

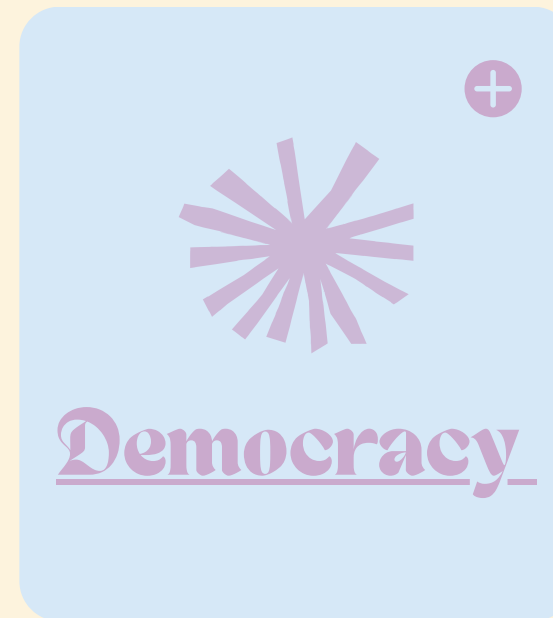
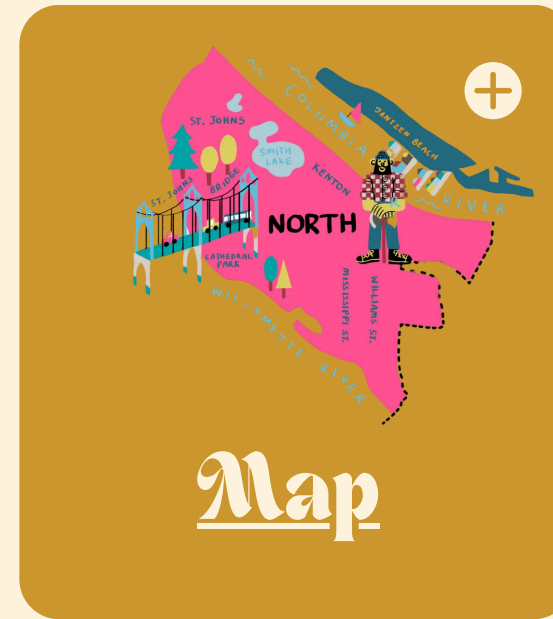
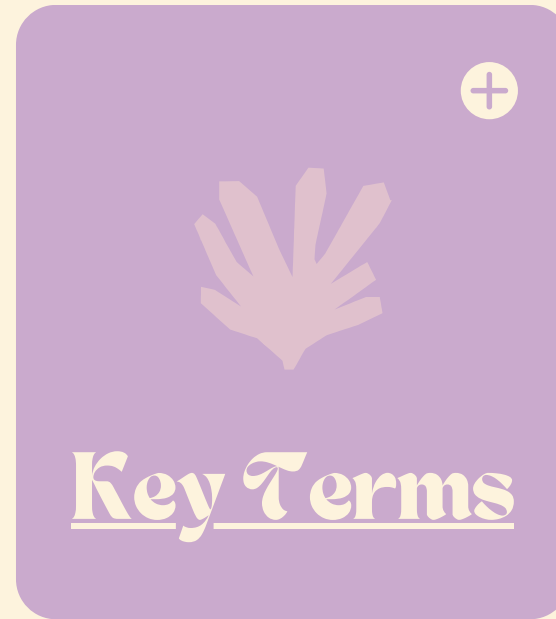
University of Portland: Public Research

Fellows 2025



Weaving Narrations of Everyday Democracy

EVERYDAY
DEMOCRACY



City

Definition: Wachsmuth (2014) postulates that the city ought to be treated as a category of practice.

This view offers the opportunity to observe people's relationship to urbanisation processes. It centres on mapping how these processes are experienced and interpreted by social actors in everyday life and formed into practical representations.

