

What Community Supplies

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Community seems to be the modern elixir for much of what ails American society. Indeed, as we reflect on the wrenching social changes that have shaped our recent past, calls for a return to community values are everywhere. From politicians to private foundations to real estate developers to criminal justice officials to communitarians, the appeal of community is ubiquitous.

Consider just a few examples of the efforts to mobilize action under the rubric of community. Among private foundations many programs have settled on community as a conceptual umbrella to coordinate new initiatives. Meanwhile the growing community development corporation (CDC) movement has long singled out community as a meaningful unit of social intervention to improve the lives of the poor. In the criminal justice system the move to community-based strategies has included increased community policing, community-based prosecution policies, and community corrections. Even real estate developers are beginning to take heed of modern discontent with urban sprawl and suburban anonymity. They are proffering new visions of living arrangements that promote neighborliness, local interaction, and common physical space with architectural integrity, all in an attempt to restore some semblance of community. And in intellectual discussions, the rise of communitarianism as a serious movement is centered on community responsibility and civic engagement as the structure supporting social justice and the good society.

Whatever the source, there has emerged a widespread idea that something has been lost in American society and that a return to

community is in order. The loss is expressed most frequently in terms of the decline of civic life and the deterioration of local neighborhoods.

But if community has come to mean everything good, as a concept it loses its analytical bite and therefore means nothing. What exactly do we mean by community? Does the term refer to geographic locales, such as neighborhoods? Or to common membership in some association or group? Does it mean shared values and deep commitments, and if so to what? What in fact does community supply that makes it so in demand? Not only are the answers unclear, the current appropriation of community rhetoric elides any references to the dark side of communal life. One might ask, what do we stand to lose by a return to community—what does community deny? Perhaps more important, does the current drumbeat of allusions to community values bespeak a mythical past, raising the paradox of returning to nowhere?

The thesis of this chapter is that community does matter, albeit not in the simple way that current yearning suggests. Communities are an important arena for realizing common values and maintaining effective social controls. As such, they provide important public goods, or what many have termed "social capital," that bear on patterns of social organization and human well-being. There is hope in this conception, for it reveals ways to harness social change to reflect the nature of transformed (not lost) communities. Especially in low-income, socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, dimensions of social capital may work to buffer the forces of sociodemographic changes that have

battered the idea of community. But the concept is not an unqualified good, and thus one must also come to grips with such potential adverse consequences as local corruption and the social exclusion of outsiders.

To tackle these matters, this chapter begins by reviewing some of the defining themes of community and neighborhood, placing present concerns within the framework of intellectual history. Although not apparent from recent debates, there is a long history of research and theory on urbanism and community in the United States.

I next highlight the social dimensions by which communities in the United States are stratified ecologically. Neighborhoods vary a great deal in terms of racial isolation and the concentration of socioeconomic resources, and social dislocations such as crime and poor health come bundled in geographical space.

I then turn to the heart of the topic: what community supplies and how structural forces in the larger society shape the internal dynamics of communities. Specifically, I explicate a theory of community social organization and the public-good aspects of social capital such as informal social control mechanisms, network ties to extra-local power, mutual trust, capacity for efficacious action, and organizational resources that communities can in theory provide. Just as important, I delineate what research has revealed about the ways structural forces (for example, inequality and stability) promote or inhibit these public goods.

COMMUNITY: LOST, FOUND, AND LIBERATED

The "loss of community" is by no means a new concern. The basis of the classic urban paradigm in sociology is related to the massive social changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Concern over the presumed decline of traditional forms of personal association in small towns and neighborhoods under the advance of urbanization and industrialization was widely expressed by early sociologists such as Tönnies, Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber. Wirth (1938)

later expanded these concerns by positing that size, density, heterogeneity, and anonymity were socially disintegrative features that characterized rapidly changing cities. He contended that these defining elements constrained social relations to be impersonal and superficial and that this estrangement undermined family life and the intimate bonds of local community.

