was the presence of the old communities and traditions, and the reluctance to evolve beyond them. Given the long academic history of each university – not to mention the protected architectural status of several university buildings – the roots of these institutions run deep and are tightly integrated into the local community. Thus, those students who have transitioned from the old system are likely slower to subscribe to the new Aalto system than those who enrolled into the University after Aalto was founded. The study further revealed that students are missing the fundamental building blocks needed to truly

connect with the Aalto identity and community.

This points to a crossroads in terms of community building at Aalto: how might the storied history, reputation and traditions of HSE, TKK and TaiK be preserved, all while developing a distinct sense of togetherness around the new, shared identity of Aalto? And at the same time, how might the accessibility and tangibility of the Aalto identity and community be increased through the built environment? While the influence of the built environment less acute, it does reveal the underlying culture and community chemistry of the current organization of Aalto.

#### *Old vs. new identities.*

The data collected for this study suggests that the old, pre-existing communities of HSE, TKK and TaiK are so strong that they may be blocking any true Aalto roots from taking hold. For example, several reasons were suggested by respondents of the online survey for the perceived lack of spirit around Aalto:

“Unfortunately all Aalto schools have their own traditions.”

“At Töölö or Arabia campus the sense of community applies to “HSE” or “TaiK” students.”

“Design Factory or other places where different Aalto students meet up [are places where Aalto community exists]. In other places the “old” schools are still strong.”

“I think that the only place there is any sense of togetherness is in the Venture Garage, because it’s probably one of the only places that people feel they are in something other than a university.”

“[The] only place where there is sense of community between people from different schools is the Design Factory. Probably there is sense of community in each [separate campus] location, but it is between the people of that specific school, it is not sense of “Aalto community.””

“The community feel [on the Otaniemi campus] is non-existent. It is so heavily associated with Teekkarit that it will take a few generations of students before that feeling is lost.”

In the study’s in-depth interviews, particularly amongst the Business School students, several statements also pointed toward similar sentiment about the presence of pre-existing communities preventing Aalto community proliferation, such as:

(BIZ 2): “All of the schools still have a strong identity. They identify themselves as the School of Economics or the School of Arts...I think us here at HSE see ourselves as people from the School of Economics first, and then as people from Aalto second.”

-----

(BIZ 1): “I think that some obstacles were the pre-existing communities. Like, you start as a Mursu, you start your first year there. I think that some of the people build really strong networks then and they stick to those. And then those are pretty hard to break...so pre-existing communities are an obstacle. Then, because Aalto came, or sort of happened when we started [in 2009], and I was looking forward to being one big happy family [sarcastic laugh].”

### *Chasing a name.*

According to the study’s respondents, following Aalto’s launch the University has continued to hone its image and identity, most notably through repeated changes to the names of Aalto’s Schools.

At the time of the data collection for this study, the new “School of Business”, or “BIZ” name change for the School of Economics had not yet been announced (that name change went into effect August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012). While the transition from “TKK” to “TECH” appears to have been smooth, there is evidence to the contrary for “ARTS” and “BIZ”. With respect to the ARTS students in particular, a proposed name change to “Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Creativity” to begin January 1<sup>st</sup> 2012 was met with firm resistance (NYT.fi, 2011), resulting in a petition and Facebook pages like “Aalto University School of Shenanigans and Wizardry” with over 1000 “Likes”, see Figure 19, left.



Figure 19:

*Left: Aalto School of Arts, Design & Creativity protest page, circa October 2012 (Facebook.com, 2012)*  
*Right: “Aalto Uni Meme” against Aalto “BIZ” name (Facebook.com, 2012)*

Similarly, the Helsinki School of Economics became the “Aalto School of Economics” when Aalto launched in 2010, then in 2012 became the “Aalto School of Business”, abbreviated as “BIZ” (Aalto-www, 2012c). This move to a new BIZ acronym spawned criticism on the web such as the post made by the Facebook Page “Aalto Uni Memes” saying: “[Aalto] finds a more international name for business school, every 11 months.” See Figure 19, right.

From the in-depth interviews conducted for this study, when respondent ARTS 1 introduced themselves they alluded to this name-changing tendency, joking about the difficulty to remember what the current ARTS name was:

(ARTS 1): “I’m [ARTS 1] from...what is TaiK called usually? The School of Arts, Architecture and Design? Yes, that’s where I’m from [laughs]. I remember the name! Yes!”

This reluctance to shed old identities also likely extends to the academic reputations once carried by the name of the old schools, particularly the former Helsinki School of Economics (HSE). According to the respondents, University employees like Researchers were most concerned about Aalto’s name as it was seen to be less known outside of Finland. In her interview, Aalto School of Business Vice Dean Rebecca Piekkari added:

(Piekkari): “For the research community...the Aalto brand is completely unknown. So we have lost the location that used to be part of our name, Helsinki School of Economics. For Business Administration researchers, the name of the famous Finnish architect doesn’t tell them anything.”

In the in-depth interviews, BIZ 2 noted that:

(BIZ 2): “[Researchers] were afraid because they were trying to be as internationally known as possible and HSE had already gotten a reputation. They said that some of their colleagues abroad were kind of confused by the whole think. They didn’t know what Aalto was. All of a sudden you’re doing research for a school that has already gotten a name for itself and then they go and change the name altogether. It’s hard to convince people that “hey, it’s still the same.””

Fortunately however, several of the in-depth interview respondents expressed optimism about the new campus in bridging this culture gap:

(BIZ 1): “I think it’s great that we’ll have one campus. I think it will be a huge step. I think that all of the biggest problems of being different schools will start slowly disappearing when the people who never went to their own schools leave.”

-----



(TECH 2): “Maybe [a sense of TKK hierarchy will be at the new campus] at the start, but it will get easier.”

-----

(ARTS 2): “Yeah, I don’t think that it’s going to be an issue. I think it just needs time.”

### *Transitioning labels.*

Finally, according to one Business student, a transition of labels – that is how students see or refer to themselves or other peers – is also occurring. While the combining of TKK, HSE and TaiK together will create just one overall label covering all students (“Aalto”), respondent BIZ 1 saw the pre-Aalto labeling orientation as fractured and illogical at times. This was evidenced through the following exchange:

(BIZ 1): “...If you think of TKK before Aalto it’s pretty fractured, or split up as well. Like the Architecture students are definitely not the normal engineering students. And they have a really strong community within themselves, but I don’t think that they really mix with anyone else at all.”

(Researcher): “Because probably the big reason [Architecture students] joined the Arts School was that their mindset and their skill set were so different [than Engineers]. I mean, when most people hear “Architects” they think “Design School, right?” and we’re like “no, actually not.” And of course the label of Arts school and Engineering might not be worth anything, it might irrelevant. But still there was always this disconnect between the Architecture program and the Design School being split, so maybe they rallied around that fact and grew closer together.”

(BIZ 1): “Yeah. Like I’d put them more in Kipsari than Dipoli cafeteria, definitely. But yeah, maybe that label thing is a good point. That maybe taking that away will enable them as well. Taking away the “Business School”...well, there will always be a Business School, but a lot of the labels will now be Aalto University.”

The exchange above first shows the respondent’s assumption of siloing within the School of Science & Technology by the Architecture students – who have now been merged to the School of Arts & Design. Isolated through skill sets and lifestyles, for the respondent this appears to have created more closeness between the Architecture students. Second, BIZ 1 uses a physical location to describe the character of the Architecture students – that they’re more ‘Kipsari than Dipoli’. This shows a distinct sense of identification of one physical space to one culture of students. Finally, it shows additional belief by the respondent that the labels that will come to dominate in the new student culture will be more united around that of “Aalto”.

### 5.3 LIVE AALTO, BE AALTO: PRACTICING MULTI-DISCIPLINARITY

As detailed in Chapter 3, Aalto University came together as a result of merging the disciplines of Arts, Design, Science, Technology, Engineering and Business. As Aalto defines itself through a narrative of multi-disciplinarity, according to the respondents leading just such an academic lifestyle was needed for students to feel true a sense of Aalto community. Thus, the respondents most often defined being truly “Aalto” as having participated in just such a cross- or multi-disciplinary lifestyle. This lifestyle included associating with people from other schools, or through taking so-called “Aalto” courses, which are classes made up of students from each Aalto school.

Since the idea of Aalto University is predicated on this sense of cross-disciplinarity, students observed “Aalto spirit” or “being truly Aalto” on occasions when the three disciplines were simultaneously present or interacting together. The converse was true as well – when the respondents participated in activities that were not cross-disciplinary in nature, this is not seen as fulfilling what it means to be truly “Aalto”.

The in-depth interview respondents indicated that the Design Factory and Startup Sauna/Venture Garage featured high levels of cross-disciplinary learning. As a result, these sites were identified as being more “Aalto” in spirit than other campus locations.

*“Aalto” only when three disciplines are interacting together.*

Based on data from both the online and in-depth interviews, insights emerged to suggest that living and “Aalto” lifestyle meant living in a multi-disciplinary manner. For example, in the online surveys when asked where the sense of Aalto community is strongest on any campus, the responses included comments such as the following:

“I feel there is a strong sense of community [in Otaniemi]. Maybe because most of the interdisciplinary work takes place there [Design Factory, Startup Sauna/Venture Garage]. At Töölö and Arabia campus the sense of community only applies to HSE or TaiK students.”

“Aalto Design Factory, Aalto Venture Garage and Lampomiehenuja 3 [Aalto Administration] building. These buildings are the original Aalto building, shows in design and the fact that people there tend to identify themselves as Aalto people and work on multi-disciplinary stuff.”

“Design Factory is the only place I go to where there actually are people from all three schools.”

Apparent in the responses were acknowledgements of the multi-disciplinarity inherent in areas of any campuses that best communicated the “Aalto spirit”. Whereas the Töölö

and Arabia campuses were unsuccessful in cultivating “Aalto spirit”, the Design Factory and Startup Sauna/Venture Garage managed to perform this well. But why?

In the in-depth interviews, statements showed that students became exposed to the other schools of Aalto only through participation in an “Aalto course”, or in other words courses that combined students from each of the three Aalto schools. For example, as seen in the statement below, neither TECH 1 nor TECH 2 had met any ARTS students before enrolling in a multi-disciplinary Aalto course called Mechanical Engineering 310 (ME310) housed at the Design Factory:

(Researcher): “Have you met a lot of TaiK students otherwise?”

(TECH 2): “Not much, before ME310 [an Aalto course].”

(Researcher): “So when you met those TaiK people it was at Design Factory, or somewhere near Design Factory.”

(TECH 2): “Yes.”

(TECH 1): “I actually haven’t gone to TaiK before any of my Design Factory courses.”

When the same question of places on campus with Aalto spirit or community was asked of BIZ students, BIZ 1 echoed similar sentiment as the surveys about the Design Factory, calling it the “heart of Aalto”. Plus a response from BIZ 2 also noted participating in these so-called “Aalto courses”:

(BIZ 2): “There’s a growing number of students that take all of these courses that have people from all different schools, and that makes them more of these Aalto students. And then little by little that creates a sense. Because I know a lot of my friends have been hanging out at the other campuses and know people from the other schools, but I think that there’s still a majority of people that stick to their own school and own courses.”

Also, the respondents that showed how students – especially from the School of Business – were prevented from adding any such Aalto courses into their study plans revealed barriers. This lack of flexibility on behalf of the administration was thus preventing these students from participating in multidisciplinary courses, and therefore fully immersing into the Aalto community. For example, BIZ 2 said the following of the School of Economics’ approach to course flexibility:

(BIZ 2): “When they were talking about this merger they were talking about “there’s going to be all these classes that you can take from the different schools” and everything, and I personally

had, when I was trying to get into that one class at TaiK I had a lot of problems getting it to fit in my study plan, my HOPS. And actually because I applied for this whole minor program in the school of arts, and that would have been ok for my faculty and the head of that program in the school of arts and everything, but then it all came to a stop because of some bureaucratic stuff I guess.

...That's when I realized that all of these things...kind of what they promised with the merger weren't really happening, at least yet. Like this freedom of classes. But it was weird because it was all administrative stuff that was keeping me from taking this course."

There were also mismanaged expectations about the speed with which the Aalto implementation would go into effect. Plus, since the in-depth interview respondents belonged to the class of students caught in the middle of the transition from the old HSE system to the new Aalto system, this speed issue became especially poignant, for example by BIZ 2:

(BIZ 2): "Because the merger only happened such a short time ago, it's kind of understandable that it's still not as flexible as they promised, but maybe because it was hyped. There was all this hype about the merger. That "all these things going on and we're going to be together..." and "it's going to be flexible, and all these cool things are going to happen" and then when it doesn't happen that fast..."

## **5.4 DENSITY AND CLOSENESS**

The 14,000 students in Otaniemi (Aalto-www, 2013c) reflect the sheer size of the School of Science & Technology campus. For example, in the online survey, respondents stated the following about to the acreage of the campus and its effect on them:

"Whenever I go to Otaniemi I feel I'm by myself in that huge space."

"It's way too big to feel togetherness with anyone..."

"The whole campus is pretty spread out and it feels like it's designed for summer. When there are no people. Bummer."

"It's rather big, so walking from one location to another across campus there's not really [a] sense of community. It's like walking through a park where you don't know anyone, and don't feel encouraged to greet them or whatever."

"[The] place seems quite spread out and not too attractive."

Keywords from these statements like “way too big”, “quite spread out”, “rather big” and “huge space” showed that these respondents acknowledged the large size of the campus, and felt that it was bigger than perhaps these respondents would want. While no respondents explicitly said that the Arabia or Töölö campuses were more comfortable in size, the Otaniemi campus area was revealed as an imposing structure on these respondents. Linking these respondents’ statements to a sense of community, keywords like “not really a sense of community”, “don’t feel encouraged to greet [others]” and “feel by myself” showed that the campus size acted as a deterrent for these respondents in feeling truly connected to anyone there, and feeling lost or alone on campus.

It can also be inferred from these respondents’ statements that another way to increase the sense of community at the campus would be to promote a feeling of smallness and density (either real or perceived) amongst students. The respondents’ comments inspired the question: if this density effect could be delivered, could this added visibility of other students and their increased density help to facilitate interactions, chance meetings and a sense of closeness?

#### *Unseen students in closed spaces.*

Adding to the online survey comments above, while the in-depth interviews addressed the scale of the Otaniemi campus as well, those respondents also noted related challenges on the other campuses that were more contained, like the Arabia campus. To this point ARTS 1 said the following:

(ARTS 1): “I feel that [the School of Science & Technology] campus is really spread out. And I have a hard time finding anything because there are so many buildings, it’s a big place. And I think that our problem in Arabia is that the building is like a maze. And when people go in there they are kind of stuck in their own departments. And that’s something that we could maybe solve with the new campus. It could be more open, and built towards community.”

