

## TECH1502-18 Introduction to Community Media

### Lecture Seven – Decline of Community

#### 1 Full Definition of Community

plural com·mu·ni·ties

1. a unified body of individuals: as a: state, commonwealth b: the people with common interests living in a particular area; broadly: the area itself <the problems of a large community> c: an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location d: a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society <a community of retired persons> e: a group linked by a common policy f: a body of persons or nations having a common history or common social, economic, and political interests <the international community> g: a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society <the academic community>
2. society at large
3. joint ownership or participation <community of goods> b: common character: likeness <community of interests> c: social activity: fellowship d: a social state or condition. <http://beta.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community>

#### 2 Social Links

A common definition of community emerged as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings. The participants differed in the emphasis they placed on particular elements of the definition. Community was defined similarly but experienced differently by people with diverse backgrounds. These results parallel similar social science findings and confirm the viability of a common definition for participatory public health. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1446907/>

##### 2.1 England's identity crisis: what does it mean to be English?

Let's face it: we are living through the most important phase of British politics – indeed, British society – since Margaret Thatcher's first government. Everything seems uncertain: the result of the next election, the long-term fate of all three main parties, the reputation of such British institutions as the BBC, the police, and the NHS – and the future of the United Kingdom itself. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/20/england-identity-crisis-english-euro-scottish-elections-ukip-patriotism>

##### 2.2 Our strength lies in our diversity

The debate on multiculturalism lingers despite the fact that in many communities we are into the fourth and fifth generation of British citizens. The definition of multiculturalism alone as a starting point has been a contentious one with various opinions put forward on what the word actually means. What does it mean to integrate and what does it mean to be British? Over the past half-century and more, we can safely say there has been a lot of progress made by BME (black and minority ethnic) groups. Members of such communities play a key role in the operation of British society, performing various duties in professional capacities in the political, health, education and business sectors for the betterment of our Great Britain. <http://www.pukaarmagazine.com/our-strength-lies-in-our-diversity/>

#### 3 Social Capital

What is community and why should educators be concerned with it? We explore the development of theory around community, and the significance of boundaries, social networks and social norms – and why attention to social capital and communion may be important. <http://infed.org/mobi/community/>

#### 4 Common Values

A community is a social unit of any size that shares common values, or that is situated in a given geographical area (e.g. a village or town). It is a group of people who are connected by durable relations that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties, and who mutually define that relationship as important to their social identity and practice. Although communities are usually small, community may also refer to large groups, such as national communities, international communities, and virtual communities. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community>

## **Facebook's failure: did fake news and polarized politics get Trump elected?**

The company is being accused of abdicating its responsibility to clamp down on fake news stories and counter the echo chamber that defined this election <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/nov/10/facebook-fake-news-election-conspiracy-theories?INTCMP=sfl>

### **4.1 Definitional Utility**

"Definitions of community in current usage are many and usually vague and non-isolating. A definition which would have wide acceptability and utility, would be one which was operational and included people in interaction in a given area" <http://search.proquest.com/openview/015790453dd3148fcbd2c1c6549e8f0e/1?pq-origsite=gscholar>

'Community' is a term used, with considerable regularity, across a vast range of social settings. It is a commonplace of everyday speech, and features prominently also in professional and political discourse. We might note familiar terms such as 'community care', 'community relations', 'community policing', 'community punishment', 'community regeneration', to mention but a few. However, as Cohen suggests, the near-ubiquity of the term is matched by the vagueness and variability of meaning that attends its use. It may be that users are not particularly clear about what exactly they mean by the term, or it may be used and understood in widely divergent ways by different actors and audiences. <http://www.whb.co.uk/socialissues/vol2my.htm>

## **5 Loss of Community**

Forget terrorism, global warming or rising interest rates - local post office closures are what keep us Brits awake at night, according to a new report by volunteering agency CSV. The report, Vanishing Britain, reveals that the majority of people in the UK are concerned that we are turning into an urbanised, work-obsessed nation of out-of-town supermarket shoppers. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2006/aug/16/communities.guardiansocietysupplement>

### **5.1 Diversity is a Boon – but we're losing our sense of community**

#### **5.2 A thick community**

Is one with a high degree of social solidarity and a low degree of diversity. This is the sort of community where people are similar in language and culture, and where, as a consequence, there is a high degree of trust among people. It's a relatively stable place – not a lot of coming and going. You grow up where your parents grew up. You die near where you were born. People leave their back doors open and know their neighbours' business. The best thing about a thick society is that people look after each other and have a high degree of civic pride. The worst is that it's often not good at dealing with difference, or with outsiders.

