

STRONGER TOGETHER: TINY-HOUSERS' VIEWS OF COMMUNITY

Stronger Together: Tiny-housers' Views of Community

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Abstract:

Over the last decade, tiny homes (generally described as homes smaller than 500 ft²) have grown in popularity thanks to recent representation in the media (Ford and Gomez-Lanier 2017). An increasing number of people have begun to adopt this reimagined way of living, and some tiny-housers have sought to live near other tiny-housers, forming tiny house communities (Kilman 2016, Mangold et al. Forthcoming). Little systematic research focusing on the tiny-housers views of community exists. To provide initial insights, 30 interviews were conducted with people at various stages in their tiny house journeys. The 30 interviews were transcribed and analyzed in Nvivo 11. Preliminary findings suggest that many of these tiny-housers want to redefine the normative American concept of community by rejecting sub-urban frameworks and borrowing elements from both strong place and interest-based community models. They seek to accomplish this vision through one or more of the following: (i) increased community participation, (ii) shared spaces and resources, and (iii) development of significant relationships with neighbors rooted in mutual support and frequent interaction. While participants strive for this type of community, they also insist upon a clear recognition of personal space and boundaries. Participants also express an interest in having diverse communities, yet desire to maintain many common interests and goals. These community elements are not entirely unique to the tiny house movement. The small space, however, both encourages and facilitates this kind of community participation.

Key words: *Tiny house, lifestyle, downsizing, good life, alternative lifestyle, minimalism*

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Mangold, Severin, Chelsey Willoughby, Devin Hing, Codey Collins and Toralf Zschau. Forthcoming. "Why Live Tiny? A New Multi-Dimensional Model." *Sociological Spectrum*.