Wellman (1979) summarizes this classical tradition in urban sociology under the label "Community Lost," invoking the idea that the social ties of modern-urbanites have become impersonal, transitory, and segmented, hastening the eclipse of community and feeding the process of social disorganization. Community Lost is thus a salient theme that has a venerable history in twentieth-century America.

Research, however, suggests that Wirth's thesis is naive and the pronouncement of the loss of community premature. Ethnographic research in the 1950s and 1960s discovered thriving urban communities and ethnic enclaves where kinship and friendship flourished. Especially in poor urban neighborhoods, the evidence of dense social networks and local identification remained strong (see Gans, 1962; Jacobs, 1961; and Stack, 1974).

Even quantitative studies began to challenge the hegemony of Community Lost. In an important 1975 survey replication in a Rochester, New York, neighborhood of a study conducted there in 1950, Hunter (1975) found a decrease in the use of shopping, entertainment, and other facilities but no change in informal neighboring and local interaction. Indeed, the local sense of community had increased, leading him to conclude that "the hypothesized consequences of an ecological and functional increase in scale have not resulted in a social and cultural-symbolic loss of community." Summarizing these findings, ethnographic and quantitative alike, Wellman (1979) declared a mid-century era of "Community Saved."

As suburbanization and technological change have increased in the past two decades, scholarship has begun to reach a compromise in the Community Lost and Community Saved arguments. The research of theorists on social networks has shown

that, contrary to the assumptions of a decline in primary relations and to the Community Saved image of dense parochial ties, modern urbanites have created non-spatial communities—viable social relations dispersed in space (Tilly, 1973). Modern urban dwellers, for example, might not know (or want to know) their neighbors on an intimate basis, but they are likely to have interpersonal networks spread throughout the city, state, and even country. Wellman refers to this expanded concept of community as “Community Liberated,” or what might be thought of as community beyond propinquity. This does not mean local relations are unimportant, but only that they are no longer controlling for many areas of social life.

Fischer (1982) has presented a similar vision of what urbanism has wrought and what it means to think of communities as liberated. Clarity is accomplished by emphasizing the distinction between the public and private spheres of social life. In the urban world of strangers a person typically has the capacity to know people categorically, to place them by appearance (age, ethnicity, lifestyle) in one of many urban subcultures. But this is a situational not a psychological style, and it says nothing about attitudes and action in the private sphere. City dwellers have not lost the capacity for deep, long-lasting relationships; rather they have gained the capacity for surface, fleeting relationships that are restricted. Consequently, urbanism’s effects are specified: estrangement occurs in the public sphere—less helpfulness, more conflict—but not in the private sphere—personal relationships and psychological well-being.

It is unfortunate that the present nostalgia for community has emerged almost oblivious to a research cycle of Community Lost, Saved, and Liberated. The evidence supports the argument for Community Liberated, showing that community has been transformed rather than lost. I use this framework to understand what community supplies in mass society. The evidence is now clear that urban dwellers rely less than they have in the past on local neighborhoods for psychological support, cultural and religious nourishment, and economic needs and transactions. They can

shop, work, go to church, and make friends throughout geographical space and, increasingly, cyber space. This alone suggests that interventions in the local community are unlikely to succeed if they attempt to penetrate the private world of personal relations.

I contend that we do not need communities so much to satisfy our private and personal needs, which are best met elsewhere, nor even to meet our sustenance needs, which for better or worse appear to be irretrievably dispersed in space. Rather, local community remains essential as a site for the realization of common values in support of social goods, including public safety, norms of civility and mutual trust, efficacious voluntary associations, and collective socialization of the young.

The local community remains important for another reason—economic resources and social-structural differentiation in general are very much spatially shaped in the United States. Income, education, housing stock—the bedrock of physical and human capital—are distributed unevenly across geographical space, often in conjunction with ascribed characteristics such as racial composition. The continuing and in some cases increasing significance of such ecological differentiation is fundamental to our understanding of community.