According to ARTS 1, while the Arabia campus was centralized into one single building, an extensive network of corridors, classrooms and walls of the building caused occupants to feel hidden, lost and disconnected from others. For this respondent, just as the large size of the Otaniemi campus did for other respondents, a similar sense of isolation can come from a maze-like feeling or a lack of openness, and this sense of isolation can act as an inhibitor to community formation.

ARTS 2 also noted this ‘hidden student’ phenomenon that existed at the Arabia campus, and suggested that the spaces could be empty due to the timing of lectures. Due to this



timing, lectures let out at staggered times such that students were unable to meet each other:

(ARTS 2): “I’ve been studying there for more than three years and I don’t know any other students. And I feel like I’ve spent all of these years in a bubble. The spaces are empty, I don’t know why is that. Is it that the lectures are arranged at different times that students don’t really meet anywhere.”

ARTS 2 also added a comment about the “maze” feeling that the building gave, where students disappeared behind the walls and left occupants feeling isolated:

(ARTS 2): “...When you meet people, and you have conversations with people, you exchange ideas, as you share thoughts, and that creates an inspiring environment. But when you’re sitting alone in your bubble, like in those dark empty spaces, it’s like a maze.”

(ARTS 1): “Yeah, people just disappear.”

(ARTS 2): “Yeah, it’s funny. And I was surprised when I heard how many students we actually have.”

(ARTS 1): “Because you never see them.”

(ARTS 2): “Because you never see them! [Laughs] Unless it’s lunchtime.”

Similarly, that same sense of emptiness was echoed by TECH 1 as well:

(TECH 1): “There weren’t any students when I went [to the Arabia campus]. It felt kind of like maybe it was the wrong time to go there. It felt a bit empty. There were a lot of cool works, a lot of cool things that the students had done...I felt like “where is everybody?””

This collection of statements about observations at the Arabia campus – composed of a single building with many floors – showed that while a campus can be compact, a feeling of togetherness or connectedness was not ensured because of it. For these respondents, walls, secluded workspaces or even transition periods between classes contributed to a student community’s sense of isolation and inability to properly connect with one another.

However, according to ARTS 2, this perceived lack of closeness could be specific to the Arabia campus as it lacks a social culture unlike that at the Design Factory. ARTS 2 continued:

(ARTS 2): “Nobody [at the School of Arts & Design], like in Design Factory/Venture Garage, came to me and said “hey we haven’t met” before, and “what’s your name” and then you meet people this way. So it’s the lack of this sense of community, and you’re alone with the stress... and if you have problems it’s not even easy to reach professors or coordinators. Especially in our [fashion design] department.”

*Enabling socializing through smallness.*

Comparing against the ARTS respondents, the BIZ students in the in-depth interviews indicated that they saw walls and enclosed spaces as advantages of the Töölö campus. BIZ 1 insisted that in order to contain people inside a space and bring them to collide, walls were necessary:

(BIZ 1): “Yeah, it’s difficult to maintain any sense of community [at the Otaniemi campus]. Yeah, you need to build walls somewhere, to cage people in. But then what I also found limiting was the fact that we were amongst ourselves, like we didn’t mix with the foreigners, and we didn’t mix with the other Aalto students, so it was kind of a dilemma. The things that I found good in our school mostly come from it being so tiny as well. That’s what enabled bumping into friends all the time everywhere. How do you build a small environment that enables you, without limiting anything?”

Thus, according to this respondent, a lack of walls or other containing elements let users of the space disperse, thus lessening the perceived density of occupants inside. When occupants have the room to spread out, then the “bumping into friends” that BIZ 1 mentioned was more difficult to do and thus connectedness suffered. According to this respondent, it was the collisions with friends that give the feeling of community and togetherness, and this was a good consequence of small environments like those at the School of Business. However, this respondent also saw a “limit” of small environments in closing off outsiders like foreign students or students from other schools, thus hindering integration and diversity. BIZ 1 favored small spaces that enabled students without limit them, while the respondent acknowledged that “you don’t want to build a bunch of small schools next to each other” in reference to the new campuses’ building plans.

### *Sense of (unspoken) community.*

Finally, an acknowledgement of a more passive sense of community emerged from both the ARTS and BIZ students during the in-depth interviews. In contrast to an activated sense of community that may be clearly visualized or verbalized, these respondents revealed that a type of bonding also took place without sharing any words or other overt actions. For example, evidence of this unspoken community came from the BIZ respondents in particular:

(BIZ 1): “At the office a bit later during the day, like after 5 or 6, or if you’re there at night, for example. Then you start bonding with people in a certain way, and the support network of the community activates itself. Like, “we will survive!” [laughs]”

(Researcher): “Is there something about the late-night component that makes it significant?”

(BIZ 1): “Yeah, I think that when it hits 6-o’clock or after 6-o’clock then you’re sharing the experience. It’s almost a social event because neither of you *have* to be there anymore, it’s not within working hours. I mean we don’t formally have those working hours between everyone, but I think that there’s an aspect to it that after 6-o’clock it’s your own time and your own choice, so people relax a bit maybe. Something happens after 6-o’clock. ...We’re in the same boat. We both have the same amount of work to do and the same amount of dedication to do it.”

-----

(Researcher): “Do you think that they’re also doing the same thing to you? That you’re recognizing them, do you think that they’re recognizing you? Do you ever think “hey, I know you!”?”

(BIZ 2): “I don’t know! ...I think about, can I go start saying hi to them and everything, because I’ve never talked to you, but I’ve seen you every day for like the past month.”

For these respondents it appeared that such shared circumstances were also considered as opportunities for passive bonding, and created a feeling of togetherness as well.

## **5.5 CREATING COLLISIONS: INTEGRATING GROUPS & INDIVIDUALS**

Based on the respondents from both the online surveys and the in-depth interviews, these Aalto students were keen on meeting other students from different backgrounds, but the current campus’ built environment was not doing enough to support this. However, areas with high foot traffic emerged as favored areas for the respondents to socialize, such as building corridors and lobbies.

*Reaching out.*

When asked about the greatest drivers that created a sense of community or togetherness at Aalto, several respondents to the online surveys touched upon the meeting other students from different backgrounds. Some of the responses included:

“Common interests and courses that make people from different communities know each other and start valuing their point of view and knowledge.”

“I think students are really curious about other disciplines and what they do, and if given a chance, would benefit from working with students from other schools.”

“Doing something together – getting to know fellow students.”

These responses showed a yearning amongst the respondents to hear and learn different student perspectives, plus an acknowledgement about the value that these interactions could deliver. One respondent also drew a connection between action (“doing”) and creating togetherness (“getting to know fellow students”).

A related question about what it meant for the respondents to be a part of the Aalto community showed additional insights into the drivers behind taking an active role as a member of the Aalto community. Stated drivers like networking, widening perspectives and expanding possibilities not only demonstrated some of the value propositions of a stronger Aalto community for these respondents, but also pointed towards a sense of excitement around the presence of a more active, robust community. For example:

“[The Aalto community] creates great opportunities when getting to know people from different schools. You may build wider networks and through the cooperation with different schools you may acquire wider knowledge throughout the studies.”

“A chance to learn from other professionals, an opportunity to broaden my views”

“Aalto is super. It’s a great platform to meet talented people from various backgrounds.”

“Meeting new people with different backgrounds. Lots of possibilities.”

Based on these statements, the online survey respondents described Aalto to be a tributary of sorts for a diverse array of talent. In addition, the respondents revealed that they saw the new university campus setting as an opportunity to become exposed to this talent, and to ultimately build a sense of community around it.

### *Breaking silos.*

As seen also in Section 5.4, a phenomenon of siloing emerged through the in-depth interviews. According to the respondents, some of them felt isolated and segregated on some parts of campus, and this siloing prevented them from interacting with the larger campus community. Similar sentiment also emerged in the online surveys with comments such as:

“Otaniemi’s biggest problem is that it is totally segregated and there is no natural interactions with anybody.”

According to the in-depth interview respondents, this siloing phenomenon was most prevalent at the Arabia campus, which the ARTS respondents described as a “maze” and made up of “dark empty spaces” that formed lonely “bubbles”. However, those bubbles burst at times of mass collision, for example when students moved to the several cafeterias located on campus during lunchtime. For these respondents, episodes of migration such as this produced a mixing effect and brought students out of the maze and into view of others. For the ARTS respondents, the presence of people aided in feelings of togetherness and a lack of isolation, which then ultimately lead to feelings of comfort and satiety. When probed further about why having people around lead to comfort, ARTS 2 noted the following:

(ARTS 2): “I think that you don’t get the feeling that you’re alone. Because you spend most of your time studying and it’s people who make you feel like at home. I think that University could be as comfortable as home, because you spend most of your time at University.”

Thus, leveraging physical space and travel routes to facilitate interactions and unplanned meetings dismantled this siloing tendency for this respondent and increased visible contact in the space.

### *Facilitating unplanned, spontaneous meetings.*

Drawing from the in-depth interviews, there was a desire to avoid making separate zones for ARTS, BIZ and TECH students on campus. Favored instead was creating a united hive that mixed or cross-pollinated all of these groups that made up the Aalto student population. According to the respondents of the in-depth interviews, this use of the built environment to facilitate interactions, especially in areas with high foot traffic, might also dismantle the siloing effect.



Regarding this sense of cross-pollination and the use of traffic areas, an exchange during the in-depth interviews between TECH 1, TECH 2 and ARTS 2 included desires for more directly mixing different disciplines together on campus. Also, the respondents hoped that the newly developed spaces avoided creating single-discipline buildings and rather focused on promoting the same spirit of multi-disciplinarity upon which Aalto was founded. For example some of the respondents said:

(TECH 2): “[A suggestion to Aalto administration about the new campus design] is that there is not one place for [the] Arts school, one place for Economics – so they are mixed.”

(Researcher): “So to have one building with course rooms for the different disciplines?”

(TECH 2): “Yeah. So that they interact.”

(TECH 1): “Try to avoid the situation that ARTS 1 described at TaiK. About where people just sit in their own departments.”

(ARTS 2): “Yeah. Or different buildings, to avoid that. At least students could change buildings from time to time, but not stay in one building because that’s going to create a vacuum again. And also do more projects together. Students from different departments. Have classes together.”

(TECH 2): “Mandatory classes.”

(ARTS 2): “Yes.”

(TECH 1): “That’s one, so that they meet by chance also. Like, put...if this is for example the building where some of the people in department X are here, and then they have to go through this building where’s department Y, design it so that they’re meeting.”

Thus, these respondents suggested that by creating physical intersection points or spaces where students collide could help disparate groups to integrate and cross-pollinate – or “design it so that they’re meeting” as TECH 1 put it. This approach could answer the desire to avoid built environment-triggered self-segregation, as noted by BIZ 1, such that the new campus would not “build a bunch of small schools next to each other,” according to BIZ 1.

However, the respondents pointed out some locations on the Aalto campus that were already creating collisions between students. For example, TECH 1 noted that this could already be seen at the Design Factory through its “coffee maker” policy in the Kafis kitchen (Figure 20), which TECH 1 described as the following:

(TECH 1): “[Design Factory Director Kalevi Ekman] says that he only allows coffee machines in the kitchen, so that will make sure the people will come out and interact. So something with that metaphor. Something similar to that on the campus scale. Make sure that people mingle.”

From the perspective of the BIZ respondents in the in-depth interviews, similar opportunities for creating collisions and getting people together were also noted as links to building a sense of community. When those respondents were asked about ideal spots at the School of Business, the list consisted of Kesko-sali (a large group work space on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor), Tieto-sali (large computer lab) and Rafla (campus cafeteria), all of which are large, indoor co-habitation spaces at that campus. See Figure 20 for images.

For respondent BIZ 1, areas of the School of Business that featured high volumes of foot traffic presented the best opportunities for generating unplanned or spontaneous meetings. In particular, these areas included the public-use tables (also called “bars” or “ledges” by BIZ 1, Figure 20) located in the lobby of the School’s main building. Often used by student groups to sell tickets for events or other promotional purposes, these tables were not designed for sitting but rather for displaying literature or storage. However, according to BIZ 1, when contrasted with the couches inside the lobby more suited for socializing purposes, the tables remained more popular for that respondent.

BIZ 1 explained:

(BIZ 1): “What I think is my favorite spot [on the Töölö campus]...when you come in, and they have the couches on the right...not my favorite because they’re out of the way but still in the middle. But either sitting on one of those bars, like the ledges where they have the papers, or when you come up two steps toward the Juhlasali on the left, there’s always a couple of tables. Just sitting on one of those tables, and you’ll see everyone, like ALL of your friends will be there.”

(Researcher): “Why were those better places to sit than the couches? You know, because the couches were made for sitting, but then you’re sitting on bookshelves and tables instead?”

(BIZ 1): “Because the couches, I think they’re awkward. To get there and to get away from there, it’s awkward. If you see someone it’s not natural to go and say “hi”. Like if you’re sitting on the couch over here [showing the positioning of the couches] and your friend comes in from the door over here, and there’s a huge big thing in between you, and a lot of space, so if you want to be private and just do stuff, but not fully concentrate then I think that they’re ok. Or if you’re meeting someone or waiting for someone, fine, but if you want to just kill ten minutes and maybe bump into someone, then you’re not going to bump into anyone there. Bumping into people is definitely a big thing. Because I think that that’s a great thing about a campus, all the unplanned meetings. I think that was the BEST thing about being there. There were lectures, I’m sure, but talking to people was the best.”

Thus, for BIZ 1, the favorability of a spot at the campus – driven by the ability to run



Figure 20: From top to bottom:  
“Kafis” kitchen, Aalto Design Factory, Otaniemi campus (source: ADF Flickr);  
Kesko-sali group workspace, Aalto School of Business, Töölö campus;  
Tieto-sali large computer lab, Aalto School of Business, Töölö campus;  
Rafla student cafeteria, Aalto School of Business, Töölö campus;  
Lobby ledges, Aalto School of Business, Töölö campus

into friends – was based on the ease and effectiveness with which to intercept friends as they walked by. When BIZ 1 intercepted and engaged with friends, this activated a valuable sense of community for this respondent. And while the ledges were not created for sitting, they were more effective community activators for that respondent than more traditional seating solutions located in a less traveled areas. Also, while the ledges were unconventional in that they were not ergonomic and lacked cushions or other comfort features, they delivered what BIZ 1 considered the very “best” aspect of student life nonetheless – talking to people and being an active participant in the Aalto community.

Finally, as mentioned Tieto-sali and the Rafla were also cited as places with a strong sense of community on the Töölö campus by some respondents. During the in-depth interviews, when probed about places at the Töölö campus with the strongest sense of community, BIZ 1 cited both Tieto-sali and Rafla:

(BIZ 1): “...The cafeteria [has the strongest sense of community on the Töölö campus]. That and the [Kesko-sali] 5<sup>th</sup> floor study hall. I remember the times when I would feel at home [in Kesko-sali], just like being in your living room where people kind of come and go and you just do your work, and people come and go, and then you take a break, and you don’t have to explain your existence to anyone. You can just be in this timeless space.

