TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT COMMUNITIES

Principles and Practices

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Abstract Communities are essential to our health and survival. Learning about community will add value to our individual and collective well-being by producing community-aware learners who are active participants in their communities and have some understanding of the challenges to creating healthy communities and the strategies to meet these challenges. This introduction identifies several themes of teaching and learning about community, including its interdisciplinary nature, the unique learning opportunities it offers, and the principle that—no matter our geographic, social, familial, or economic status, or our political ideology—community is integral to our lives.

Keywords Interdisciplinary • Connections • Collective

This book is about how to understand the concept of community and convey that understanding to students from kindergarten to college. It is based on the proposition that communities are essential to our health and survival and that learning about community will add value to our individual and collective well-being. Over years of teaching undergraduates I have encountered many students who want to learn about—and valued colleagues who have discovered creative ways to teach about—community. I understand their passion, because I share it.

Why is it important to study community? The simple answer is that community is integral to our daily lives, and that healthy communities

measurably impact our quality of life. The goal of teaching students about community issues, while involving them in it, is to produce adults who are active participants in their communities and have some understanding of the challenges to creating healthy communities and the strategies to meet these challenges. We no longer question why we study individuals and their behavior, despite the complexity, in order to improve their lives. The study of communities—how they function, the challenges they face, the strategies for improving them—is, if anything, even more important because of the extent of its potential impact.

Those of us who teach about community have often experienced its critical role. As a public defender, I worked hard to effectively represent individual clients, but it troubled me that their successes and failures had as much to do with the communities to which they belonged as with their individual attributes. When I turned to an academic career, I found pleasure in teaching about individual rights and liberties, but was more interested in when and how to balance those rights against society's critical need for collective solutions. I developed mock trials and other ways to teach about the adversarial nature of our legal system, but I thought of this system as a last resort, when negotiation, compromise, and collaboration had failed. It was largely for that reason that I sought to learn about communities: to address my own intellectual curiosity and to share what I learned with students who evinced the same desire to form healthier, stronger, connected communities. This book is dedicated to those students who are building community in such creative ways.

While a handful of higher education institutions have created schools or departments of community studies—sometimes attached to other departments—and others in the field have concerned themselves with the programmatic outlines for studying community, I have found that teaching and learning about community is more often the initiative of an individual teacher, who designs courses around topics in which that teacher has expertise, such as education, urban studies, or public health. One or more community issues are at the heart of the course, but the word "community" seldom appears, and the concepts are not deliberately included.

At the same time, over the past several decades, "community" has penetrated American education in the form of service- or community-based learning. Virtually every academic institution sponsors student involvement in the community, usually under the auspices of a community engagement or service office. We have an outstanding office on my campus, and its leadership has steadily worked to engage more faculty

members in teaching and learning about community issues such as race, immigration, poverty, and the environment. My experience, however, is that these efforts have three major limitations. One is that too often the community engagement is limited to service and research, while community participation can take many other forms, such as advocacy, community development, organizing and politics. A second limitation is that the courses are rarely coordinated with the community engagement, so the students going out into the community are not guided into sophisticated critical thinking about the substantive topics related to the subject of their service, such as homelessness, education, and public safety. A final limitation is that, even if a course offering full credit is attached to the service, it is unlikely to focus on critical thinking about communities, how they function, and their options for addressing the issues involved. More guidance, expertise, and prototypes for teaching these courses are needed. In addition, principles and practices of teaching and learning about community should be adapted to coursework at any level, in any number of disciplines, so that students are exposed to community issues throughout their academic lives.

In courses entirely devoted to community, and community components of courses with a different focus, I have identified several themes and pedagogic challenges.

An encompassing theme is the interdisciplinary nature of teaching and learning about communities, which can involve a mind-bogglingly wide range of disciplines. It is daunting to venture outside one's area of expertise to study how policies play out in actual communities. Yet communities do not experience challenges in isolation, and addressing them through the education system, the criminal justice system, or the housing system without considering their interconnectedness ignores the importance of these connections. When I asked an education policy expert if community factors were involved in the achievement gap, his frank response was, "That's not my field." Yet evidence shows what we intuitively know: children are influenced not only by quality teaching, but also by the communities in which they live, including their family and their neighborhood.[1] If we study communities, we may learn that, for example, absences and changing schools—functions of health and housing—also have a huge impact on student achievement, and their causes have little to do with education policy. Would we want to take the risk of implementing the recommendations of education policy experts alone, excluding evidence from the study of community influences?

Beginning in secondary school, educators are also steeped in their disciplines. Because they must venture into unfamiliar territory, they are likely to focus on their area of expertise when teaching about community issues. My own experience is that courses about concepts related to community—connections, engagement, social capital, community change—are frequently taught by non-traditional faculty with experience in the community-based world. As a result, another theme in community studies, as in interdisciplinary learning more generally, is the need for points of focus, for definition. How deeply should a course on community delve into each of the disciplines involved, and how much should it focus on the connections among them? In the following chapters I attempt to do both.

The question of focus raises the challenge of how to teach about community in a way that focuses on issues of importance and offers a valuable learning experience not found in already existing curricula, particularly urban studies. Having come to the study of community through a process that was not led by any particular curriculum, I am convinced it offers unique learning opportunities that have not been sufficiently explored in urban studies or other courses, which do not take into account the multiple and morphing communities of place and people in which we engage. Only recently, the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development opined that the agency's name should become the Department of Housing and Community Development, in order to reflect both its inclusion of extra-urban areas and the government's focus on holistic approaches that extend far beyond housing.[2]

Wherever we live, however we pursue our lives, we are inevitably part of, and interacting with, one or more communities. Thus, a final theme that is integral to teaching about community is that, no matter our geographic, social, familial, or economic status, or our political ideology, community is integral to our lives. There are communities of identity and communities of diversity. Community can be created and managed through large institutions like government, and it can also form organically through interactions with one another at the most micro level, in families, small groups, and neighborhoods. Community can exert control over our lives but also indulge our own choices. And, whether we like it or not, communities are constantly evolving. A concern for healthy communities crosses ideological boundaries: it is important to both progressive and Tea Party activists. Representatives of multiple ideologies have enrolled in my classes and, while they differ on many issues, they share a passion for strengthening community life. All of us, from all walks of life, should be exposed to

examples of the many forms community takes, how community does and can interact with our lives, and ways we try to change them, even if that exposure contrasts with our own preconceptions and deeply held beliefs. In this I acknowledge my own view that, since we live in communities, we ultimately need to take others' views and passions into consideration, even as we adhere to our own.

Ultimately, strong communities require collective responsibility for policies and practices that work. We are bound to have views that reflect our geography, demographic characteristics, faiths, values, and ideologies; learning about community includes understanding of, and respect for, our differences. At its core, however, the study of community should be about getting past our divides with fruitful exchange, and about policies and practices that work to strengthen our collective well-being.

The following chapters discuss principles and practices intrinsic to the study of community, which, as I conceive it, involves three overarching areas: (1) what community means, (2) proposed, attempted, and successful solutions to the major challenges confronting communities, and (3) how communities evolve and change. Undoubtedly I have omitted some, while including others that are not useful to your teaching; as with any area of study, many course designs can teach effectively about community. Chapter 2 discusses the concept and attributes of community, as seen from several perspectives. Chapter 3 describes how to incorporate the assets of, and challenges to, healthy communities into our teaching, followed in Chapter 4 by an analysis of the different strategies and agents that can be utilized to create and maintain asset-rich communities. Utilizing the substantive and process-based concepts of Chapters 3 and 4, Chapters 5 and 6 provide a sampling of scenarios that illustrate the principles and practices inherent in teaching about community. Chapter 5 offers examples of actual challenges that communities are facing, and Chapter 6 contains sample projects that can enhance different aspects of learning about community. They illustrate the holistic, interdisciplinary nature of principles and practices in building, maintaining, and transforming communities.

You will note that this book contains many questions, not always with answers. Teaching and learning about community concerns discussion and debate as much as it does principles and practices. It should encourage conceptual thinking about community as well as the practical application of these concepts into your own teaching. Sometimes answers exist; where they do not, raising and wrestling with the questions is not only the first step toward answers, but also a means in itself of building and strengthening community.

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Perspectives on the Meaning of Community

Abstract Implementing effective policies and healthy community practices requires an understanding of what we mean by the term "community." Key characteristics include interdependence, mutual responsibility, commitment, and attachment. Community takes many forms, including communities of place, groups of living things in an ecosystem, and communities of people. It can also be analyzed from multiple perspectives, including community in contrast to individualism, bonding and bridging social capital, and race, class, and diversity.

Keywords Characteristics • Forms • Social Capital • Ecosystems

Implementing effective policies and healthy practices that impact our daily lives requires an understanding of what we mean by the term "community." Consider, for example, Jane Jacobs' argument against a proposed highway in lower Manhattan. Her position depended in large part on her knowledge of and extensive research into the nature of the community the highway would traverse, including walkability, the vital role played by local merchants who served as hubs of community connection and exchange of information, and the dynamic diversity of institutions and people comprising the community in which she lived.[1] Consider another issue: the community influences that impact our ability to support our children and those who teach them. For example, if low-income people are highly mobile,

causing their children to move frequently from one school to another, and research shows that mobility adversely impacts learning, we can explore the community aspects of this challenge in order to either reduce mobility or devise strategies for effective education in the face of mobility.[2]

Although community is such an integral part of our lives that we generally take its meaning for granted, it is necessary to step back and ask, "What is community?" This chapter, therefore, is about the concept of community, which is a critical prerequisite to addressing issues and challenges related to that concept. A universal definition may be out of reach, but key characteristics include interdependence, mutual responsibility, commitment, and attachment. Community takes many forms and can be analyzed from multiple perspectives. The following pages define community in contrast to individualism, then in terms of place and people, ecosystems, civic engagement, and bonding and bridging social capital. It concludes by approaching community through the lenses of class and race.

Individualism and Community: The American Perspective

To some degree, community can be defined by what it is not. As de Tocqueville so perceptively described it, Americans' relationship to community is quite different from that in Europe and many other parts of the world, where historically the collective—as represented by the state and the ruling class—has played an integral role in people's lives. Woven into the American ethos is a conviction that individual responsibility for and entitlement to one's own way of life is critical to well-being. To the extent that community institutions impede individual liberty with what are viewed as arbitrary and coercive measures, they are approached with suspicion.[3] However, unlimited individual freedom, operating from arbitrary self-interest to do whatever we want, even to the detriment of others, is not how we actually live. We try to be as independent as possible, but we see value in interdependence, a measure of responsibility toward others, and dialogue and discussion. So we balance individual pursuits with consideration for the collective.

An example that is particularly salient to students and can be debated in the classroom is a school community service requirement or incentive program. Support for an individualist position might include arguments that it is impossible to define service, that no individual should be coerced into service, that people forced to serve others will not do so effectively,

and that in fact a requirement to serve that is not from the heart defeats its own purpose.[4] A position tending toward community would stress that service is an effective way for people to develop empathy toward those in situations different from their own, along with habits of civic engagement. According to this argument, we should either require or provide incentives for service to ensure that students develop these qualities, just as we ensure students learn reading, writing, and mathematics.[5]

Teaching and learning about community assumes that a healthy society respects individual freedom, while also serving common interests, whether it is providing mutual support, collaborating on projects that could not be accomplished alone, or insuring order. Finding the appropriate balance between the two is critical to developing an understanding of community.

Place and People

With the concept that community is as natural to our lives as our own selves, when I ask students to provide a photograph of a community to which they belong, many select their family, neighborhood, or group they associate with their physical surroundings. A place becomes a community not simply through proximity, but by interaction with one another as members of civil society. People in families and neighborhoods support each other to confront challenges and share assets. Infrastructure needs to be built and maintained: these include housing, transportation corridors, schools, businesses, utilities. Decisions about the use of these assets must be made. Learning about community involves discussion of the way we find consensus and, when we fail to do so, establish rules and customs concerning our lives in common.

As humans have become more mobile, and technology has provided new venues for interaction, community may take on new meaning, challenging our assumptions about place and people.[6] Is an Internet group a community if the people in it are fully engaged with one another yet will never have a face-to-face interaction? Is a neighborhood a community in a time when people all too often do not know their next-door neighbors? The boundaries of place have become far more elastic as connections among people have grown in number but arguably declined in intensity.

How to define a community becomes, therefore, a basic first step in the study of communities. Can a nation be a community? Videos from World War II show Americans engaged in the military, industry, and volunteer organizations. Did this common enterprise create community? If so, is it

comparable to joining a national or cross-border organization on behalf of a specific cause or protest? When asked to provide a photo of a community with which he identified, one student selected a picture of the main thoroughfare in his country's capital city; it was packed with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators. In his view, not universally shared by his classmates, community was created by the cause, not the size.

Community, then, is arguably becoming less about discrete places and more about interaction in all its forms—a mechanism for airing and resolving dissension among individuals and constituencies, accommodating diversity, and expressing common aspirations.

Ecosystems as Communities

While it has no single definition, community has traditionally been associated not uniquely with people, but also with a group of living things in the same environment or ecosystem.[7] Wherever living things gather, they have the potential to collaborate and thereby form a community. Humans are connected to the larger community in myriad forms. The power sources that provide our transportation and heat and cool our homes, our food supply, our health, and our recreation—all are part of an ecosystem that is amazingly robust, yet also fragile. Learning about community includes asking how we, as humans, protect the very system on which we have become so dependent, even as we care for ourselves. With increasing attention to the environment and ecosystems, the idea of community may well be addressed in that context as well.

As I write this book as an armed occupation of land belonging to a wildlife refuge in the western United States has been occupied by a small community of ranchers who claim the government is interfering with their livelihood, which involves grazing animals that are part of our food source. The government, in turn, contends that regulation of ranching is essential because grazing compromises territory that is home to an ecosystem that has intrinsic value, and is also a recreation site for hunters, fishermen, and birders. In another current controversy, business interests wish to run oil pipelines through American Indian lands, as well as farms and ranches. These communities of landowners have been joined in their opposition by environmentalists who also object to the way the oil is extracted. In favor of the pipeline are some labor unions who see jobs for a community of laborers. This is one of the sample lessons on community presented in Chapter 6.

Community, Civic Engagement, and Democracy

Communities may also be defined within a political context, where issues of civic engagement and democracy are a primary focus. From a public policy perspective, community is the foundation of a healthy democracy. With the exception of those communities that govern themselves—currently limited to small tribes and localities with a tradition of participatory governance—citizens choose representatives to develop policies and practices, and oversee the institutions of governance. Members of the public have the ability to advocate directly with these representatives concerning issues that are of importance to them, and show their approval or disapproval by reelecting or voting these representatives out of office. A democratic community requires knowledge about the issues citizens confront and engagement with one another to reflect and assert their collective will. It is where that engagement occurs, in the local bookstore or coffee house, in schools, on the streets, in an online forum, in citizen groups, and in meetings.[8] Community, therefore, can be defined in terms of an educated and participatory citizenry.[9]

Bonding and Bridging Communities

In addition to place and people, community may be defined by social capital, the ties that allow people to engage in the larger society. Scholars have divided social capital into two types: bonding, which arises among people held together by a sense of identity and homogeneity, and bridging, characterized by heterogeneous networks.[10] This distinction can be found in the larger ecosystem as well; groups of the same species frequently form tight communities, while different species form symbiotic or collaborative relationships. Both types of communities help them survive challenges that they could not endure alone.

A bonding community is exemplified by the family of iconic civil rights leader and Congressman John Lewis. Lewis vividly describes a scene in which he and his young cousins kept his aunt's small rural Alabama shack from blowing away in a severe storm:

> …Aunt Seneva told us to clasp hands…Then she had us walk as a group toward the corner of the room that was rising….Then we walked back in the other direction, as another end of the house began to lift. And so it went,

back and forth, fifteen children walking with the wind, holding that trembling house down with the weight of our small bodies.[11]

Those in bonding communities, like Lewis' family, have high levels of trust and mutual support, but they may also act in ways that exclude those who violate the established norms or are perceived as outsiders. As Lewis describes it, that same family virtually disowned him when he joined the Civil Rights Movement, fearful that his actions would destroy generations of established relationships.[12] At the same time, when he encountered strife from racial discrimination, within his own community of civil rights activists, and in politics, Lewis sought to reproduce the power and mutual support of the family that exerted such a powerful influence on him—a community closely tied by proximity and bonding relationships.

All the disagreement and strife that Lewis encountered in his own cohort was divisive, but, as will be discussed later, it brought very different constituencies together to form a powerful, community-driven movement that made America more democratic. Discussion about whether Lewis' ideal community is possible involves the study of bridging social capital and the ties that allow individuals to engage in the larger society. Bridging social capital involves relationships that serve common interests as social as a bowling league, as consciously civic as a neighborhood association, or as transformative as a movement. Research suggests that bridging communities have less trust but greater tolerance, which, according to Robert Putnam, gives them the capacity to solve common problems and makes them essential to the democratic process.

Putnam's concern, which has generated considerable controversy, is that the number of people participating in bridging activities has declined in recent years, threatening the civic ties that cross social and economic divides.[13] While he devotes considerable research to the causes of decline, which he attributes primarily to forces that diminish face-to-face interaction, including technology such as social media and the automobile and highway systems,[14] some question Putnam's idealized version of past communities, which—whether labeled bonding or bridging—were characterized by isolation, narrow-mindedness, and exclusion. They argue that the trends Putnam describes are both irreversible and possess many positive characteristics, and that today's bridging

communities offer vibrant new forms of social capital more appropriate to the times.[15]

While bridging and bonding groups are not entirely distinct from one another, the duality concept sheds light on the meaning of community. The closer the ties, the greater is the sense of identity, trust, support, pressure to fit in, and exclusion of those on the outside. The looser the ties, the greater are the diversity, potential for both dissension and tolerance, and flexibility. Bonding communities need more bridges; bridging communities would benefit from closer ties.