Before addressing ecological differentiation, however, I must first digress to consider the operational definitions of community and neighborhood in modern society. The complexity of the phenomenon is staggering; Hillery (1984) reviews close to one hundred definitions of neighborhoods. The traditional definition of a neighborhood, as used by Park, Burgess, and other members of the early Chicago School, refers to an ecological subsection of a larger community, a collection of both people and institutions occupying a spatially defined area that is conditioned by a set of ecological, cultural, and political forces. In an almost utopian way, Park defined neighborhood as “a locality with sentiments, traditions, and a history of its own” (Park, 1916, p. 95). He also claimed that the neighborhood was the basis of social and political organization, albeit not in a formal sense.

Park’s definition overstates the cultural

and political distinctiveness of residential enclaves, but there are aspects of it worth preserving. Most important is the recognition first that neighborhoods are an ecological unit and second that they are nested within successively larger communities. There is no one neighborhood, but many neighborhoods that vary in size and complexity depending on the social phenomenon of interest and the ecological structure of the larger community. This idea of embeddedness is why Choldin (1984) argues for the term *subcommunity*, emphasizing that the local neighborhood is integrally linked to, and dependent on, a larger whole. For these reasons, one can think of residential neighborhoods as what Suttles (1972, p. 59) calls a "mosaic of overlapping boundaries" or what Reiss (1996) calls an "imbricated structure."

ECOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION AND COMMUNITY STRATIFICATION

A wealth of research has studied the ecological differentiation of American cities. Research traditions rooted in "social area analysis" and "factorial ecology" have established structural characteristics that vary among neighborhoods, chiefly along the dimensions of socioeconomic stratification (poverty, occupational attainment), family structure, residential stability (home ownership, tenure), race or ethnicity, and urbanization (density).

This research has demonstrated that many social indicators coalesce in physical space. Current research is attempting to investigate how macro forces lead to the clustering of social and economic factors in urban areas. The best-known result is Wilson's (1987) theory of "concentration effects" that arise from living in a neighborhood that is overwhelmingly impoverished. Wilson argues that the social transformation of inner-city areas in recent decades has resulted in an increased concentration of the most disadvantaged segments of the urban black population, especially poor, female-headed families with children. At the national level in 1990, fully 25 percent of poor blacks lived in concentrated poverty neighborhoods com-

pared with only 3 percent of poor whites (Jargowsky, 1997, p. 41). The consequences of these distributions are profound because they mean that relationships between race and individual outcomes are systematically confounded with important differences in community contexts.

The concentration of poverty and joblessness has been fueled by macroeconomic changes related to the deindustrialization of central cities where low-income minorities are disproportionately located. These changes include a shift from goods-producing to service-producing industries, the increasing polarization of the labor market into low-wage and high-wage workers, and the relocation of manufacturing away from the inner cities. The related exodus of middle- and upper-income black families from the inner city has also, according to Wilson, removed an important social buffer that could potentially deflect the full impact of prolonged joblessness and industrial transformation. Wilson (1996) argues that income mixing within communities was more characteristic of ghetto neighborhoods in the 1940s and 1950s and that inequality among communities today has become more pronounced as a result of the increasing spatial separation of middle- and upper-income blacks from lower-income blacks.

Focusing on racial segregation, Massey and Denton (1993) describe how, in a segregated environment, economic shocks that push more people into the ranks of low-income earners not only bring about an increase in the poverty rate for the group as a whole but also cause an increase in the geographic concentration of poverty. This geographic intensification occurs because the additional poverty created by macroeconomic conditions is spread unevenly over a metropolitan area. The greater the segregation, "the smaller the number of neighborhoods absorbing the shock, and the more severe the resulting concentration of poverty" (Massey, 1990, p. 337). At the other end of the income distribution, the growing geographic concentration of (predominantly white) affluence suggests a society increasingly bifurcated by wealth. Although for different reasons, both Wilson and Massey

contend that race-linked social change is a structural force that is reflected in local environments.

