The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of SocialWork

SOWK 5953A/C Integrated Social Work Practice III

Lecture 1: What is Community & Community Work?

Theory of Community (Smith, 2001)

Community

- As a **value**
    - solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust.
- As a **descriptive category** or **set of variables**
    - **Place**
      Territorial or place community can be seen as where people have something in common, and this shared element is understood geographically.
      Another naming this is as 'locality'. This approach to community has spawned a rich literature – first in 'community studies' and more recently in locality studies (often focusing on spatial divisions of labour).
    - **Interest**
      In interest or 'elective' communities people share a common characteristic other than place. They are linked together by factors such as religious belief, sexual orientation, occupation or ethnic origin.
      In this way we may talk about the 'gay community', the 'Catholic community' or the 'Chinese community'.
      selfhood have played an important role in 'opening out the conceptual space within which non-place forms of community can be understood' (Hoggett 1997: 7).
    - **Communion**
      Weakest form: as a sense of attachment to a place, group or idea (in other words, whether there is a 'spirit of community'.
      Strongest form 'communion' entails a profound meeting or encounter – not just with other people, but also with God and creation.
      One example here would be the Christian communion of saints – the spiritual union between each Christian and Christ (and hence between

every Christian).

- **'communities of meaning' (Cohen, 1982, 1985)**
    - "community" plays a crucial symbolic role in generating people's sense of belonging' (Crow and Allan 1994: 6).
    - The reality of community, Cohen argues, lies in its members' perception of the vitality of its culture (a significant element of this is what
    - Putnam calls 'social capital'.
    - "People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity' (Cohen 1985: 118).
- **Boundary and community**
    - members of a group have something in common with each other;
    - and the thing held in common distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other possible groups (Cohen 1985: 12).
    - Community, thus, implies both similarity and difference. It is a relational idea: 'the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities'
    - question of boundary – what marks the beginning and end of a community?
    - boundaries may be marked on a map (as administrative areas), or in law, or by physical features like a river or road. Some may be religious or linguistic.
    - However, not all boundaries are so obvious: 'They may be thought of, rather, as existing in the minds of the beholders' (Cohen 1985: 12).
    - they may be seen in very different ways, not only by people on either side, but also by people on the same side.
    - This is the *symbolic* aspect of community (or communion) boundary and is fundamental to gaining an appreciation of how people experience communities (and communion).
    - The defining of a boundary places some people within, and some beyond the line. The definition of 'community' or 'communion' can, thus, become an exclusionary act.
    - The benefits of belonging to a particular group are denied to non-members. A very obvious example of this is the growth of 'gated communities' in the USA and UK. A physical barrier is erected to keep out, in this case, those who are poor or who are seen as a threat

- As **network** and **local social system**
  - people live close to one another do not necessarily mean that they have much to do with each other.
  - There may be little interaction between neighbours. It is the nature of the relationships between people and the social networks of which they are a part that is often seen as one of the more significant aspects of 'community'.
- As **norms** and **habits**
  - **Tolerance :** an openness to others; curiosity; perhaps even respect, a willingness to listen and learn (Walzer 1997: 11).
  - **Reciprocity** : Putnam (2000) describes generalized reciprocity thus: 'I'll do this for you now, without expecting anything immediately in return, and perhaps without even knowing you, confident that down the road you or someone else will return the favour'. In the short run there is altruism, in the long run self-interest.
  - **Trust:** The confident expectation that people, institutions and things will act in a consistent, honest and appropriate way (or more accurately, 'trustworthiness' – reliability) is essential if communities are to flourish.
    - Closely linked to norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement (Putnam 1993; Coleman 1990), social trust – trust in other people – allows people to cooperate and to develop.
    - Trusting others does not entail us suspending our critical judgment – some people will be worthy of trust, some will not.

The Desire for Community (Brent, 2004)
- **Illusion, Confusion and Paradox**
  - Community is a desire, continually replenishing itself as people seek voice and connectedness, in all their imperfections.
  - Community, even if an illusion, has very real effects, even if these do not produce utopia.
  - Community activity creates conflict and division. Though community action is partly based on reassuring ideas of cooperation and mutuality, it is also divisive, dividing the inside from the outside, and producing internal strife between different factions.
  - Community *is*, a continual deferral of any descriptive or definitional formulation by which 'it' can be identified. There has been a reliance on

metaphor, and a stress upon relationships with other concepts.