INEQUALITY, CLASS, AND COMMUNITY

Any study of bonding and bridging communities—the relationship within and among component parts of the larger community—entails discussion of social and economic inequality. From some perspectives, it would seem the two are unrelated. Research has shown extensive social capital can be found in low-income communities,[16] but others suggest that income and wealth disparities are integrally related to community and are a cause rather than a result of declining social capital.[17] From Lewis' description, social capital seemed to have abounded in his extended family; on the other hand, his aunt still lived in a ramshackle home. Indeed, Putnam himself has more recently stressed the destructive consequences on individuals and communities of disparities in economic opportunity.[18] For example, research shows a correlation between inequality and political disenfranchisement,[19] indicating that the greater the inequality, the less attention those in power pay to people at the bottom, leading to a vicious cycle of greater apathy and less political involvement among low-income people. A recent study provides evidence that inequality has led to rising residential segregation, resulting in greater social isolation based on class and accompanying declines in bridging social capital.[20] It seems, then, that the economic divide may support bonds within a social class but weaken community across classes, offering less opportunity for economic mobility and social integration. From another perspective, however, inequality is a natural result of capitalism, whose innovations in the end are better for communities than any alternative; innovative individuals create economic growth and wealth that can ultimately benefit all through economic growth, products, philanthropy, and redistribution.[21]

RACE, ETHNICITY, DIVERSITY, AND COMMUNITY

While there are many aspects of social and economic inequality that impact larger communities, and groups within them, the particular issues of race, ethnicity, and diversity are basic to the study of community in the United States. Consider especially communities of concentrated, often racially or ethnically homogeneous, poverty. They have many human assets, but are economically and socially isolated from the resources of the larger community. In particular, historically pervasive racial as well as class discrimination, supported by the government through its political and economic goals, institutions, and laws, played a major role in driving African Americans and American Indians into the least resourced communities where their isolation from the outside world only intensified. By the time legal discrimination ended, a significant number of these communities in concentrated poverty were entrenched, resource-deprived, and still facing geographic and economic barriers to joining communities of less concentrated poverty.[22] The limited opportunities available to them entail adjusting to a completely different environment where they may feel uncomfortable if not downright unwelcome. And, as we will discuss in Chapter 5, low-income racial minorities who move are most likely to resettle in new communities of racially concentrated poverty. Studies in fact show that even middle-class African Americans with choices settle in majority African American communities which have significantly higher rates of poverty than comparable white communities.[23]

Learning about their unique experience helps us understand the nature of their communities today. These two communities of color do not share the history of immigrant communities whose people came to America (or other countries) primarily in search of opportunity or to escape turmoil in their homeland. Many immigrants bring with them considerable social capital in the form of extended family and community support, both in their new communities and in the community they left. At times significant numbers of people from one village are able to migrate to the same place, with the promise of work with far better pay than in their country of origin. Indeed, they have often formed community associations to support one another, using their community ties to create bridges to their new world. While the first generation often endures poverty and hostility, sometimes based on race, many of them are assimilating into the larger community within a couple of generations. The loss of cultural identity with the communities they left is offset by the opportunities they have gained.

American Indians and African Americans, on the other hand, forged their identity within the American borders, and that identity was only cemented through discrimination and separation. They have their own communities which resist attempts at forced assimilation, and they maintain an identity and comfort level with their neighbors, preserving a cultural and political identity apart from the larger community. While many of them would choose integration if they were offered more opportunity to do so, and integration into the larger community may further tolerance, diversity, and social capital, it also threatens to dilute these bonds, forged under great hardship. It is this tension that makes race particularly salient to any exploration of community.

Conclusion

The concept of community, and any particular community, depends on the lens through which we view it. It can provide identity through common customs, symbols, language, faith, and ethnicity. It can be a source of mutual support through proximity, ties of family or friendship, or a common purpose. It can also be where we find ourselves—in our neighborhoods, schools, work, an online forum—and where we exchange information, discuss common concerns, and negotiate our differences. The same community, in fact, can be all of these.

With this understanding of community, we can learn about tangible and intangible challenges to the formation and resilience of healthy communities. The next chapter explores how communities develop assets to address some of those challenges and the complex interrelationship among these challenges and assets.

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Assets of and Challenges to Communities

Abstract An understanding of community assets is a prerequisite to teaching and learning about community. This chapter summarizes major community assets—housing, infrastructure, food, health, safety, jobs, financial security, families, and education—and the challenges communities confront in providing them and keeping them strong. Each asset is analyzed individually, with the perspective that their interaction is necessary to a holistic understanding of community and to addressing community challenges in an interconnected process.

Keywords Assets • Challenges • Interaction

This chapter concerns teaching and learning about the assets of healthy communities and the questions and challenges communities confront in providing these assets for their constituents. Learning about assets and challenges from a community perspective requires less of a deep dive into each subject in favor of a basic understanding of each and a more thorough exploration of the connections among them. Just as a jigsaw puzzle is composed of many pieces, each of which is essential to putting the puzzle together but none of which by itself can create the picture, so an understanding of each community asset is a prerequisite to understanding community, while learning about their interaction allows us to see the bigger picture and address community challenges in a holistic manner.

Underlying all community assets and challenges is the interplay among market forces, government policies, and considerations of race and class. A Fannie Mae Foundation report at the turn of the century listed ten major influences on the American metropolis of the previous 50 years and predicted ten major characteristics of the years to come.[1] A discerning eye can see that virtually all of these characteristics, and the shape and character of communities generally, are largely determined by the interaction of these three major forces. Consider the growth and character of American suburbs. The availability of large, relatively inexpensive tracts of land attracted markets. It was the government-supported interstate highway and rail systems, however, that created the infrastructure to insure accessibility of the suburbs to jobs in the cities. Finally, the almost complete racial segregation of the twentieth-century suburbs had its roots in land use and other policies designed to keep African Americans, American Indians, and sometimes other minorities in their own communities, leading to intense racial concentrations, particularly concentrations of poverty which have such a profound impact on our communities today. While the groups and patterns may vary, this interplay can be observed in communities around the globe.

Housing

The study of housing is critical to understanding communities. Beyond the axiom that shelter is a basic individual need, and impacts many individual outcomes in health, education, and work, housing is inseparable from community. It contributes to stability in families, public safety, and surrounding infrastructure. People with stable housing care about and invest in their community. Furthermore, housing construction and maintenance produce jobs that contribute to community well-being.[2] Given the critical role of housing, it is important to learn how communities developed their housing patterns, and how they establish housing priorities, examples of which follow, in the context of their history, their present condition, and likely community trends.

Inclusive and Affordable Housing

The challenges to individuals who lack affordable housing spill over into communities, which must deal with homelessness and the instability of families who are struggling or unable to pay for their homes. Demand for

affordable housing does not invariably lead to an increase in supply; the result is that communities face two challenges: prohibitive housing prices and insufficient income to pay those prices. No example could be more compelling than the housing bubble of 2008, in which the entire world economy went into deep recession in part because of unsustainable housing costs for people who lacked the means to pay them. Not only were individuals affected, but entire communities were decimated. In addition, entrenched segregation and concentrated poverty, which isolate groups of people from good schools, jobs, and services, pose a major challenge for many communities. The causes, which include discrimination, market barriers, and self-segregation, interact in complex ways and defy simple remedies. For these reasons, it is important to study the major approaches to providing housing that is both affordable and accessible to all.

One approach is to make affordable housing more accessible in middle- and upper-class communities, many of which set historical patterns of racial and ethnic segregation through such actions as neighborhood covenants.[3] Today, legal remedies are available in the case of deliberate and de facto discrimination in the sale or rental of housing, but identifying and remedying housing discrimination through the legal process can be protracted and costly.[4] Furthermore, many barriers to entry are driven by the market and embedded cultural patterns of distrust and even fear that outsiders will compromise community character, threaten public safety, and depress the economic value of homes. It is important to study the actual impact of integrating communities, both on the new entrants and the existing community, and proposals for maximizing outcomes. One policy that has a small but positive impact on the supply of affordable housing is known as inclusionary zoning, a policy and set of rules that require developers of multi-unit properties to offer a specified percentage of units at what are determined to be affordable prices, in exchange for which they are allowed to add additional units to their projects.[5]

A second area of study involves policies and practices for building up housing in communities with high concentrations of poverty.[6] Teaching about the renovation of dilapidated housing and continued maintenance of that housing once it is improved should include a comparison of strategies for the renovation and upkeep of public housing and policies geared to the private market. The community impact of public housing is checkered. It is, on the one hand, a huge asset that keeps over two million people—particularly the elderly and single-parent families—from becoming homeless,[7] but, particularly in large metropolitan centers, it has been at

the cost of residential segregation in massive projects. Over the past quarter century, public housing authorities have pursued two major strategies: either renovation and improved maintenance of existing public housing or, where housing was so dilapidated as to become uninhabitable, replacing these large public housing projects with mixed-income communities. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the latter policy, and compares it to practices focused on moving people to high-opportunity communities.

While public housing has provided a significant percentage of affordable housing in communities, the private housing market is far larger and must be relied on to offer affordable housing to people at all stages of their lives and with a wide range of incomes. The study of community includes evaluation of various public policies and practices to increase affordable housing supply, such as housing vouchers that can be used in the private housing market,[8] tax credits to developers and landlords of affordable housing,[9] and rent control or stabilization.[10]

Teaching and learning about revitalizing housing in low-income communities must include consideration of its impact on existing residents, both renters and homeowners, which involves discussion, usually spirited, about the process known as gentrification, in which communities experience a rapid influx of wealthier residents. A disinvested community, which for years has been inhabited by low-income people, often racial minorities, suddenly shows signs of revival, perhaps because of the renovation of underutilized housing stock, the impact of nearby development, or conscious public policy to refurbish housing or bring in new residents, businesses, and transportation options. As a result, the housing becomes attractive to higher-income people, especially those who prefer to live in a diverse community. Their ability to pay drives housing prices up. Long-time homeowners sell, perhaps to their advantage, but only well-off people—often disproportionately white—can afford to buy. Residents of more modest means who live in market rate housing may be forced to move.[11]

Even if gentrification does not cause out-migration, it does change the neighborhood, in many cases dramatically.[12] Those who remain may find the neighborhood becoming unrecognizable, even unwelcoming. New residents bring with them a desire for services that fit their needs, which are not necessarily those of long-time residents. Soul food eateries may be replaced by trendy tapas bars, barber shops by salons and fitness centers, on-street parking by bike lanes, and people parks by dog parks. They are merely cohabiting the same space, as opposed to interacting in that space.[13] My and my students' informal questioning of numerous

community residents suggest a mix of reactions from existing residents, from hostility to embracing the change.[14]

In such a tenuous environment, should government risk seeding the gentrification process by developing housing and, if so, what mix of housing? Would this process produce the same result as when the market controls it: low-income people priced out of their community? If so, and if low-income people are highly mobile under any circumstances, it is appropriate to critically think about whether and in what circumstances housing policy is the key to revitalizing high-poverty communities, and whether inclusive housing is a more important goal than, say, a guaranteed minimum income that would make housing more affordable from a demand perspective.[15]

Home Ownership, Rental Housing, and Community

Is it sound public policy to promote home ownership? From the Great Depression until the twenty-first-century home ownership crisis, American home ownership rates rose from 33 to over 66 percent, spurred in large part by government policy—chief among them the mortgage interest tax deduction—to promote home ownership as an individual, neighborhood, and community asset.[16] Although owning a home is a significant financial asset that also brings stability and investment in the community, it also involves risk, particularly for those who purchase either a home they cannot afford or one that declines in value. In these circumstances, home owners can accumulate debt or find themselves stuck with a home they are unable to sell. If they and many of their neighbors default on their mortgages and vacate their homes, the entire communities can become blighted and abandoned. In contrast, rental housing gives the renter more flexibility and mobility, and less responsibility, but it is not an asset that builds wealth. Renters too face vulnerabilities, particularly to their landlords for poor maintenance, rent increases, and even eviction. Learning about community entails study of the appropriate balance between home ownership and rental housing, insuring that all people have a roof over their heads, adequate resources to obtain and maintain housing appropriate to their needs and financial capacity, and the ability to change their housing and community when circumstances require it.

One practice that combines aspects of both models is that of cooperative housing, where households own housing in common, and community land trusts, in which land is held communally and residents can take

advantage of a more limited recapture of appreciation. Housing cooperatives, generally found in urban areas, are corporations whose residents own shares that commit them to shared responsibilities while allowing them to build individual wealth if their residence increases in value. Shared equity cooperatives combine the coop model of corporate ownership and the shared assets vision of community land trusts, often formed for the protection of land in rural areas. In limiting the amount of wealth each individual homeowner can build, these options are more accessible to buyers of modest means.[17] The cooperative model has been extended to various forms of housing communities, such as retirement housing communities and intentional communities like cohousing and communes, making it an option worthy of study.

Community Infrastructure

Teaching and learning about community includes envisioning safe, attractive, and comfortable communities, and offering reliable access to basic needs and services like food, maintenance, jobs, health care, education, recreation, and child care. The infrastructure required includes public spaces like parks, playgrounds, and libraries; transportation support such as buses, trains, and roads; and utilities such as electricity, water, and sewage treatment. The challenge is for communities to satisfy these needs in a sustainable and equitable way, serving the needs of a range of individuals.

With population growth and over time, the resources needed to support community infrastructure become strained, leading to systemic breakdowns and environmental degradation. As a result, communities have been challenged to provide effective and more sustainable infrastructure. Any restriction or allocation of resources, however, is subject to discussion of such issues as the choices and siting of infrastructure, the equitable allocation of resources, and the cost-effectiveness of new technologies for infrastructure. Every community grapples with these issues, which, like the Keystone Pipeline controversy discussed in Chapter 6, provide examples of infrastructure development from a community perspective.

Our income and wealth differences separate us not only in terms of where we live, but also what infrastructure amenities we find in our communities. Most communities have well-kept buildings and streetscapes, utilities that are maintained, and vital retail such as supermarkets and pharmacies, savings banks, and restaurants. Low-income communities, by contrast, are more likely to contain dilapidated buildings and public

spaces, poorly maintained utilities,[18] and wealth-stripping establishments such as check cashing stores and pawn shops, liquor stores, corner markets with few healthy food options, and fast-food establishments. While on occasion they may be anchors of their community, is it acceptable that they be the only choices? What constitutes equity, and to what degree is it the responsibility of communities to equalize access to infrastructure? Is it preferable to build more infrastructure in under-resourced areas, or insure that residents of these areas have reasonable and affordable access to the resources wherever they may be? Delivering equitable infrastructure is a particular challenge in the United States, where each community has its own governance and tax systems, often in conflict with one another. Without regional cooperation and structures or extensive national intervention, equity is likely out of reach.[19]

Teaching and learning about community also offers the opportunity to consider the value of diverse housing and infrastructure. Some commentators argue for the vibrancy of communities with a range of transportation options for pedestrians, drivers, and people using public transportation; a wide variety of residences, stores, and gathering places; and a mix of people with many different backgrounds and interests sharing the space, supporting the community's needs, and at times engaging with one another.[20] Nonetheless, many communities embody the preference of their constituents for less diversity, finding it more comfortable, less fractious, and frequently less costly.

Food and Health

The study of community infrastructure is related to teaching and learning about health from a community perspective, including community assets that promote health, particularly a healthy and sustainable food supply, and health care. In the United States, most people have access to food, thanks to benefits provided through federal policy,[21] but they are not assured of high-quality food. How much burden should communities shoulder for the care of chronic diseases caused by poor nutrition? What about diseases which are caused or aggravated by poor health habits such as smoking or substance abuse? Societies grapple with the question of whether health care is an individual or community responsibility, especially when the causes of poor health are complex, the costs of care high, and the quality and effectiveness of treatments debatable.

As towns and urban centers have grown, the need for healthy food has increasingly involved bringing food from farms—sometimes even thousands of miles away—to markets, and ceding local control of food to outside sources that could produce food more efficiently and affordably. Today's food infrastructure, however, has created significant challenges for some communities that, for reasons that are not always clear, lack convenient access to supermarkets. Whole communities with thousands of people, arguably with considerable buying power, may not have even one grocery store or farmers' market. The latter, in particular, is not only a source of nutritious food, but also a place of community engagement.[22] In addition, current farming and distribution systems tend to produce food that can be produced in bulk with the aid of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and can last a long time with the aid of preservatives. Concerns are that the use of these chemicals endanger our rural communities, and contaminate the food produced there for general consumption. Yet organic and high-quality fresh foods are generally more expensive, and recent research suggests that bringing more sources of food to communities, while important for supplying basic necessities and for the convenience of shopping near home, may not in itself result in healthier eating habits and overall better health.[23]

The study of community requires consideration of its role in improving health outcomes—a subject that will be discussed in Chapter 5. Sound community practices are particularly important in light of major advances in health care which have produced treatments and cures never imagined, lengthening life expectancy and raising expectations, but accompanied by costs most individuals are unable to shoulder alone, and by many treatments that research has shown to have questionable and even negative effects on health outcomes. Communities are challenged to implement cost-effective measures centered on prevention instead of later intervention, and on less expensive alternatives to high-tech care, such as healthier diets and treatment in community health centers. The challenge is particularly acute for certain groups such as the uninsured and underinsured, and those who, because of poverty or other factors, are isolated from nutritious food and adequate health care.[24]

Among the most costly populations in the health care system are the chronically mentally ill, who are responsible for a significant percentage of costly emergency care resulting from their illness, neglect of chronic diseases they may have, and homelessness. In earlier times many of the severely mentally ill were housed in institutions under deplorable conditions—sometimes

restrained and physically abused. Media exposure, public outcry about conditions and cost, and legal actions in the United States led to legislation strictly limiting institutionalization in favor of community treatment that never materialized, leaving many of the mentally ill population on the streets, sometimes ignored, sometimes instilling in communities mixed responses of sympathy, repulsion, and fear. The makeshift, temporary community response of cycling them in and out of hospitals, jails, and shelters became embedded, with no measurable improvement in their lives. Caught in the netherworld of the public health, criminal justice, and homelessness systems, they and the communities in which they live face considerable challenges. Teaching and learning about community can explore the evidence that shows that the cost of their care, and the burden on their communities, diminishes significantly when they have stable housing, accompanied by appropriate case management. The link between housing and both better and cheaper health outcomes is well established; as a result, the elimination of chronic homelessness, discussed in Chapter 5, has become a goal for many communities.[25]

SAFETY

Another community challenge worthy of study is safety, which involves the intersection of community standards with the legal/criminal justice system to determine how to classify and treat behavior that is damaging to oneself, other individuals, or the community. Even if social and economic factors influenced their actions, when and how should they be held responsible? Who is threatened? What combination of punitive and rehabilitative measures is best suited to protecting the community and deterring others?

These questions are particularly salient in the United States, where disproportionate numbers of young minority males are caught up in the criminal justice system, permanently impacting their communities, families, and futures. During spikes in disorder that raise public anxiety and lead to harsher penalties, as during the War on Drugs of the 1980s, African American communities are deeply impacted: by the devastating impact on the already fragile conditions on the one hand, and the resulting incapacitation of so many of their population, particularly males, on the other. Some critics of excessive criminalization and incarceration, however, offer other reasons for the policies that have affected African Americans, and some other minorities, so disproportionately and adversely impacted by what Michele Alexander has called "the new Jim Crow": disproportionate

targeting and punishment of young black males.[26] Students of community can consider and weigh the consequences of policies that have the effect of minimizing the economic and emotional contributions of black males to their families and neighborhoods. Students can also debate whether the targeting is more a function of poverty than of race.[27] While incapacitation of individuals who threaten community safety is necessary, there is considerable agreement across the ideological spectrum that a significant population with criminal records and incarceration also damage communities, both socially and economically.

For this reason, teaching and learning about community should be concerned with the preservation of public safety through measures that are effective and impose the least collateral damage. At one end are the options that keep people on the path to productivity so they do not enter the criminal justice system. These include strengthening other community assets such as the family, education, and workforce development, while also giving careful consideration to what activities should be treated as criminal as opposed to behavioral and health-related. When communities, after careful consideration, choose to impose criminal penalties, they can take steps to support those who have been involved in the criminal justice system, including victims of crime, those who are returning to the community from incarceration, and family members of both groups.