The recognition of the spatial clustering of social problems actually has a long history. In the 1920s Shaw and McKay (1969) discovered that the same Chicago neighborhoods characterized by poverty, residential instability, and high rates of crime and delinquency were also plagued by high rates of infant mortality, low birth weight, tuberculosis, physical abuse, and other factors detrimental to child development. This general empirical finding has emerged repeatedly. Clearly, there is a connection between the healthy development of children and community structure.

In short, research on ecological differentiation has established some facts. First, there is considerable race-linked economic inequality among neighborhoods and communities, evidenced by the clustering of indicators of both advantaged and disadvantaged socioeconomic status and racial isolation. Second, social problems come bundled at the neighborhood level, including but not limited to crime, social disorder, and poor child health. Third, the ecological concentration of poverty, racial isolation, and social dislocations appears to have increased significantly along with the concentration of affluence, especially during the 1980s and 1990s.

Despite increased urbanization and a complex imbricated structure, neighborhoods and residential subcommunities remain persistent in American society. As any real estate agent or homeowner will attest, location does matter. It remains for a theory of community to specify the social mechanisms by which structural dimensions of community, especially the concentration of urban poverty, racial segregation, and residential stability, matter. It is to this issue I now turn.

THEORY OF COMMUNITY SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

At the most general level, community social organization may be thought of as the ability of a community structure to realize the

common values of its residents and maintain effective social controls. Social control should not be equated with repression or forced conformity. Rather, it refers to the capacity of a social unit to regulate itself according to desired principles, to realize collective, as opposed to forced, goals. This conception is similar to Tilly's (1973) definition of collective action: the application of a community's pooled resources to common ends. There seems to be a consensus among Americans on the virtues of neighborhoods characterized by economic sufficiency, good schools, adequate housing, and a clean, healthy environment. The capacity to achieve such common goals is linked to informal relationships established for other purposes and more formal efforts to achieve social regulation through institutional means (see Kornhauser, 1978, p. 24).

The present framework of social control does not rest on homogeneity, whether cultural or socio-demographic. Diverse populations can and do agree on wanting safe streets. And social conflicts can and do rend communities along the lines of economic resources, race, political empowerment, and the role of criminal justice agents in defining and controlling drug use, gangs, panhandling, and police misconduct. Conflict usually coalesces around the distribution of resources and power, not the content of core values. As Selznick (1992, pp. 367, 369) has written, "communities are characterized by structural differentiation as well as by shared consciousness." The goal of community is thus unity in diversity, or the reconciliation of partial and general perspectives on the common good.

This sociological conception of social control addresses the longstanding criticism that theories of community social organization deemphasize social conflict. Recognizing that collective efforts to achieve common goals are variable and coexist with conflict, I thus use the term "differential social organization." In other words, I accept that communities lack homogeneity as I define them and focus on the variable forms of organization, formal and informal. Furthermore, my definition embraces geography rather than solidarity or identity as the major criterion

identifying a community. Following Tilly (1973, p. 212), I "choose to make territoriality define communities and to leave the extent of solidarity problematic." When formulated in this way, the dimensions of community social organization are analytically separable not only from racial segregation, concentrated poverty, instability, and other exogenous sources of variation but from the social goods that may result.

Networks, Social Capital, and Collective Efficacy

The social-control way of thinking about community is grounded in what Kasarda and Janowitz (1974, p. 329) call the "systemic" model, in which the local community is viewed as a complex system of friendship and kinship networks, and of formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life, on-going socialization processes, and local institutions. Important systemic dimensions of community social organization are the prevalence, interdependence, and overlapping nature of social networks, local participation in formal and voluntary organizations, and the span of collective attention that the community directs toward local problems.

Thus conceived, the systemic model of social capital borrows insights gleaned from the social network paradigm in sociology. As a theoretical project, network analysis rejects the attempt to explain social process in terms of individual cognition or categorical attributes such as poverty or ethnicity. What counts more are the *social relations among persons* and the *structural connections among positions*. Applied to the local community, network analysis investigates the constraining and enabling dimensions of patterned relationships among social actors in an ecological system. The important point to take from this view is that community composition, the aggregation of individual characteristics, matters primarily as it bears on network structure.