■ There have been a whole raft of words connected to it: power, voice, social peace, warmth, conflict, division, enmity, disunity, unity, certainty, illusion, locality, nature, lifeworld, organic, autonomy, fantasy, myth, resistance, cultural identity, face-to-face, nationalist, reactionary. It is all very inexact, though, to judge by how often the term is used, it illustrates perfectly the idea that '["inexact"] does not mean "unusable" ' (Wittgenstein, 1976, p. 41).

■ Community is the continually reproduced desire to overcome the adversity of social life, and it is community as desire rather than community as social object which commands engagement. This desire manifests itself in a number of contradictory ways, and leads to no unified form of relationships or direction of social action. This explains the lack of any single morphology of community.

地域性社區 *(geographical community):*

■ 社會學者對什麼是社區出現不斷的爭議,並無一定的共識和結論。而社會學與政治學亦對社區有不同的取向。

■ 過去，對社區的理解大部分人是以「人際關係的群組」(sets of relationships)來定義社區，這種關係是以地理為基礎，人們互動的對象常是居住相近的人，因此，人際關係通常都發生於一定的地域或以鄰近地區為範圍，所謂「人際關係的群組」包括工作、宗教、種族、政治、娛樂等活動所組成的群體，而通常我們所認定的社區亦包括其互動的性質，一個社區其成員對社區應有歸屬感、認同感、社區中人與人之間有連繫與伙伴的關係（賴兩陽, 2002: 15）

■ 社會學者 Bulmer (1987: 38-39) 則將社區的焦點放在

 i. <u>初級團體或個人關係 (primary group relationships or personal relationships)</u>
   - 非正式的連結
   - 主要是朋友、鄰居和親戚

 ii. <u>網絡/ 制度性或社會性的結構關係 (institutionalize or socially structured relations)</u>
   Bulmer 建議使用社會網絡(social networks)這個名詞以取代定義混淆的「社區」

思考: 互聯網的興起，人際關係的互動出現重大變化, 日常以電郵或 ICQ 交往突破地域的限制，七一互聯網的動員功能，'flash mobs' 的出現，是否顯示在人際交往中地域的重要性經已愈來愈低?然而,為什麼我們仍要五十萬人同時集中於港島的街道上，為什麼要在同一時間同一地點進行同一無意義的活動呢?我們對地域及空間會否有一新的詮釋?全球化會否出現地球村，會否有地球公民的出現?但上述行為又是否反映人需要歸屬、認同與連繫的需求不是下降反而是上升呢?

功能性社區 (functional community)

◆ 梁祖彬 <理論> 第二章: 26:

1. 社區代表社會集體。可以是同一地域內的居民(地域性社區)，也可以是有著共同生活方式、信仰、背景、利益及功能的一群人(功能性社區)。
2. 有共同點把他們聯繫起來，把他們與非成員分開;
3. 提供給成員「集體身分」(collective identity)及歸屬感
4. 社區亦代表了人際關係的理想: 緊密的交往、互相照顧、關懷、合作、支持及依賴。
5. 透過社區團結關係的保護，成員獲得心理上的安全感及歸屬感，
6. 透過集體行動, 成員可以了解他們的共同問題，更有效地保障集體和個人的利益。
7. 社區可以有經濟、教育、社會參與、感情及社會控制等五方面的功能。

社區與社會工作

◆ 梁祖彬 <理論> 第二章: 30 認為:

1. 社區是一個工作環境(community as a context)，一個工作地點；社會作者需要了解工作對象的生活環境、問題、資源及文化背景。
2. 社區是一個互相照顧的網絡(caring community)，一個可滿足成員生理上需要及心理上需要的單位；社工着力發展及加強成員間的互助關係，歸屬感及自助能力，以解決成員的個別或共同問題。
3. 社區是影響社會政策的基地(empowered community); 社區工作是一種爭取及保障集體共同利益的手法

社區工作由地域的社區為主要對象，開始轉移至組織某些被視為「弱勢」

(vulnerable)的社群如病人、婦女、接受福利者、工人、老人等。這些以有共同問題或需要的人士為組織對象的社區工作，主要是為成員提供互相支持、服務及分享經驗的網絡，減少他們對正規及專業服務的依賴。這些組織也可以變成壓力團體，爭取社會及政府對他們面對的問題作出關注。這類非地域性的社區工作可稱為「自助組織運動」。

> 練習：　請舉出五個香港不同自助組織運動的名稱，及了解他們組織是什麼對象

1.　什麼是社區工作?