And the cafeteria, you go in to eat, and you end up having debates about things. And even during the summer that I was there, that would be the place you could meet then, people coming in from work, or would be in the building, like your friends from outside of your courses you could come and eat together.”

According to the respondent, Kesko-sali felt like a “living room” and a “timeless space”, where the respondent could go and not have to give a reason for being there. That sense of liberation and absence of scrutiny likely enabled the respondent to stay longer at that location, and to spend more time amongst the Aalto community. Further, Rafla for BIZ 1 as well as BIZ 2 was also referenced as hives for people, thus making them spots with the greatest sense of community at the campus. Of Rafla and Tieto-sali, BIZ 2 said the following:

(BIZ 2): “[Tieto-sali and Rafla] is where you see the people – where people are. I’d imagine if there would be a space that would be a little more enjoyable, that’s where people would be, but there’s not really a space like that here.”

## 5.6 TOGETHERNESS BY DOING: ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Widely inclusive, recurring events like Vappu, or spontaneous ones like sports triumphs such as Team Finland in the 2011 Ice Hockey World Championships in Helsinki can breakdown social barriers and form community bonds, and the built environment acts as the stage for these occasions. The presence of events and activities can also bring life to the place where they are hosted. This aspect of “life” was one that was uncovered through respondent’s statements as lacking at the current Otaniemi campus.

### *The action and triggers in events.*

The opportunity for events to build a sense of community became evident in the in-depth interviews, as did the ability of those events to connect disparate individuals and groups attending them. During the in-depth interviews, when ARTS 2 was shown the image cards to spur ideas of observed instances of community, an event-related theme emerged:

(ARTS 2): “I chose these pictures about Vappu, Flow Festival, and also people gathering around screen...if there’s some event that concerns all people and it’s relevant for everybody, if you think about Vappu, people open up. It’s not even about the alcohol, but people are just more open because it’s relevant for everybody, and everybody is involved in that. So I think that that’s what creates this more open atmosphere.”

A key component about the remark was the statements about “relevance”, a characteristic that acts to make the event more inclusive for a wide variety of audiences as barriers to participation are low. Annual events like Vappu are free to enter, have no entry restrictions and are held in urban areas near big population centers. For ARTS 2, this characteristic of Vappu created a “more open atmosphere” and had everybody “involved”, active and feeding the sense of community there. Further, events were revealed to act as “triggers” for communication and interactivity, evidenced ARTS 2’s following comment:

(ARTS 2): “These pictures are with like a lounge area where people hang out. Also a bar. But here they look like they’re sitting by themselves and don’t really communicate with each other, but I think that events would be like triggers, and people do need an open space, and then they can share and get to know each other through those events in the first place. Events are something that trigger conversation, people find each other. And then when they gather together or when they hang out in some common space, it’s easy to share experiences. And



thoughts. Even with new people. You can be like “hey, have you been to that event” and I think that screen is something that does bring people somehow together.”

ARTS 2 alluded that the events acted as triggers for connection in two ways: first, events brought people together, getting them to “gather” in greater numbers and in a defined place; and second, events gave strangers a shared currency for conversation, like an ice-breaker upon which to start building a relationship and creating community bonds. For this respondent, events acted to lessen the difficulty of building bonds, and thus sharing experiences was “easy” within this context.

### *The role of parties.*

According to the respondents, currently the events that primarily connect students are parties. In the in-depth interviews, parties at both the Arts & Design and Business schools were noted as keys to driving togetherness, however with varying degrees of success. BIZ 2 expressed a more cynical view of the social demeanor at the School of Business through claiming that parties hosted by the KY Student Union were the only occasion under which students there could meet:

(BIZ 2): “[The KY building has] that kitchen area with a couple of couches. And a smoking area...and the sauna room. Not really that open space. Like open for everybody. So I guess the only way you interact with people are at the parties and events.”

As for the School of Arts & Design, one party is organized each autumn to unite the students on the Arabia campus. However, for ARTS 2 these events acted as fleeting occasions of connection:

(ARTS 2): “And then after [the annual ARTS party] ok you meet those people and then you see them at the university after that and you just say hi and nothing else because you don’t see them anymore, like they get lost in that maze.”

So, while the event acted as a catalyst for bringing students together, based on the respondents’ remarks there must also be additional energy used outside of the event to maintain the connection.

However, the Design Factory in Otaniemi campus again emerged as a positive example of a built environment that promotes togetherness and community through actions and events, as evidenced by TECH 1's comments:

(TECH 1): "The thing that I like about Design Factory is that it makes everybody do stuff. Like in [ME]310 [mechanical engineering course] we had SUDS. Sometimes, most of the time it was really fun to do things. Ok now there's a challenge, everyone has to do something like [an assignment]. There were times when I was feeling lazy, sometimes it was annoying, but most of the time it was really fun. Activation."

Here, TECH 1 applauded the Design Factory's ability to inspire students to "do stuff" – in other words, to engage students in action or participatory behavior. Often a pleasurable and positive experience for this respondent, this "activation" of students also worked to change the timbre of relationships between students, breaking down the hierarchy to deliver a different way of interacting with people. Of this TECH 1 said:

(TECH 1): "[Doing something] destroyed the hierarchy. Everybody does stuff, everybody presents stuff. I have a lot of work experience in Japan where everything is really hierarchical. And I think that the lack of hierarchy is a really good thing. Or not like anarchy, but kind of like empowerment. Try to make students get excited."

## 5.7 INTERPRETIVE SPACE FOR STUDENTS

Some communities use rituals and traditions as threads to bind themselves together. Rituals, such as annual celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries for example, stand as predictable events when community members can meet each other and nurture their sense of community. Some traditions act as guiding protocols for how such occasions are marked, and are often identically repeated according to past executions. Elements like these can shape some of the building blocks around which communities are formed, and act as transitional phases during which old identities are shed and new identities are adopted (van Gennep, 1960).

However, according to the in-depth interview respondents, such fixed order and repetition also hindered their free use of space, as the respondents viewed order as rigidity that negatively affected creativity. This fixedness was also revealed in the study to limit the development of togetherness in spaces where users could not act as they wish, but rather how the spaces dictated they should act. This then stood as a hurdle

for some respondents to truly connect with a space and to make it feel as their own. In other words, for the respondents in the study the flexibility of spaces communicated possibility or potential, while fixedness broadcasted the opposite.

Tommi Laitio, Director of DEMOS Helsinki, also spoke of this sense of interpretive space in a lecture at the June 2012 “make.helsinki” workshop, focused on facilitating guerilla urban design actions on unused “hidden gem” spaces around Helsinki. Considered for this study as an expert in community identity, co-creation and wellbeing – all in the context of the built environment as defined by the goals of the make.helsinki workshop – Laitio described some of the nuances of our environment:

(Laitio): “...The fact that we can adapt our environment makes us happy. The fact that we feel that we have an ownership to the surroundings that we live in makes us happy. There’s very good, solid academic research on the relationship between the place we live in, the relationship that we have to that place, and whether we feel that we can change that place or not. So, the fact that you feel that you can put your finger into your neighborhood twist it to a certain direction is really important.”

So, if according to Laitio the interpretive nature of space may offer benefits to users such as happiness and connectedness, perhaps more spaces can be developed to allow for more improvisation, experimentation and personal embellishments?

### *Making interpretive space.*

Each of the TECH, BIZ and ARTS respondents spoke of some sense of interpretive space in the in-depth interviews. By “interpretive” it is meant the way in which spaces can be customized given any individual user’s needs or desires, thereby ascribing to it a particular meaning or significance. For example, during the in-depth interviews, TECH 1 referenced a recent experience at a wedding:

(TECH 1): “I was at two weddings this year. The fact that every seat has a card with a name of the person who’s sitting there. The name card is there and you’re supposed to sit there [pointing]. And this table [pointing] goes to take food first, and you [pointing] go next. And there’s all this kind of protocol and hierarchy and this kind of system....it feels a bit tiring.

...I didn’t feel about weddings like that before...it’s the structure that you’re not allowed to break. You’re like: [pointing] “Don’t innovate.” “Don’t be creative.” It’s the kind of the thing that’s so mentally tiring.”

The respondent's finger pointing and characterizations like "mentally tiring" of the wedding communicated that respondent's frustration and dislike of the experience. And while TECH 1 had this feeling of events outside of the university environment, this respondent also linked it to student life within Aalto as well:

(TECH 1): "One thing I feel is that after I started going to Design Factory I started enjoying Sitsit, you know what is Sitsit? I started enjoying them less, actually because they're formal."

(Researcher): "So by "formal" you mean dictated by these rules, by this protocol?"

(TECH 1): "Yeah, protocol and convention. I felt like many things in the Teekkari culture started to seem structured and [that] there's this kind of way you should go. I felt like Design Factory showed me like "No, just do what you want.""

Through this respondent's exposure to the Design Factory – described as an environment less dictated by rules and protocol and "do what you want" mentality by the respondent – this changed the respondent's interpretation of other situations that did not share the same philosophy as Design Factory. This also applied to university culture, indicated by the respondent's stated displeasure in Teekkari culture, which is prevalent on the Otaniemi campus. Thus, when confronted with less impulse-forgiving environments like a wedding or "Sitsit", the imposed rules were a source of frustration for the respondent.

"It's a human desire to influence our environment", added DEMOS Helsinki's Laitio, "because for a long time people have felt that they don't have the possibility to influence the city that much, or the public space that much. So, there's a growing demand, or growing desire to have more space to yourself" he said. Laitio's statement lent credence to the fact that TECH 1's frustration likely stemmed from the inability to influence that respondent's environment.

Likewise, ARTS 2 shared similar sentiment as TECH 1 through an observation about an event hosted by the School of Business. Here, ARTS 2 told of an unsuccessful merging of two university communities ARTS and BIZ:

(ARTS 2): "I think that some parties could also work, they just need to be organized so that the atmospheres wouldn't be formal. Because in those parties organized by HSE they felt a bit formal and too commercial. [The trigger that made it feel formal] was the space, first of all, the tables, how they were positioned there. If you sit then you sit alone with your friends only and you don't really mix with anybody else. And also, well people were dressed up very, they had their formal outfits, so it creates a bit of an uptight atmosphere."

ARTS 2's characterization of the event as "formal", "too commercial" and "uptight" showed the respondent's unease with the experience, and the integration of this respondent into the BIZ community was likely unsuccessful as a result. Further, referencing again the sense of commerciality seen in Section 5.1, ARTS 2 also made a link to the built environment where the party was hosted. Based on ARTS 2's comments, the space prevented this respondent from feeling more engaged with the BIZ community at the party. As characterized by the respondent, through the fixed, orderly presentation of the tables and overall layout of the venue, this kept attendees from achieving a "mix" of partygoers, and thus made for an uneasy atmosphere.

Similarly, Laitio pointed out that while an ability to affect private surroundings was important, the role of "group" and "doing things together" were driving influences in the creation of connectedness to spaces as well. "Very much this relationship with your environment and your own happiness is about feeling that you can make decisions on your surroundings, but still feeling like you belong to a group of people" Laitio said, and noted a artistic work by Elissa Eriksson (Figure 21). "That's why it's important to do these things together. Because it's easier for us as people to do something together than by ourselves. But also still making sure that we are in the driving seat in some way. That we make decisions on our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others" he concluded.



*Figure 21: "This is anyhow my city". Photo by artist Elissa Eriksson (Flickr.com, 2013)*



*Enabling nesting.*

The term “nesting” in the context of this study is described as making a home for oneself, complete with a level of intimacy and comfort. In the in-depth interviews, some respondents spoke of customizable spaces – however not only on functional terms, but also on psychological or emotional terms as well. Some respondents wished to inject their own personalities or identities into the spaces they inhabited, thus giving them something that *they* had created in the space. Along with this active participation in creating the space came a vested interest in protecting that contribution for the long term. Plus, such deposits of ‘self’ into shared spaces, while likely intimate and personal for the individual, may contribute to the space functioning more effectively overall, thus affecting everyone using that space.

Some of the respondents in the in-depth interviews implied a desire to ‘nest’ in the spaces they inhabited, and this nesting ability was then tied to the development of a sense of community. For example, ARTS 1 compared shared working spaces at the School of Arts & Design, and a school in Denmark the respondent attended while on an exchange semester there:

(ARTS 1): “It’s important to have your own territory in the common space, where you can leave your stuff. Because when you’re working on a design project you have so many things going on and if you have to have these large IKEA bags carry it all, then it’s really hard and you’d rather do it at home. But if you have a place at the school where you can leave all of your stuff there, and also some tea and biscuits maybe, it’s super nice to go there and hang out with the others, and work there.

...We don’t have large homes where we could have just a workspace there. That’s why it would be nice to have it at school. And it also brings a sense of community when you are working with the others. And you can have even little meetings there. And that’s something I hope to see in our new campus.”

For this respondent, having “own territory” in a common space facilitates working remotely there, and thus the opportunity to “hang out” with others in the studio community. However, this desire for nesting may be more acute for Arts & Design students who often carry supplies and materials to and from shared studio spaces and may be dependent on the tools and machines housed there. Further, ARTS 1 noted a need for more social working environment as at the school in Denmark:

(ARTS 1): “That’s something that should be solved – that we would have some kind of a social working place. Which is open to all the students. So that you could have your own table there. And a piece of wall or something where you could hang your inspiration material. Because that’s something that I saw in Danish Design school [in Copenhagen] where I was in exchange. And that was really nice to see the projects that the other students have, and especially in the visual design world it’s really good to see what the others are doing. And it also brings the feeling of community.

...There is a difference [from how ARTS displays student work]. Because in TaiK, it’s just exhibitions you see on the walls. And in Copenhagen, they had...it’s your own table where you can work all the time, so you can have your stuff there. And even now a bit of food in some cupboard underneath the table. And also it’s work going on. Work in progress. That you can see, in the tables. And that’s something that was really good. Inspirational. And it also teaches you a lot, when you see how the others work with their projects.”

According to ARTS 1’s statement above, if a space displayed “work in progress” of other designers, then this would bring “feelings of community” as designers could see what others were doing and use that work as points for connection. Also for ARTS 1, the ability to store small personal effects – like food or other work-related items – was noted as a valued aspect of such a space.