#### **5.3 A thin community**

Is one with a high degree of diversity and a low degree of social solidarity. In this community (which often isn't really much of a community at all) you can be as different as you like. Nobody cares. People come and go all the time – "citizens of the world but citizens of nowhere", to paraphrase Theresa May. You don't always have much in common with people living next door, and often you don't even know their names. You shop online. Loneliness can be a problem. But diversity is celebrated. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2016/oct/06/diversity-is-a-boon-but-were-losing-our-sense-of-community?INTCMP=sfl>

#### **5.4 Pace of Change**

In terms of communication, technology has evolved rapidly and with it so has the ability to communicate via a variety of technologies. One could suggest that communication is vital for the survival of society. However it is the method through which communication with evolve alongside technology that is vital to its survival; it is safe to say that these methods are those filled with variety and communications technologies can take many forms, one could suggest that these different forms are simply a result of sociological evolution; just as humans began their communication with speech and cave art, other major landmarks of communication have also been discovered, such as the Telegraph, Telephone and wireless communication, and with the evolution of technology also developing rapidly, as has communication. <http://2013.neutralmagazine.com/article/have-we-created-a-loss-of-community/>

#### **5.5 Cars don't just choke our children – they tear a hole in our communities**

Yet it's treated in most countries as a public health afterthought. Pollution is linked to heart attacks, strokes, lung and bladder cancers, low birth weight, poor memory and attention in children, low verbal IQ, faster cognitive decline

among elderly people, and earlier onset of dementia. In the UK it is believed to cause between 40,000 and 50,000 deaths a year; in London it may be killing more people than smoking does.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/08/cars-choke-communities-pollution-diesel?INTCMP=sfl>

## **6 Sense of Community**

The topic of the loss of a sense of community, and diminishing social capital in North America and in much of the West, where individualism and self-sufficiency are lauded as being among the most desirable qualities, as developed and 'evolved' creatures, is not a new one. Researchers and anthropologists have long since studied, how and why and at what cost, have we, as 'Westerners' no longer seem to fully grasp what it means to be in 'community' despite our endless online social media 'networks' and artificial attempts to replace something that most of us have never truly experienced, organic and authentic community. <http://www.channelinitiative.org/from-the-field/2014/4/23/the-loss-of-a-sense-of-community>

### **6.1 Bowling Alone:**

*Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* is a 2000 nonfiction book by Robert D. Putnam. It was developed from his 1995 essay entitled *Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital*. Putnam surveys the decline of "social capital" in the United States since 1950. He has described the reduction in all the forms of in-person social intercourse upon which Americans used to found, educate, and enrich the fabric of their social lives. He believes this undermines the active civil engagement which a strong democracy requires from its citizens. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling\\_Alone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bowling_Alone)

<http://bowlingalone.com/>

### **6.2 The Loss of Community**

What causes community breakdown? One could argue that the problem is poverty - a growing divide between the rich and the poor, between individuals in Canadian cities, and also between wealthy and poor regions of our country and our world. We believe the problem is deeper than this and poverty is just a surface issue or symptom of the problem. We believe community breakdown is related to public attitudes and society's weakening belief in the power of community and communal responses. It is about a growing cynicism in people; they no longer believe positive change is possible. This has resulted in the breakdown or reduction of centrally or politically-driven social interventions.

[http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/index/PB\\_comm\\_breakdown.pdf](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/index/PB_comm_breakdown.pdf)

"Civil society theorists Jean Cohen is dissatisfied with the conclusion drawn by Putman and others that horizontally structured rather than vertically structured associations create 'good' social capital, thereby increasing political responsibility" (Rennie, 2006, p. 31).

### **6.3 Post-Industrialisation**

All this was before the coming of postindustrialism, a superficially attractive but fundamentally disastrous intellectual fad. Espoused by London--based elites in the 1970s and powerfully championed by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s, postindustrialism postulates that sophisticated states no longer need manufacturing. Instead they should promptly move to a new promised land of postindustrial services. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/economics-blog/2015/may/18/as-the-uk-has-discovered-there-is-no-postindustrial-promised-land>