The systemic or network analysis of social control is theoretically compatible with more recent formulations of what has been termed *social capital*. Coleman (1988, p. 98) defines

social capital by its functions: it is created when the structure of relations among persons facilitates action, "making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible." Social capital is a social good embodied in the relations among persons and positions. In other words, social capital is lodged not in individuals but in the structure of social organization. Putnam (1993, p. 36) has defined social capital in a similar fashion as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit."

It follows that communities high in social capital are better able to realize common values and maintain effective social controls. Consider the case of childrearing, which is analyzed typically from the perspective of families. Neighborhoods characterized by extensive obligations, expectations, and interlocking social networks connecting adults are best able to facilitate the informal social control of children. Such close local networks provide the child with social capital of a collective nature, as reflected in the idea that "it takes a whole village to raise a child."

Social networks alone, however, are not sufficient to understand local communities. After all, networks are, differentially invoked; and in fact dense, tight-knit networks may actually impede social organization if they are isolated or weakly linked to collective expectations for action.

Private ties notwithstanding, then, it is the linkage of mutual trust and the willingness to intervene for the common good that defines the neighborhood context of what Sampson *et al.* (1997) term *collective efficacy*. Just as individuals vary in their capacity for effective action, so too do neighborhoods vary in their capacity to achieve common goals. It follows that the collective efficacy of residents is a critical feature of urban neighborhoods, regardless of the demographic composition of the population.

Institutions and Public Control

The present integration of a social capital and systemic network model of community

social organization should not be read as ignoring institutions or the political environment of which local communities are a part. The institutional component of the systemic model is the neighborhood organizations and their linkages with other organizations, within and outside the community. Neighborhood organizations are the structural embodiment of community solidarity. For example, Kornhauser (1978, p. 79) argues that when the horizontal links among institutions in a community are weak, the capacity to defend local interests is weakened. Moreover, institutional strength is not necessarily isomorphic with neighborhood cohesion. Many communities exhibit intense private ties among friends and kin yet still lack the institutional capacity to achieve social control.

Vertical integration is potentially even more important. Bursik and Grasmick (1993) emphasize the importance of *public* control, defined as the capacity of local community organizations to obtain police and fire services, block grants and other extralocal resources that help sustain neighborhood social stability and local control.

LINKING STRUCTURAL DIFFERENTIATION AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

The preceding discussion underscores the reality that community social capital does not emerge from a vacuum. It is embedded in structural contexts and a political economy of place. Structural differentiation and extralocal political economy shape the dimensions of neighborhood social organization

Research shows that local friendship ties and the density of acquaintanceship vary widely across communities and that these variations are positively related to residential stability in a community. Stability is typically measured by average length of residence and the prevalence of homeownership. Community stability is independently associated with collective attachment to community and rates of participation in social and leisure activities. Furthermore, community residential stability has significant contextual effects

on an individual's local friendships and participation in local social activities even after accounting for factors such as age, social class, and life cycle (Sampson, 1988). Consistent with the predictions of the systemic model, these findings suggest that residential stability promotes a variety of social networks and local associations, thereby increasing the social capital of local communities.

Neighborhood variations in informal social control and institutional vitality are also systematically linked to patterns of resource deprivation and racial segregation, especially the concentration of poverty, joblessness, and family disruption. Wilson (1996) has described the corroding effects on neighborhood social organization of concentrated joblessness and the social isolation of the urban poor. He argues that in areas of economic distress where men are marginalized from the labor market and often family life as well, the incentives for participation in the social aspects of community life are reduced.

Similarly, Brooks-Gunn *et al.* (1993) reported that for many child and adolescent outcomes such as low IQ, dropping out of high school, problem behaviors, and out-of-wedlock births, the *absence* of affluent neighbors was more important than the *presence* of low-income neighbors. In particular, high economic status proved to be more important than the poverty status, racial composition, or the family structure of neighborhoods. Aber (1992) found that neighborhood socioeconomic status and joblessness interacted to predict adolescent outcomes: it was in conditions of high jobless rates that the absence of affluent neighbors served to depress academic achievement scores.