Finally, these social workshop-type conditions also emerged amongst the respondents from the School of Business. As presented in Section 5.5, Kesko-sali at the School of Business was said by some respondents to have a strong sense of community amongst the current spaces at the Töölö campus. For BIZ 1, not only was this space effective for group work, but also it was positively multi-functional:

(BIZ 1): “I did hang out [in Kesko-sali] a lot. I think it was just a space where a lot of us did our projects, because there’s space to work in a group, and there’s also computers, and the reading halls are close. There’s a varied option of types of places you can sit. Like, you can be alone in a back corner, when you’re trying to concentrate. Or you can be in the middle tables with your group, or you can be on the computer and look down, or look up and for sure you’ll see people you know. You can go upstairs, you can be there in a more-or-less sociable space. I think you could really easily choose your home, in a way, there. It’s flexible, in that way.”

## 5.8 VILLAGING

Each in-depth interview began with an open-ended question about most or least favorite aspects of the current Aalto campus. Several themes emerged from the responses, including the comparison of campuses to villages, along with mentions of food services as well as the idea of “homing”, related to nesting seen in Section 5.7. While some elements of Aalto’s current campus catered well to short-term stays – such as attending class, meetings or social engagements – some respondents revealed that the campus did not sufficiently support long-term stays, and thus limited the amount of time spent on campus.

### *Campus villages.*

During the in-depth interviews, both ARTS 2 and BIZ 2 cited other successful campus experiences outside of Aalto while studying abroad. Those respondents found that the campuses of those universities felt more like “villages”, in that the spaces and services on offer met nearly all of the needs that they had throughout the day. According to those respondents, this enabled them to stay on campus longer and prolong their connection to the university lifestyle and community.

The term “village” was used to mean a type of human settlement or community that serves the comprehensive needs of the included population. In this study, “villaging” occurs when a given environment develops a wide-ranging portfolio of services much like those seen in a village. ARTS 2 and BIZ 2’s exposure to more village-type campuses came while studying abroad at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in Brisbane, Australia and British Columbia University (BCU) in Vancouver, Canada, respectively. Comparing QUT to Aalto University after returning to Finland, ARTS 2 saw QUT as having different kinds of services for students and Aalto as comparatively “fragmented”:

(ARTS 2): “It’s very fragmented [at Aalto] than at QUT because the buildings were closer to each other [at QUT]. And it looked a bit more organized. Where as [at Aalto], I love it that we have a lot of trees and parks, but it still looks a bit fragmented. Like you don’t actually realize where the campus starts and where it ends. And which buildings are part of the campus and which are not. But at QUT it was quite clear. There was like a village. It was built like a village. They had different kinds of services for students.”

(Researcher): “So village meaning stuff was closer together?”

(ARTS 2): “Yeah. Close together, they have grocery shops, they have different kinds of services for students. Even hairdresser, dentist...”

In the passage, ARTS 2 described several characterizations about QUT that made it feel “like a village.” First, the campus was “more organized” with “buildings closer to each other”, thereby connecting a degree of order and purposeful positioning of buildings to a village feel. QUT’s campus also had clearer boundaries to differentiate itself from the surrounding city of Brisbane, plus student-focused services specifically, in contrast to Aalto’s campus.

Next, BIZ 2 said of BCU in Vancouver, Canada:

(BIZ 2): “[The BCU campus and the dorms] were in the same area, and it was HUGE, it was like a city of its own. It was actually governed by its own government and detached from the city of Vancouver. And it had its own electricity service. But in that way I understand this whole moving-the-campus thing to Otaniemi, that when it’s in one area it creates a community there. But I was actually just yesterday talking with a colleague of mine, who is a student at Otaniemi, that they don’t have any cafeterias there, or any coffee shops, so that was different in Vancouver. That they have coffee shops and a couple of restaurants, and supermarkets inside the campus. So it was a city of its own.”

(Researcher): “Were they fairly visible so you could see that they’re there? Did it feel a little bit more lively on that campus [as compared to Aalto’s Otaniemi campus]?”

(BIZ 2): “Yeah, it felt more like a neighborhood, a city neighborhood, like a borough – a “kaupunginosa” than just a place to go to school. I think they even have a movie theater there. All these little things that a city or a small town would have.”

(Researcher): “So if it has the things that make it seem self-sufficient, like with its own electricity, its own services, nightlife, foodlife, and all that, that’s what helps give it some sense of identity, or?”

(BIZ 2): “...yes.”

BIZ 2 echoed ARTS 2 by praising BCU’s servicescape and its independent power generation systems and governing authorities. Other characterizations of BCU’s campus as a “city of its own”, a “neighborhood”, “borough” or “kaupunginosa” (Finnish for “neighborhood”) with everything that a “city or small town would have” in terms of service offerings further deepened the link of BCU to a village. Additionally, BIZ 2 cited on-campus food services along with dining and entertainment options like bars and cafes that operated outside of the University’s purview and were open at night.

*Food services.*

In addition to BIZ 2's observations about BCU, other respondents also noted food services and how they impacted stays on Aalto's campuses. For example, TECH 1 also noted how the lack of restaurants prevented spending more evenings on campus:

(TECH 1): "I'd like to have more restaurants here. More life."

(Researcher): "Why restaurants?"

(TECH 1): "Sometimes I feel like 'hmm, like in the evening, I'd like to eat something. But then the choices I have...well, I need to go all the way to Helsinki to do that.'"

(ARTS 1): "So you actually live here?"

(TECH 1): "I live pretty close. But even if it's been a long day, like for some people who only come here to study. Maybe it's more usual for people who are toward the end of their studies. Sophomores. People who just started they're happily getting drunk in the park. I'd like to somehow make this place more lively. And I'm hoping that the other Aalto people will help in creating an atmosphere like that."

Here, TECH 1 connected the presence of restaurants to the level of "life" on campus, and noted that the restaurant offerings at the Otaniemi campus were insufficient. TECH 1 also referred to a dimension of seniority – that current on-campus dining services were less satisfactory for more senior students, while younger students are more open to creating their own solutions such as socializing in a nearby park. However, a positive solution to the restaurant services question came from ARTS 2, citing the Design Factory and Aalto Venture Garage as sites where long-term stays were properly facilitated:

(ARTS 2): "For example here at Design Factory and Venture Garage, people stay there. The environment is built so that you do feel comfortable, you have everything you need. You have the kitchen that brings people together. And you feel ok staying there and doing your work. And then consequently you meet new people. And it creates a more open environment."

Here, through the statement "everything you need" ARTS 2 is referencing the sufficient level of services at those two sites, which leads users to feel "comfortable", thus linking the completeness of such offerings to feelings of personal satiety. Further, this respondent linked the ability to "stay" in a space – that is for a multiple-hour, long-term period of time – to an ability to increase focus on work and a frequency of meeting new people in an environment that is more "open" as a result of a complete range of services being provided.



### *Nesting and homing.*

Finally, to encourage long-term stays, the respondents suggested that physical spaces promote nesting (as presented in Section 5.7) or “homing” as described by one respondent, which is an environment that offers security and happiness, and feels like a place of rest, retreat, or secure refuge (Merriam-Webster, 2012). As seen in the statement below, according to ARTS 2 this feeling of “homing” was present at the Arabia campus even though the sense of community there was otherwise low:

(ARTS 1): “[The Arabia campus] is kind of cozy that you have your own little group. And you’re all the time in your own little group. For example in my year, there were eight students so we know each other really well in the first two years when we had intensely studied together. And it’s nice to have that homing. But otherwise there isn’t so much community. But if you are going towards homing, then Arabia is really good.”

## **5.9 WORK + PLAY: PROFESSIONAL AND SOCIAL SPACES**

On top of professional outlets, university life offers many social outlets as well, but perhaps the bonds built under predominantly social circumstances are fleeting. They may simply not go deep enough to last. However, do connections along social *and* professional lines go deeper, acting to build richer bonds that have a higher potential to endure?

### *Bonding across work and play.*

For the respondents of the in-depth interviews, the convergence of work *and* play scenarios arose as an opportunity through which to grow a sense of community, and several respondents wished that more such spaces were present on Aalto’s campuses.

As noted in Section 5.1, especially for the BIZ respondents at the School of Business the initial orientation period was when most bonds between students were built. However, if these bonds did not evolve past simply social connotations – for example through shared goals, as suggested by one respondent – they were less likely to last for the long-term. As the respondents spent more and more time as part of the Aalto community, their exposure or connectedness to the campus itself tended to diminish, perhaps due to the fleeting nature of the social-based bonds students formed during the orientation period. This was noted especially with the BIZ respondents, who built their core network in the first few weeks of school. This network then expanded less and less as the academic

years progressed. For example, BIZ 1 said of how much time was spent at the School of Business' campus:

(BIZ 1): "Yeah, especially in the beginning, I did. A lot. Like in the first year, year and a half, before my exchange, I definitely spent a lot of time at that campus. But then at some stage I think I started working and wasn't at HSE anymore, and at some stage I think I just got bored of hanging out at school.

...I wasn't willing to spend as much time, I think that when my group of friends evolved [changed], and got extended and I found a new group of friends, that's when I had some kind of resistant reaction, that I didn't want to spend as much time there anymore. That I didn't want to donate, or not donate, but give in to just hanging out there anymore without any purpose. Just for the friends. I think I started feeling that I just wasn't home anymore."

According to this respondent, a feeling of "resistance" developed towards the School of Business once the purpose for being there involved only social endeavors. This supports the conclusion for this respondent that the intensity of relationships predicated solely on social pursuits tended to dwindle over time.

### *Shared goals.*

During the following exchange between TECH 1 and TECH 2, the presence of a shared goal emerged as a key success factor in why work/play scenarios yield strong feelings of community for these respondents:

(TECH 1): "The strongest sense of community is when work and play mix."

(TECH 2): "Where you have the same goal with people."

(TECH 1): "Yes."

A "goal" in this instance can be interpreted in several ways: either as a united outcome that parties from different perspectives agree on, or then as an alignment or overlapping of core values that span social and professional interests. Regarding the former, as a united outcome TECH 2 alluded to this while pointing to an image of an American football stadium. About this photo (see Figure 22, next page) TECH 2 said:

(TECH 2): "Game pictures. Somewhere people are playing something, that's the strongest feelings of community. Togetherness."



*Figure 22: Football game picture referenced by TECH 2 (Al Messerschmidt/Getty Images, 2010)*

The shared goal in this case was the glory and standing received from winning the game. Whether the perspective on this was from the spectators or the players themselves, the goal was the same. For TECH 2, such a focused, shared motivation for being present at the stadium, this scenario built a sense of togetherness between the spectators and players.

In the latter interpretation above, an overlapping of core values that span social and professional interests, TECH 1 described the sense of a shared goal differently. TECH 1 explained a nuance in which connectedness can plateau if concerning only either social or professional matters, but can extend past that plateau if the two are able to mix or cross-pollinate. TECH 1 described this phenomenon through the following statement about work- and school-related communities:

(TECH 1): “For me, I’ve been in communities where you mostly interact with people related to work. And they are formal communities, they are matter-of-fact communities...that are based on facts. Like focused on problem solving. They are problem-solving communities.

Any workplace where you haven’t hung out so much with your co-workers, where you don’t know your co-workers. Then there’s [communities] like you have your friends, where you don’t share any professional goals, hanging out with them is fun but sometimes you may want to

connect with those people also on some other level. Like, did you see the game last night, or how was your weekend. At some point you get bored of that kind of topics. So I think that having both is best, because at some point you can just joke around and sometimes you can say “hey, I’ve got a cool idea related to this...” and that’s one of the strong points of Design Factory.”

Here, for TECH 1 a “matter-of-fact” community was strictly professional in nature, like co-workers, whereas friends could be associations strictly of a social nature. Goal sharing in this case was then when opportunities arise, as TECH 1 put it, “to connect with those people also on some other level.” Goal sharing was about striking a diversified portfolio of interests between connections, such that any one broken bond did not lead to the total decay of that relationship as a whole.

According to TECH 1, this merging of work/play was already occurring at the Design Factory, and thus could be expanded to other campus locations as well. Expanding further on the Design Factory, TECH 1 added:

(TECH 1): “In Design Factory, work and social life do mix. But for me, it’s more like a converging state of mind and a diverging. Like if I really need to focus, that’s when I need to be alone. Or when I need to diverge and get other people’s input and ideas, then obviously having people around you is good. So, I don’t know, maybe in Aalto, and traditional researchers, maybe some of them are a bit stuck also in their mindsets, they need to do everything themselves, write papers. If I need to expand, then having people obviously helps.”

TECH 1 characterized the Design Factory’s role as a facilitator or catalyst in mixing work and play. Plus, for this respondent the Design Factory also transitioned well from a professional space by day to social space by night, that did not feel rigid or hinder innovative “creative” thinking. TECH 1 continues about the Design Factory:

(TECH 1): “I think Aalto already has all of the professional-related know-how. We have talented designers, good engineers, and business people of course. I don’t think that’s going to be our problem. It’s how to make this place to feel more cozy, and the thing that companies like Google and Facebook have done is that they’ve tried to make the workplace pretty cool to hang out in even after work. And that’s something that Design Factory has as well.”

Not only did this remark demonstrate how workplaces could be re-engineered into socializing destinations, but it also suggested that Aalto’s spaces lacked a sense of coziness. According to this respondent, the coziness, comfort or desirability of a space

enabled users to remain active in it for longer, and in the case of workspaces to use them beyond the close of traditional workday hours.

Finally, according to some of the in-depth interview respondents, more of these work/play locations are desired around Aalto campuses, such as at the Otaniemi campus. Plus, the later a space was open also contributed to the space's ability to transition from a work to a play space, which thereby helped the space to feel like a "hang out" space – to use the words of TECH 1. A final example, Kipsari in Arabia was again mentioned as a favored space on Aalto campuses for these respondents, particularly for its role as a facilitator in the mixing of work and play:

(TECH 1): "And [Kipsari] is open pretty late isn't it?"

(ARTS 2): "It's a bar also."

(TECH 1): "Yes. So that's exactly what I'd like to have [at TKK]."

(ARTS 2): "And you can also, after the lectures, or after finishing work you can just stay with the people you work with and have a beer, or just hang out."

(TECH 1): "Yes. Yes."

(ARTS 2): "I think [Kipsari] is the only place where I feel like hanging out and you know having a beer, or something to eat."

(ARTS 1): "That's probably the whole heart of it, of Arabia. Is Kipsari."

(TECH 1): "...Now that I understand better I want to have something like Kipsari here [at TKK]. Like not only a restaurant, but a bar where you can go for beers, and something...well there's Cantina in Dipoli but it's hidden. Not even half of the people even know that it's there. There should be something like that."

## 5.10 DISCUSSION

Reflecting upon the findings, the specific context of university campuses may include some unique and differentiating aspects worth noting. One example is when on-campus student housing is involved, and thus exposure to the university community is near constant for those residents. Through this added contact with the campus compared to off-campus housed students, these on-campus housed students have an increased opportunity to contribute to the university narrative, and thus to make the place 'their own' through imposing personal interpretations onto the spaces they use. However, should the university campus spaces poorly cater to flexibility, interpretation or meet the expectations of what university spaces *should be* in the minds of these students, this might then negatively influence the quality of the overall experience of the campus.