Communities are also challenged to provide both safety and security without unduly infringing on our privacy and freedom. The task is complicated by the fact that some things to which we are most attached endanger community safety. For Americans this includes guns, alcohol, and automobiles—sometimes in combination. When do measures to preserve public safety become so oppressive that we decide to live with certain risks in order to maintain individual autonomy? Imagine a law-abiding young black male living in what is deemed a high crime area, worried about becoming the victim of crime on the one hand, and of routine police stops and questioning on the other. Consider evidence of the lives that have been lost or saved as a result of guns. These are the difficult issues with which communities grapple as they balance individual rights and community safety.

Significant research has explored holistic preventive approaches to safety. The broken windows theory contends that immediate intervention, from cleaning up distressed properties to arresting people for disorderly public behavior, helps keep neighborhoods intact.[28] This approach, however, has been criticized for relying too strongly on heavy-handed law

enforcement tactics, which, while designed to protect the community, all too often results in a climate of fear, confrontation, and alienation, particularly in communities of color.[29] Efforts to reform police training have often foundered on the dual role that police are asked to play as both cops and community facilitators. An alternative view is that informal social capital creates safer communities from within. In what is termed "collective efficacy," families and neighbors engage with and look out for one another, informally setting and enforcing community standards. According to a community perspective, strategies that encourage these ties reduce pervasive and oppressive police presence in communities.[30] The best solutions, such as a multi-faceted initiative David Kennedy and others undertook in Boston, are practical, inclusive, and trust building.[31]

Jobs and Financial Security

Healthy communities are composed of people with sources of income and financial security, connected to opportunity, and capable of supporting themselves and their families, so it is important to explore community strategies for promoting work and savings. Evidence shows that the single best solution to poverty is work, and some argue that a guaranteed, even subsidized, job is the single best step we could take for individuals, their families, and their communities.

With industry, jobs, and capital increasingly migrating from one part of the world to another, however, communities are winners and losers. Businesses seeking cheap labor may improve community living conditions where they go, but can leave devastated communities behind when they leave. Businesses that import cheap labor may create entire new communities of immigrants whose living conditions have improved, while depressing the economic condition of those who are unable to find or have lost well-paying jobs. When the economy changes, the nature of its jobs changes as well. Manufacturing jobs, which, over time and through the bargaining power of unions, had brought many people into the middle class, disappeared and were replaced by jobs in the technology and service sectors. The former requires more education than those lost in manufacturing while those lacking higher education are driven to the service sector, which, like industry in its early years, offers low wages and poor working conditions. Community workforce initiatives, such as tax incentives to employers to hire and train local residents and job training programs, have proved challenging, particularly where significant numbers of the eligible population lack appropriate job skills.[32]

In addition to jobs, and the capacity to obtain and maintain jobs, communities are concerned with the need for individuals to earn enough income to support themselves and their dependents, as well as a safety net, so that they do not become a burden on the community if and when they are not working. In an effort to balance our collective obligation to support one another with the cost of this obligation and the principle of individual responsibility, we have policies such as the minimum wage, tax credits for low-income workers, health insurance, and guaranteed compensation funds for workers who retire, become disabled, or lose their jobs for other reasons. Providing income security is a challenge, especially in what is increasingly becoming a "sharing economy," in which both employers and workers are looking for more flexible work arrangements.[33] Does the distinction between full-time and part-time workers make sense in today's communities? When people frequently hold more than one job at a time, what is the balance among community, employer, and individual responsibility for their critical needs and those of their families? How do we insure people have enough savings for emergencies and retirement?

Communities can support business and entrepreneurship. As they do for housing, mainstream financial institutions offer many tools, such as loans and investments, to support businesses as well as individuals, yet they are least likely to be found in communities that need them the most. Fringe institutions, such as payday lenders and pawn shops, are far more accessible in low-income communities, offering a range of services that banks have historically not provided. At the same time, their terms and conditions more often strip rather than build wealth. In response to this dilemma, Congress in 1977 established the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 to support entrepreneurship at the local level, with capital provided by mainstream banks but distributed by financial institutions that are connected to communities and offer reasonable terms.[34] Community banks are now an important source of loans in neighborhoods that had historically been excluded from mainstream financial services.

Finally, teaching and learning about community includes financial security beyond income. People lose jobs, stop working for one reason or another, and experience emergencies. They need savings for a rainy day, for retirement, for a crisis. Studies show that portions of the population, particularly minorities, lack any significant savings cushion. Current wealth-building strategies under study include different kinds of savings plans, particularly for higher education[35] and retirement.

Families and Community

Family was and remains at the heart of community, even as family composition and ties have changed as communities have changed. When people worked where they lived—on farms, in small towns—family members contributed toward both their common survival and care of one another. With industrialization, which separated home and work, and globalization, which caused more frequent mass migrations, family members began to be separated more from one another and thereby less able to care for each other's needs. More recently, increasing numbers of women have entered the paid workforce, making child care and elder care services a necessity. As a result, while the family remains an important asset, it has taken on new forms, which requires new thinking about community.

As we do with community, we must determine the meaning of family if we are to preserve and support this critical asset. The nuclear family, defined by the marriage of a man and a woman for life, and in most cases the bearing of children, is only one perspective on the family relationship. Family can encompass same-sex relationships and other alternatives to marriage created by divorce, remarriage, and stepfamilies, cohabitation, single-parent households, extended families including grandparents raising grandchildren, and even close-knit communities of people with ties other than blood kinship.[36] As the legal process grapples with how to treat these relationships, communities approach family from political, cultural, and social perspectives. Recently, for example, the courts recognized the right of same-sex marriage,[37] but cultural acceptance is not universal; some argue that marriage and family are defined by the potential to procreate and bear children, while others contend that it is the commitment to the relationship that defines family.

The meaning of family also has an important bearing on public policy and practices. In some industrial countries, government has taken on a familial role in earnest, providing retirement benefits, universal health insurance, subsidized and even free-of-charge child care, elder care, and generous paid family leave. In the United States, the bulk of federal social welfare benefits for non-working populations go to two entitlement programs for the elderly: social security and health insurance. These programs, while very costly, remove an enormous burden from individuals, families, and employers. Government also provides benefits to children, foremost among them universal public education, funded primarily at the local and state level. Programs such as our current welfare system reflect

the perspective that stable, two parent, working families are better for children and remove a burden from communities while, recognizing that many families experience significant burdens which call for some measure of assistance, other government programs are targeted to families in need and generally administered at the community level, thereby making them important areas of teaching and learning. They include services for preschool children including child care, early childhood education, and mentoring programs for older children.[38] As many of these services are interconnected, Chapter 5 contains a discussion of collaborative community initiatives, such as the Harlem Children's Zone, to address the needs of at-risk children "from cradle to college."

Putnam argues that in families where only one parent worked, the other parent—invariably the female—had time for community activities that generated considerable social capital, and that today's harried families in which both parents work have little time for these pursuits.[39] More salient, according to other research, is the increased economic divide, and resulting social gulf, between higher-income families in which both parents work in high-paying professions, and low-income, often single-parent, families and individuals.[40] Their experiences are so different as to create widely divergent perspectives of community.

Many contend that providing higher quality care for children, the elderly, and the disabled requires better training, greater professionalization, and higher wages for the workforce, which is among the lowest paid in the service sector. Since all of these practices would raise costs, how should they be allocated among the market, the family, and the government? Should they be viewed as a burden on communities or an investment in families, ultimately saving money on health care, public safety, and the welfare system?

Communities also are critical to needs of children at risk, particularly those who have been neglected or abused. Learning about the child welfare system elucidates poignant dilemmas for children and communities. How can we support families in order to prevent abuse and neglect and keep children in their homes?[41] How do we make the determination that they must be temporarily or permanently separated from their birth parents? Once made, how do communities insure these placements improve their lives rather than further damage them? How does the system determine incentives that work to the benefit of children?[42]

An example for learning about families at risk is the issue of teen pregnancy, the subject of a collective impact initiative described in Chapter 5. On the one hand, children are among our greatest assets: our workforce and parents of the future. On the other hand, teen pregnancy often turns

this asset into a burden, as the children of teen parents are far more likely to be and remain in poverty, and have other problems, such as mental illness, homelessness, and criminal activity. Learning about community includes scholars helping communities find ways to both discourage teen pregnancy and assist the children resulting from these pregnancies.[43]

Education

Because responsibility for funding, allocation of resources, curriculum, standards, administration, and staffing in US public education is largely vested at the local level, community tends to play a large role in education. Schools are largely identified with neighborhoods and, given the country's demographic patterns, economic divisions, and history of discrimination, this means that some neighborhoods face significantly greater education challenges than others. Despite abundant evidence that a large and persistent "achievement gap" exists particularly between black and white students,[44] and despite the fact that enforced school segregation was abolished, education has been and remains highly segregated by income and race, in neighborhoods and school districts that are de facto drawn along racial and economic lines. As a result, communities with concentrations of high-poverty students have sought their own solutions, generally involving extra-neighborhood school choice, which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Communities also grapple with the goals of education and the skills children should learn. Most agree on basic substantive skills such as math and reading, but differ on how much or the extent to which schools should focus on professional skills, higher-order critical thinking, civic engagement, and social skills. Because education in the United States is universal in principle but often highly unequal in practice, federal efforts to improve the lives of children have in recent years focused heavily on closing the achievement gap among low-income and minority students, but without major impact. Despite evidence that the achievement gap begins at birth and is solidified by the time children enter kindergarten,[45] programs for addressing the gap in early childhood face many barriers and are consequently far from universal. Other community initiatives have shown great promise,[46] but the question remains whether success in one community is transferable to another.

Another major area of study is the appropriate balance between college and work-readiness curricula; the latter is often associated with second-class education, to which so many low-income students have been relegated in the past. Teaching and learning about community explores these

tensions while maintaining focus on the ultimate goal for communities: to preserve freedom of choice while insuring that everyone has a basic level of education on which to build future success.

Since evidence shows both that poverty is a major determinant of academic achievement and that academic achievement is a major road out of poverty, intense debate focuses on whether the best way to improve outcomes is to focus on attacking poverty or improving the poorest-performing schools. Is this debate productive or does it simply divide communities? Teachers unions have been vilified for putting the interest of teachers over children, entire school districts blamed for giving up on low-achieving students, and proponents of choice accused of being bent on dismantling the public school system. Community studies has the capacity to bring the constituencies and ideas together to craft meaningful and practical policies for children, both within and outside school walls.

Conclusion: Community as an Asset

This chapter has identified community assets, and challenges American communities confront in providing each of them. Learning about community calls for teaching and learning about community assets, both individual and collective, and about the challenges to providing them, in part because we often address them separately when many of them are inextricably linked, and in part because our value differences interfere with practical and proven solutions. As we discussed in Chapter 2, community in the form of bonding and social capital is itself an asset, as the level of trust and tolerance in any community is generally a measure of its ability to support individuals and families, keep order, solve problems, and change in a healthy process. Learning about that process is the subject of the next chapter, which discusses the strategies and agents that keep communities healthy and can be harnessed to effect positive change.

Notes

1. Fishman, Robert, "The American Metropolis at Century's End: Past and Future Influences," *Housing Facts and Findings* 1:4 (Winter 1999), http://www.knowledgeplex.org/kp/text_document_summary/article/relfiles/hff_0104_fishman.html.

2. "Meeting our Nation's Housing Challenges," Report of the Bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission (May 30, 2002): 10–22, http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/mhc/MHCReport.pdf.

3. David Rusk has been one of the most articulate commentators on the impact of housing segregation and the need for communities to provide integrated housing. See, e.g. Rusk, David, *Cities without Suburbs* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2013); Rusk, David, "Housing Policy *is* School Policy," Presentation to the Housing Mobility and Education Forum, Baltimore, Maryland (December 3, 2007), http://www.prrac.org/pdf/Rusk.pdf. See also Massey and Denton, *American Apartheid*.

4. For an example of a major legal action that has had mixed impact in deseg-regating housing, see Mallach, Alan, "The Betrayal of Mount Laurel," *Shelterforce Online* #134 (March/April 2004), http://www.shelterforce.com/online/issues/134/mtlaurel.html.

5. "Expanding Housing Opportunities through Inclusionary Zoning: Lessons from Two Counties," The Urban Institute (January 10, 2013), https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/affhsg/HUD_496.html. While it can have a distinct impact in communities which are experiencing considerable new development, inclusionary zoning may not be worth the costs of regulation in communities which have limited space for development. Moreover, it is a challenge to determine what level of income to target for the zoning, and how many units must be set aside.

6. For a comprehensive study of strategies, see Katz, Bruce, et al., "Rethinking Local Affordable Housing Strategies: Lessons from 70 Years of Policy and Practice," The Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and the Urban Institute (December 2003), http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/knight/housingreview.pdf.

7. For demographic information on subsidized housing, including traditional public housing and vouchers, see "Demographic Facts: Residents Living in Public Housing," National Center for Health in Public Housing, http://www.namgt.com/hphr/pdfs/demographicfacts.pdf; "Public Housing," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/ph.

8. While housing vouchers provide the opportunity for people to move to higher-opportunity areas, housing voucher units are more often available and used in low-income neighborhoods. See, e.g. Kneebone, Elizabeth and Natalie Holmes, "Promise and pitfalls of housing choice vouchers vary across nation," Brookings (August 14, 2015), http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/the-avenue/posts/2015/08/14-housing-choice-vouchers-kneebone-holmes.

9. See, e.g. Wallace, James E., "Financing Affordable Housing in the United States," *Housing Policy Debate* 6:4 (1995): 794–802.
10. While price control is an attractive solution for preserving affordable housing stock, a concern is that it can have negative consequences, such as driving landlords out of the affordable rental housing market and disproportionately benefiting those not in the targeted population. See, e.g. "Does Rent Control Work?," *The Economist* (August 30, 2015), http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2015/08/economist-explains-19.
11. It is not clear what role gentrification plays in the movement of low-income people; studies show that low-income residents are equally mobile in communities that are not gentrifying. See, e.g. Freeman, Lance, "Displacement or Succession: Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods," *Urban Affairs Review* 40:4 (March 2005), http://uar.sagepub.com/content/40/4/463.abstract.
12. See, e.g. Hyra, Derek, *The New Urban Renewal: the Economic Transformation of Harlem and Bronzeville* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008).
13. Hyra, Derek, "Addressing Social Segregation in Mixed-Income Communities," *Shelterforce* (November 17, 2015), http://www.shelterforce.org/article/4313/addressing_diversity_segregation_in_mixed-income_communities/.
14. At a talk at American University a few years ago, John Lewis himself responded to a student question by saying he felt that, on balance, gentrification's effect was more positive than negative.
15. See, e.g. Katz et al., xii–xiii.
16. See, e.g. Garriga, Carlos et al., "Recent Trends in Homeownership," *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis Review* (September/October 2006), https://research.stlouisfed.org/publications/review/06/09/Garriga.pdf. I have found that, with most young students, teaching about housing begins with a definition of a mortgage and an explanation of tax deductions. It was in part this experience that made me realize how little most of us know about how communities actually work and how policy impacts them.
17. "Shared Equity Models Offer Sustainable Home Ownership," *Evidence Matters*, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/fall12/highlight3.html.
18. As I write, the entire city of Flint, Michigan, which has heavy concentrations of poverty, is under a state of emergency because its water supply is permanently damaging the health and lives of its residents. See, e.g. Barry-Jester, Anna Maria, "What Went Wrong in Flint?, *FiveThirtyEight* (January 26, 2016), http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-went-wrong-in-flint-water-crisis-michigan/.

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20. For examples, view the four-part series *Designing Healthy Communities*, designinghealthycommunities.org.
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Strategies and Agents of Community Well-Being

Abstract Teaching and learning about community requires knowledge of the strategies and agents which contribute to the process of building, maintaining, and transforming communities. This chapter describes these strategies and agents, with a focus on their unique strengths and limitations, and some examples of how they interact with one another. The strategies range from one-on-one individual relationships through service, to community-based strategies via community development and organizing, to the use of research and advocacy expertise, to citizen participation in the political process. Major agents include government, the for-profit and non-profit sectors, individual and collective leadership, and the media.

Keywords Agents • Strategies

Teaching and learning about community involves knowledge of not only the substantive building blocks of communities, described in the previous chapter, but also the process by which communities impact us and provide a venue for mediating and resolving our differences. In order to function effectively and in the collective interest, communities and their members utilize a number of strategies and agents, from one-on-one individual relationships through service, to government policy. This chapter describes and contrasts the major strategies and agents, with a focus on their unique

strengths and limitations.[1] It sets the stage for examples in subsequent chapters of how they might be used on behalf of communities, either alone or in concert with one another.

Strategies

Service and Volunteerism

Helping a member of one's inner circle, be it a family member, friend, or neighbor, is the most basic form of community involvement. During his travels in the early 1800s, Alexis de Tocqueville devoted considerable attention to the unique nature of American civil society, where serving others in the community often extended beyond one's inner circle to those in the larger community, which he opined was connected to a culture of individual responsibility for one another, as well as to religious values.[2] Indeed, these values and practices play a powerful role in American community life.

Service has many advantages as a community-building strategy. It can help to address immediate and pressing needs. At its best, it connects people of varied interests and backgrounds, with the potential to build social capital, tolerance, and empathy, creating a community across boundaries of culture and class. In exposing structural issues in society, it has the potential to enlist the server in more basic and encompassing community change.

Proponents of more fundamental change argue, to the contrary, that service can do a disservice to communities by treating the served as passive recipients, requiring perpetual help, rather than developing their capacity and independence. Schools, fraternal organizations, and workplaces promote service opportunities that are, according to Robert Egger, more suited to the redemption of the giver than the benefit of the recipient.[3] Community service, perhaps because it is a "safe" strategy that doesn't rock the boat of long-held societal values, may have become so pervasive as to overestimate its arguably limited direct impact on the issues it addresses.[4] Teaching about community can include discussing how the birthday of Martin Luther King, considered a revolutionary organizer in his time, is observed primarily by small acts of service. Is this observance true to, or a distortion of, his legacy? Are these acts of service diverting our attention from larger social and economic issues?[5]

Advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of and within communities conjures up professional lobbyists hobnobbing with the powerful. Indeed, lobbying is a form of advocacy that uses both expertise and connections to impact those in power, particularly government and business, on behalf of a particular agenda.

The strengths of advocacy also reveal its weaknesses. For example, advocacy can bring many voices together, thereby increasing the power of each one, but when thousands or even millions of people sign a form petition without becoming more involved, how seriously does the power structure takes their demands? In many ways it makes sense to entrust our passion for a particular community issue to people with the time and expertise to promote it on our behalf. A good advocate has studied an issue well and can use evidence to support it; however, to the extent that advocates position themselves near power centers in order to maximize their influence, they may become more isolated from the communities they purport to represent, which is why Chapter 6 includes a lobbying exercise that uses citizens as lobbyists on their own behalf. In addition, the example of the education advocate discussed in the Introduction raises concerns that advocates for one particular community issue or agenda may not reflect the complexity of communities and the need for advocates to collaborate on holistic issues, as is evidenced by the varied interests represented by opponents to the Keystone Pipeline, also discussed in Chapter 6. This approach to advocacy may take even longer to mature than single-issue advocacy, but may result in more sustainable systemic change.