甘炳光與莫慶聯(<理論> 第一章: 9-13)，綜合不同學者及機構對社區工作的定義，有以下共通點，認為社區工作是:

1. 是社會工作的一種介入手法；
2. 是一個過程；
3. 是運用集體行動的方法;
4. 鼓吹居民自助、互助及自決的精神；
5. 能找出及滿足社區的需要，解決社區問題，培養社區歸屬感和認同感，達致社區整合，改善社區生活素質；
6. 能發展居民能力，加強其自主性；
7. 能促進社會轉變

但上述定義亦少提及一些更宏觀及更結構的目標如

1. 改變社會制度;
2. 改變權力分配;
3. 減低居民的無能感;
4. 增強自信及權力感(empowerment)

> 社區工作的定義:
> 社區工作是以社區為對象的社會工作介入手法。它透過組織居民參與集體行動，去釐訂社區需要，合力解決社區問題，改善生活環境及素質;在參與的過程,中讓居民建立對社區歸屬感，培養自助、互助及自決的精神;加強市民的社區參與及影響決策的能力和意識，發揮居民的潛能，培養社區領袖才能，以達致更公平、公義、民主及和諧的社會。

社區工作是：手法？ 服務？信念？ *(甘與莫 <理論>第一章：1-2)*

1. 社會工作的手法

◆ 回到香港的脈絡，究竟什麼是社區工作?最普遍的看法是社區工作是社會工作三大手法之一。

◆ 相對個案及小組工作，社區工作是較遲才獲確認為社會工作的介入(intervention)方法。美國在 1920 及 1930 分別確認個案及小組工作的手法，社區工作手法要遲至 1962 年才被社工教育課程委員會承認為社會工作基本方法之一。這確認希望擴大社會工作的分析角度，跳出微觀的層面，補充危機介入方法的不足，最終令當事人的問題能全面得到處理及解決。

◆ 由於社區工作是經常協助低下階層爭取權益,有時反而可能被視為一種社會運動而不是社工專業。所以，在六十年代和七十年代，英國就經常討論社區工作與社會工作的關係。

◆ 社區工作被確認為社會工作方法之一,亦反映出兩者有很多共通而一致的基本價值觀,如相信人的自決權利,相信人的尊嚴及價值,相信爭取公義的重要等。

◆ 事實上,現時不同的社會服務中,已普遍使用社區工作的手法。如青少年中心的「關社」及「青年議會」；康復服務組織弱智人士的家長及長期病患者,老人服務的關社、義工及爭取權益組織,就算是較傳統的家庭服務,亦將變成綜合家庭服務中心,著重建立社區網絡,防止家庭問題產生。

2. 特定的服務

◆ 在香港,社區工作除了是一種工作方法外,還可視為一種特定的服務。五六十年代,由於有量移民,政府便開始推行社區工作服務,設立社區中心(CC),培養居民對社區的歸屬感及互助合作的精神。

◆ 七十年代末期,木屋及臨屋的數目大幅增加,這些地區的居住環境惡劣,政府開始資助社工機構,從事「鄰舍層面社區發展計劃」(NLCDP),這是官方對社區工作作為一種服務的確認。

◆ 而在九十年代末,政府有意收縮 NLCDP, 但在居民與社工的爭取下,減慢了步伐，亦在市區舊區成立綜合鄰舍服務計劃 (Integrated Neighbourhood Project, INP)作出替代,以平息反對的聲音。

2. 獨特的信念

◆ 社區工作本身是十分籠統的名詞，亦並非社會工作者的專利，廣義來說任何人或組織，只要在社區內從事任何為人群服務的活動及服務，己可算是進行社區工作。

◆ 聯合國曾在 1963 年對社區發展作出的定義是「人民與政府群策群力的過程，目的在於改善社區的經濟、文化、及社會狀況，對國家的進步作出貢獻」。事實上，很多政黨、議員、城市規劃師所做的工作均符合上述社區工作的廣義的定義，但卻不能算是社會工作範疇下的社區工作，正正因為它們缺乏社會工作/社區工作的信念。所以社區工作不單是一種工作手法或是一種特定的服務，社區工作的特質在於其特有的信念與堅持。

◆ 這些信念除了是社會工作的基本信念外，社區工作的獨特信念包括:
1. 以社區為對象;
2. 採用結構導向(structural oreientation)的角度分析問題;
3. 介入的層面較廣包括社會政策與制度
4. 強調居民的集體參與
5. 事工目標與過程目標並重
6. 運用社區資源
7. 具政治性

New Direction: Community Social Work (Stepney & Popple, 2008)

"Community is back in vogue as a context, method and as a level of intervention"

(Mizrahi, 2001, p.176)

● Ambiguity about the current identity and status of community social work (CSW)
   ■ Paradox concerning limitations of social work to resolve many of the problems in the community with methods of community intervention are being brought back into use
   ■ Become part of a process of social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal

project in UK (Popple, 2006), and also social inclusion and building social capital projects funded by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund in HK;

- Tension between the state and the citizen: whether the state can promote change at the local level in favour of marginalized groups , and develop preventive policies for collaboration and inclusion whilst resisting pressure for more enforcement and control (Stepney, 2006)

- Tension between to social justice and limited resources: sense of responsibility reflected in social work profession and commitment to social justice vs. front-line agencies faced problems of inadequate resources and support in the community, poor infrastructure services, fragmentation of community networks and so on.