Further, the findings suggest that the degree to which university campuses facilitate the integration and cross-pollination of the population is higher than typical places, and these intersections of people stand as ideal socializing spots through which to experience the sense of university community. Universities also likely hold more events than average communities, bringing event venue designs to become especially important.

The time scale involved in the exposure to university life is another likely differentiator, meaning that the opportunity to grow connected to the university community is perhaps atypically short. Plus, the student population is likely more transient than usual (many degree programs range from two to five years), such that campus spaces must be additionally flexible to accommodate the interpretations of a large volume of users as turnover occurs. Also, a higher premium is likely placed on spaces that cater to both professional and social pursuits at universities. While workplace or residential communities may lean more toward work than play or vice versa, university campuses may need to strike a closer balance of the two as both activities may be practiced with equal regularity. Finally, campuses may be unusually affected by symbols and narrative (Nenonen & Kojo, 2013), especially considering that the power of a school's brand is often a competitive advantage in student recruiting and fundraising, and vibrant campus life is a selling tool by universities to prospective students.

Aalto's strategy and history also contributes to the uniqueness of its community-building and placemaking profile. Aalto's strongly stated mandate to inspire and support interdisciplinary learning already sets an expectation for the mixing of students from varied academic backgrounds. Plus, Aalto's history is complex considering the school's need to not only respect the history of the three old, and highly respected universities from which Aalto came, but also to now forge new traditions while united under the Aalto flag.

Overall, the study's findings point toward an opportunity for Aalto to use placemaking as a tool with which to increase the accessibility and tangibility of the Aalto identity and community through the built environment. Aalto, and other university campuses for that matter, can meet more sets of demands by providing spaces that support collaboration, and by recognizing the vital role that campus design can play in facilitating interaction between students and academic departments.

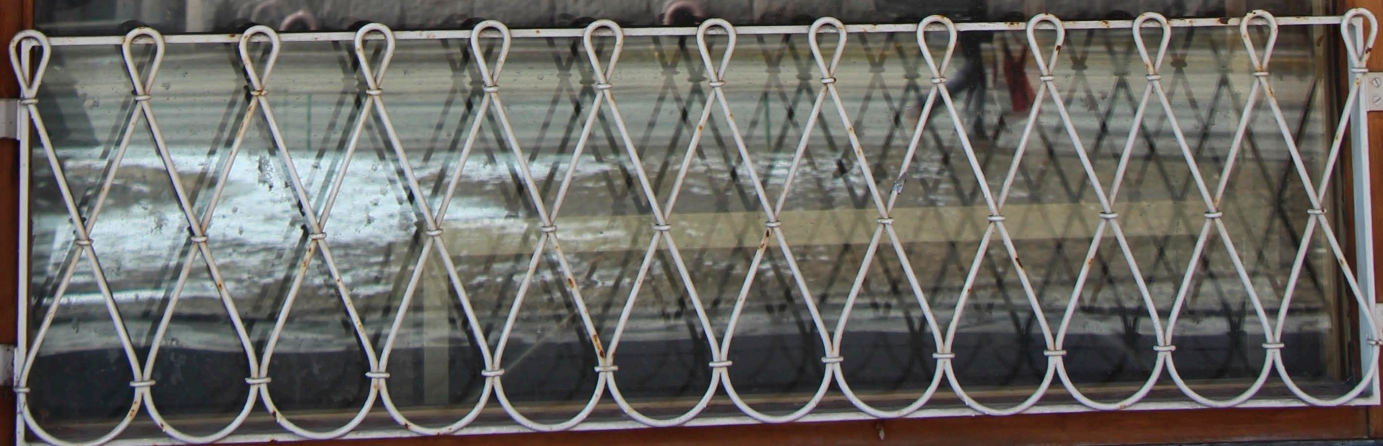
Additional practical and theoretical implications stemming from the findings are further discussed in Section 6.3 and Section 6.4.



# A!

Aalto-yliopisto  
Kauppakorkeakoulu  
Aalto University  
School of Business

Runeberginkatu 14-16





## 6. CONCLUSIONS

*Based on the findings from Chapter 5, Chapter 6 consists of the study's main conclusions in the form of the Community-Forward Campuses framework. Additionally, practical and theoretical implications of the framework are presented, plus an evaluation of the study and future research possibilities.*

### 6.1 COMMUNITY-FORWARD CAMPUSES FRAMEWORK

Following the presentation of the main themes within the findings throughout Sections 5.1-5.9, those themes were then grouped further based on similarities identified amongst them. Figure 23 (next page) illustrates the study's main conclusions, in the form of the "Community-Forward Campuses" framework. The "community-forward" name of the framework suggests that should a university campus follow the prescribed principles, then that campus will be more equipped to strengthen both its sense of community and its sense of place.

This framework consists of a set of nine sub-principles, which then combine further to make up three higher-level main principles, that suggest a new role for the built environment in creating a sense of community in the context of university campuses. The framework is based on the literature analysis and the field research conducted on the Aalto University student community.

Within the Community-Forward Campuses framework shown in Figure 23 the three main principles are:

- (1) Communication:** Elements of the built environment that dispense information, communicate narratives, brand values, mission statements, etc.
- (2) Integration:** Elements of the built environment that create interactions, cross-pollination, facilitate introductions or mix members together.
- (3) Duration:** Elements of the built environment that enable long-term stays, embedding or deep connectedness.

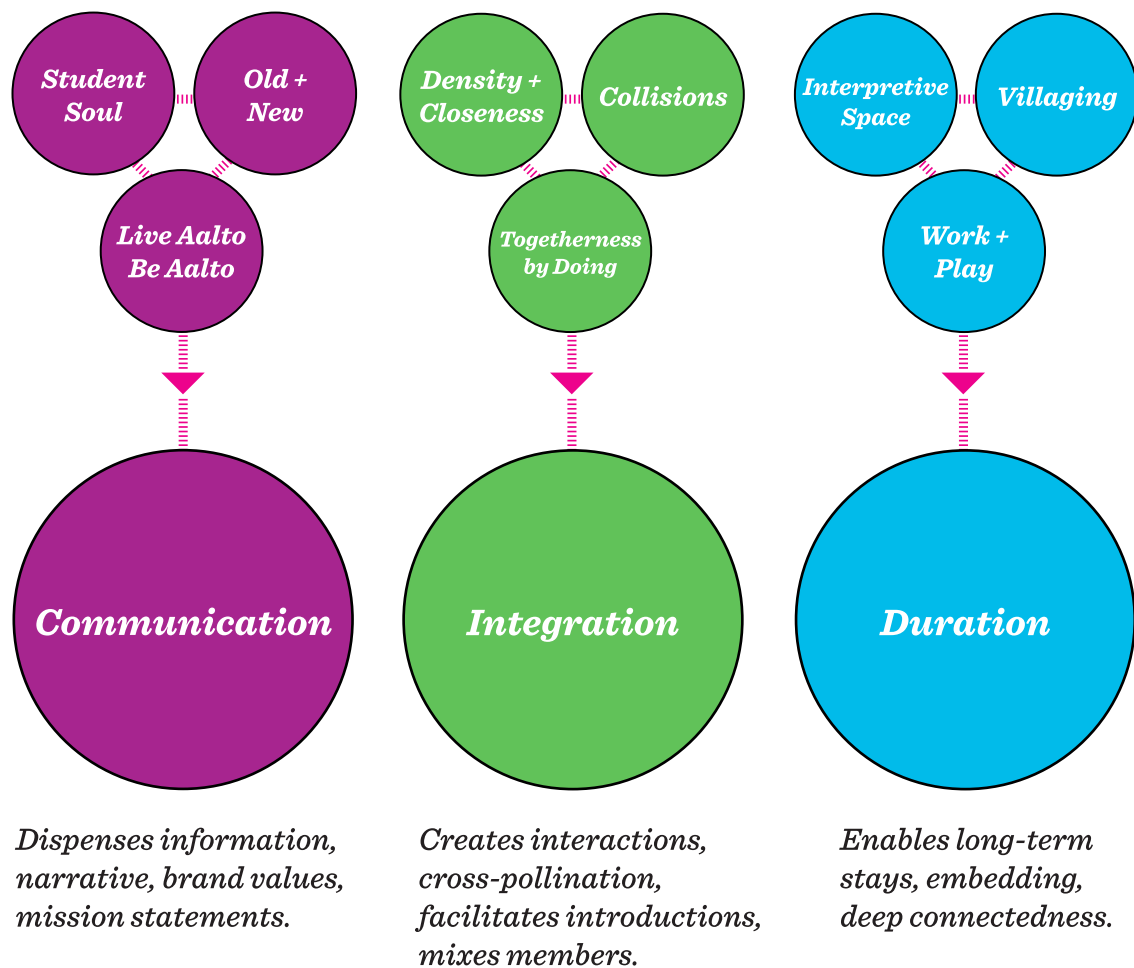


Figure 23: The Community-Forward Campuses framework:  
This framework represents the primary conclusions from the study: nine sub-principles and three main principles of Community-Forward Campuses.

## 6.2 PLACEMAKING POTENTIAL ON UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

This thesis contributes to the development of the field of placemaking, specifically within the context of university campuses. While some universities have implemented placemaking practices in the past (such as the examples in Section 2.4.2), little research is available on how placemaking should be best tailored to fit the unique conditions present on university campuses. Diverging from traditional thinking of university campus development that overly focus on research facilities and learning technologies, these plans should also include achieving a sense of place in order to benefit from the strong sense of community that is inherent in places. By considering community-forward campuses that follow the principles of (1) communication (2) integration, and (3) duration, Aalto University may see an impact on the sense of community at its new campus in Otaniemi.

This study aimed at implementing placemaking and the development of sense of community on the practical level on university campuses. It further sought to contribute to the development of sense of community through placemaking and to generate new knowledge in the field. The research gap was identified in relation to the practical implementation of placemaking to increase the sense of community at the existing campuses of Aalto University, with a projected view towards the new joint campus in Otaniemi that is scheduled for completion in the year 2015. The study also built a link between existing place and community research to connect with the unique challenges and opportunities specifically present at university campuses.

In order to accomplish the stated aims, the study aspired to gain deep insights from the Aalto University community about the current sense of community at Aalto, and the influence of the campus' built environment on the intensity of that sense to obtain an overall understanding of the phenomenon. The primary research question (1) and the secondary research questions (A, B, C) answered by the study were the following:

- (1) Which elements in the built environment contribute to the development of a sense of community on the site of a university campus?
- (A) What is the current state of community at Aalto University?
- (B) How does the current built environment of Aalto's campuses (in Töölö, Arabia and Otaniemi) contribute to the sense of community amongst Aalto students?
- (C) How might we develop the physical spaces of the new Aalto campus in Otaniemi to better build a sense of community amongst Aalto students?



Question (1) was answered through an extensive literature review and the extraction of pertinent characteristics of communities and placemaking for university campuses. Questions (A), (B) and (C) were answered by conducting research on the student community of Aalto University and the application of qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews and affinity mapping analysis. The current state of the sense of community at Aalto was identified and solutions were proposed in order to influence it by way of the built environment and placemaking. New knowledge was generated through the combination of the theoretical implications and the empirical findings gained from the field.

## 6.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

While the previously presented findings intentionally did not include recommendations for action on behalf of Aalto University, the Community-Forward Campus framework offers new ideas for implementation into Aalto's new campus development plans. Grouped by each of the three main principles, the following suggestions build off of the needs identified through the study, plus opportunities on which the new campus may capitalize:

### **Principle 1: Communication**

*1 // Campus with student soul: Communicate student spirit.*

Whether the colorful walls of Kipsari in Arabia, student housing at the Teekkari Village in Otaniemi, places designed by students for students, or heavily feature student presence, positively contribute to the campus narrative. Students want to feel under the 'spell' of the university experience, and when spaces or events seem overly shaped by sponsors or outside figures, this tends to break the university spell. By showing how students have shaped the spaces around campus, this sense of participatory design make these spaces easier to identify with. This also applies to AYY's understated presence on campus, and the Administration itself must play more of a role in community development.

**Insight:** Self or peer involvement aids in narrative buy-in.

**Action:** How might we increase the transparency of student involvement, action or engagement in spaces? And better integrate community building entities like AYY on campus?

*2 // Negotiate with the past: Embrace the old while developing the new.*

Pre-existing communities still dominate the sense of identity of many Aalto students, and the fluctuation of the new schools' names has done little to speed up the adoption process. Not wanting to lose the prestigious history of TKK, TaiK and HSE, Aalto must celebrate these existing communities while using built spaces to create unity and new traditions around the single, shared identity of Aalto.

**Insight:** Students are missing the fundamental building blocks needed to truly connect with the Aalto identity and community.

**Action:** How might we increase the accessibility and tangibility of the Aalto identity and community through the built environment?

*3 // Live Aalto to be Aalto: Practice multi-disciplinarity to fully embody Aalto values.*

To truly be "Aalto" is most often defined by students as participating in a cross- or multi-disciplinary lifestyle. This can be achieved by often associating with people from other schools, or through taking so-called "Aalto" courses, which are classes made up of students from each Aalto school. As Aalto defines itself through a narrative of multi-disciplinarity, leading just such an academic lifestyle is needed for students to feel a true sense of Aalto community.

**Insight:** Subscribing to the Aalto community means living a multi-disciplinary academic lifestyle.

**Action:** How might we use the built environment to communicate multi-disciplinarity, or to broaden the terms by which students call themselves Aalto altogether?

**Principle 2: Integration**

*4 // Community through closeness: Decrease the distance between people, literally and figuratively.*

What is clear to anyone traversing the Otaniemi campus of Aalto is that it is *big* place. Plus, the distance between buildings is also vast and transportation links are not ideal. Acreage and wayfinding aside, this has a real effect on the way in which the campus imposes itself on students. Students now feel lost, alone, and the grand scale of the campus is an obstacle for students in meeting each other. The closer students are or feel to each other, and the more visible they are to one another, aids in delivering communal feelings.

**Insight:** The smallness and density of spaces (real, or perceived) aids in visibility, and facilitates interactions, chance meetings and a sense of closeness.

**Action:** How might we increase the sense of smallness and density in spaces?

*5 // Create collisions: Engineer spaces facilitating cross-pollination of people.*

Students at Aalto are keen on meeting other students from different backgrounds, and creating physical intersection points or spaces where students collide helps disparate groups to integrate and cross-pollinate. Students now tend to quickly become siloed or enrooted into only one or a few places, and as a result meet less diverse groups of people. Leveraging physical space and travel routes to facilitate interactions and unplanned meetings can dismantle this siloing tendency, and increase visible contact in a space.