Community Development and Social Enterprise

Because the health of a community depends in large part on its infrastructure, community development is a critical strategy for creating and maintaining community well-being. Like advocacy, development can be expert-driven, but its agenda is generally more practical than policy-focused, and its practitioners include government as well as the private and non-profit sectors. With the many resources government and the private sector have at their disposal, allowing them to build structures intended to last, development can be a broad and embedded strategy. The permanence of development, however, is also a concern, because its results, intended or unintended, can be problematic, misguided, discriminatory, and difficult to undo, as demonstrated by the urban renewal of the 1930s, discussed in Chapter 5.

Community development is about not only bricks and mortar, but also people who create thriving communities through their creative efforts: the local bakery, the barber shop, the murals, the farmers' market, the street fair. Some community development is linked to social enterprise, which has elements of a business model but whose primary goal is to create a social good such as transportation access and utilities for an isolated community, a creative model for a school, and a mentoring or tutoring program.[6] Social enterprises can be valuable laboratories for utilizing human capital and for testing, evaluating, and perhaps replicating creative ideas in communities.

The federal government has promoted comprehensive community development,[7] and, recently, foundations and government concerned with maximum impact are developing strategies for supporting, and even scaling up, community development, along with tools for testing the effectiveness of these strategies and measures to adapt them to the needs and conditions of different communities.[8] Some have claimed promising results, though none has yet reached the scale of transforming a community.[9] Teaching and learning about the recent comprehensive community development strategy known as collective impact is discussed in the next chapter.

Community Organizing

Many argue that community development, no matter how well intentioned, requires the participation of stakeholders in order to succeed as a strategy.[10] Organizing, a strategy that involves the community in shaping its own destiny, is a natural product of community life in a democratic culture. It became an embedded strategy after the Industrial Revolution caused mass migration of workers from small towns to cities, where they often lived in conditions of poverty, stress, and mobility that made it difficult for them to advocate for, or contribute to, community improvement. It was through the efforts of dedicated crusaders like Jane Addams in Chicago, who became deeply concerned and involved with the plight of residents in low-income urban communities, that organizing evolved. Initially committed to acts of volunteerism and service, and inspired by the settlement houses in England, Addams became convinced that change could occur only when residents pooled their human capital to support one another, elected representatives who reflected their views, and advocated with legislators and other power holders in their own interest.[11]

Concurrent with the organizing movement in residential communities was the rise of worker organizing and formation of labor unions.[12] Because workers join a union through a workplace election process, labor union advocates argue that they cement personal relationships and provide a forum to engage on common issues of concern, serving important community functions such as support for members, information sharing, collaborating with management on workplace improvements, advocacy, and working to elect politicians who support worker interests. While union membership has precipitously declined, labor organizing is still a community strategy that, I and others have argued, is an important community practice.[13]

Whether in the workplace or in neighborhoods, organizing is difficult. In contrast to professionals like community developers and advocates, community members are first and foremost involved in their work and family lives, which limits the time and energy they have available to acquire education and expertise concerning issues of importance. Moreover, how do communities decide what is important? Homogeneous communities tend to organize against what they perceive as threats to their accustomed and comfortable way of life. Diverse communities, which experience greater mobility and looser ties of commonality and trust, are likely to have varied points of view about a wide range of issues in their communities. The result is that, when communities organize, it is often in response to a crisis and in opposition to an action by government, business, or other outside groups rather than in some positive long-term effort. Moreover, organizing is usually accompanied by intensity, confrontation, and agitation with the goal of sharing power, so it is not surprising that those with the reins of power rarely support efforts to organize.

Nonetheless, when it is effective and inclusive, organizing is the voice of the people, which needs to be heard in order for democracy to function. Effective organizing, therefore, requires dedicated people who know a community, listen to its residents'—and their opponents'—concerns, provide guidance, and facilitate both action and compromise without imposing their views. Organizing is also an essential partner to effective community development, combining standards, expertise, and resources with community input and consensus. Community organizing is the critical component that holds the private sector, politicians, and public officials accountable to the people and their interests. Examples of the use of organizing, often in combination with other strategies, are found in the next chapter.

Politics

In a representative democracy, on a day-to-day basis, individuals and communities are represented through the political process. The political process is replete with contradictions. It calls for both adherence to principles and willingness to compromise. While allowing politicians to solicit and accept financial contributions, it views with disfavor any political decision on behalf of contributors. Those who govern are expected to represent all their constituents, including those who disagree with them and those who are not engaged in the process at all. Is it surprising, then, that politicians are influenced by both those with the deepest pockets[14] and groups with the loudest voices? It is the latter who can exert considerable influence at the community level. The expression "all politics is local" refers in part to the need for government to stay connected to the communities they represent, and for communities to present their grassroots concerns to government. From mayors, to local councils and boards, to grassroots citizens associations[15] and advisory groups, to town hall meetings,[16] politics offers a wealth of opportunities for ordinary citizens to participate and organize on behalf of their interests. In this sense, politics is both bottom-up, since communities elect and petition their representatives, and top-down, because communities entrust their governance to these representatives.

At the same time, "all politics is local" also suggests that the communities in which we choose to live reflect and may cement our political views, and may isolate us from conversation with those whose views differ from our own. While disagreement and contention are an inevitable part of the political process, disengagement from one another can polarize politics to the point of dysfunction.[17]

Research and Education

Perhaps, with all its contradictions, politics as a strategy best represents the way communities actually function. If so, education and research are the strategies that help communities function at their best by providing information for informed decisions, focusing and elevating debate, and preparing people to be contributing members of society. By themselves, education and research may be immensely rewarding; as a community strategy they are valuable only insofar as they increase the positive potential of other strategies to improve community well-being.

Research helps determine if a community strategy is worth the investment. Although the complexity of communities presents a challenge to reliable design, excellent research has made it possible to determine the effectiveness and scalability of a number of strategies, causing some to be expanded, others to be abandoned, and still others to be modified and improved.[18] Education is critical to making informed and reasonable decisions about the existence and nature of pressing issues facing our communities. I make this assertion with the understanding that some of us have been "educated" in values and ideologies that—particularly if we surround ourselves only with people like us and ideas like ours—education may not appreciably change. Nonetheless, diverse communities of engaged citizens will ultimately grapple with different points of view. In this environment, it is important to study ways to educate community members.

In my view, the K-12 classroom is by far the best place to produce engaged community members, in large part because it is universal, but also because it can encourage lifelong habits in engagement with the process of building healthy communities. Since the vast majority of K-12 students are living with their families, they can weigh what they learn at school with their families. For example, we can study proposals to lower the voting age to 16,[19] so that children can learn about issues and develop lifelong habits of voting while they are still at home and in school. Even education about a topic as fundamental to democratic values as voting, however, can prove quite controversial in highly diverse societies like the United States. As a result, much of our education about communities comes from the groups of which we are a part, such as families, workplace associations, and interests groups, and from media sources that mirror our views and values. Unfortunately, these are not necessarily the best venues for education about perspectives different from our own, which are an integral part of such diverse societies and are most naturally found in the public square.[20]

Deliberation and Participatory Democracy

The more government becomes the domain of elites, experts, lobbyists, and the like, the less representative of the community it may become.[21] A valuable—some have argued invaluable—strategy for both educating community members and using that education on behalf of communities is the practice of participatory democracy, accompanied by engaged deliberation. Around the world communities are experimenting with ways that citizens, through deliberation and participation in the work of governing,

can make substantial contributions and reach solutions appropriate to their community. They meet informally, and in unions, guilds, and other associations. They can be asked to participate in town halls to set community priorities. In some instances, they have actually created budgets and government programs in their communities.[22] These policies and practices are worthy of study.

AGENTS

Government

Although we don't always recognize or appreciate its impact, government is the dominant agent of most community initiatives. Among federal, state, and local governments exist financial resources and human capital that dwarf those of all other agents except the private sector, and a substantial amount of those resources have been directed to community services–often provided by the for-profit or non-profit sector–such as retirement and health care, income supplements for the working poor, and education for children. Government's potential to reach the greatest number of people and help build lasting healthy communities is great.

Yet government has many drawbacks. Its sheer size can lead to a rigid, one-size-fits-all approach to community needs, which vary and change. At the same time, democratic government can be endlessly variable and unreliable as leaders are voted in and out of office. It makes sense to have a combination of elected officials providing flexibility, and bureaucracy that resists the winds of constant change, but the tension can result in promises that can't be kept, bureaucratic calcification, and both government and citizen demoralization. The danger of corruption, breakdown, and alienation is always present. Even those who believe that government has a role in making policy and providing resources recognize that it can be ill-suited to intervening in communities. That is why many services supported by government are delivered by the for-profit and non-profit sectors.

I have made a point of teaching about the function of government in my classes, not for value or ideological reasons, or because I believe it is the preferred agent of community well-being, but because I believe learners today are exposed to so much anti-government messaging that they fail to recognize all that it does and will continue to do in their communities. Once we discuss various ways that government impacts our lives, we can then evaluate how it can appropriately support community well-being.

The For-Profit and Non-Profit Sectors

The major role of the for-profit sector is in providing goods, services, and jobs essential for community health. If community needs align with the pursuit of profit, businesses can be major agents of community well-being. For example, in the health care field, the for-profit sector has produced substantial innovation that has lengthened and improved quality of life. Because the business sector is so important to a market economy, it is important to consider examples where for-profits have made substantial contributions to communities, to compare the community practices of different businesses, and to discuss whether the priorities of the private sector (such as maximizing shareholder value) are appropriate.

If it is not the private sector's role to ensure that its products and services are "good" for communities, or that they are distributed universally, fairly, and affordably to all who need them, or that employees receive a living wage, then we need to discuss the implications for communities. What is the extent of government's role to provide for communities when and where there are market failures or the private sector chooses not to invest, and to regulate the excesses and deficiencies of business? As we have discussed, the United States has a history of civic associations at the grassroots, combined with distrust of big government, which has led to a greater role for non-profits in providing services that government offers in other first-world countries: higher education, universal child care, health care, and social services. In fact, the health care and higher education sectors are responsible for the lion's share of the non-profit economy.[23] An important topic for discussion is the strengths and weaknesses of each of these important agents for building healthy communities. While government has greater uniformity and reach, nonprofits have the potential to provide more targeted services while enhacing social capital and civic participation.

Ninety percent of the over one million non-profits in the USA, constituting ten percent of the country's GDP, were not in existence before 1970.[24] The reasons they have proliferated are no doubt complex, but one factor may be the change in the political landscape from the 1960s, when extensive social welfare legislation—Medicare, Food Stamps, and Head Start to name just a few—was passed at the federal level, followed by a significant contraction of government beginning in the 1970s and 1980s. Non-profit service providers formed to administer some of these

programs at the community level, leading to growth in the number of non-profit advocacy organizations to intercede with the government and other funders on behalf of causes supported by the service providers.

Non-profits differ from for-profits in that any profits they make are returned to the organization instead of distributed to owners, which gives them a responsibility to the community they serve. Non-profits vary greatly; some are dedicated to improving communities, others are predominantly member-serving, and many have elements of both. The majority of higher education institutions and a substantial number of hospitals are non-profits, as are religious institutions, fraternities, labor unions, and trade associations. Non-profits can be flexible and innovative; others are poorly managed with high turnover and committed to unproven strategies. In contrast to government, with one-size-fits-all programs, each non-profit is likely to go its own way, administering programs that may be creative but at the same time unlikely to grow in scale. While many of them provide one or more services that would otherwise not exist, it can be difficult to determine whether these services are truly needed or how they should be prioritized; this determination is largely left to funders.

The role of religious institutions deserves particular attention because of their connection to both parishioners and local communities. Faith is interwoven into the fabric of American communities as an incubator of social capital and agent of community well-being, and faith-based individuals, groups, and institutions are major sources and motivators of charitable and community endeavors. Yet the relationship of religious institutions to community is complex. Some have been criticized for testing the Constitutional separation of church and state by becoming too enmeshed in politics. Others are questioned for activities that may benefit parishioners but not, or even at the expense of, the surrounding community. Nor have a plethora of studies found faith-based organizations significantly more or less effective agents of community well-being than secular ones.

Like for-profits, non-profits are frequently competing with each other for clients and resources. Their financial support comes from fees (such as memberships, tuition, and proceeds from sales), government funds in the form of grants or contracts for services, and donations from private philanthropic organizations, many of which are non-profits themselves, endowed with funds from private sector profit. Philanthropy has historically been an agent of experimental innovation, willing to take greater risks than government because private donors have greater control and less accountability to the public than government. Yet critics have argued that, in their power to define what is good for communities, they are less democratic and participatory than government, that they are overly applying market

principles to solving community problems and, moreover, the wealth they are now using to solve problems was amassed at the expense of community.[25]

Another area of study is the role for private wealth in community investment. Socially responsible investing is a mechanism for private individuals to invest in companies and initiatives which promote sustainability, equality, and other social and economic goods.[26] One recent form of socially responsible investing that directly impacts communities is through purchasing social impact bonds in social programs that, if successful, will save money and thereby provide a return for the investors. While public/non-profit/private collaborations such as these have the potential to provide large-scale community benefit, they have drawbacks. It is difficult to define community benefit, and it is risky to invest in the "public" good: the recent experiment with social impact bonds to support what appeared to be a promising program for intense service to juvenile offenders in New York City showed no positive results.[27]

While other countries could benefit from more non-governmental organizations, some have argued that the United States needs fewer non-profits and more collaboration among those that remain.[28] Some are concerned that the professionalization of services compromises social capital resulting from voluntary engagement with a religious or civic motivation. Innovation, others contend, has its limits, and focus should instead be placed on implementing proven and comprehensive community strategies, managed by a coalition of non-profits as well as strategic partnerships between government, philanthropy, and grassroots non-profits.[29] Chapter 5 provides an example of such a strategy, known as "collective impact."

Leadership

In the United States, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Veterans Day commemorate the efforts of many on behalf of a collective endeavor; Columbus Day and Martin Luther King Day pay tribute to individuals. While community strength depends on more than one or two individuals, every community can identify certain people, whether organizers, advocates, or entrepreneurs, who have long-lasting impact.[30] Discussions about leadership focus on the qualties that make them critical to the transformation of communities. Exceptional leaders are visionary. They may have their own ideas or recognize others' ideas as transformative; their ability is in knowing how to put those ideas into effect. They also know how to bring others to their vision and build loyalty to it. They may be confident, ambitious, even narcissistic, but the best of them build a community around their vision so that it is more likely to survive them.

One objection raised to a holiday honoring Martin Luther King was that the "beloved community" of the Civil Rights Movement contained so many other people with different skills and visions and so many brave people on the front lines, that it was unfair and misleading to single out one. Sometimes, however, communities need individuals who embrace leadership and bring together people of otherwise differing views. King's charismatic vision, and his ability to communicate this vision in powerful words and actions, made him a leader among leaders and served as a focal point for the efforts of thousands.

King and others like him also raise the ethical dimensions of leadership; leaders who benefit community must have community-based values. A great leader can be destructive; ethical leaders may seek power or recognition, but their underlying purpose is constructive, to benefit the common good, and to promote values of inclusion and engagement.

Media

The Civil Rights Movement is a frequently cited example of media's potential impact on a major community issue. For a century after the Civil War, African Americans in the South had struggled to bring their plight to the attention of the nation, but major change did not occur until virtually every American home had a television. When activists decided to include children in their demonstrations, and they were met with fire hoses and beatings that were vividly displayed on the television news around the country, Northern whites began to join the cause in the form of demonstrations, advocacy, and financial support. Some contend that the Civil Rights Act would not have become law without television.[31]

Our times are marked by new technologies that are radically changing communication. Despite its potential to change communities for the better, it is estimated that the average American spends approximately five hours a day in front of a television, which, according to Robert Putnam, diminishes social capital, adversely impacting community.[32] The proliferation of electronic media outlets allows us at a moment's notice to obtain customized information tailored to our interests and views. Digital communication allows people to reach others instantaneously, but with a less intimate connection, and opportunities for hurtful, damaging communication that they would be less likely to employ in personal conversation. While social media tools can be used to organize people and raise funds almost instantaneously, and sometimes massively, recent examples of its use suggest that traditional strategies and agents of change, like those

of the Civil Rights Movement, are necessary to create embedded community change through long-lasting connections that are tested by commitment, persistence, and the ability to face and work out conflict.[33]

The media—from town criers to newspapers to radio and television to the Internet and social media to neighborhood listservs[34]—act as the agent by which we communicate with one another, whether to inform or persuade. Media can aim for objectivity or opinion, for discussion of issues or entertainment. They can elevate or debase the conversation. They have the power to influence and change entire communities. Media, in various modern forms, occupy a major portion of our time, with the potential to make us think critically or to act with unreasoned passion, engage us with or isolate us from one another, reach across or create boundaries. As with any other agent, it is the way we use the media that determines their impact on community.

Conclusion: Applying Principles to Practice

Chapters 3 and 4 have provided information for teaching about assets which communities can develop and maximize, and a number of strategies and agents available to them in that process. Given their complex and fluid landscape, the best way to learn about community is through both real world and simulated examples of how they combine assets, strategies, and agents to develop holistic policies and practices. These illustrations can stimulate discussion about critical components of community, as well as offer guidance on ways we can best contribute to our communities. I hope they stimulate you to find examples of your own.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Deepak Bhargava and the Center for Community Change for, and have liberally borrowed from, the information they have shared in talks to my classes on strategies and agents of community change.
2. Tocquevlle, *Democracy in America*, 590–599.
3. "15 Minutes with Robert Egger," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Summer 2004), http://ssir.org/articles/entry/15_minutes_with_robert_egger.
4. Two thoughtful *New York Times* articles discuss volunteering from different perspectives. See Tugend, Alina, "The Benefits of Volunteerism, if the Service is Real," *The New York Times* (July 30, 2010), http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/31/your-money/31shortcuts.html?_r=0; Mosie, Sara, "The Vanity of Volunteerism," *The New York Times* (July 2, 2000), http://www.nytimes.com/2000/07/02/magazine/the-vanity-of-volunteerism.html?pagewanted=all.

5. See, e.g., Kivel, Paul, "Social Service or Social Change?(2006), http://coavp.org/sites/default/files/social%20service%20vs%20change.pdf.

6. See, e.g. Shore, Bill, *The Cathedral Within: Transforming Your Life by Giving Something Back* (New York: Random House, 2001), Ch. 5.

7. For the most recent White House community development initiative, see "Building Neighborhoods of Opportunity," White House Neighborhood Revitalization Report (July 2011), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/nri_report.pdf.

8. Kelly, Marjorie and Sarah Kelly, "Cities Building Community Wealth," The Democracy Collaborative (November 2015), http://democracycollaborative.org/sites/clone.community-wealth.org/files/downloads/CitiesBuildingCommunityWealth-Web.pdf. It is worth noting that higher education institutions are sometimes partners in these efforts, as consumers of products created by local enterprises, sources for volunteers, partners conducting research on the efficacy of different community development strategies, and innovators in the community. See "Linking Anchor Institutions to Outcomes for Families, Children and Communities, http://community-wealth.org/indicators#reports.