City Dwellers

Definition: People will struggle and succeed socially and professionally while becoming an integral part of the economy and society. They undertake daily rituals, mundane / extraordinary, random / staged under these settings. People construct a sense of memorial pride of the past and present in these -public and private- buildings, streets, and spaces.

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Democracy

Definition: The United States operates as a representative democracy, where citizens vote for representatives who then work on legislations and governance. Some of the key features of democracy is the rule of law (laws apply equally to all citizens, including government officials), and protection of rights (the constitution and bill of rights safeguard individual liberties, e.g. freedom of speech, the press).

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Democratic Principles

Definition: The idea of democratic principles aims to ensure that the government remains accountable to the people and respects their rights and freedoms. Therefore, democracy is an ongoing process with room for improvement and debate, reflecting on the diverse, dynamic nature of the United States society.

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Community

Definition: A community is a group of people who share an identity-forming narrative

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Types of community

Formal communities engage in planned joint activities while informal ones consist of personal and social networks.

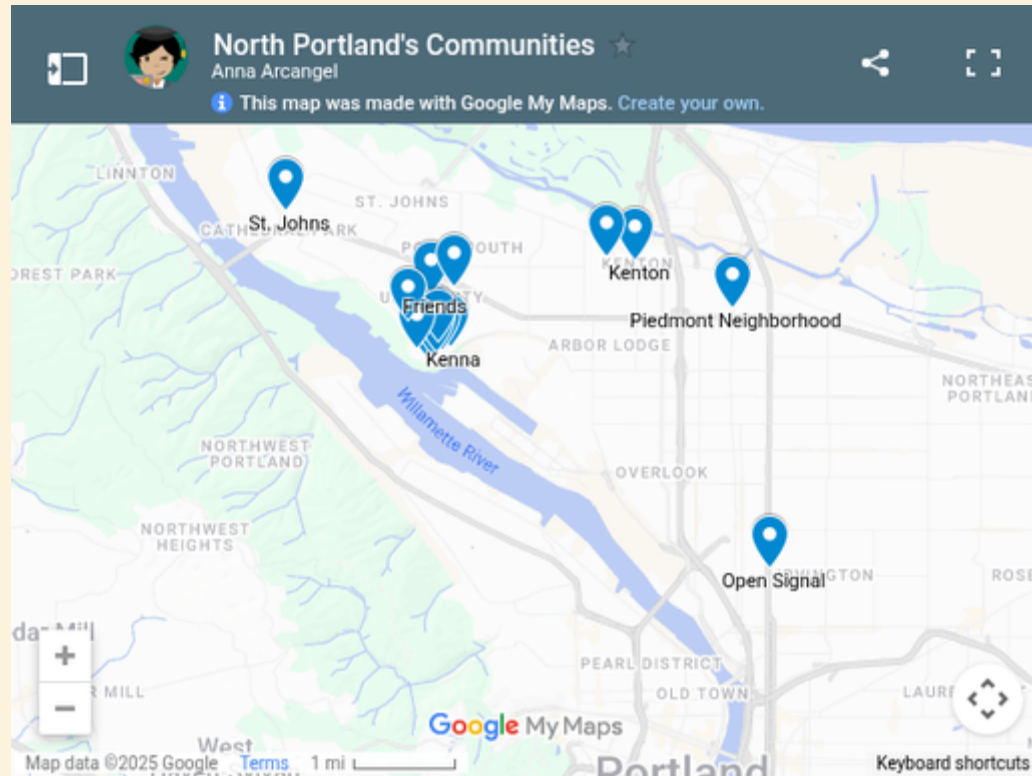
Urban communities are large with advanced technology and diverse occupations.

Global communities share views on issues across nations.

Social space communities form around physical or online gathering places.

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Community Map



Community members were asked to fill in 4 statements.

My community gathers at ____

My community is called ____

We use our voice to ____

Our hope for North Portland is ____

This map contains their responses, showcasing how the people of North Portland think of themselves and the communities they are part of.