**Insight:** Getting to know students from different backgrounds is a desired aspect of the new Aalto configuration. The constant volume and variety of people passing through high traffic areas make them favored for socializing.

**Action:** How might we increase cross-pollination of people and groups, and develop high traffic areas to be more multi-functional beyond just people flow?

*6 // Togetherness by doing: Facilitate the forming of bonds through diverse events.*

Much like students learn by doing, we can achieve *togetherness* by doing as well. That is, achieve togetherness by bonding through events, activities and shared experiences. We see how widely inclusive events like Vappu or spontaneous ones like sports triumphs can break barriers and form bonds, and the built environment acts as the stage for any scheduled or spontaneous events. The presence of events and activities also brings action and life, another aspect that the vast and expansive Otaniemi campus is lacking.

**Insight:** Events act as useful triggers for social interaction.

**Action:** How might we use space to play host to a diverse range of events, both planned and unplanned?

### **Principle 3: Duration**

*7 // Interpretive space: Allow students to make their own space.*

Protocol and rules are in place to dictate order and control, and are the basis upon which many traditions are built. But such imposed or perceived institutional norms can also detract from the experience in a space for those who wish to make a place their own,

or wish to feel that they can act as they choose. Flexibility communicates possibility or potential, while fixedness broadcasts the opposite. Spaces should help people evolve past how they are *supposed* to use the space to how they *want* to use a space, thereby providing an opportunity to experience a space to its fullest.

**Insight:** Protocol and fixedness detract from the ability to use spaces freely, or customize spaces to fit individual needs, taking away from the experience of a space.

**Action:** How might we create spaces that do not dictate set behaviors, and allow for more improvisation, experimentation and personal embellishments?

*8 // Create a village: Provide all essentials to enable long-term use of spaces.*

Students cited successful campus experiences (typically while studying abroad) that more resembled villages – that is, spaces and services met nearly all the needs that students had throughout the day. This enabled students to stay on campus longer, thus developing a more intimate relationship with the campus, and becoming more ingrained in the university lifestyle. Nesting also promotes repeat and long-term use of spaces, which is brought about through on-site storage, among other elements.

**Insight:** Long-term usage of the campus is enabled through comprehensive service offerings and need serving.

**Action:** How might we engineer spaces to better serve long-term stays, and more resemble villages?

*9 // Combine work and play: Form bonds traversing social & professional interests.*

Few would doubt the appeal of the social side of university life, but the bonds built under such circumstances are fleeting – they simply do not go deep enough to last. However, when students connect along social *and* professional lines, the resulting bonds are richer and more multi-faceted, and thus the potential for them to endure increases.

**Insight:** For richer connections, build bonds that traverse social and professional interests.

**Action:** How might we create spaces where social and professional interests can integrate together more seamlessly?

## 6.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Reflecting back further on the study's findings in addition to the discussion from Section 5.10 concerning some of the unique characteristics posed by university campuses on placemaking and the development of the sense of community, similarities were also uncovered between the study's findings and the existing theory from the reviewed literature presented in Chapter 2. These similarities suggest that the approach to placemaking and developing a sense of community on university campuses largely matches existing understanding of the practice.

Figure 24 shows a side-by-side comparison of both the built-environment factors affecting community development as uncovered from the literature review, as well as this study's main findings centering on community development and the built environment in the context of university campuses. Factors identified during the literature review are on the top (as presented in Section 2.2), and those from the empirical study are on the bottom (as presented in Section 6.1).

As seen in the comparison figure at right, matching factors include 1. symbols, artifacts + narratives and student soul; 2. history + memory and old + new; 3. density + visibility and density + closeness; 4. events+ happenings and togetherness by doing; 5. cross-pollination + connection and collisions; and 6. interpretive space in both frameworks.

Further examples of matching insights were uncovered as well. For example, similarities like the importance of seating that is socially placed and flexible, and places laden with life and food, as according to Whyte (1980 & 1988). Also, nurturing togetherness through *doing* – the interactional phenomenon of working towards a common goal, not solely for the outcome (Theodori & Kyle, 2008). From Mehta and Bosson's work (2009, p.781), students on university campuses also do, or at least seek to mark territories through personalization or interpretation in order to make them more "distinctive and identifiable". Also true on university campuses, the presence of food and outdoor seating help to combine relaxation (eating and drinking) and socializing to enable longer stays and deliver a more social street environment (Mehta & Bosson, 2009). Outdoor seating elements on university campuses also contribute to the visibility of students, and this degree of student visibility makes experiences in places more pleasurable and increasingly attractive (Mehta & Bosson, 2009). Chavis and McMillan's contact hypothesis (1986) also holds true, as the more students interact and spend time together the closer they become.

This study's findings also echo those by Nenonen and Kojo (2013) and their research on the Aalto Design Factory. As did this study's investigation into Aalto's broader



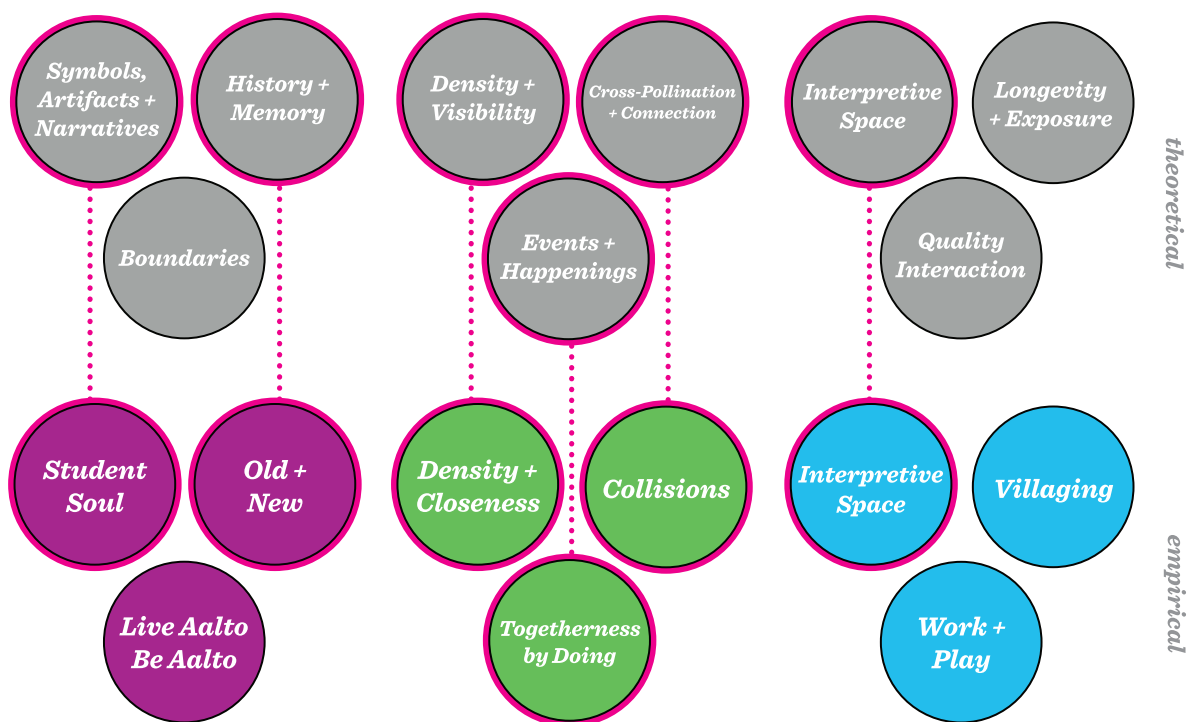


Figure 24: Comparison of factors; theoretical (top) vs. empirical findings (bottom)

campus, important space characteristics at the Design Factory include those that “felt like one’s own” (p.8) or that can be used freely and felt pleasant, like home. Similarly, Nenonen and Kojo also state that co-working spaces create a sense of community and cross-pollination of users, while also creating a place that is both physical and social in nature (Nenonen & Kojo, 2013).

## **6.5 EVALUATION OF THE STUDY**

Some limitations exist to the conducted study. First, the empirical data collected is limited to observations of a defined segment of the Aalto student community. That is, the findings may neither apply to other segments of the Aalto student community, nor to university campuses other than Aalto, including those outside of Finland. The findings may not apply either to other examples of campuses, such as corporate campuses. Additionally, as the data was collected from current M.Sc. students who had experienced the transition from the old university structure to the Aalto structure first-hand, students new to Aalto beginning after 2013 may have significantly less intimate knowledge of the pre-Aalto environment, regardless of Bachelor’s or Master’s level status. The interview respondents were also of all Finnish descent, thus again possibly limiting the breadth of their observations. However, since all in-depth interview respondents were familiar with pre- and post-Aalto life, it can be assumed that they had a holistic view of the state of Aalto spirit and its trajectory. They are also in a unique position to propose forward-looking observations about the design of the new campus in Otaniemi before it is built.

The volume of data is another possible limitation to the study, though it was noted that as findings began to repeat themselves the data set had been saturated. Still, six in-depth interviews could be argued as limiting, and while many of the themes presented in the findings had corroboration from respondents from at least another school, few themes included supporting evidence across all three of Aalto’s primary schools: Business, Arts & Design and Science & Technology.

While the aim of the study intended to get all six in-depth interview respondents together at once to have a group discussion about the phenomenon, only four respondents were interviewed in a group setting, and the remaining two were interviewed individually. While all six respondents were confirmed to participate in the group discussion, two respondents could not attend due to personal reasons, such that there was insufficient time to recruit replacements. However, given that each of the three primary schools of Aalto were represented in the final respondent pool, this ended up meeting the study’s data collection stipulations nonetheless.

Finally, in order to not mislead the reader, it was made transparent in the study that the number of responses to the online survey was too low to consider representative of the entire Aalto community. However, as the surveys included open response questions, some of those comments served as primer for the more robust in-depth interviews.

## 6.6 FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

In future studies, the difference in perception of the sense of community for new Aalto students could be investigated, particularly after 2015 once the new campus in Otaniemi has been built. Also, data could be sought from Bachelor's level students as well to contrast against that which has been collected from Master's level students.

Also in future studies, it would be interesting to investigate how the Aalto brand is enacted through the experience of a place, perhaps in the context of branded environments to explore the role of brand as a component of building a sense of place on a university campus. Differences in the development of sense of community on existing campuses that are redeveloped through a retrofit versus those that are newly built could be investigated as well.

If the findings of the study would eventually be applied into the actual development plans of the new campus, then further effort could be made to test and validate the findings of this study against the degree of togetherness present at the Otaniemi campus after 2015.

Finally the data collection methods could be further explored, in that in-person interviews may not be the most effective way to collect insights on such a complex and intangible phenomenon like the sense of community. Different approaches could increase the co-creative nature of this study, where respondents would be encouraged to communicate insights about community through non-verbal means like drawing or rapid prototyping. Further, methods could be applied to observe moments where sense of community is strongest *as it happens*, as opposed to after the fact in a sterile interview environment. Approaches like design probes, user shadowing, or picture journals could produce additional insights with less intrusion on behalf of the Researcher.



*Kesko-sali private study room, Töölö campus*

*Photo: Tuomas Sahramaa*

## 7. REFERENCES

Aalto-www. (2012a 10-Dec). *Aalto University campuses*. Retrieved 2013 15-Mar from Aalto University website: <http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/campuses/>.

Aalto-www. (2012b 04-May). *Aalto University main campus to be located in Otaniemi*. Retrieved 2013 10-Mar from Aalto University News website: <http://www.aalto.fi/en/current/news/view/2011-06-17-002/>.

Aalto-www. (2012c 01-Aug). *Aalto University School of Economics renamed the Aalto University School of Business*. Retrieved 2013 14-Mar from Aalto University website: <https://into.aalto.fi/display/enaalto/Aalto+University+School+of+Economics+renamed+the+Aalto+University+School+of+Business>.

Aalto-www. (2012d 02-Nov). *Reports and Statistics*. Retrieved 2013 9-Mar from Aalto University website: [http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/reports\\_and\\_statistics/](http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/reports_and_statistics/).

Aalto-www. (2012e 09-Nov). *Student union and other student organisations*. Retrieved 2013 14-Mar from Aalto University website: [http://www.aalto.fi/en/studies/student/student\\_life/](http://www.aalto.fi/en/studies/student/student_life/).

Aalto-www. (2013a 07-Feb). *Aalto University Schools and Units*. Retrieved 2013 09-Mar from Aalto University website: <http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/organization/schools/>.

Aalto-www. (2013b 13-Feb). *Helsinki University of Technology TKK*. Retrieved 2013 15-Mar from Aalto University website: <http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/history/tkk/>.

Aalto-www. (2013c 03-Jan). *Mission, Vision and Values*. Retrieved 2013 10-Mar from Aalto University website: <http://www.aalto.fi/en/about/strategy/>.

Aalto University. (2011a). *Aalto Life Manual*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.



- Aalto University. (2011b). *Aalto University: A Campus Vision for a Thriving Learning Community*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.
- Aalto University. (2011c). *Aalto University Strategy: Edition October 2011*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.
- Aalto University. (2011d). *Aalto University Strategy: Freedom to Think, Courage to Act*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.
- Aalto University. (2011e). *A Vision for Aalto University's Campus*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.
- Aalto University. (2012). *Campus 2015 Competition Programme*. Aalto University Press. Helsinki, Finland. Retrieved 2012 7-Mar.
- Ahlbrant, R., Cunningham, J. (1979). *A New Public Policy for Neighborhood Preservation*. New York: Praeger.
- Anderson, B. (1983) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Edition ed. London and New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 5-7.
- Aronson, E., Mills, J. (1959). *The Effect of Severity of Initiation on Liking for a Group*. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 59, 177-181.
- Bailey, C. (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. 2nd Ed. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks / London / New Delhi.
- Beatley, T. (2005). *Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age*. Island press, Washington DC, 2005. Accessed 12-Jun 2013. Available from website: [sustainability.asu.edu/docs/gios/wrigley/Beatley\\_111705.pdf](http://sustainability.asu.edu/docs/gios/wrigley/Beatley_111705.pdf)javascript:void(o).
- Bell, E., Bryman, A. (2003). *Business Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Berger, P., Neuhaus, R. (1977). *To Empower People*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

- Bernard, J. (1973). *The Sociology of Community*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.
- BES Group. (2012 11-Sept). *Built Environment Services (BES) -Research Group*. Retrieved 2013 19-Mar from BES Group website: <http://bes.aalto.fi/en/>.
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods and Practices*. Retrieved: 19-Mar 2013 Available at: [http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa\\_textbooks/3/](http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3/).
- Bryan, I. (2004). *Community-Oriented Marketing: The Definitive Guide to Enlightened Business Development*. iUniverse, 2004.
- Carson et al. (2001). *Qualitative Marketing Research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. P.6.
- Case Western University. (2010). *Case Western Master Plan 2005: Introduction and Overview*. Accessed 23-Mar 2013. Available online at website: <http://case.edu/administration/cpfm/pdc/mp/introduction.html>.
- Chavis et al. (1986). *Sense of Community Index (SCI)* (Chavis, Hogge, McMillan, & Wandersman, 1986).
- Cook, S. (1970). *Motives in Conceptual Analysis of Attitude Related Behavior*. In W. J. Arnold & D. Levine (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches*. (2nd edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications, Inc; 2nd edition.
- Denzin, N., Lincoln, Y. (2005). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. SAGE Publications Inc. USA. 3rd edition.
- Doolittle, R., MacDonald D. (1978). *Communication and a sense of community in*

*a metropolitan neighborhood: A factor analytic examination.* Communication Quarterly, 26, 2-7.