9. See, e.g., Greenberg, David, et al., "The Promise of Comprehensive Community Development: Ten Years of Chicago's New Communities Program, MDRC (August 2014), 10–11.

10. See, e.g., Bamberger, Michael, "The Role of Community Participation in Development Planning and Project Development," The World Bank (1988), http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/IW3P/IB/2000/05/31/000178830_98101902091596/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf.

11. Addams, Jane, *Twenty Years at Hull House* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

12. Lichtenstein, Nelson, *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

13. Kravetz, Katharine, "Bringing Theory to Practice," *The Good Society* 22:2 (2013): 168–169. See also Finnegan, William, "Dignity: Fast-food workers and a new form of labor activism," *The New Yorker* (September 15, 2014): 70–79, which discusses the new forms labor organizing is taking.

14. Lindblom, Charles E., *Politics and Markets, The World's Political Economic Systems* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

15. Alinsky, Saul, *Rules for Radicals* (New York: Vintage, 1989). See also *The Democratic Promise: Saul Alinsky and his Legacy*, produced by Bob Hercules and Bruce Orenstein, Berkeley Media (1999).

16. Lukensmeyer, Carolyn and Steve Brigham, "Taking Democracy to Scale: Creating a Town Hall Meeting for the Twenty-First Century," *National Civic Review* 91:4 (July 1, 2003). As a result of these efforts, Washington

DC now has an annual town hall meeting, organized by local government and well attended by a diverse group of citizens, to recommend budget priorities.

17. Galston, William A. and Pietro Nivola, "Vote Like Thy Neighbor: Political Polarization and Sorting," The Brookings Institution (May 11, 2008), http://www.brookings.edu/research/articles/2008/05/11-polarization-nivola-galston; Levine, Peter, *We Are the Ones We Been Waiting For: the Promise of Civic Renewal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 100–102.

18. For example, consider two rigorous studies by the research group MDRC, one of the New York City small high schools project ("New York City Small Schools of Choice Evaluation") and the other of a New York City program to reduce adolescent recidivism ("Impact Evaluation of the Adolescent Behavioral Learning Experience (ABLE) Program at Rikers Island," MDRC (July 2015), http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/adolescent-behavioral-learning-experience-valuation-rikers-island-summary.pdf), that reached opposite conclusions.

19. Wagner, Markus et al., "Voting at 16: Turnout and the quality of vote choice," *Electoral Studies* 31:2 (June 2012): 372–383.

20. Levine, *We Are the Ones We Been Waiting For*, Chapter 3.

21. *Ibid*., Chapter 4.

22. See the articles in the *Journal of Public Participation*, 8:2 (2012), which analyze examples of participatory budgeting.

23. Much of this section relies on a thorough explanation and recent data on the non-profit sector in Salamon, Lester M., *America's Nonprofit Sector: A Primer* (Foundation Center, April 2012), Chapter 3.

24. Hall, Peter Dobkin, "Historical Perspectives on Nonprofit Organizations in the United States," *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management* (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass-Wiley, November 2010), Chapter 3.

25. Ramdas, Kavitha, Matthew Bishop, and Michael Green, "Point-Counterpoint: Philanthrocapitalism," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (2011), http://ssir.org/point_counterpoint/philanthrocapitalism.

26. Companies can also apply to be certified by a non-profit entity as benefit (or B) corporations and obtain greater credibility for providing community benefits. See Surowiecki, James, "Companies with Benefits," *The New Yorker* (August 4, 2014), http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/08/04/companies-benefits.

27. See Note xviii. For a critique of social impact bonds, see Levine, Peter, "Qualms about a bond market for philanthropy," (November 12, 2013), http://peterlevine.ws/?p=12772.

28. Schambra, William A., "The Professionalization of Charity," Philanthropy Roundtable (November/December 2003).

29. Neuhoff, Alex and Katie Smith Milway, "Collaboration-palooza," *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (December 17, 2014), http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collaboration_palooza.

30. The combination of characteristics I describe in this section comes from exceptional leaders whom I have followed over the years.

31. Bodroghkozy, Aniko, *Equal Time: Television and the Civil Rights Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013).

32. Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, Chapter 13.

33. See, e.g. Sheedy, Caroline, "Social Media and Social Change," American University School of Communication Capstone Project, https://www.american.edu/soc/communication/upload/Caroline-Sheedy.pdf.

34. Austermuhle, Martin, "After Thirteen Years, Cleveland Park Remains Biggest Neighborhood Listserv in D.C.,"*dcist* (December 3, 2012), http://dcist.com/2012/12/cleveland_park_listserv.php.

Case Studies in Community

Abstract This chapter presents case studies of how community assets, strategies, and agents described in the previous two chapters can be mobilized in concert to build and transform communities. It includes (1) a comparison of three policies for addressing concentrated poverty in communities, (2) promising policies and practices to address chronic homelessness, (3) multi-pronged approaches to health and safety issues such as smoking, substance abuse, and obesity, (4) school choice strategies, and (5) collective impact, a collaborative approach to address community challenges. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of a successful community-based campaign in Minnesota.

Keywords Case studies • Housing • Homelessness • Health and Safety • School Choice • Collective impact

The following examples of interconnected approaches to community building are among many that could be offered to teach and learn about community. None of them has proved to be perfect, because people and their communities are far from perfect, but each teaches us about how communities work and gives us opportunities for discussion about how they can become stronger. In describing these initiatives, I attempt to focus less on their details than on the interconnectedness of challenges that communities encounter and solutions that result.

Moving Out, Moving In, Building Up: Moving to Opportunity, Hope VI, and Promise Neighborhoods

During the Great Depression, the federal government established the public housing program, which provided funding to local housing authorities with a mandate that they build or find housing for those in extreme poverty who would likely become homeless. The goal to insure the construction of decent, affordable housing was a major step forward in assisting low-income people, particularly the elderly, but the implementation was more uneven and problematic. While the majority of public housing residents were and remain white, the demographics of urban centers were changing as African Americans migrated to northern cities to escape draconian conditions in the rural South. Faced with racial prejudice and government restrictions on where they could live, they formed their own communities, often located in downtown areas where they could access work and benefit from mutual support in their sometimes deplorable conditions. These were often the first communities targeted for development by the housing authorities, which relocated many of the residents to large public housing "projects" that, often because of resistance of whites to any form of black integration, were segregated from the rest of the community. White residents and businesses, already moving from many of the neighborhoods sited for public housing, hastened their departure, isolating the new residents further from services and economic opportunity. Yet it must be said that those who moved into the "projects" when they were new often found them far better than any living conditions they had experienced up to that time, and people adjusted to their new homes, in many instances developing relationships of mutual support and community.[1]

Once built, however, the responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the housing devolved to local housing authorities, often run by inexperienced patronage appointees. Public housing deteriorated as cities spent their dollars on other initiatives. Meanwhile, the waiting list for subsidized housing in many cities continued to grow. In the 1970s, housing authorities began to issue subsidized vouchers, allowing eligible individuals and families to find housing with participating landlords in the private market. Still, many public housing residents remained in the projects, isolated in a cycle of unemployment and poverty, plagued by crime and substance abuse. Residents experienced increasingly dysfunctional living conditions, to the point where some in the most distressed housing abandoned their

homes. The fabric of community was in tatters, and the face of urban public housing became that of single black mothers and grandmothers raising children in a cycle of dependency.[2]

In the 1990s, when living conditions reached this critical juncture and decisions needed to be made whether to renovate or tear down public housing, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) developed two grant programs for which local housing authorities could apply. HOPE VI funded the replacement of some of the most severely distressed public housing projects with mixed-income communities in the same location.[3] Moving to Opportunity provided housing vouchers for the relocation of a targeted population of public housing residents to middle-class communities.[4]

The purpose of both Moving to Opportunity and HOPE VI was to better the lives of public housing residents living in communities of concentrated poverty. Housing policy experts have found neighborhoods of concentrated poverty implicated in poor economic mobility, health, and safety outcomes for residents.[5] As broken as they appear from the outside and as frustrated as residents may be, however, many high-poverty neighborhoods have exhibited strengths, including strong social cohesion.[6] In providing an opportunity for better housing, are these two programs neglecting the importance of community to their residents?

Moving to Opportunity's strategy is to move people out of distressed public housing into middle-class communities, making it possible for people to access more and better options for services, jobs, and education. Evidence from Moving to Opportunity suggests that people who successfully relocated permanently experienced improvement in some aspects of their lives, but not others.[7] Moreover, many ended up in communities that were only marginally less segregated and higher income than those they had left,[8] demonstrating the challenge of opening up middle-class communities and offering affordable housing in them. The Moving to Opportunity families wanted a better life, but they found it difficult to find housing in, or connect with and take advantage of, substantially higher-class communities. Interestingly, a comparable local program in the Chicago area with more intensive long-term counseling was far more successful at permanent resettlement and strong outcomes, providing evidence that Moving to Opportunity's results could significantly improve with this kind of support.[9]

Assume that Moving to Opportunity were able to successfully accommodate far more individuals. What happens to the communities they

vacate? Despite their considerable human and physical capital, they are overly burdened with boarded-up housing, vacant lots, and vandalism. In addition to the goal of improving the lives of public housing residents, underlying the HOPE VI program is a commitment to redeveloping high-poverty communities, in order to preserve them, by converting high-poverty public housing projects into mixed-income communities, with the goal of stabilizing neighborhoods and attracting better services.[10]

HOPE VI developments may preserve at least some units of affordable housing, but does this strategy offer greater opportunity for upward mobility of low-income residents? The evidence is not persuasive. The time it takes to rebuild, as well as criminal history and credit restrictions on all HOPE VI public housing residents, has limited the number of former residents who have returned once the project is complete, turning most HOPE VI developments into completely new communities. Those who do return and new residents report stress adjusting to HOPE VI communities. Low-income residents find themselves outnumbered by middle-class residents with whom they feel no connection.[11] The middle-class residents of mixed-income communities, in turn, blame the public housing tenants for problems with disorder and crime. A housing authority employee once told me that, although HOPE VI was intended to make market rate and subsidized units indistinguishable, middle-class residents immediately believed they could identify their low-income neighbors because "they throw their chicken bones into the back yard." Over time, the real and perceived differences may ameliorate and become those of any community. Still, a ten-year evaluation of HOPE VI showed mixed results, suggesting that improvements for low-income residents have been largely limited to health outcomes, and have not resulted in significant economic gains.[12]

If these two programs were simply about improving people's life chances with better housing, they would not go to such lengths. Core support comes from those who envision revitalizing communities, improving lives, closing racial and economic divides, and increasing diversity. They argue that, after generations of segregation and isolation, integrating and diversifying communities requires social engineering that brings initial tensions and discomfort, but that, over time, differences will dissolve and our multicultural society will have truly multicultural communities. If their efforts fail for lack of a sound and intensive community strategy or lack of community support, however, programs like Moving to Opportunity and HOPE VI could, like the programs they are replacing, result in more harm than good.[13]

It was in part frustration with outside planning imposed on organic communities that Geoffrey Canada developed a plan for the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ). A native New Yorker, child of an alcoholic father and a single mother, Canada was exposed to both the dysfunction and richness of Harlem, a large swath of northern Manhattan populated almost entirely by Blacks from the American South and the Caribbean.[14] A social enterprise guru, he was committed to addressing the challenges while attempting to preserve the existing population in place. Over 30 years he created and presided over the HCZ, a multi-faceted program covering 100 square blocks and 10,000 people, designed to build up the community by supporting children and families. Canada focused on education instead of housing, on people instead of infrastructure. With substantial philanthropic funding, the Harlem Children's Zone established several programs providing a continuum of support from birth to college.[15] Although effects of the programs may not be clear for decades, if at all, one study has shown that the HCZ, particularly the system of charter schools it established, has positively impacted the children in its domain.[16]

When a social enterprise shows promise, the natural result is to apply its lessons to other, comparable communities. The federally funded Promise Neighborhoods, a small number of communities selected in a competitive process from the US Department of Education to create community-building programs geared to each neighborhood's demographics and circumstances, is modeled on the HCZ.[17] Concurrently, HUD developed the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative to address issues in distressed communities with public or HUD-assisted housing.[18] To the degree possible, the community is intended to share the driver's seat, forming a core group to assess the neighborhood's needs and assets, obtain input and support from a wide group of residents, support promising programs, and develop new initiatives where needed.

While these programs are too new for meaningful evaluation, early experience suggests that they bring both opportunity and challenges. As the HCZ has demonstrated, they are costly, and few politicians are willing to experiment with taxpayer dollars as a philanthropist might. The HCZ, moreover, has been significantly guided by funders and managed by Canada himself, whereas the goal of the Promise and Choice Neighborhoods is greater citizen input with the hope that, should they survive the shifting political winds, they could be learning laboratories in how to empower and support community members. As discussed earlier, residents are difficult to engage on any matter, and developing sustained

and knowledgeable engagement to better the community, after decades of disappointment, is a monumental task which requires considerable patience and trust building. The difficulty is compounded by the reality that neighborhoods and their residents are continually changing; the gentrification of Harlem as the HCZ evolved has likely impacted the HCZ efforts in both positive and negative ways.

Teaching and learning about Moving to Opportunity, HOPE VI, and the Promise and Choice Neighborhoods Initiatives illustrates the potential and pitfalls of policies designed to address the issue of concentrated poverty. These programs—one that integrates middle-class communities, another that brings the middle class to communities of concentrated poverty, and a third that aims to develop and engage the existing members of the community—allow us to view community through multiple lenses. Each, while dedicated to expanding opportunity, contains different principles and practices for creating a healthy community. Moving to Opportunity envisions opening up middle-class communities to a more diverse population which can benefit from strong existing infrastructure. HOPE VI brings middle-class residents into low-income communities as a means of building up those communities with infrastructure and social capital. The Promise Neighborhood Initiative is focused on building the capacity of low-income residents in communities of concentrated poverty. The challenges encountered in each of these programs can be addressed in part with more resources, such as additional affordable housing and intensive counseling. These resources, however, are often expensive, and results often not as extensive as our hopes for them.

As a final note, some commentators have opined that the focus of community development in communities of concentrated poverty should dramatically shift from housing and education reform, which are costly, complex, and difficult to evaluate, and often permanent, to a guaranteed minimum income, which could be structured in a number of different ways. Proponents argue this solution would be fairer, more efficient, and more effective. Recent examples from abroad have proved promising, but it is not clear whether their results are guaranteed in the high-poverty urban environment in the United States.[19]

A comparison of these three programs offers many fruitful areas of study, including the following:

- The evolution and effects of communities of concentrated poverty
- The multiple priorities of people who live in these communities
- The role and consequences of community planning, both short- and long-term

- Identity, race, and class in the context of bonding and bridging communities
- Scaling up entrepreneurial community initiatives
- Evaluation of social programs
- The complexity of policy choices and the diversity of key actors in making and implementing those policies.

RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness, in large part a by-product of poverty, has always been with us, but it increased dramatically beginning in the early 1970s, for two reasons. One was the drastic downsizing of hospitals for the mentally ill, releasing them to the community without resources for treatment. The other was a rise in the cost of housing and decline in the availability of affordable rental housing, including that geared for single individuals.[20]

The steep rise in the number of chronically homeless people called for an immediate community response in the form of shelters. Envisioned as temporary, the housing was bare bones, and available only during night-time hours. The vulnerability of shelter seekers to long lines in the evening and eviction during the day, criminal and other threats to their safety, and numerous restrictions[21] caused some homeless people to choose life on the streets, where they were also vulnerable—to crime, extreme weather condition, poor health, and lack of sanitation. Community organizations and advocates began to consider more sustainable solutions, and in 2000 the National Alliance to End Homelessness issued a plan to end homelessness in ten years by closing the front door—taking measures to keep people with housing from losing it—and opening the back door—getting people off the streets and into more permanent housing.[22] The result has been increased investment in permanent housing for the homeless. Some programs begin with transitional housing for the chronically homeless, incorporating behavioral conditions, such as abstention from alcohol and drug use and participation in therapy or support groups. Others have pursued a "Housing First" policy that places homeless individuals in housing from which they can be evicted only if they act in a way that would result in any person's eviction. After obtaining government-subsidized vouchers for their clients and assisting them in finding housing, Housing First organizations provide incentives and support to stabilize their clients' lives. Individual Housing First programs have shown promise.[23] While transitional housing proponents

contend that their programs transform behavior, some preliminary studies of programs that place people immediately into subsidized housing show significantly better results at keeping individuals and their families in permanent housing.[24]

A lesson from the study of chronic homelessness is that it is by no means inevitable, nor is it insoluble. In developing appropriate policies and practices, the first step is to understand the reasons that the problem arose and the characteristics and needs of the population that is impacted. As with most community challenges, this one has many facets, including mental illness, substance abuse, and lack of productive outlets for those who have the capacity to take advantage of them—but an overarching issue is lack of housing for this population. The next step is to determine goals, among which could be housing the homeless, or permanently changing their lives. Once the reasons and goals have been established, initiatives can be proposed and undertaken, after which they can be evaluated to determine if they have met the established goals, and the reasons they have succeeded or fallen short.

Health, Safety, and Individual Behavior

Communities address not only development and infrastructure, but also individual behavior, especially when it impacts health and safety. They determine, set, and modify standards through a number of systems and strategies. The strictest of these is the legal system, which has the capacity to require and ban behavior, but there are many others, including the following:

- Default mechanisms—sometimes referred to as "nudges"—that include people unless they actively decline; for example, a system that automatically enrolls people in a health insurance plan[25]
- Measures to isolate and shame abusers without banning their use
- Public relations measures designed to influence community opinion for or against a behavior, such as pictures of the effects of substance abuse on the human body[26]
- The use of research,[27] accompanied by education of individuals and communities
- The use of infrastructure, such as community gardens.

The larger and more diverse the community, the more difficult it is to determine common standards; behavior that is banned in one community

could be central to another. Sufficient consensus, however, can result in strategies that change behavior on a large-scale basis, with accompanying impacts on communities. This was the case with efforts to reduce smoking in the USA. In 1964, a total of 42 percent of Americans smoked. Although evidence of the dangerous health effects of smoking had been accumulating, many Americans either did not believe it or were not able or sufficiently persuaded to stop, or not to start, smoking. Depicted as an attractive accessory in many films and commercials, the prevailing community sentiment was that smoking was a matter of individual choice, and a desirable one at that. Although a number of health-related organizations were attempting to change the nature of the debate, throughout the twentieth century the number of smokers rose significantly. It was only when these organizations persuaded Luther Terry, the Surgeon General in President Lyndon Johnson's administration, to issue a report on the adverse health effects of smoking that community standards began to shift. The ensuing public relations campaign helped to cement the change. Today, almost all Americans believe that smoking has a number of adverse health impacts, and the percentage of smokers in the population has dropped to 18 percent.[28]

In addition to framing smoking as a public health challenge, anti-smoking advocates were able to influence the adoption of other strategies that included banning the sale of tobacco products to minors, heavily taxing the purchase of cigarettes, and—especially since research has now documented the danger of breathing second-hand smoke—creating more and more smoke-free zones in public venues such as hotels and restaurants, school campuses, and office buildings. At the same time, a number of states took successful legal action against the tobacco companies for the costs of health care resulting from smoking. Without wholesale criminalization, measures like these were able to change the culture around smoking in the United States.