Studies have explored the mechanisms of community social organization more directly, especially how they are shaped by ecological differentiation. Elliott *et al.* (1996) examined survey data from neighborhoods in Chicago and Denver, which revealed that a measure of informal control was significantly related to adolescent outcomes in both places—positively to school achievement and conventional friendships, for instance, and negatively to delinquency. A similar finding was reported in Sampson's (1997) analysis of a

community survey in Chicago designed to measure the willingness of neighbors to intervene in skipping school, spray-painting graffiti, and like public acts of deviance by children. Variations in the informal social control of children across eighty neighborhoods were positively related to residential stability and negatively related to concentrated poverty. In fact, informal social control accounted for more than half of the relationship between residential stability and lower rates of delinquency.

Although limited, the cumulative results of recent research support the idea that neighborhoods characterized by mistrust, sparse acquaintanceship networks among residents, attenuated social control of public spaces, and a weak institutional base coupled with little participation in local voluntary associations face an increased risk of crime, social disorder, and troublesome youth behavior. Perhaps more important, these dimensions of community social capital or collective efficacy are systematically structured (although not determined) by differences in wealth, jobs, family status, and residential tenure. Once again, however, one must be careful not to view structural patterns as arising solely from processes indigenous to neighborhoods. To understand neighborhood variations and ultimately to design community interventions, one must also take into account urban political economy.

Political Economy

Empirical research on the political economy of American cities has shown that structural differentiation is shaped directly and indirectly by the spatial decisions of public officials and businesses. The decline and destabilization of many central-city neighborhoods, for instance, has been facilitated not only by individual preferences as manifested in voluntary migration patterns, but government decisions on public housing, incentives for suburban growth in the form of tax breaks for developers and private mortgage assistance, highway construction and urban renewal, economic disinvestment in central cities, and zoning restrictions on land use.

Consider public housing and the legacy of urban renewal. Bursik (1989) has shown that the construction of new public housing projects in Chicago in the 1970s was associated with increased rates of population turnover, which predicted increases in crime independent of the area's population composition. Skogan (1990) has noted that urban renewal and forced migration contributed to the wholesale uprooting of many urban communities, and especially that freeway networks driven through the center of many cities in the 1960s destroyed viable, low-income neighborhoods. Across the nation, fully 20 percent of all central-city housing units occupied by blacks were lost in the 1960s because of urban redevelopment. This displacement does not even include that brought about by evictions, rent increases, and other routine market forces.

Equally disturbing, Wilson (1987) documents the often disastrous consequences of municipal decisions to concentrate minorities and the poor in public housing. Opposition from organized community groups to building public housing in their neighborhoods, de facto federal policy to tolerate extensive segregation against blacks in urban housing markets, and the decision by local governments to neglect code enforcement and the rehabilitation of existing residential units have all contributed to segregated housing projects that have become ghettos for many poor minority members.

The responsibilities of private development and business do not emerge unscathed, either. The idea of cities as growth machines (Logan and Molotch, 1987) reflects the marriage of private markets and enthusiastic governments to pursue aggressive development, often at the expense of previously stable communities with strong patterns of local social organization. Tax breaks for suburban development and federally supported housing mortgages have been especially prominent in the hollowing out of many urban centers. Historically, real estate agents have aided racial segregation and neighborhood instability by acting as panic peddlers in an effort to induce or accelerate the pace of neighborhood change. Joining them have been banks that redlined mortgage applica-

tions and promoted economic disinvestment in the inner city.

Zoning, a seemingly innocuous administrative practice, has undermined the social aspects of traditional urban life. By design, zoning is intended to create separate geographical spaces, and it has done so by cutting up neighborhoods into artificial segments, which disrupts patterns of social interaction and human activities. Indeed, the eerie lack of people walking and interacting on the streets of many suburban developments attests to zoning's dehumanization of the environment.