Duke University. (2013). *West Campus Plaza*. Accessed 24-Mar 2013. Available at website: <http://www.architect.duke.edu/landscape/places/plaza.html>.

Durkheim, E. (1950). *The Rules of Sociological Method*. Translated by S. A. Solovay and J. H. Mueller. New York: The Free Press.

Edney, J. (1976). *Human territories: Comment on Functional Properties*. Environment and Behavior, 8, 31-47.

Eisenhardt, K. (1989). *Building Theories from Case Study Research*. Academy of Management Review 14(4), pp. 532-550.

Elder, J. (1998). *Stories in the Land: A Place-Based Environmental Education Anthology*. The Orion Society. Great Barrington, MA Accessed 20-Mar 2013. Available from website: <http://www.orionmagazine.org/i/documents/SIL-complete.pdf>.

Erikson, K. (1966). *Wayward Puritans*. New York: Wiley.

Eriksson, P., Kovalainen, A. (2008). *Qualitative Methods in Business Research*. London: SAGE Publications Inc.

Fraser, B. (2009). *The 'kind of problems cities pose': Jane Jacobs at the intersection of philosophy, pedagogy, and urban theory*. Christopher Newport University, Newport News, VA.. Vol. 14, No. 3, June 2009, 265-276.

Fullenwider, K. (2010). *Placemaking 101: Ten Steps to Transform a Public Space*. Accessed 19-Nov 2012 through website: <http://www.good.is/posts/placemaking-101-ten-steps-to-transform-a-public-space/>.

Gehl, J. (2011). *Intelligent Cities: Jan Gehl on Community*. National Building Museum. Washington, DC. Accessed 10-Feb 2013. Available online at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TwTL6YNQLVs>

- van Gennep, A. (1960). *The Rites of Passage*. Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. London. Great Britain.
- Gensler. (2011). *No More Teachers, No More Books?* Gensler Education Roundtable Survey, May 05, 2011. Accessed 20-April 2012. Available through website: [http://www.gensler.com/uploads/documents/Education\\_Roundtable\\_Survey\\_11\\_10\\_2011.pdf](http://www.gensler.com/uploads/documents/Education_Roundtable_Survey_11_10_2011.pdf).
- Gieryn, T. (2000). *A Space for Place in Sociology*. Annual Review of Sociology 26: 463-496.
- Glenwick, D., Jason, L. (1980). *Behavioral Community Psychology: Progress and Prospects*. New York: Praeger.
- Glynn, T. (1981). *Psychological Sense of Community: Measurement and Application*. Human Relations, 34, 780-818.
- Gottdiener, M. (2000). *New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Culture and Commodification*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2000. P.277-281.
- Gryada, V. (2012). *Ever-Changing Space: Spatial Design Guidelines for Aalto University Learning Center*. School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University.
- Gusfield, J. (1975). *The Community: A Critical Response*. New York: Harper Colophon.
- Hester, L., Roback, H., Weitz, L., Anchor, K., McKee, E. (1976). *The supervisor – supervisee relationship in psychotherapy training from the perspective of interpersonal attraction*. Comprehensive Psychiatry, 17, 671-681.
- Hirsijärvi, S., Hurme, H. (2001). *Tutkimushaastattelu – Teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö*. Helsinki University Press. Helsinki.
- Holmström, J., Ketokivi, M., Hameri, A-P. (2009). *Bridging Practice and Theory: A Design Science Approach*. Decision Science 40(1), pp. 65-87.

- Hummon, D. (1992). *Community Attachment. Local Sentiment and Sense of Place*. In: I. Altman & S. M. Low (Eds.), *Place attachment* (pp. 253-277). New York and London: Plenum.
- IDEO. (2009). *HCD toolkit*. Available at: <http://www.ideo.com/work/human-centereddesign-toolkit/> [Accessed: 11 December 2012].
- Jacobs, J. (1961). *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Jacobs, J. (1993). *Great Streets*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jones, D., Sundsted, T. & Bacigalupo, T. (2009). *I'm Outta Here! How Coworking is Making the Office Obsolete*, Not an MBA Press, Brooklyn & Austin.
- Jung, C. (1912). *The Psychology of the Unconscious*. Leipzig, East Germany: Franz Deuticke.
- Kasarda, J., Janowitz, M. (1974). *Community Attachment and Mass Society*. *American Sociological Review*, 39, 328-339.
- Keinonen, T. (2011). *User Data Interpretation*. Lecture slides 28.09.2011 Aalto University School of Art, Design and Architecture.
- Kojo, I., Nenonen, S. (2012). *Workplaces for Social Ecosystems: User Experiences in Co-working Places*, Proceedings of EFMC2012, 23rd - 25th of May, 2012 Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Koskinen I., Zimmerman, J., Binder, T., Redstrom, J., Wensveen, S. (2011). *Design Research Through Practice from the Lab, Field and Showroom*.
- Koskinen, I., Battarbee, K., Mattelmaki, T. (2003). *Empathic Design. User Experience for Product Design*. 2003 (IT Press: Helsinki).
- Kwiatkowski, A., Buczynski, B. (2011). *Coworking: Building Community as a Space Catalyst*. Cohere, LLC.



- Lang, J. (1987). *Creating Architectural Theory: The role of the behavioral sciences in environmental design*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Lanham, K. (2007). *Planning as Placemaking: Tensions of Scale, Culture and Identity*. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, April 17, 2007.
- Lantolf, J. (2000). *Introducing Sociocultural Theory*. Lantolf, J. (ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. New York: Blackwell, 1991.
- Libeskind, D. (1999). *Traces of the Unborn*, in N. Leach. *Architecture and Revolution. Contemporary perspectives on Central and Eastern Europe*, London: Routledge, pp.127-129.
- Marquis, C., Lounsbury, M., Greenwood, R. (2011). *Community as an Institutional Order and a Type of Organizing. Introduction to Communities and Organizations*. Vol. 33, edited by Christopher Marquis, Michael Lounsbury, and Royston Greenwood. *Research in the Sociology of Organizations*, 2011.
- Massey, D. (1994). *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Maykut, P., Morehouse, R. (1994). *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. Routledge. Falmer, London. (1998).
- McMillan, D. (1976). *Sense of Community: An Attempt at Definition*. Unpublished manuscript, George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, TN.
- McMillan, D., Chavis, D. (1986). *Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory*. *Journal of Community Psychology*, Volume 14, January 1986, p. 6-23.
- McNiff, J. (2013). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*, 3rd Edition. New York: Routledge. P.23.
- Mehrhoff, A. (1990). *The Phenomenology of Place*. *Humanities Education*, VII, Summer 1990.

Mehta, V., Bosson, J. (2009). *Third Places and the Social Life of Streets*. Environment and Behavior 42: 779 originally published online 23 October 2009.

vanMeter, P., Murphy, L. (2012). *Placemaking 101*. Accessed 22-Oct 2012 through website: [http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=429:placemaking-101&catid=57:perspectives-and-predictions&Itemid=102](http://www.philasocialinnovations.org/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=429:placemaking-101&catid=57:perspectives-and-predictions&Itemid=102)

Nenonen, S., Kojo, I. (2013 - working paper). *Experience of Places – a Six-dimensional model for capturing the user experience*. Aalto University.

Newman, O. (1981). *Community of Interest*. New York: Anchor Books.

Nielsen, J., and Landauer, T. (1993). *A Mathematical Model of the Finding of Usability Problems*. Proceedings of ACM INTERCHI'93 Conference (Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 24-29 April 1993), pp. 206-213. Accessed 2013 Mar-19 through <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/why-you-only-need-to-test-with-5-users/>

Nisbet, R., Perrin, R. (1977). *The Social Bond*. New York: Knopf.

NYT.fi. (2011). *Taikkilaiset eivät halua luovuusmaistereiaksi* 10.11.2011, klo 16:46 Aino Frilander. <http://nyt.fi/20111110-taikkilaiset-eivat-halua-luovuusmaistereiaksi/> Päivitys 10.11.2011 klo 17.56.

Närvänen, E. (2012). *User Communities and Campus*. School of Management. University of Tampere.

Park, R. (1924). *The concept of social distance as applied to the study of racial attitudes and racial relations*. Journal of Applied Sociology, 8, 339-344.

Perrucci, R. (1963). *Social distance strategies and intra-organizational stratification: A study of the status system on a psychiatric ward*. American Sociological Review, 28, 951-962.

Peterson, J., Martens, R. (1972). *Success and residential affiliation as determinants of team cohesiveness*. Research Quarterly, 43, 63-76.

- Pew Research Center. (2011). *Social networking sites and our lives*. Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project. Authors: Hampton, K., Sessions Goulet, L., Rainie, L. and Purcell, K. Washington, DC. Accessed 26-Mar 2013. Available at website: <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Technology-and-social-networks.aspx>.
- Place Focus. (2012). *Urban Design + Placemaking 101*. Accessed 22-Oct 2012 from website: <http://www.placefocus.com/Urban-Design-101/place-101.html>
- Placemaking Chicago. (2008). *What is Placemaking?* Website accessed 23-Mar 2013 from: <http://www.placemakingchicago.com/about/>
- Planning Institute of Australia. (2009). *Planning Institute of Australia* (online) Accessed 24-Mar 2013. Available at: [www.planning.org.au](http://www.planning.org.au)
- Prahalad, C.K., Ramaswamy, V. (2000). *Co-opting Customer Competence*. Harvard Business Review, 78, 1, pp. 79-87.
- Project for Public Spaces. (2000). *How to Turn a Place Around*. Accessed 20-Apr 2012. Excerpts available via website: [http://www.placemakingchicago.com/cmsfiles/placemaking\\_guide.pdf](http://www.placemakingchicago.com/cmsfiles/placemaking_guide.pdf).
- Project for Public Spaces. (2005). *PPS Goes Back to College*. Accessed 11-Jun 2012. Available at PPS website: <http://www.pps.org/reference/campusesprogram/>.
- Project for Public Spaces. (2013a). *About Project for Public Spaces*. Accessed 23-Mar 2013 from website: <http://www.pps.org/about/>.
- Project for Public Spaces. (2013b). *Case Western Master Plan*. Cleveland Ohio (2002) Accessed 24-Mar 2013. Available at website: <http://www.pps.org/projects/casewestern-2/>.
- Project for Public Spaces. (2013c). *Duke University West Campus Plaza: Creating a Central Square: Durham, North Carolina (2005 – 2006)*. Accessed 24-Mar 2013. Available at website: <http://www.pps.org/projects/dukeplaza/>.

- Project for Public Spaces. (2013d). *Eleven Principles for Creating Great Community Places*. Accessed 09-Apr 2012 from website: <http://www.pps.org/reference/11steps/>.
- Project for Public Spaces. (2013e). *What is Placemaking*. Accessed 23-Mar 2013 from website: [http://www.pps.org/reference/what\\_is\\_placemaking/](http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/).
- Quinn, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. 3rd Ed. Sage Publications. London / New Delhi.
- Rappaport, J. (1977). *Community Psychology: Values, Research and Action*. New York: Rhinehart and Winston.
- Rytönen, E. (2012). *Strategic campus development of Aalto University: Internal and international benchmarking of space resources*. International Design Business Management, Aalto University.
- Sarason, S. (1974). *The Psychological Sense of Community. Perspectives for community psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. P. 157.
- Sargeant, B. (2009). *Place Making in the Urban Corridor*. Planit Consulting Pty Ltd. International Cities Town Centres & Communities Society. ICTC 2009. Deakin University Campus, Geelong, Australia. 27- 30 October, 2009.
- Schein, E. (1984). *Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture*. Sloan Management. Review, 25:2.
- Schneekloth, L., Shibley, R. (1995). *Placemaking, the art and practice of building Communities*. John Wiley and Sons, Inc. New York.
- Seamon, D., Sowers, J. (2008). *Commentary as published as a chapter in Key Texts in Human Geography*. P. Hubbard, R. Kitchen, & G. Vallentine, eds., London: Sage, 2008, pp. 43-51.
- Silverman, D. (2006). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. Sage Publications. London.

- Sime, J. (1986). *Creating Places or Designing Spaces?* School of Architecture, King Henry Building Portsmouth Polytechnic, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 2D Y, U.K. *Journal of Environmental Psychology* (1986) 6, 49-63.
- Shamai, S., Ilatov, Z. (2004). *Measuring Sense of Place: Methodological Aspects*. Hai Academic College, Golan Research Institute, Kazrin, Israel. Received: March 2004; revised September 2004.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Malden USA and Oxford UK: Blackwell.
- Stake, R. (2010). *Qualitative Research: Studying how things work*. New York: The Guilford Press. Accessed: 15-Apr 2013. Available online at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/133980814/Qualitative-Research-Robert-Stake-2010>
- Stern, S. (2011). *A Co-creation Primer*. Harvard Business Review. <http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2011/02/co-creation.html>.
- Theodori G., Kyle, G. (2008). *Community, Place, and Decision-Making*. Connecting Decision-making with Sense of Place Workshop, September 23-27, 2008. Available at: <http://www.parklab.uiuc.edu/>.
- Tönnies, F. (1897/1957). *Community and Society*. New York, NY: Harper Torchbook.
- Venturi, R. (1966). *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. New York: New York. Museum of Art.
- Wagner, A. (2011). *Work & The City Developments in Urban Working Culture*. Master Thesis, Polis: European Urban Cultures.
- Walljasper, J. (2009). *Big Plans on Campus*. Accessed 28-Mar 2013. Available at website: <http://www.pps.org/articles/campusbulletin/>.
- Webster, Merriam. (2013). Dictionary terms: “academic community”, “community” and “homing”. Accessed 15-Feb 2013.



Whyte, W. (1980). *The social life of small urban spaces*. Washington, DC: Conservation Foundation.

Whyte, W. (1988). *City: Rediscovering the Center*. New York: Doubleday.