One of the underlying premises of the anti-smoking campaign was that it was more effective—in terms of both cost and community acceptance—to use community and peer pressure to limit smoking and make it less socially acceptable than to use the criminal justice system in an effort to eliminate it. The failure of the alcohol prohibition movement looms large in twentieth-century American history. Like smoking, alcohol has been widely considered to be socially acceptable, especially given some research findings that limited drinking may actually have some health benefits. The dangers of alcohol, however, were in the behaviors it caused—particularly violence—that led to movements to ban it and ultimately the passage of

an amendment to the Constitution. The result, however, was significant community resistance in the form of underground trafficking in alcohol so disruptive, and even violent, that the amendment was repealed only a few years later. Our communities now show no signs of returning to the criminalization of alcohol use, in preference to banning it for minors—a strategy many consider unsuccessful—and punishing some of the dangerous behaviors that it influences.

Similar questions are now being raised about the criminalization of many drugs. When drug use and trafficking hit the streets of urban areas in decline and became visible in neighborhoods and to the population at large, the prevailing sentiment was to rid communities of this scourge. The frequent police "sting" operations in areas of high drug trafficking and increased arrests, along with harsher penalties including mandatory minimum sentences, have not only failed to change levels of drug use, but have ravaged communities, creating strained relations between police and community and an explosion in the prison population, particularly of Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians, over the past 50 years.[29] The impact of a criminal history on employability, families, and communities has been well-documented and has led to a reconsideration of drug policy, but the challenge of decriminalizing drugs, which have a long history of association with the criminal justice system, as well as with issues of race and class, is daunting. For those who study communities, the distinction is that smoking itself is the behavior and public health issue, whereas alcohol and drugs, in addition to their health impact on the user, can lead to behaviors, such as violence, that inflict damage on the entire community.

Teaching about these issues involves addressing a number of questions. Should communities address all three of these addictive substances as public health challenges, now that we have a wealth of evidence of their health and economic impacts on individuals and communities, the questionable consequences of overusing legal, particularly criminal, penalties for substance abuse, and the effectiveness of the strategies to reduce smoking? As with smoking, is the best course for the community at large to accept that some people are likely to abuse substances in ways that hurt themselves and impact their families and communities, and take steps to minimize the damage?

Obesity is a recent challenge that, more like smoking, has been cast as a public health issue. Unlike the other behaviors described above, eating is necessary to our health, and it is difficult to determine the boundary beyond which it becomes injurious. Another difference from smoking is that the effect of obesity can be seen. While smoking was once considered

socially attractive, obesity engenders the opposite result: ostracism and even bullying, particularly with children. Whereas strategies against smoking included making it less "cool," the strategies being considered and deployed to combat obesity involve more community efforts and fewer approaches targeting individual behavior. They include, for example:

- Education, such as food labeling, community gardens attached to schools, home visiting programs that include nutrition education
- Media campaigns on the dangers of obesity
- Changes in the environment, such as providing more nutritious food options in low-income communities, siting schools and other facilities children use within walking distance of their homes, providing accessible community spaces that encourage exercise, and nutritious school meals
- Behavior modification, such as taxes on high-sugar foods.

From banning certain behaviors to treating them with a laissez-faire approach, communities can offer a range of approaches to the kinds of behavior that damage individual and community well-being.[30] Lessons from history suggest that forbidding or punishing behavior can cause it to reemerge in ways that may be particularly destructive, involving underground economies and criminal activity, even violence. The alternative, to minimize the behaviors and the damage they inflict on communities through less draconian strategies, appears to be effective in the end, even though it requires patience, considerable effort, and community recognition that the behavior will not likely be fully eliminated.

COMMUNITY, NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS, AND SCHOOL CHOICE

In an increasingly mobile world, where we live should not determine our life prospects. At the same time, our neighborhoods still play an important role in our lives, as can be seen in neighborhood schools, which have cemented communities through the interactions of families, both inside their walls and in the surrounding area. Most communities' school systems still determine a child's school according to the neighborhood in which he or she lives, and the quality of a neighborhood school is itself largely determined by the neighborhood. One reason is that funding for public

schools—which is based on property taxes, which, in turn, are based on property values—varies considerably with community wealth. As a result, wealthy suburban communities are usually able to pay higher salaries and offer more amenities than financially strapped schools in urban and rural communities of concentrated poverty where, even in the best of circumstances, the challenges can try the best of teachers. A second reason is that children in high-poverty neighborhood are less prepared for school than their counterparts in higher-income neighborhoods. As we have noted in Chapter 3, evidence shows that concentrated poverty affects educational outcomes.[31]

Among policies and practices to improve communities and the life chances of their children is that of increasing the options for schools that are not bound by geography, so that a child's neighborhood does not limit him or her to one school. Teaching and learning about education includes examination of the strengths and weaknesses of varied school choice policies that have exhibited some success or strong potential, but none of which has yet revolutionized education in the United States.[32]

Vouchers for Low-Income Families

The use of vouchers to access more affordable housing options on the private market has been an integral part of housing policy for half a century. Education vouchers that can be applied to private schooling, it is argued, can also expand choices for families, while challenging neighborhood schools to do better with new ideas and practices. Support for vouchers comes primarily from those who believe markets deliver better quality more efficiently than government, and from a significant number of minorities living in communities with failing public schools. Opponents, including teachers' unions and the more liberal establishment, contend that, while vouchers may work well in the overwhelmingly private housing market, it is not appropriate for a public education system whose goal is quality and fair education for all. They further note that a voucher program can deliver more quality choices only if the voucher is large enough, the students who qualify are truly low income, a sufficient number of high-quality affordable private schools exist, and quality options are available to children who fail to receive a voucher or find a school with their voucher.[33] Whether school vouchers can turn a public school system into a private one that still offers education for all, or whether vouchers should remain a limited option in communities that support them, remains to be seen.[34]

Charter Schools

Charter schools are hybrid public schools that operate more like non-profits, but subject to public school oversight. Charters must be approved by an official body and can be shut down for poor educational or financial performance. They receive public school funding through a predetermined formula but are usually allowed to supplement their budgets through fund-raising. With the autonomy to set curriculum and hire and fire staff, they have the flexibility to experiment with structure and curriculum, providing new models for all public schools. Their students are public school students, usually admitted through a lottery system rather than a zip code.

Over the years, evidence is accumulating that charter schools have started to outperform traditional public schools.[35] Some charter schools that focus on high-poverty students have excellent records in raising student achievement in core subjects,[36] comparable to that of their public school counterparts with similar student populations. Evidence also suggests that charter school students are more likely to stay in school and out of trouble.[37] The reasons for these outcomes and the implications for communities are, however, unclear. Even though charters appear to take students with class and racial profiles similar to those of their public school counterparts, it could be that neighborhood schools are left with the most difficult-to-reach students in families that are the most stressed.

Some have argued that charters should remain small in number so they can fulfil their role as learning laboratories for the system as a whole.[38] Some school systems are taking the opposite approach and significantly expanding their charter offerings.[39] Underlying much of the controversy over evaluations and results are policy differences over such issues as centralized versus autonomous governance; the qualifications, role, and treatment of teachers; and the effect of schools with concentrations of high-poverty students.

Magnet Schools and Gifted and Talented Programs

Magnet schools are public, usually secondary, schools that offer specialized curricula such as science and technology, arts, or simply advanced academics geared to higher-achieving students. They are often found in large urban school districts or consortia of school districts; sometimes magnet programs are incorporated into a regular public school. For the

most part, they accept students through a competitive process, which suggests that overall they do not have a major impact on student achievement. Furthermore, in a nation guided by the principle that separate is not equal, magnet schools have a tendency to promote rather than diminish segregation by siphoning off many of the most gifted students.

Where magnet programs have value is in large school districts, or across school districts, with a diverse population of students. If these districts offer a large menu of curricula that appeal to a wide range of learners, they can bring a variety of demographic and economic groups together with the potential for building social capital. For this reason, magnet schools are often favored by those who believe in a racially and economically integrated society, as an alternative to high-poverty charter schools, which, they argue, perpetuate segregation. Since both programs have had some success with creative educational options, yet also have tendencies to leave some of the most disadvantaged students, could proponents of these two practices find common ground in a blended system?[40]

Vocational Schools and Apprenticeships

While magnet schools focus on gifted and talented students with, like charter schools, the goal of sending students on to four-year colleges, another choice is apprenticeship programs, grooming students for high-quality, well-paying jobs. Students in apprenticeship programs would be required to complete a regular high school curriculum so they are prepared for college, but at the same time learn skills—preferably from an employer with a stipend—while they are in school. Should they complete the curriculum successfully, waiting for them will be a job with good pay and the opportunity for upward mobility.[41]

Some low-income and minority communities evince skepticism about any educational initiative that resembles the vocational education of the past, when children were directed by race and class away from higher education. Proponents of apprenticeships counter that a well-designed and respected apprenticeship program, offering students the option of preparation for high-quality jobs,[42] does not foreclose college as an option at any time during their lives. With high levels of unemployment in low-income communities, they argue that apprenticeships are the key, rather than a barrier, to economic mobility. The question remains whether a track for apprenticeship programs functions better in communities with greater social cohesion and without as divisive a history of segregating and tracking minorities.

Community Schools

While many school choice options take children out of their neighborhoods, the community schools movement advocates for bringing the neighborhood to the school by making the school the center of health, social, psychological, parent support, and other family services. The ideal is a school and community center under one roof, with collaborative supervision.[43] In that form, parents and children can easily access all the services they need.

The community schools model, while complex and difficult to implement, is immensely appealing to those who believe in strengthening existing communities of place and contend that education alone will not build that strength. Neighborhoods, however, are constantly changing, raising questions about the cost-effectiveness of the model as compared to the approach of the Promise Neighborhoods, which houses community organizations in a separate organization rather than a school.

Controlled Choice

While education policy experts argue for their favored solutions and disparage those of others, communities have sometimes opted for a combination of initiatives most appropriate to their circumstances, with the understanding that families can be presented with a system of meaningful choices if self-interest aligns with the goals of the larger community. Controlled choice does not consign children to neighborhood schools, nor does it give families complete choice. At several junctures in a child's educational journey parents are allowed to rank the schools they would prefer for the child, whether traditional public schools, several magnet schools, and a limited number of charter schools, but the assignment is made by the school district.

Even where the school system makes every effort to satisfy families, the practice is the subject of intense and sometimes acrimonious debate, and its results at closing the achievement gap are problematic.[44] At the same time, controlled school choice, like most school choice options, is also about community. In today's communities, many children are not being well served by the traditional school system based on small, often segregated, districts with neighborhood schools. At the same time, any replacement system must be acceptable to the community as a whole, treating all constituencies as fairly as possible and garnering their input in the process. Moreover, it only works where meaningful choices exist. In high-poverty school districts, where the ability to cross district boundaries is limited or

non-existent, choice has little meaning. Excellent high-poverty schools exist, but not excellent predominantly high-poverty school districts in which all students could attend a high-quality school. A solution that offers choice but also insures fairness to the entire community—one in which ideology is tempered by a common effort in a spirit of partnership—is likely to produce longer, lasting results and strengthened community ties.

What No School Can Do

James Traub's 2000 New York Times article, "What No School Can Do," struck a cautionary tone concerning all education reform initiatives aimed at closing the achievement gap.[45] Recent data support the article's theme of the limits of education system in today's demographic realities. Unlike in the past, the majority of current public school students are from low-income families.[46] With this information in mind, should we focus our efforts on reducing inequality, breaking up concentrated poverty, or improving schools through choice other other measures described in Chapter 3? While it may be more complex and politically challenging to target concentrated intergenerational poverty and segregation, and while the failure of repeated initiatives to address the gap produces a sense of hopelessness within high-poverty communities and in the society as a whole, an upending of our current education system without evidence that its replacement will strengthen education, career success, and communities should be carefully perused. A multi-pronged approach that begins in early childhood should also be carefully considered and structured, in order to justify what could be a substantial investment. In the meantime, however, we should be aware that, for families in communities with a dearth of good schools, the many forms of school choice offer hope for their children.

Collective Impact: Lessons from Milwaukee

As the non-profit sector has proliferated, commentators have questioned its ability to address large community issues. While targeted and creative approaches to community problems are needed, a collaborative model may in many instances be the key to systemic solutions. The challenge in our complex communities is determining when and how to foster collaboration with a problem-solving approach through a collaborative of organizations from different sectors with a common agenda, sometimes known as collective impact.[47] Collective impact initiatives offer excellent opportunities to learn about community.

In 2008, the Milwaukee United Way, which funnels donations to local non-profits, utilized the collective impact approach to address teen pregnancy, which is implicated in intergenerational poverty and other negative outcomes. The United Way took the leadership role in convening a coalition of stakeholders which were attempting to address teen pregnancy in Milwaukee, home to one of the highest rates in the nation, with the goal of reducing teen pregnancy by 46 percent in ten years. Each organization that participated was required to agree on the targets and roles assigned to it by the United Way, and all had to work together. A 2015 evaluation of the project showed a 50 percent drop in teen pregnancy, exceeding expectations.[48] Key to achieving that result were the following:

- Clear and achievable goals, supported by the community
- A collaborative of non-profits with appropriate expertise and willingness to commit to the goals, work together under strong leadership, and exhibit flexibility when needed.
- Strong leadership with leverage to keep the coalition working together on behalf of the community and focused on the goals
- Regular communication and collaboration among all stakeholders.

The United Way was able to harness the creativity of the non-profit sector, exert leverage to make them work together, and actually form a community of non-profits.

The initiative does, however, raise questions. How did the United Way pick its goal? Even if it chose the appropriate goal in a collaborative process, was it fortuitous that teen pregnancy rates were entering a dramatic downturn nationwide at the time, and did the collective impact approach make a significant difference? Even if evaluation confirms that it did, it could be difficult to replicate the non-profit landscape in Milwaukee, including a very strong leader willing to set rigorous standards and a group of qualified non-profits interested in participating. Have other comparable cities reduced teen pregnancy at similar rates without using the collective impact approach? If so, what are the costs of Milwaukee's approach as opposed to that in other locales?

A critique from both the right and the left focuses on the process of collective impact. Long before the term existed, grassroots organizations were collaborating with one another to address community problems. The concern is that collective impact, if it places too much power in funders and lead organizations, stifles creativity, innovation, and organic collaboration

by establishing a top-down agenda and compelling organizations to align with the collective impact model or lose funding.[49] How do we insure that community organizations of all kinds are included, respected, and heard, without fragmenting what could be a comprehensive effort? To alleviate this concern, collective impact would have an inclusive model that establishes goals collectively, and find ways to utilize the expertise, skills, and connections of a wide variety of community-based initiatives. This model, which trades some efficiency for more mutual responsibility and respect, might be well worth the tradeoff for the social capital it could build.

TWIN CITIES LIGHT RAIL: INCLUSION

In the 1970s, plans were afoot to turn Interstate Highway 35, which runs through central Minneapolis, Minnesota, into an eight-lane freeway. Neighborhoods in the path of the proposed expansion rose up in opposition, and a light rail system was born. Thirty years later, the first leg of the system opened, with expansion plans that included a line between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul, its twin city and Minnesota's capital.[50]

The cities applied for federal funding and submitted a plan that included several stops in the downtown business district of St. Paul, which, it was argued, would serve the needs of St. Paul's major employers, including the state government and its commuting workers, revitalize downtown St. Paul, and make federal approval more likely by keeping stops to a minimum and reining in costs. Organizations representing some of the minority, modest-income communities along the proposed line were concerned when they saw that the plan's proposed stops in these communities were few and far between.

Minnesota is known for the engagement of its citizens. A number of grassroots community organizations along the proposed line formed a coalition to advocate for additional stops in some of their communities, arguing that development was equally important in those neighborhoods, and that the scores of existing small businesses along the path of the light rail—many of them minority-owned and staffed—would suffer all the economic losses during construction, with no compensating gain of stops at the end of the process. They noted that placing stops far apart in residential neighborhoods would be a hardship for many, especially during St. Paul's long and brutal winter.

The coalition slowed the planning process through meetings and, ultimately, a legal action. Meanwhile, a presidential election brought in a new administration with a different infrastructure philosophy that was more sympathetic to the coalition. A working group was created among three federal agencies: the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency. Their mandate was to work on holistic approaches to infrastructure development, which left a greater opening for the coalition's alternative light rail plan. As a result, a revised plan with the additional stops was submitted and approved at the federal level. The light rail, with the added neighborhood stops, opened in 2014.[51]

As with transit development in general, the new stops could have varied impacts on existing residents and businesses if, as predicted, they cause a metamorphosis of the surrounding communities. Building consensus around gentrification may be as difficult as the initial planning and construction process because, while it disrupts and even overwhelms existing communities, it also brings opportunity to many: more diverse retail, more customers for businesses willing to cater to multiple constituencies, jobs, and higher prices for property owners who wish to sell. It would indeed be ironic if the coalition's efforts lead to development that excludes the very people it was intended to help.

What are the lessons from this infrastructure project? One lesson involves the substance of community planning. As with housing, infrastructure is not just about structures, but also the ability to access education, jobs, and services, and about connecting people not only to their needs, but to one another. Infrastructure can involve acts as small as the repair of a pothole and projects as large as a light rail or highway system.

In either case, this example also shows that, with hard work, patience, and some luck, the community can be heard by those who develop and maintain the infrastructure. From small neighborhood organizations that give voice to their constituents, to coalitions that amplify that voice, to large entities like government, which is responsible for much of our infrastructure and implements broad policies for diverse populations, community is integral to infrastructure.

Another important lesson concerns the role of agents and collaborative networks in the community transformation process. First is the vibrant civil society in St. Paul, with its many grassroots non-profits which represent their communities well. Community members serve on their boards of directors and are regularly consulted and highly valued. Second are the

collaborations that expand knowledge and influence, both in their own work and in the larger community. The coalition that resisted the light rail project was not new; the organizations represented had worked together many times in the past, and people on them knew and to a substantial degree trusted one another. Collaboration amplified the voice and power of each individual organization to reach the community as a whole. Third is the for-profit sector, in this case vibrant small businesses that served the communities all along the rail line and contributed to the process. Finally is the government, at both the local and the federal levels. Both levels of government were initially resistant to the coalition's wishes, but the political process that elected President Obama changed the federal government's position, and provided the necessary funding and support that the local government needed to accede to at least some of the demands. In the end, it was the government that held the resources and the ultimate power, but the community was able to influence the process.

Conclusion

These few examples of promising approaches to community challenges share certain characteristics. Initially, they are guided by one or more goals. The chief goal of the HCZ and Promise Neighborhood initiatives is to build up a neighborhood by focusing on families and children, while the goal of HOPE VI is to transform a neighborhood through mixed-income housing. Moving to Opportunity is aptly named, since its goal is to offer opportunity and support for people who want to move into neighborhoods that offer higher-quality education options, infrastructure, and jobs.