- The contradiction between social legitimation vs. radical agenda for change.

Further reading

Bauman, Z. (2001) *Seeking Safety in an insecure world*, Cambridge: Polity Press. 159 pages. Useful overview of the idea in the context of current debates about the nature and future of society.

Bell, C. and Newby, H. (1971) *Community Studies*, London: Unwin. 262 pages. Classic overview of community studies (American and European) with a useful chapter discussing theories of community.

Cohen, A. P. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Tavistock (now Routledge). 128 pages. Outstanding exploration of 'community' that focuses on it as a cultural phenomenon. Cohen looks at the ways in which the boundaries to communities are symbolically defined and how people become aware of belonging to a community. Chapters examine the 'classical' tradition of community and the contribution of the Chicago tradition; symbolizing boundaries; communities of meaning; and the symbolic construction of community.

Cohen, A. P. (ed.) (1982) *Belonging. Identity and social organization in British rural cultures*, Manchester: University of Manchester Press. 325 + x pages. This book examines the nature of belonging; social association within localities; and how these may relate to wider appreciations of nation. The book includes some excellent material from ethnographic studies of six rural communities: Anthony Cohen on Whalsay, Shetland; Marilyn Strathern on Elmdon; Isabel Emmett on Blaenau

Ffestiniog; Peter Mewett on a Lewis crofting community; Sidsel Saugestad Larson on Kilbroney; and Robin Fox on Tory Island.

Crow, G. and Allan, G. (1994) *Community Life. An introduction to local social relations*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf. 229 + xxv. Excellent overview of the sociology of community in contemporary Britain. Chapters examine the various themes running through the sociology of community; community life in past generations; restructuring communities - the impact of economic change; the significance of geographical mobility; ethnicity, solidarity and social segregation; changing ideals of housing and domesticity; urban redevelopment and community action; community and social policy; and the continuing importance of the sociology of community. As an exploration of the use of the British community studies tradition the book is difficult to fault.

Etzioni, A. (1995) *The Spirit of Community. Rights responsibilities and the communitarian agenda*, London: Fontana Press. 323 + xii pages. Influential US text that argues for the balancing of individualism with social responsibility. The section titles provide an insight into the line: shoring up morality; too many rights, too few responsibilities; the public interest.

Etzioni, A. (1997) *The New Golden Rule. Community and morality in a democratic society*, London: Profile Books. 314 + xxi pages. Interesting development of communitarian debates based around what Etzioni sees as the two cardinal founding principles   and core virtues of the good society: social order (based on moral values) and autonomy (or "thick" liberty). The "golden rule" is where these are in equilibrium.

Frazer, E. (1999) *The Problem of Communitarian Politics. Unity and conflict*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 279 + ix pages. Very helpful exploration and critique of the subject with some useful material on community.

Hoggett, P. (ed.) (1997) *Contested Communities: experiences, struggles, policies*, Bristol: Policy Press ISBN 1 86134 036 2. £15.95. Following introductory essays on contested communities (Hoggett) and neighbours (Crow), this book has sections on community and social diversity; local government and community; and community participation and empowerment. The book uses a set of case studies to examine the sources of community activism, the ways communities define themselves and defined by outsiders, and the room for partnerships with different agencies. Internal conflicts within communities are also examined.

Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling Alone. The collapse and revival of American community*, New York: Simon and Schuster. 541 pages. Brilliant setting out of analysis and

evidence concerning the decline and possible reconstruction of civil life in the United States.

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*Kumar, C. (2005). Revisiting 'community' in community-based natural resource management. In *Community Development Journal, 40* (3): 275 –285.

*Stepney, P. &Popple, K. (2008). Social Work and the Community : a Critical Context for Practice.   Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 7

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黃洪及李劍明 (2001) 困局、排斥與出路: 香港邊緣勞工質性研究。 香港:樂施會。

賴兩陽(2002)。 *社區工作與社會福利社區化*。台北: 洪葉文化