Later twentieth -century Britain experienced two fundamental historical shifts: the collapse of manufacturing industry and the emergence of a multicultural society. Taking the city of Leicester as a case-study, this article explores the interconnected histories of these two processes. In the 1970s and 1980s Leicester witnessed simultaneously the sharp contraction of its manufacturing base and the creation of a large, permanent Asian community. While Leicester's manufacturing economy and industrial neighbourhoods provided both employment and places of settlement for migrant Asian populations, these populations in turn helped to mitigate the effects of rapid industrial collapse. What the example of Leicester graphically shows is how global historical processes played out in unanticipated ways in a particular urban locale. <https://lra.le.ac.uk/bitstream/2381/28317/3/Gunn%20Hyde%20aug%202013.pdf>

### **6.4 The Transformation of Leicester, 1945-1980**

Between the Second World War and the 1980s Leicester was transformed as a city. It changed from an industrial to a largely post-industrial city as traditional industries such as hosiery and footwear declined and finally collapsed. In the

same period Leicester moved from being a predominantly white British city to a multi-cultural and cosmopolitan one, through successive waves of immigration from around the world.

<https://le.ac.uk/modules/hs3673>

Parents of youngsters at a local football club say a university's involvement is pushing away the "community". De Montfort University is in the process of investing more than £2 million to improve and expand Beaumont Town FC's facilities in Beaumont Park, in exchange for using the space for its own university sports teams. But parents say their children are being "pushed" out of training to accommodate De Montfort University teams and that the club house and changing rooms have been painted in university colours of red, rather than the blue and white of Beaumont Town FC.

<http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/it-s-like-a-dictatorship-row-over-de-montfort-university-s-involvement-in-beaumont-town-fc/story-29887243-detail/story.html>

## 6.5 Social Breakdown and Poverty

For many decades, under successive Governments, UK poverty has been defined narrowly by a measure of national income inequality. That is to say, households have been classified as living in poverty if they fall below a set income level, typically taken at 60 per cent national median income. Although this technique can be helpful in mapping low income areas, it is an arbitrary measurement of poverty, which reveals little about the reality of life in low income communities, and it offers no explanation or understanding about the root causes of poverty.

<http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/about-us/social-breakdown-and-poverty>

## 7 Connectivity

Chronological connectivity lends meaning and dignity to our little lives. It charges the present with a vivid validation of our own aliveness. It puts us in touch with the ages and with the eternities, suggesting that we are part of a larger and more significant organism. It even suggests that the larger organism we are part of cares about us, and that, in turn, we should respect ourselves and our fellow creatures and all those who will follow us in time, as those preceding us respected those who followed them. In short, chronological connectivity puts us in touch with the holy. It is at once humbling and exhilarating. I say this as someone who has never followed any formal religious practice. Connection with the past and the future is a pathway that charms us in the direction of sanity and grace. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/09/home-from-nowhere/376664/>

The article is nearing two decades old but whenever I head to the suburbs it's obvious how this mode of life is still perpetuating. I have to agree with the assessment that a lot of the issues in modern America can be linked to the popularity of suburban sprawl; bedroom communities to which the people drive after work to get away from one another and live their private lives. What do you think, has our disconnection with local neighbourhood eroded our values and created a sense of apathy toward each other and the communities that are supposed to bind us? <http://www.blue-light.org/vb/threads/632239-The-loss-of-community-in-modern-America>

The Catalan capital's radical new strategy will restrict traffic to a number of big roads, drastically reducing pollution and turning secondary streets into 'citizen spaces' for culture, leisure and the community <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/may/17/superblocks-rescue-barcelona-spain-plan-give-streets-back-residents>

### 7.1 Shared Identity

"Civic education is the right way to go; it's hard to create a sense of national identity without acknowledging some shared things. Not everything has to be shared - colour and god can be different - but there has to be something in common. Brown is trying to identify what we all share when he talks about British values - that's the right direction," says Putnam. <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2007/jul/18/communities.guardiansocietysupplement>

White Britons Now A Minority In Leicester, Luton and Slough, But 'Britishness' Remains High  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/01/10/white-britons-minority\\_n\\_2446765.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/01/10/white-britons-minority_n_2446765.html)

### 7.2 Mutual Benefits

Failure to cooperate for mutual benefit does not necessarily signal ignorance or irrationality or even malevolence, as philosophers since Hobbes have underscored. Hume's farmers were not dumb, or crazy, or evil; they were trapped. Social scientists have lately analysed this fundamental predicament in a variety of guises: the tragedy of the commons; the logic of collective action; public goods; the prisoners' dilemma. In all these situations, as in Hume's rustic anecdote,

everyone would be better off if everyone could cooperate. In the absence of coordination and credible mutual commitment, however, everyone defects, ruefully but rationally, confirming one another's melancholy expectations.