As can be seen, however, communities are often divided over what these goals should be. Successful community strategies involve the consideration and weighing of multiple voices and values, which can produce tension and disagreement. A community strategy is stronger if those voices can be incorporated into it and is probably not worth pursuing if it lacks the necessary community support. Unfortunately, a major challenge for communities—one that can become a vicious cycle—is involvement. If the community itself is not engaged in this process of maximizing its assets, it will default to those with expertise in one area, cut off from the community repercussions of the actions they take. Their actions can confirm a community's sense of its powerlessness, leading to civic disengagement. A successful community strategy, therefore, incorporates constituent voices

in ways that bring out the best in the community through education and dialogue.

Indeed, collaboration is a part of any democratic strategy. Any one of the small St. Paul community groups that wanted a light rail stop would probably not have been able to impact the larger city initiative, but the coalition that formed was able to collaborate on an overall strategy and amplify each group's voice. Collaboration with institutions outside of the community can be valuable as well: the HCZ connected and collaborated with outside funders to support, advise, and evaluate its programs.

Communities are complex and imperfect, so no strategy for addressing their challenges is without flaws. Successful approaches do, however, have commonalities. First, they take into account the multiple facets of community life that are involved. Solving the problem of homelessness not only requires housing, but involves issues such as mental and physical health care, behavior issues, and the role of the criminal justice system. Building a light rail requires consideration of issues beyond transportation: the impact on businesses and jobs, the rewards and risks of gentrification, and the role of the environment. Second, they are flexible, with built-in feedback mechanisms, so they can improve. HOPE VI, for example, changed its model after it was criticized for replacing a considerable amount of affordable housing stock. Although still an imperfect solution in many ways, HOPE VI renovation projects came to include as many low-income units as were in the project they replaced. School districts that have long-time systems of school choice are continually responding to political realities and community preferences by modifying the model. Finally, successful approaches require both determination and patience, seeding sustainable solutions that are worth the investment.

NOTES

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50. Inserra, Andy, Minneapolis's Hiawatha Light Rail: A Success Story Over 30 Years in the Making, LightRailNow! (August 2004), http://www.lightrailnow.org/features/f_min004.htm.

51. For an excellent discussion of the movement for the additional stops on the Minneapolis-St. Paul Light Rail Line, see Babler, Tracy, "Making Light Rail Stop for Us," Shelterforce (July 25, 2011), http://www.shelterforce.org/article/2312/making_light_rail_stop_for_us/. For a summary of the entire process, see "Is the Twin Cities' New Light Rail Line an Urban Planner's Dream?," National Journal (February 4, 2016), http://www.nationaljournal.com/next-economy/america-360/is-twin-cities-new-light-rail-line-urban-planners-dream. For a discussion of the role of community organizing in the process, see Blackwell, Angela G. et al., "Using Community Organizing and Community Building to Influence Public Policy," in *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Welfare*, ed. Meredith Minkler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 379–381.

Learning Through Reflective Exercises and Community Experience

Abstract With the goal of encouraging readers to develop their own classroom- and community-based lessons for experiencing and reflecting on community, this chapter provides a starting point with exercises utilizing a variety of principles and practices. They include a holistic community study, a service-learning exercise that encourages reflection on the value and pitfalls of service and volunteering, reflection on access to social services through small-group visits to organizations that provide the services, a role-playing debate on a community infrastructure project, a lobbying assignment involving an issue of real-world importance to the student lobbyists, and an exercise in community transformation. These exercises allow students to experience communities directly or replicate their experiences. The community becomes a classroom, a learning laboratory, a place of engagement, while the classroom becomes a locus of discussion about community and its impact, both on our lives and in the broader policy context.

Keywords Exercises • Experience • Objectives • Evaluation

Courses about community have the benefit of a learning laboratory all around us, with endless ways to enrich our understanding of principles and practices. The exercises presented here are merely examples of explorations and simulations that can illuminate the study of community and be tailored to the goals of a particular course.

Community Study

In order to better understand the challenges communities face and the principles and practices they employ to address them, students can study a community—defined predominantly by place, such as a neighborhood, or by people who identify with each other, such as a faith-based or ethnic community—in depth. Over several weeks, even an entire semester, and with faculty guidance, students

- Select a community of manageable size, using criteria they have established from class discussion and readings on what constitutes a community
- Compile and analyze information on the history, geography, and demographics of a community, in order to put its current challenges in context
- Explore and map the community, with an emphasis on stakeholders (such as residents, businesses, and public institutions). Those who do not choose a community of place can use creative mapping, such as an organizational chart with stakeholders
- Obtain multiple perspectives on the community's challenges and assets from articles, interviews, and community meetings
- Identify the community's greatest challenges and assets, whether physical, economic, human capital, collective, or public
- Identify and support the most promising strategies and agents for strengthening the community.

Undergraduates are occasionally daunted by this project when they first encounter it, but quickly find their bearings. They lack the data and research skills of community planners, but they are refreshingly free of preconceptions and can develop an on-the-ground perspective that many planners lack. The best way to begin this process is simply by experiencing the community, and then building on that experience with documentation. Once they get started, most soon grow to appreciate the combination of multi-faceted secondary and primary research that incorporates their own observations and conclusions, an inventory of community assets, the community's perspective, and information derived from traditional sources on both the community itself and the major challenges it confronts. From this research, students synthesize a plan, which may include physical change, such as tearing down or building up, social or political change, such as a

community organizing plan, and/or economic change, such as a living wage initiative. They explain why they have chosen this particular plan for this community. As they develop their plan, they come to appreciate the complexities of any community improvement process.

The learning objectives of this project are for students to gain the ability to

- Describe a community from multiple perspectives. Who represents the community? Which are the most powerful voices?
- Identify and prioritize community challenges and assets. What are the strengths on which this community should rely? What are its major challenges?
- Synthesize primary and secondary research about communities. How much do we know about this community from objective and outside research as opposed to the understanding of community members?
- Approach a community from a holistic, interdisciplinary perspective. For example, how does—or could—a local school, or library, or recreation center do much more for the community than its primary function?
- Develop support for a realistic, forward-looking strategy for a particular community—one that includes the input of a variety of community stakeholders. The students should gain both an insider and outsider perspective from their research. How can they meld these perspectives to identify and address the most important challenges for the community? What is the best route for this particular community?
- Reflect on the meaning of community. Does the entity they studied constitute a community? Why or why not?

The evaluation of this project gives equal weight to the following:

- Initiative and primary research: getting to know the community well through thorough, first-hand observation and a range of information and perspectives from multiple sources
- Thorough secondary sources such as census and other databases, information gathered in class and from assigned readings, and any other secondary sources on their chosen community
- Organization and clarity of the presentation

- Critical thinking and analysis: presenting a thorough, cogent plan that makes sense and, based on the evidence available to the author, is realistic while offering a vision for the community.

Students have characterized the study as a defining learning experience, one that applies the classroom knowledge they have gained about community assets, strategies, and agents to the practicalities of community life on the ground.

Below are examples of student comments:

I was able to integrate everything I had learned throughout the semester. I evaluated the assets and liabilities of a cross-section of the Shaw community and proposed a plan to improve neighborhood conditions. To illustrate my findings, I presented a photographic collection and drew from interviews with residents, readings, site visits, presentations, and my own personal experiences.[1]

   The community perspective paper gave me hands-on insight into the vibrancy of Washington DC's neighborhoods. I wrote about Sursum Corda during the time that plans for redevelopment were being deliberated over and finalized. Conducting the research and writing the paper allowed me to get into the neighborhood, meet the people being affected by the city's plans, and learn about a neighborhood's ability to organize and represent itself. The hands-on approach to learning…was what peaked (sic) my interest in developing a career in community development and planning. I had the opportunity to present my research at a local conference, which was an exciting experience![2]

Learning About Community Through Service

The United States has always relied on citizen service to address community problems and even transform communities.[3] Service learning has gained a foothold in both K-12 and higher education, offering the opportunity for teaching and learning about pressing community issues in a way that integrates classroom and experiential study.[4]

   The primary purpose of this assignment, which could be characterized as a service-learning exercise, is to consider and evaluate the strengths and limitations of grassroots community service. In the broader sense, service learning can be enlisted to study community itself, by having students serve a grassroots organization that relies to a greater or lesser extent on volunteers, in order to experience how these organizations operate, how

effective they are, and whether they represent the community in its aspirations, values, and plans. By discussing their experiences with one another, students can appreciate the complex relationship between a community and the organizations involved in it. Specifically, they

- Experience practical problems in the community
- Discover and analyze different strategies to address these problems
- Consider what makes a grassroots organization effective
- Think about their own professional aspirations and whether they will be community-based.

Note that I have not included benefit to the community. Since the purpose of the exercise is to have students experience a wide range of community organizations and critically assess their value, it does not require assigning students to those with the best reputations, best use of volunteers, or a particular political or social philosophy, but rather those who are interested in the effective use of students to serve. The assignment can instruct students to select the organization themselves either from a list provided by the teacher or on their own, or assign students to a community-based, community-serving organization—usually a grassroots non-profit—which has requested assistance. Some of the organizations may be well-established and funded, while others may be small and operating on a shoestring budget. No matter the characteristics of the organization, students can learn a great deal from their and their classmates' experiences.

While the primary goal of the service is to study community-based organizations, participants must clearly understand their role in pursuing the goals of the organization for which they volunteer on behalf of communities whose constituents will be affected (positively or negatively) by their service. They are responsible for meeting the requirements of their sponsoring organization—whether on a regular, perhaps weekly, schedule or on a special project—in a responsible, high-quality and timely manner, which requires leadership, maturity, organization, diligence, communication, and creativity.

Students can be required to keep a running journal or blog of their observations and reactions, using it to prepare a presentation about (1) the mission and substantive issues addressed by the organization, (2) which overall approach or combination of approaches the organization uses to effect community change, and (3) the effectiveness of the organization in using its approach(es) to effect its mission. The teacher has a role as a supervisor, teacher, and resource. She insures the students fulfill their com-

mitment to the organization in a high-quality manner, acts as an intermediary when needed, and advises students about their service. She can assist students in locating resources in order to obtain a better understanding of the community. Finally, her substantive role is to relate the successes and challenges students experience on the ground to larger issues of policy and community change while assisting students in developing practical problem-solving skills in communication, research, and analysis concerning communities. If all the organizations are located in one community, she provides information on the community and the challenges it confronts.

Sample topics are:

- The role and effectiveness of grassroots non-profits in communities. We often equate organizations that serve a community with the community itself. What are the characteristics of people and groups that truly represent a community? For example, a group of individuals start an artists' collective in a low-income neighborhood. Existing artists in the neighborhood, who are concerned about gentrification and feel the collective does not represent them, form their own organization. Which better represents the community? How representative **of** the community must an organization be in order to be effective **in** the community?
- Collective efficacy and action. Countless organizations exist with the goal of improving communities. Each has its own mission and plan to effect that mission. What if communities selected a goal and enlisted organizations with expertise to work together to develop and implement a plan to reach that goal? Is this collective action a path which should be incentivized or, like community organizations themselves, is it only effective when effective leadership, substantial targeted funding, and community support exist? Will corralling organizations reduce their creativity and effectiveness and, if so, is that a price worth paying for increased collaboration and greater scale? Is bringing community change to scale something government is better equipped to do than is a collection of independent non-profits?
- Evaluation. Students can be asked to learn if the organization they serve has any mechanisms for evaluating its work and, if so, what is evaluated and how? What do they think the measure of an organization's worth should be? For example, a recent thorough study established that giving homeless, vulnerable families a housing voucher was more effective than rapid rehousing and transitional

housing programs in keeping them off the streets for at least eighteen months. Should the government now support these people only with vouchers, or do the other two types of programs offer community benefits of a different kind that merit continued funding?

Community-based learning is often employed to both address and study a particular issue such as poverty, the environment, health, or education. This exercise shows that it can be an invaluable tool in the study of community itself. While it can be an extremely rewarding, active learning experience, it can also provide valuable assistance to the requesting organization and the community it serves. Becoming frustrated or disheartened by the magnitude of the challenges and the paucity of the response is part of the learning experience that the teacher can address, exploring the realities—both positive and negative—of community service.

SOCIAL SERVICES ACCESS EXERCISE

By far the largest provider of community services is government, supported by taxes assessed on the community as a whole, and sometimes by non-profits with which government contracts. In this exercise,[5] students first learn about the major social services government offers and/or subsidizes, such as food benefits, services to the homeless, health care services such as HIV testing, and welfare benefits. They are then assigned to small groups, each of which visits a service provider,[6] as closely as possible mimicking what an applicant for the service would experience.[7] When they reach the office, however, they must identify themselves as students completing a project and are cautioned not to interfere with the process of serving applicants, but to wait to speak with a representative in order to gather information. In the process, they are asked to observe the office and learn as much as possible about its services and the way applicants are treated. After the visit, students research the program and prepare a short paper on the program and their experiences. These papers are the starting point for reflection in their next class.

Learning objectives for this assignment are to better understand

- The social services government provides. Students conduct, and share with their classmates, research on the program to which they are assigned. The assignment also includes information on the history of social services in the United States, a summary of the major

services government provides, and—for comparative purposes—general information on how services differ in other countries.
- The population utilizing the services. Are they of any particular demographic groups? Do they speak English?
- The experience of those attempting to access the services. Do they have easy access? Are they made to feel welcome?
- Whether and how the services could be improved. Are they targeting the right people? Are they easy to locate?

In reflecting on reasons some services and not others are subsidized or provided, we consider the impact of values and attitudes, the decentralized structure of government, and the nature of politics and advocacy. Can we find a rationale for the services government provides as opposed to those which are left to non-profits and voluntary efforts?

Another area of discussion concerns the heterogeneous nature of the American population and how political discussion frames social services provision in terms of race and ethnicity. Is a comprehensive welfare state more likely to arise in relatively homogeneous societies than in heteogeneous ones, if the prevailing perception is that services are primarily for people who are not like us?[8]

Students accustomed to using their high-tech phones immediately confront the reality for those community members who do not have comparable access. The simple act of obtaining an address is problematic, and getting there is even more complicated. In class discussion it emerges that applicants may be eligible for multiple services, yet the offices where they need to apply are often far apart, posing a challenge for those with limited means. Moreover, the existence of a program does not insure its availability, even to those facing emergencies. Eligibility requirements eliminate some applicants; others find long waiting lists. How can we better serve people for whom services are intended? In addressing this question, the class can focus on such initiatives as transportation subsidies, consolidation of services in one physical location, effective case management, and altering funding priorities to prioritize the most effective initiatives.

This exercise offers a wide range of learning opportunities, such as putting the student in the shoes of an individual trying to access services, discussing what service providers do right and what they can improve, and analyzing the programs themselves. It can expand into study of the welfare state, with consideration of the respective roles of the community and the government in supporting individuals in need.

Community and the Environment

This exercise analyzes competing interests in a proposed infrastructure project that impacts communities, states, national governments, and international relations. It raises community concerns about land use, the environment, and jobs, and it shows how communities with widely different interests sometimes collaborate to promote common goals.

In 2008, TransCanada, a Canadian pipeline company, filed an application with the US Department of State for a permit to build a pipeline which would transport oil from Alberta, Canada, through several states to the Gulf Coast. TransCanada, which already has a pipeline across Canada to the Vancouver area (where ships take much of it to California and also to Asia), has asserted that the pipeline will reduce USA's dependence on foreign oil, make it much more efficient to transport the oil, and (according to a study commissioned by TransCanada from an independent organization) create approximately 50,000 jobs in the USA.

As a facility connecting the United States with a foreign country, the pipeline requires a Presidential Permit from the State Department which certifies that the pipeline would be in the "national interest." This determination considers the project's potential effects on the environment, economy, energy security, foreign policy, and other factors. The State Department issued an Environmental Impact Statement, noting the risk of contamination from oil leakage on the aquifer in the Nebraska Sand Hills region, which lies on the path of the proposed pipeline. President Obama decided not to issue the permit; Congress was opposed to his decision.[9]

Below are some of the major issues raised by the Keystone Pipeline.

- The environmental risk of oil leakage to ranches, water supply, and the ecosystem as a whole
- Greenhouse gas emissions and other dangers to health and the environment from extracting and refining oil from "tar sands" in Canada
- Other markets and distribution mechanisms for tar sands oil
- Job creation—both the number and types of jobs—and job losses that may result from the pipeline
- The impact of dependence on non-domestic sources of oil.

Students are assigned to one of the following groups:

- If the pipeline is rerouted to go through American Indian reservation, land, the residents of the reservation, and possibly other American Indians who have been adversely affected by other federal land use policies
- The Environmental Defense Fund
- The International Association of Oil and Gas Producers
- The Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA)
- An ad hoc association of ranchers and farmers on or near the path of the pipeline

Each group is required to analyze its relationship to, and position on, the construction of the pipeline, based on its own interests and the interests of other related communities that it can identify. Groups develop a strategy and, where appropriate, coalitions. The exercise concludes with a hearing at which the benefits and dangers of the pipeline are discussed, community interests are expressed, and stakeholders attempt to influence policy makers. After the meeting, students discuss the results of this process. What strategies were used on each side? How effective were they? Are the coalitions formed likely to be temporary? Did the groups build long-term social capital?

The controversy over this pipeline is a useful teaching tool in part because the communities involved are so varied, from ranchers to unions to Native American reservations, environmentalists to agribusiness, local to global concerns. It also shows that circumstances at the community level can lead to the formation of unlikely coalitions based in large part on collective interests, and that these coalitions can amplify their voices as they organize and advocate at the local, state, and national levels. What began as a local issue became a national discussion about energy, the environment, and jobs as well as values. Finally, it illustrates the complex relationship between communities, the private sector, and government at all levels.

CITIZEN LOBBYING EXERCISE

All too often citizens perceive themselves as impotent in the face of larger forces more powerful and better resourced, causing them to disengage from the political process and leave it to professionals. While this perception is in some sense valid, the previous exercise illustrates that thoughtful and effective citizen lobbying can make an impact on legislation, build relationships of trust and respect, and strengthen the democratic process

on which communities depend.[10] This exercise is a means to learn the requirements for, and value of, successful citizen lobbying on behalf of their community.

An understanding of the lobbying process should begin with background on the role of civic participation in a democratic society. According to Michael Schudson, the general meaning of citizenship has changed from the earliest days of our republic, when a good citizen was seen as affirming the existing system and institutions that governed society, and from the nineteenth century, when loyalty and allegiance to one's political party was the mark of a good citizen. In the current rights-based model of citizenship, like-minded individuals advocate for principles in which they have a deep-seated interest and belief.[11]

While lobbying is still largely conducted on behalf of economic and national security interests, citizen lobbying in the public interest has become a regular and accepted part of the political process. Participants in this exercise should have an understanding of why and how citizen lobbying can be effective.[12] Especially valuable to that understanding is a preparatory panel with one or more individuals with extensive experience in public interest lobbying, either as an advocate or a target.