Wilkinson, K.P. (1991). *The Community in Rural America*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Williams, C. (2007). *Research Methods*. Journal of Business & Economic Research – March 2007 Volume 5, Number 3. Grand Canyon University.

Whyte, W. (1980). *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*. Washington, DC. The Conservative Foundation.

Zander, A., Havelin, A. (1960). *Social Comparison and Interpersonal Attraction*. Human Relations, 13, 21-32.







*Kipsari, Arabia campus*

*Photo: Tuomas Sahramaa*



## 8. APPENDIX

### RESEARCH PHASE 1: Online Survey Form

<< ***Start Google Forms Survey*** >>

#### **Aalto University Campus and Community Survey**

*How might we develop the physical spaces of the new Aalto campus in Otaniemi to better build a sense of community amongst students? This is the central question in my Master's Thesis work being completed on behalf of Aalto's Built Environment Services (BES) Research Group (<http://bes.aalto.fi>). But first, I need to know what is the current state of community or togetherness (yhteishenki in Finnish) amongst students at Aalto. And that's where this survey comes in – and you.*

*This short survey will ask you to consider the sense of community at both versions of the “Aalto campus” which are: 1. The current arrangement of the three separate Aalto campuses (meaning TKK/HSE/TaiK in Otaniemi/Töölö/Arabia). 2. The new, future joint campus in Otaniemi which is currently under development and will combine TKK, TaiK and HSE Bachelors students in Otaniemi. This is referred to as the “new” Aalto campus. These survey results will be kept anonymous to encourage openness and honesty from you. If you are interested in possibly being contacted for additional interview follow ups, there is an opportunity to include your email at the end of the survey. Thank you very much for your time and participation!*

Tuomas Sahramaa

[tuomas.sahramaa@aalto.fi](mailto:tuomas.sahramaa@aalto.fi)

*\* Required*

If you are a student, at which of the following schools do you study: \*

- *School of Economics*
- *School of Arts, Design and Architecture*
- *School of Science and Technology*
- *I am not a student*

Have you ever visited the TKK/Otaniemi campus as an Aalto student? \*

- *Yes*
- *No*
- *Yes, but not as a student*

Currently, how strong is the sense of community at Aalto? \*

- *Extremely strong*
- *Very strong*
- *Moderately strong*
- *Slightly strong*
- *Not strong at all*

Overall, how satisfied are you with the current sense of community at Aalto? \*

- *Extremely satisfied*
- *Very satisfied*
- *Moderately satisfied*
- *Slightly satisfied*
- *Not satisfied at all*

Overall, how much value do you place on a sense of community at Aalto? \*

- *Extremely valuable*
- *Very valuable*
- *Moderately valuable*
- *Slightly valuable*
- *Not valuable at all*

How promising do you see the NEW campus in developing the sense of community among Aalto students? \*



- *Extremely promising*
- *Very promising*
- *Moderately promising*
- *Slightly promising*
- *Not promising at all*

Currently, in which places (physical locations) at Aalto do you feel the strongest sense of community or togetherness? And how is it that those locations make you feel that way?

\* Answers can apply to Otaniemi/Töölö/Arabia.

- *(open text field)*

How about on the current Otaniemi campus in particular? Unless not mentioned already above or you have never been there.

- *(open text field)*

Did you attend Flow Festival? \* IF NOT: Click “No” and you’re done. But MAKE SURE to scroll to the bottom and hit “SUBMIT”

- *Yes*
- *No*

If yes, which year(s) of Flow Festival?

- *(open text field)*

How strong was the sense of community at Flow?

- *Extremely strong*
- *Very strong*
- *Moderately strong*
- *Slightly strong*
- *Not strong at all*

Were there any moments when feelings of Flow community or togetherness were particularly strong/weak? If so, please describe them. And indicate if elsewhere than the Suvilahti location.

- *(open text field)*

Overall, how satisfied were you with the sense of community or togetherness at Flow?

- *Extremely satisfied*
- *Very satisfied*
- *Moderately satisfied*
- *Slightly satisfied*
- *Not satisfied at all*

Overall, how much value did you place on feeling a sense of community or togetherness at Flow?

- *Extremely valuable*
- *Very valuable*
- *Moderately valuable*
- *Slightly valuable*
- *Not valuable at all*

How effective were the festival grounds in contributing to the sense of community?

- *Extremely effective*
- *Very effective*
- *Moderately effective*
- *Slightly effective*
- *Not effective at all*

In which places (physical locations) at Flow did you feel the strongest sense of community or togetherness? And how is it that those locations made you feel that way? Ex. specific areas of the grounds. And again indicate if elsewhere than Suvilahti.

- *(open text field)*

If the NEW Otaniemi campus could take on components of Flow, what could they be and why? ...especially with the motive of building more community/togetherness amongst students.

- *(open text field)*

How much did Flow's visual identity contribute to feelings of community or togetherness?

- *Extremely*
- *Very much*
- *Moderately*
- *Slightly*
- *Not at all*

I'm collecting a list of names in case I need to do follow up interviews on the topic. If you'd like to be included just leave your email below.

Anything else or extra to add? Put it here! Any extra ideas or insights? Or even photos? Include it in the box or feel free to email me any supporting material separately.

**<< End Google Forms Survey >>**

## RESEARCH PHASE 2: In-Depth Interview Guide

### AALTO CAMPUS/COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS: DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### OVERVIEW OF EXERCISES:

INTRODUCTION TO ME AND MY THESIS	3 min
GENERAL LIFESTYLE (ABOUT YOU)	7 min
ROUTES & FAVORITE CAMPUS PLACES	20 min
PLACES WITH COMMUNITY	30 min
ALVARIN AUKIO BRAINSTORMING	30 min

#### INTRODUCTION TO ME AND MY THESIS // 3 min

(Interview format: per each workshop, three students at a time, one from each school, TKK, HSE, TAIK. Ideally three 90-minute workshops in total)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview! I have asked the three of you here to represent the views from your respective schools, TKK, HSE and TAIK.

My name is Tuomas Sahramaa and I am a Master's marketing student at the Aalto School of Economics. I will be leading this conversation. Working for Aalto's Built Environment Services (BES) research group, my goal is to help transform the new Aalto campus into a one that helps breed a stronger sense of community and togetherness amongst students. I hope that this will create a more connected, engaged and dynamic student experience at the University, and I believe that the design of the school's built environment will be a key tool in delivering this.

To accomplish my goal, I am uncovering how students currently feel about the strength of community at Aalto, how they feel about their current campus environment(s), and finally some other places in the world where they feel a sense of togetherness, or otherwise find special. Overall, I am trying to better understand student lifestyles, behaviors, values, expectations and perceptions about how to make the new Aalto campus feel more ALIVE.

Throughout the interview I will be making an audio recording, as well as taking some photographs to help me document the session to include in my thesis materials. I will also be making a written transcript of this interview to include in my thesis as well.

This interview will take no more than 90 minutes.

There are no right or wrong answers! I am interested in your points of view, your choices, the things you like, care about and are interested in. I want to hear your perspectives and opinions, and want to learn from your experiences and stories.

#### The BIG insights I am looking for are:

What would make you:

- Go/come to the new Aalto campus?
- Spend time at the new Aalto campus?
- Talk about the new Aalto campus?

#### THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEWS:

- I am looking for **INSPIRATION** ...not data/information or answers
- Get them to tell **STORIES**, to describe or **SHOW** things. Try to go beyond "say" and "think" to "feel" and "do".
- Always ask "WHY"?

Page 1

#### 1. GENERAL LIFESTYLE (ABOUT YOU) // 7 min

(Basic demographics + getting to know each other)

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself/yourselves?
- At what stage are you in your studies? Do you have a job?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What annoys you most about Aalto (campus)?
- What inspires you most about Aalto (campus)?

#### 2. ROUTES & FAVORITE CAMPUS PLACES // 20 min

(At Aalto, at which places do you feel like you are a part of the Aalto community? What makes these places special for you? What makes the place comfortable for you?)

EXERCISE WITH MAPS OF AALTO CAMPUSES (TKK, HSE, TAIK)

##### Where do you go daily? And weekly?

(Show on BIG map of Helsinki, includes all three Aalto campuses)

- Which Aalto campuses do you go to? How do you split your time between them (if applicable)?
- When you arrive at an Aalto campus, where do you usually go (buildings or areas)?
- And what about TKK in particular? As this is the site of the new joint campus.
- What is your typical route when you go TKK? Why this route?

##### What are your favorite places on your campus? Why?

(Show individual maps of respective campuses, they can comment on any campus)

- What makes this place special for you?
- How did you find out about this place?
- Do you go there with your friends? Do you talk about it/share it with anyone?
- How often do you go there? When was the last time you went there?
- What is your best memory of that place? Has it changed somehow after this?
- Describe what makes this space comfortable?

##### Where are you when you feel the strongest sense of Aalto community?

##### Where do you go when you feel angry/sad/happy/inspired...?

##### Where do you go when you want to socialize/have contact with people?

Page 2

#### 3. PLACES WITH COMMUNITY // 30 min

(In which places do you feel like part of a community, or feel a sense of togetherness? What are the building blocks? What makes a place special? What builds loyalty/frequency for going to that place? Show them images of some places to help stir their memories/thoughts about places specific to their own lives and experiences.)

##### BENCHMARK CARDS ABOUT (GENERAL) PLACES

- In what kinds of places do you feel a sense of community or togetherness?
- What aspects of these places contribute to this feeling of community?
- How are they different from other places?
- When was the last time you went there?
- What is the best experience in a place?
- What is the worst experience in a place?
- Have you had any surprising experiences in a place?
- Where was that? When? How did you feel about it?
- What are your favorite places? Why?

Please describe the experience and your typical route into a place:

Phases: entering, orienting/searching, performing/acting, leaving...

- Do you look for social interaction in a place?
- What makes you want to stay in a place?
- How do you like to be served/treated in a place?

#### 4. ALVARIN AUKIO BRAINSTORMING // 30 min

(Use a scale model of Alvarin Aukio to help brainstorm how a place such as this can be used as a spear for the campus' community building and placemaking efforts)

##### What you think of Alvarin Aukio at the center of TKK? How would you describe it?

- Have you visited Alvarin Aukio (lately)? When?
- What were you doing there? With whom?
- What kind of events would you expect (and/or wish) to have there?
- If you would have free hands, what would you do with Alvarin Aukio? How could it be designed to seem more alive?

(Optional):

- Overall, what kinds of things would bring you to the new Aalto campus?
- If you would have free hands, what would you do with the new Aalto campus?

#### CLOSING QUESTIONS:

##### What would make you:

- Go/come to the new Aalto campus?
- Spend time in the new Aalto campus?
- Talk about the new Aalto campus?

THANK YOU!

Page 3

### AALTO CAMPUS/COMMUNITY CREATIVE KIT



#### ABOUT YOU

Tell about yourselves:  
What's your typical day?  
Studying? Working?  
What annoys/inspires you about Aalto?



#### ROUTES & FAVORITE CAMPUS PLACES

Find out which campus places at Aalto new research with students, where do they socialize, work, feel sense of community, etc... Draw on maps and tell stories.



#### BENCHMARK CARDS: PLACES WITH COMMUNITY

Create 'outside-the-box' feeling by showing with benchmarks of public spaces, institutions (schools), concert venues, etc. Focus on where community happens.



#### BRAINSTORMING: ALVARIN AUKIO

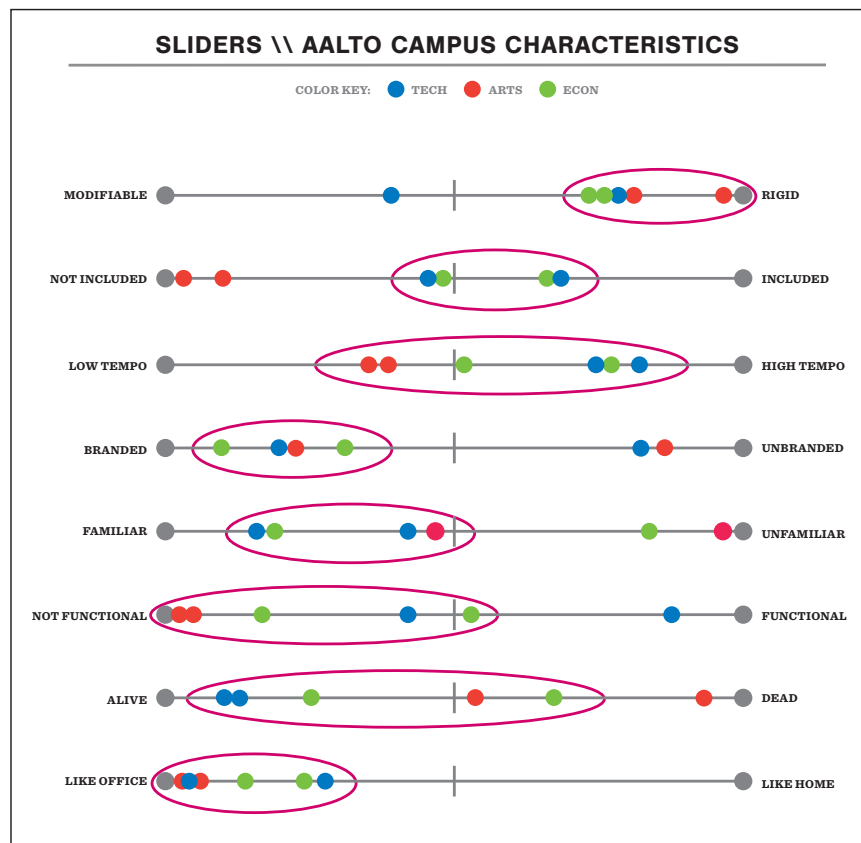
As the center of the new campus, how can this place be specifically used as the spear for community building + placemaking efforts?

Page 4

In-depth interview discussion guide and "creative kit"

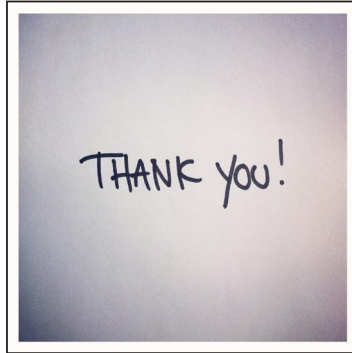


*Photograph of actual in-depth interview materials*



*In-depth interview “slider” survey responses (n=6)*





Special kudos to my thesis advisor Sammy Toyoki.  
Kaisa Airo, Suvi Nenonen and the rest of the BES research group.  
And Eelis Rytönen, for helping me get the show on the road!

Contact me:  
[www.tuomassahramaa.com](http://www.tuomassahramaa.com)  
[www.linkedin.com/in/tuomassahramaa](http://www.linkedin.com/in/tuomassahramaa)  
[tsahramaa@gmail.com](mailto:tsahramaa@gmail.com)