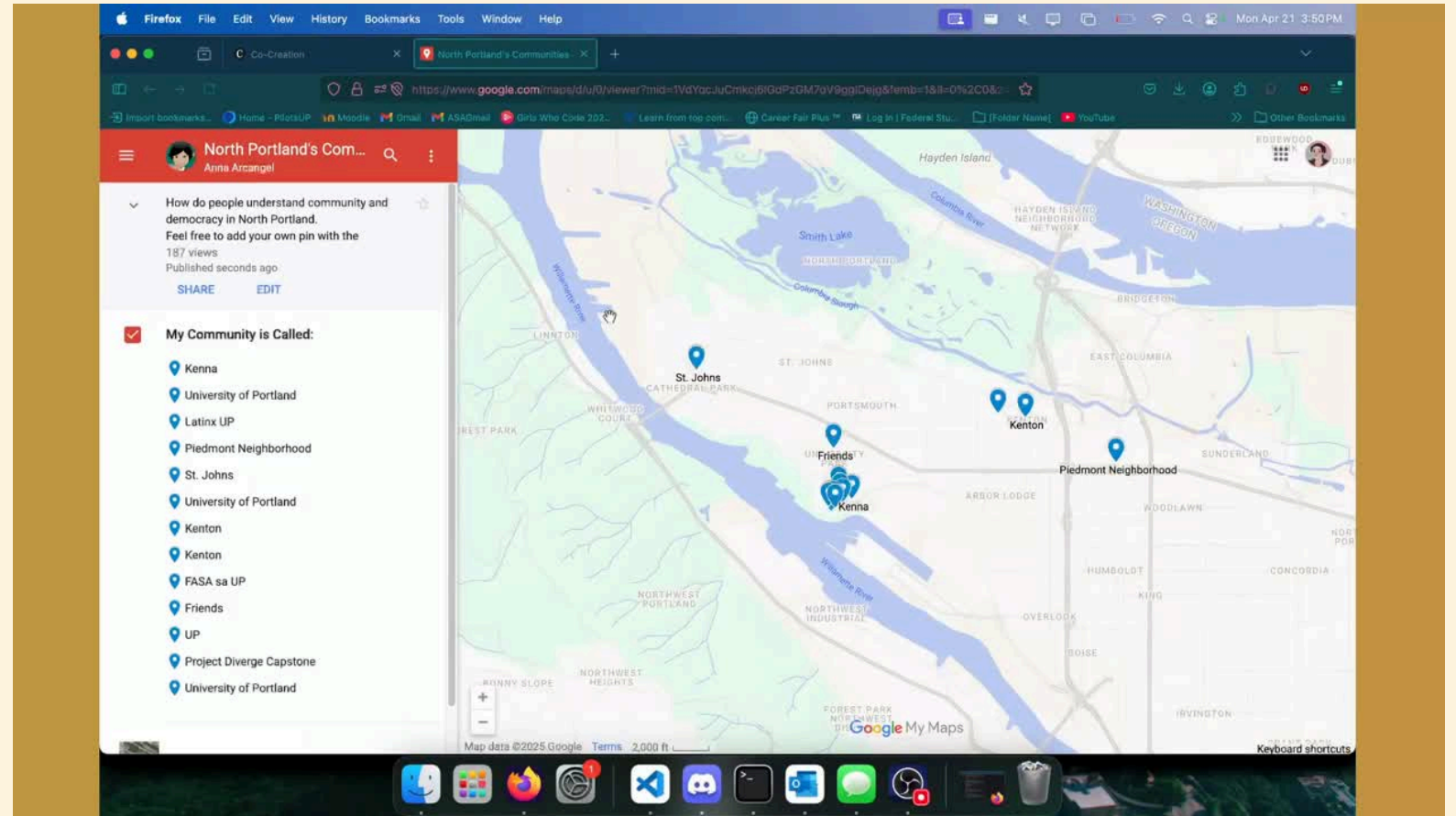
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Community Map

Want to contribute to the map?
Follow the instructions here:
(and make sure you are logged
into a Google account!)

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Methods

Literature review

It provides a foundation for existing knowledge, identifies gaps, and helps refine the scope of the study.