Whether through the purposeful segregation of low-income public housing, highway construction, urban renewal, government subsidized development by the private sector, zoning, redlining, blockbusting, or something so simple yet powerfully symbolic as gated communities with no sidewalks, it is no longer possible to think of neighborhoods as natural areas created by the aggregation of individual preferences alone. Clearly, government, business, and the political economy matter to an understanding of what communities can and cannot supply.

CONCLUSION

Urbanization and modernity notwithstanding, local communities and residential neighborhoods remain a prominent feature of American society. In this chapter I have proposed a community-level framework to explain why. I have explored the meaning, sources, and consequences of what communities supply from the perspective of a theory of social capital and collective efficacy.

It is appropriate to close, however, with some words of caution on the limits of community. Achieving common goals in an increasingly diverse society is no easy task and has proven a problem for communitarian thinking in an age of individual rights. In the pursuit of informal social control and collective goods, there is always the danger that freedoms will be restricted unnecessarily, that people will face unwanted and even unjust scrutiny. For example, surveillance of "suspicious" persons in socially controlled com-

munities can easily become translated into the wholesale interrogation of racial minorities (see Skogan, 1990). Suppose further that a community comes together with high social capital and cohesion to block the residential entry of a racial group. Put more bluntly, what if racism is a shared value among residents of certain neighborhoods? Such exclusion happens too often, prompting Suttles (1972) to warn of the dark side of "defended neighborhoods."

Consider also the historical connection between official corruption and local solidarity. Whyte (1943, p. 126) was one of the first to document the ironic consequences of dense, multiple relationships in cohesive communities for law enforcement. "The policeman who takes a strictly legalistic view of his duties cuts himself off from the personal relations necessary to enable him to serve as a mediator of disputes in his area." By contrast, "the policeman who develops close ties with local people is unable to act against them with the vigor prescribed by the law." It follows that police corruption is an ever present danger under conditions of high social capital even as it aids in dispute resolution and informal social control because of interlocking social ties. It was the nature of such corruption that originally led to decentralized policing and an emergency-based patrol response in which officers were randomly assigned across neighborhoods. The nationwide move to embrace community policing has perhaps not recognized the risks inherent in the community side of the equation.

Obviously, Americans would not do well to think of racism, norms of social exclusion, and instruments of corruption as desirable forms of social capital, and we must balance community with a normative conception of social justice. It is for this reason that I have focused on widely expressed desires regarding community—especially social order and public safety. My strategy relies on a vision of urban America based on shared values for a safe and healthy environment, not on policies that divide by race and class. Nonetheless, pursuit of community goals must proceed cautiously and with respect for individual rights, diversity, and limits on state

power. Fortunately, legal justice and community are not the antinomy common wisdom suggests. Constitutional law has long been concerned with balancing individual rights against the need to promote the health and safety of communities. The very idea of police power suggests the tension, long recognized by the Supreme Court, between individual rights and the pursuit of social order. Bringing law and social justice back into discussions of community development is a welcome and necessary move in the attempt to unite diversity in the name of community.

Finally, I caution against falling into the trap of local determinism. Part of the appeal of community is the image of local residents working collectively to solve their own problems. A defining part of American tradition (nostalgia?) is to hold individuals as well as communities responsible for their own fate. Like Saul Alinsky, I too have embraced the American ideal of residents joining forces to build community and maintain social order. This is not the only or even the most important story, however. As I have been at pains to emphasize, what happens within neighborhoods is in large part shaped by extra-local social forces and the political economy. In addition to encouraging communities to mobilize via self-help strategies of informal social control, it is incumbent on government to mount aggressive strategies to address the social and ecological changes that have battered inner-city communities. The specific nature of such efforts is beyond the scope of this chapter, but that should not detract from the importance of restorative moves at the political and macro-social level. Recognizing that community social action matters, in other words, does not absolve society of the responsibility for seeking equality of opportunities at the neighborhood as well as the individual level.

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