<http://prospect.org/article/prosperous-community-social-capital-and-public-life>

### 7.3 Distress and the Breakdown of Community

One of the most destructive problems is the breakdown of community, and it is this breakdown that has often led to the breakdown of persons. Though we may put many around us, we are alone. Relationships have become superficial, there is no longer concern for the other, and we are pressed by societal and financial pressures to focus on our own survival. We do not concern ourselves much with the plight of others except a few we may call family or friends, and even then, our concern and attention is waning. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/extreme-states-mind/201304/distress-and-the-breakdown-community>

### Half UK budget deficit 'is down to job destruction in older industrial areas'

Report finds that legacy of hollowing-out of manufacturing in 1980s is far more people claiming incapacity benefits <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/06/half-of-uk-deficit-is-result-of-job-destruction-in-older-industrial-areas>

### The legacy of leaving old industrial Britain to rot is becoming clear

The hollowing-out of British industry since the 1980s is the single biggest change to the UK economy in the postwar era <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/06/the-legacy-of-leaving-old-industrial-britain-to-rot-is-becoming-clear>

### Jobs, Welfare and Austerity - How the destruction of industrial Britain casts a shadow over present-day public finances

First, at a time of political, economic and social turmoil there is an inevitable tendency to focus on the here and now. However, creative solutions rarely emerge from short-termism and political expediency. We are witnessing a marked break with long-run post-war trends, the intensification of long-standing issues and problems, and the emergence of new challenges. Now is not the time for collective policy amnesia. It is a time to take stock, reassess and reconsider; to take the long view and reflect on lessons to be drawn from previous policies, strategies and initiatives in order to chart a way forward. <http://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/cresr30th-jobs-welfare-austerity.pdf>

## 8 Social Capital Primer

"By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital – tools and training that enhance individual productivity – the core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or a college education (human capital) can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups" (Robert D. Putnam, 2000, p. 18).

"Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them. In that sense social capital is closely related to what some have called 'civic virtue.' The difference is that 'social capital' calls attention to the fact that civic virtue is most powerful when embedded in a dense network of reciprocal social relations. A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital" (Robert D. Putnam, 2000, p. 19).

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. Social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other ["norms of reciprocity"].

### 8.1 How does social capital work?

The term social capital emphasizes not just warm and cuddly feelings, but a wide variety of quite specific benefits that flow from the trust, reciprocity, information, and cooperation associated with social networks. Social capital creates value for the people who are connected and – at least sometimes – for bystanders as well.

### 8.2 Social capital works through multiple channels:

- Information flows (e.g. learning about jobs, learning about candidates running for office, exchanging ideas at college, etc.) depend on social capital.

- Norms of reciprocity (mutual aid) rely on social networks. Bonding networks that connect folks who are similar sustain particularized (in-group) reciprocity. Bridging networks that connect individuals who are diverse sustain generalized reciprocity.
- Collective action depends upon social networks (e.g., the role that the black church played in the Civil Rights movement) although collective action also can foster new networks.
- Broader identities and solidarity are encouraged by social networks that help translate an “I” mentality into a “we” mentality.

### 8.3 What are some examples of social capital?

When a group of neighbours informally keep an eye on one another’s homes, that’s social capital in action. When a tightly knit community of Hassidic Jews trade diamonds without having to test each gem for purity, that’s social capital in action. Barn-raising on the frontier was social capital in action, and so too are e-mail exchanges among members of a cancer support group. Social capital can be found in friendship networks, neighbourhoods, churches, schools, bridge clubs, civic associations, and even bars. The motto in Cheers “where everybody knows your name” captures one important aspect of social capital. [http://bowlingalone.com/?page\\_id=13](http://bowlingalone.com/?page_id=13)

## 9 Community Participation

A community’s members are a rich source of knowledge about their community and of energy and commitment to that community. When public health professionals envision a program to address health issues in a particular community, tapping into the community’s expertise and enthusiasm is frequently an essential issue. Genuine participation by community members, including youth, is the key. Community members control the project at the same time that professional partners build the community’s capacity to make informed decisions and to take collective action.

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/component/content/683?task=view>

“Social connections are also important for the rules of conduct that they sustain. Networks (almost by definition) mutual obligations; they are not interesting as mere ‘contacts.’ Networks of community engagement foster study norms of reciprocity” (Robert D. Putnam, 2000, p. 20).