We discussed theories on urban design, city, communities, democracy and design.

Co-creation

It is a powerful approach that fosters collaboration and shared ownership, as stakeholders actively participate in the process. We hosted two co-creation sessions with UP graduate & undergraduate students.

Activation

It is relevant to engage people and empower communities to take action, fostering participation and change. We created an activation during the event where North Portland City Councilors visit Campus

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Belonging in North Portland: Stories of Communication and Connection

Explore important themes we discovered in our co-creation sessions, such as: sense of belonging and community & news engagement

How does North Portland create a sense of belonging?

Belong to

PLACES: “There are few places that make me feel more ‘at home’ or ‘comfortable’ in the area but if I frequent them a lot.”

PEOPLE: “from teammates and like-minded people. Also good to engage in nature and the surroundings.”

SPACE: “certain areas in Portland feel more safe than others.”

Excluded

PEOPLE: “I do not feel a sense of belonging tbh, a lot of pretentiousness.”

SPACE: “Do not feel welcome.”

LOCATION: “I am just here.”

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News Engagement

Enable

ACCESS: “It allows me to have information at any point in the day. I check multiple sources. ”

PEOPLE: “Convenient but lots of ‘groupthink’.”

INFORMATION: “information and news is far more accessible and personalized than ever before.”

Prevent

INFORMATION: “Information feels less valuable.”

CONTENT: “Irrelevant search results, hallucinations, SEO and sites.”

RELIABLE: “Information through AI is less reliable than other trusted news sources but is far easier to obtain.”

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Government Communication

Policy

“Lack of inclusion in policy changes. How many community members are part or aware of these decision making conversation? ”

Form

“In the City of Portland transportation survey on campus, it felt accusatory when asking why we don’t take public transit. The questions failed to consider the base concerns of why people don’t take public transit.”

Platform

“I don’t feel like the city of Portland reaches the platforms that I consume.”

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What does democracy mean to daily life?

Advocacy **PROVIDES:** “Speak up about what you believe in.”

ENABLES: “Having open conversations.”

ENCOURAGES: “Freedom of speech and voting.”

Voice “I exercise democracy by running a household with my partner.”

“The concept of being allowed to choose, anytime we’re given a voice.”

“Being able to have an impact on issues that are important to me and my loved ones.”

How can we apply democracy in our communities?

Governance “Using positions of power to get marginalized people the support that they need.”

Inclusivity “Democracy is about how we live together, listen to one another, and make decisions collectively.”

Education “As college students we are given the opportunity to vote for our student government and leaders.”

“Having to evaluate teachers at the end of course.”

Dialogue “Talking with ALL people and approaching people that don’t always get a chance to speak.”

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What stops you from practicing democracy?

Lack of Education:

“Not being informed or lack of being educated on current events.”

Communication Difficulties:

“Being pitted against people who have different political beliefs than me.”

Time Constraints

“Finding time from busy schedules.”

“I would like to be more directly involved, but I prioritize other things in my daily life.”

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Meet the Team

Angel Dulay

Mayor: Biology major, Chemistry minor.

Hometown: Mililani, Hawai'i.

Why PRF: As an incoming senior, I feel this calling to give back to the community. I joined PRF to find a way in making a difference beyond the UP campus. My goal is to incorporate important themes such as inclusion, community engagement, and equity to strengthen everyday democracy.

Sophie Arcangel

Mayor: Computer science major, English minor.

Hometown: El Dorado Hills, California.

Why PRF: As a cross-disciplinary student, I'm passionate about bringing together different disciplines to address problems in the community. PRF is the opportunity not only to work across the university with other students, but to work with the city of Portland itself.

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Beatriz Itzel Cruz Megchun

Role: Associate professor of Design and Innovation.

Why PRF: I am interested in exploring the city and how inhabitants intervene through place-making practices.

Sharmeen Inayat

Role: Advisor

Why PRF: I am invested in community building under precarity and in political climates where rights and democratic processes need to be claimed/reclaimed through everyday actions and provocations.

Acknowledgements

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you!*

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