The exercise calls for students to be divided into small groups to research and lobby for or against a piece of legislation, a government action, or a rule. In most instances, the legislator should be one from the district in which one or more of the students vote, or which he/she considers home. Each group can select or be assigned to lobby on a different piece of legislation that affects a community issue, or they can all be assigned to lobby concerning one legislative (or executive) initiative. They thoroughly research the issue and those whom they will be lobbying, determine what they will be asking, and prepare packets with relevant talking points, fact sheets, issue briefs, and/or letters of support.[13] They schedule a meeting with the office to be lobbied, and prepare their presentation, geared to the amount of time they will have and designed to be as effective as possible. They discuss their "ask" of the legislator, whether it is to introduce or sponsor a piece of legislation, to vote a certain way, or simply to take a certain position on an important issue. They should prepare for difficult questions and reactions, and have responses ready, including a short and pithy written piece that they can leave with the legislator or the staff.

After the visit, students prepare a report, either individually or as a group, with consideration of the following:

- The legislation in question and their "ask"
- What issues they discussed and their main talking points
- The response of the legislator, including main concerns
- Their responses to the legislator's concerns
- The strengths and limitations of citizen lobbying
- What else they learned from the experience

The final piece of the project is a group discussion of the experience, including how it changed their perceptions of lobbying and the political process. In our discussions, it is evident that students begin the exercise with many reservations. They are anxious about the process, particularly if they are lobbying a public official with a position to which that official appears opposed. They view lobbying as exclusive to the powerful and well-resourced, and even corrupt, not something meant for them—a perception that is unfortunate but understandable. Student comments suggest, however, that for most the experience is usually enjoyable, and often powerful and enabling, even when the legislator is opposed to their position. Depending on how they frame their "ask," they often find areas of compromise, but even when the differences are insurmountable, they report being treated with respect and consideration, in part because they matter as voters and participators. It is important to remind them how in lobbying the perfect can become the enemy of the good, and to discuss how incremental positive outcomes are sometimes as or more valuable than large-scale wins. Almost all of them end the exercise with the conviction that, at some point in the future, they will be participating in such a process again, with the recognition that their participation affects their community. The exercise can be adapted to focus on other roles for citizens in their communities, such as on advisory boards and in participatory decision making.

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION EXERCISE

This simple, powerful, student-created, and student-led exercise relates community transformation and civic participation to the aspirations of those embarking on or involved in work—whether paid or volunteer—involving community and civil society. The discussion is truly a group activity which requires little direction. Groups whose participants have considerable experience and forged close bonds with one another, and those with little or no prior experience together, engage with one another in a thoughtful and creative process. The exercise presents choices to both

young people who are embarking on careers, and those who are already established, whether they seek a career change or are eager to make their current work more rewarding.[14]

Scholars and practitioners have written about the importance of civic engagement from the perspective of integrating the civic world into the classroom,[15] as well as about students actively engaging in their own learning through community problem-solving.[16] At the same time, people envisioning or engaged in civic-related careers face difficult choices. Are they more suited to the kind of human interaction involved in community work, or are they better suited to research and policy? If they are entrepreneurial, how can they connect their work to community issues? Will civic work be the focus of, or a sidelight to, their careers? This exercise raises participants' awareness of the choices that are available to them, while allowing them to reflect on how their own experience and aspirations fit into the larger issues of civic life, linking their community and academic experiences with the larger question of how communities transform.

The exercise has two parts. The first consists of an analysis of the characteristics, strengths, and limitations of community change strategies and agents outlined in Chapter 4,[17] followed by a discussion of how strategies and agents could collaborate or be combined to create more sustainable community transformation.[18]

In the second part, which need not occur on the same day, participants are first requested to identify their career path from among these strategies/agents.[19] Discussion includes experiences that have instilled in them a passion for a particular career path, as well as their internal dialogue about where they belong. Participants are then asked to identify which strategy or agent they believe represents the most effective path to community change.[20] They explain the reason for making the same, or a different, selection from their career choice, recognizing that their personal path could contribute to community well-being while it might not in itself be the most effective route to change.

This activity achieves two learning objectives. The first is to reveal the many strategies and institutions available to those embarking in this work of community transformation, and the ways they can integrate these strategies in their own careers in order to effect positive change. The second is a lesson in community transformation generally, particularly that most lasting contributions to community strength and change, including their own, occur in interconnected ways over a long period, requiring collaboration, patience, perseverance, and even courage. We usually conclude

the exercise with the dissection of a movement that transformed society, which demonstrates why change can be both difficult and lasting.[21]

Conclusion

One of the great pleasures of teaching and learning about community is the opportunity to be involved with communities themselves, along with a wide variety of stakeholders and other civically engaged individuals. Another is to appreciate and evaluate the people, groups, and institutions with expertise. Melding experiences in the classroom and the community through the use of exercises, accompanied by relevant research, contributes to educated reflection on the meaning and role of community in our general well-being. As students grapple with salient issues, the community becomes a classroom, a learning laboratory, a place of engagement, while the classroom becomes a locus of discussion about community and its impact, both on our lives and in the broader policy context. I have offered exercises and actual community experiences that illustrate a range of policies and practices. These examples are intended primarily to stimulate your own creativity in developing and adapting illustrations most suitable to your expertise and that of your learners.

These exercises, and this book as a whole, reflect my view that one of the most important goals of teaching about community is to introduce students to multiple perspectives on communities and how to strengthen them. Through a combination of exercises like these, students come to appreciate the many assets that create communities, the key institutions that attempt to address their problems, and the diversity of strategies – beyond service alone – that are utilized in efforts to maintain and strengthen them. They begin to recognize, as I did, the rich complexity of communities and the strategies we can employ to maximize their benefit to each of us. As we need education to maximize our own individual development, so learning about community makes us better able to participate in the improvement and well being of the communities to which we belong.

Notes

1. Matthew Scherzer, email, June 14, 2005.
2. Aimee Chambers, email, December 12, 2008.
3. See, e.g. "Volunteering and Civic Life in America 2015," Corporation for National & Community Service, https://www.volunteeringinamerica.gov/.

4. Whitfield, T. S., "Connecting Service- and Classroom-Based Learning: The Use of Problem-Based Learning," Michigan Journal of Community Service-Leaning 6 (1999): 106–11.

5. I am grateful to my colleague Marie J. Fritz for this exercise and the lobbying exercise.

6. The programs the teacher selects should have a public office the students can visit during regular business hours. Programs can include SNAP or other welfare benefits, emergency housing, domestic violence services, and HIV or other health testing.

7. For example, they are instructed to call an information number to obtain an address for the provider and are not allowed to use email, texting, or smart phone applications to locate the office.

8. See, e.g. Mau, Steffen, "Ethnic diversity and welfare state solidarity in Europe," AGF Midpoint Conference (2007), http://www.pol.ed.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/10215/paper_midpoint_conference_project_3.pdf. This question harkens back to discussions of bonding and bridging social capital.

9. Parfomak, Paul W. et al., "Keystone XL Pipeline Project," Congressional Research Service (1/26/2012), http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R41668.pdf.

10. "Making Change Happen: Advocacy and Citizen Participation," Action Aid, Institute for Development Studies Participation Group, and Just Associates (2001), http://www.justassociates.org/sites/justassociates.org/files/mch1-advocacy-and-participation.pdf.

11. Schudson, Michael, The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life (New York: Free Press, 2011).

12. See, e.g. The Democratic Process; Ottinger, Lawrence S. and Richard A. Couto, Political and Civic Leadership: A Reference Handbook, Volume I (Washington, DC: Sage, 2010).

13. For federal legislation, a useful general Web page is http://congressfoundation.org/projects/communicating-with-congress/perceptions-of-citizen-advocacy-on-capitol-hill. To find pending legislation, go to http://www.govtrack.us/ or http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php.

14. The exercise is also applicable to the following groups: (1) institute or conference participants in such areas as higher education, service learning, national service, advocacy, community development, community organizing, and civic engagement; (2) undergraduates, including orientations, upper-class seminars, classes involving civic studies, and community-centered and leadership groups such as student government, and career planning seminars; (3) graduate courses in such fields as public administration, public affairs, and non-profit management; and (4) those engaged in public service, whether through business, non-profits, or government.

15. See, e.g. Eble, Kenneth E., *The aims of college teaching* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983); Hollander, Elizabeth and Matthew Hartley, "Civic renewal in higher education: The state of the movement and the need for a national network," in *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, ed. Thomas Ehrlich (Phoenix: American Council on Education/Oryx, 2000): Chapter 19.

16. Whitfield, Toni S., "Connecting Service- and Classroom-based Learning: The Use of Problem-based Learning," *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 6 (Fall 1999): 109.

17. For an alternative model of strategies of community change, see Checkoway, Barry, "Six strategies of community change," *Community Development Jour*nal 30:1 (1995): 2–20, doi: 10.1093/cdj/30.1.2.

18. For example, Miriam's Kitchen, a community organization that serves the homeless of Washington, DC, convened a group from among its clients in order to advocate for policies on behalf of the homeless population generally. See https://miriamskitchen.org/programs/advocacy/. Another non-profit organization, DC Central Kitchen, has combined service with education and workforce training in the culinary arts and job readiness, as well as a program that provides corner stores in low-income neighborhoods with fresh produce. See http://www.dccentralkitchen.org/programs/.

19. The exercise begins with a series of signs, representing strategies and agents of community transformation, placed around a classroom. Depending on the group and time constraints, the leaders can create the signs in advance, or participants can create and place them. Participants are then asked to situate themselves near the sign which most closely approximates the career path they have chosen or are likely to choose. Most members of the group immediately place themselves near a sign, while a few ponder the choice, ending up between signs.

20. Some remain where they are, some move to other locations, and some again place themselves between signs; some even place themselves in the middle of the room, engaging in lively discussion and debate about the most effective change strategies and agents.

21. For example, the struggle over equal rights for Blacks occurred over centuries, and involved many great leaders and promising strategies. They laid the groundwork for what became the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, but they could not fully realize their vision without political leadership that resulted from President Kennedy's assassination and technological changes like television. The Movement included people who knowingly risked their lives, but smaller acts of courage occur every day as we engage with those who do not agree with us, in order to reach solutions for the larger community. See King, Martin L., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Stanford University, Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute (1963), http://okra.stanford.edu/transcription/document_images/undecided/630416-019.pdf.

Learning Objectives

Abstract The final chapter discusses four major learning objectives for teaching about community. First is that communities have multiple dimensions. They can be large or small, loose or closely-knit, homogeneous or diverse, rich or poor in social capital. Second is that communities are continually engaged in balancing multiple interests of individuals and groups of varied race and ethnicity, class, age, gender, levels of expertise, and values. The final two objectives are to convey the importance of engagement to community well-being, and the ultimate importance of including community in teaching and learning—whether in courses about community or in other learning environments.

Keywords Objectives • Learning • Engagement

The following overarching learning objectives have emerged from years of teaching about community.

COMMUNITY'S MULTIPLE DIMENSIONS

At the beginning of the semester, when I write the word "community" on the board and ask students to come up and contribute words and phrases that come to mind, the result is a range of descriptive terms. Some see community as groups with very loose ties, while others envision

ongoing substantial relationships. Although we generally associate a community with limited size, as small as a family, some definitions conceive of it as large as a nation or association of nations, such as the European Economic Community. It can be defined by place, purpose, or simple commonality. It has been noted that frequently the term community is too loosely applied to any group, no matter how remote the connection of its constituents.[1] Still, while not long ago I would have argued that my neighborhood electronic list serve of several thousand members—the vast majority of whom I will never meet or recognize—was not a community, over time my view of the list serve, and the community, has changed as the role of social media in community has evolved.[2]

Community can be best defined in part by what it is not. It is neither individualism nor large institutions like government; among its most important functions is to moderate between them. Individuals associate in communities to survive, but also to counter isolation, support one another, and improve their surrounding environment. At the same time, associations that become too large may become slow to respond, indifferent, and overly contentious. Communities, in contrast, are built on relationships of trust and tolerance; they can be both nimble and caring, and they offer a safe space where debate and discussion can occur. Community is also not confined by geography or to people; it can be found in a multitude of relationships.

Communities have an economic and political dimension beyond social functions, yet social interactions are critical to how communities exercise their other functions. For example, while most communities include elements of both bonding and bridging social capital, I find the distinction between them useful in understanding how they can both impede and promote community well-being. Bonding communities support identity, build trust, and create comfort and security among their members. At the same time, they tend to wall themselves off from outsiders and change in order to preserve their common values. The result is economic and political as well as social isolation. Bridging communities, while lacking the same level of closeness and trust, promote diversity, leading to greater understanding and tolerance as well as a more expansive and inclusive environment. That environment creates political and class tension as well as social stress. An important learning objective is to explore the appropriate balance between the two, especially in communities experiencing change.

A Well-Functioning Community Is a Balancing Act

Studying community teaches us about communication, compromise, mutual respect, and, above all, balance. Teaching about community includes discussing the balance between individual rights and collective standards, whether it concerns the siting of a homeless shelter or halfway house, the control of immigration, affordable housing, or any number of controversial issues that arise in communities. We all have identities, affinities, values, and points of view which are not always shared by other constituents of communities to which we belong. A well-functioning community rarely satisfies everyone all the time. It is important to balance the legitimate desire for rights and choice with the collective need for fairness and consideration of others.

Communities undergoing substantial and rapid demographic change particularly challenge the balance, threatening the identities, culture, and values of existing members, while offering diversity, variety, and opportunity. New entrants generally attract new services which attract more of the new people, while some existing community hangouts lose cachet and revenue, even to the point of closing. Learning about community inevitably involves dialogue about whether the existing community inevitably must give way to change, or whether it should be protected or accommodated in any way. When I moved to Washington DC a few years after the riots of 1968, it had many neighborhoods which had been abandoned by the white and then the middle-class black population, and where violence and drug-trafficking were at an all-time high. These communities suffered major disinvestment, but they also had their own services, often provided by mom and pop businesses. Local government, in developing a plan for some of the hardest-hit inner city neighborhoods, focused more on the preservation of city-owned affordable housing, improvement of services, and efforts to attract retail that would appeal to a range of people, and less on preserving private housing or existing retail over which it had considerably less control. The plan, which included a subway system and several big-box stores, has led to an influx of new residents, altering the balance by bringing communities back to life, while displacing some existing residents and businesses, and alienating some who have remained and now find their community less familiar and even hostile. Some of the recent residents feel equally alienated and insecure about crime and other activities to which they are not accustomed. Yet many are happy with the diversity and searching for ways to accommodate one another in building a

stronger community. Community change is inevitable, and often dynamic and engaging, bringing dormant communities to life, and offering variety and opportunity: for jobs, for enrichment, even for relationships, and just simple conversation across boundaries.

As difficult as it is, discussion of race, ethnicity, and class is intrinsic to this learning objective. In the United States, it requires understanding the history of slavery and legally enforced racial segregation, which in many ways devastated the Black community. It calls for discussion of policies and practices toward American Indians, who have preserved some of their identity and limited autonomy, to some extent at the cost of isolation from opportunity. It involves rational discussion of immigration, which some argue threatens the jobs and culture of existing communities, and others argue opens the door to new opportunities and relationships, potentially enriching our communities with added purchasing power and new cultural institutions.[3] And it requires us to think about economic divides. The tension between existing and new entrants exists in other iterations globally, wherever more powerful, better-resourced groups enter and reorganize societies with entirely different cultures and values. Considerations of identity, territory, and power create both tension and the opportunity to create new communities.

Another balancing act is that between outside expertise and community and community experience. Teaching and learning about community values both. Without expertise, communities can waste valuable resources, and are in danger of functioning out of self-interest, unfairness, and prejudice; expertise can inform community decisions, weigh different points of view, and temper passion with understanding. On the contrary, community members are stakeholders, and their experience, values, and opinions should be aired and respected. The individuals who make up a community have to live there long after the experts have departed. In this sense, process may be more important to the health of community than outcomes.

The Importance of Civic Participation and Engagement

In order to understand the actual process by which we build and sustain strong communities, it is of critical importance to teach and learn about civic engagement, which includes debate, discussion, negotiation, compromise, and respect. Engagement should not be taken to mean agreement, although that might occur. Democratic communities are built on this process, even when it is contentious and imperfect.

Furthermore, government is far less likely to cater to the interests of those groups and individuals who do not participate in civic life. By engaging in discussions of community issues, advocating on issues of concern, voting, or serving in public office, we gain influence for our communities because, in contrast to authoritarian rule, elected governments tend to respond to those to whom they are beholden—those who offer or withhold their vote and support. Learning about community involves exploring the reasons citizens engage or opt out, the resulting impact on community well-being, and strategies for increasing their participation.[4] We should also take away from the study of community an understanding of the role we can play.[5]

Teaching young people about engagement is particularly important, so they have the opportunity to develop habits essential to democracy.[6] Educators are specifically looking at primary and secondary school strategies that develop habits of engagement, such as student advocacy on a position of common importance to them, and lowering the voting age as part of a civic education curriculum.[7] Engaging youth before the college years is particularly important, in part because many of them do not go on to higher education, increasing the civic divide, and because habits young people form while still with their families tend to stay with them as they mature.[8]

The Importance of Community Itself

This book began with the rationale for teaching and learning about community, and concludes on the same theme. Community is not simply a backdrop for our lives; it is an ever-changing organism in which we are involved and with which we interact on a daily basis. It can have a powerful influence on who we are and what we will become, and we, in turn, can impact our communities, both individually and collectively. It is the locus of our democracy, offering myriad opportunities for discussion, exchange, and mutual support.

Notes

1. See Leibovich, Mark, "Instant Community: No Assembly Required," *The Washington Post* (December 28, 2004), http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A32723-2004Dec28.html.
2. See, e.g. Wellman, Barry, "Physical Place and Cyberplace," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25:2 (June 2001): 227–252.

3. Consider the influx of immigrants into small-town communities. Some find ways to make the transition easier, while others try to protect their community from what they believe to be a wholesale assault on its existing character. See, e.g. Guterbock, Thomas M. et al., "Evaluation Study of Prince William County's Illegal Immigration Enforcement Policy: Final Report," University of Virginia Center for Survey Research (2010); Snyder, Kim, "Welcome to Shelbyville," BeCause Films (2009).

4. MacGillis, Alec, "Who Turned My Blue State Red?," *The New York Times* (November 20, 2015), http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/22/opinion/sunday/who-turned-my-blue-state-red.html?smid=nytcore-ipad-share&smprod=nytcore-ipad&_r=0.

5. Levine, "*We Are the Ones*," Chapter 7.

6. See Levine, Peter, *The Future of Democracy: Developing the Next Generation of American Citizens* (Medford: Tufts University Press, 2007); Youniss, James and Peter Levine, editors, *Engaging Young People in Civic Life* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009).

7. See "Promoting Youth Civic Engagement," Center for the Study of Social Policy (November 2011), http://www.cssp.org/policy/papers/Promoting-Youth-Civic-Engagement.pdf.

8. See, e.g. Andolina, Molly W. et al., "Habits from Home, Lessons from School: Influences on Youth Civic Engagement," *PS, Political Science & Politics* 36:2 (April 2001): 75–80.

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by "n" denote notes

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