Community participation can be loosely defined as the involvement of people in a community in projects to solve their own problems. People cannot be forced to ‘participate’ in projects which affect their lives but should be given the opportunity where possible. This is held to be a basic human right and a fundamental principle of democracy. Community participation is especially important in emergency sanitation programmes where people may be unaccustomed to their surroundings and new sanitation facilities.

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/evaluation/watsan2005/annex\\_files/WEDC/es/ES12CD.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/evaluation/watsan2005/annex_files/WEDC/es/ES12CD.pdf)

### 9.1 Development Practice

This chapter provides an overview of community participation in development practice, using examples from the literature and chronicles of the changing meaning of community participation. The overview includes definitions, and use and abuse of the concept participation in development projects. In addition, the chapter reviews elements of effective community participation followed by an overview of the relationships between community participation and development. The section also examines the qualities of participation that particularly enhance the effectiveness of development projects through community participation

[http://lyceumbooks.com/pdf/Effective\\_Community\\_P\\_Chapter\\_02.pdf](http://lyceumbooks.com/pdf/Effective_Community_P_Chapter_02.pdf)

### 9.2 A Ladder of Citizen Participation - Sherry R Arnstein

This article is about power structures in society and how they interact. Specifically, it is a guide to seeing who has power when important decisions are being made. It is quite old, but never-the-less of great value to anyone interested in issues of citizen participation. The concepts discussed in this article about 1960’s America apply to any hierarchical society but are still mostly unknown, unacknowledged or ignored by many people around the world. Most distressing is that even people who have the job of representing citizens views seem largely unaware, or even dismissive of these principles. Many planners, architects, politicians, bosses, project leaders and power-holder still dress all variety of manipulations up as ‘participation in the process’, ‘citizen consultation’ and other shades of technobable. <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>

### 9.3 Community Participation

Community participation is about ensuring meaningful engagement with our communities. For health promotion to work well, it must be carried out by and with people, not on or to people. This means that at all stages of the health

intervention, communities are involved with and retain ownership of any health action. There are a number of terms used to describe working with communities in order to define their own goals and address collective issues. These include; community action, community participation and community engagement. In this Framework, the term “community participation” refers to all three. Community action for health is the collective efforts by communities directed towards increasing community control over the determinants of health, and thereby improving health.

“So a pluralist democracy requires lots of bridging social capital, not just the bonding variety” (Robert D Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003, p. 3).

**Community engagement** is where the community is empowered to apply its’ collective skills and resources to increase its’ level of influence and control. In health terms, this might be to improve the community’s health needs and address the local determinants of health.

**Community participation** relies on us having a good understanding of the communities, groups and individuals we work with. Effective interventions rely on community participation. Effective interventions are achieved when the community supports the identified health needs, priorities, capacity and any barriers to action.

We all have different life experiences. Effective community participation means we, as health workers, need to be able to listen, empathise and respond to the many communities within which we work.

Health promotion practice is about inclusion. The way we work needs to encourage community participation and place people at the heart of our health. [https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/wihpw/principles/community\\_participation](https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/wihpw/principles/community_participation)

#### 9.4 What is Participation?

There is no agreement among planners and professionals about the contribution of community participation to improving the lives of people, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Some completely dismiss its value altogether, while others believe that it is the ‘magic bullet’, that will ensure improvements especially in the context of poverty alleviation. Despite this lack of agreement, community participation has continued to be promoted as a key to development. <http://www.asksourc.info/cbr-book/cbr03.pdf>

“The rich mixture of events, values, feelings, and ideas that stories communicate has long made storytelling an important mechanism of social connection” (Robert D Putnam et al., 2003, p. 6).

“Organising is all about building relationships. It’s not about meetings. These are not counselling sessions. They are not an interview. It’s a conversation. You’re building a relationship here. Not extracting information. Not pushing an agenda. And the only way to do this is to leave yourself open to be changed by the conversation” (Robert D Putnam et al., 2003, p. 14).

“Relationships are not just the engine of reform, they are one of the goals of reform” (Robert D Putnam et al., 2003, p. 18).

“[We] are looking for self-worth and value, to be useful, to feel needed, and to have a role in society and culture” (Kolko, 2010).

“With its focus upon social capital, as well as content production and training, community media is a logical fit within the second of these objectives. It ‘may help underpin the development of a ‘virtuous circle’ where improved social cohesions is linked with a renaissance of urbanism, local economic development and civic culture” (Rennie, 2006, p. 153).

## 10 References

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