The Open University

Faculty of Social Sciences

DD208: Crime, Welfare and Society

Book Three Community: Welfare, Crime and Society

Chapter 5

Communities and Mobilisation

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Handover to Editor for first galley

Word length: 10,698

Contents

1 Introduction

At the centre of this book is an emphasis on the very different ways in which the concept of community is understood. In the previous chapters in this book we have seen discussions of communities as inclusionary sites of belonging and attachment and social order; as exclusionary sites of conflict and boundary and disorder; as sites in which 'problem populations and places' are identified; as sites of social well– being and trust and communities as the focus of social policy interventions. It is clear from these discussions that community is both contested and contradictory. In this chapter we too will examine the ways in which community rejects any single or settled meaning. The chapter will develop the argument that community is an 'unruly' concept as it considers the ways in which people *enact* community. What we mean by this is that we are interested in the ways in which people use the idea, or their sense of community as a basis of practices and actions. These practices and actions vary – they may be mundane and everyday or they may arise from specific sets of concerns, events or situations.

Activity 5.1

It would be helpful to think about what we mean by enacting community by starting with your own experiences:

- What kinds of communities do you feel that you belong to, and what helps you to belong? Are there also communities from which you feel excluded?

- In what ways do you, or people you know, get together to act as a community? What happens in your street, estate, neighbourhood or village that brings people together? Are some of these collective actions based on common identities rather than place?

- Try to think of activities connected with daily life as well as those which might be seen as social or political campaigns.

Comment

1 Your feelings of belonging or not belonging may stem from many different sources: bumping into neighbours in the street, meeting people at the shops, in a café, pub or in the park; from having an allotment or walking your dog. They may derive from shared membership of groups or organisations. Meeting other parents at the school gates or sharing child care can help parents feel part of a community; at the same time not being involved in many local services and facilities can lead to feelings of exclusion or marginalisation. If you live in an ethnically diverse area you may have a sense of some spaces or facilities associated with particular ethnic groups, and of other places or spaces where people interact across this diversity.

2 When considering forms of community activity you may have been involved in, your list may be quite long and quite diverse. Below are a range of activities that we thought of:

- informal social or educational: reading groups, dog training classes, local choirs, street parties;

- informal self– help: neighbours supporting older people at home; local parents sharing child care, setting up playgroups or an after school scheme;

- organised collective activities about security and crime control: neighbourhood watch schemes or campaigns against prostitutes working in local streets;

- campaigns to save or create services and facilities: a local hospital or swimming pool threatened with closure; for safer road crossings, improved housing

- protests against local developments: a hostel for asylum seekers, housing a known paedophile in the area, motorway and major road construction, a new supermarket or building on green belt and parkland.

- activities of solidarity supporting people in other countries: collections for natural disasters; global campaigns like 'Make Poverty History';

Figure 5.1 [Insert illustrations of 2 or more contrasting types of community activity from the above list.]

Such a long and diverse list raises questions as to what these very different activities hold in common. Reflecting this focus the chapter is organised it into three main sections. The chapter looks first at the mundane and everyday practices of community and considers the extent to which the social and caring interactions between people can be defined as informal, small scale acts of welfare. The chapter then proceeds to look at how more organised and semi formal and formal community based activity influences policy making and is able to define and change social and crime control policy agendas. This section argues that community based campaigns, lobbying and protest can also have an uneasy (and often a conflictual) relation with policy makers. This leads the chapter into its final key area of consideration – that community activity may directly challenge existing policy frameworks. The chapter uses urban unrest and 'disorder' as a case study through which to explore this and consider how community activity can capture the convergences between the domains of social welfare and crime control.

In this context the chapter has three key aims:

- To consider how community gets enacted by populations;

- To examine the relationship between 'bottom up' community mobilisations and governing through community;

- To consider the ways in which community mobilisations shed further light on the complex connections between social welfare and crime control policies.

2 Small acts: the micro world of community

In this section we start by suggesting that small acts of kindness or neighbourliness – social interactions, conversations and communication, looking after a neighbour's children, feeding pets or keeping an eye on property while our neighbours are away, cooking for neighbours who are ill or baking for a school or local fete, checking in on or helping an older person with their shopping – represent everyday social exchanges and supportive behaviours through which people to build a local sense of community. We can understand these small acts of social care and social responsibility as being very much part of *informal* welfare and support networks. We can characterise such networks as part of a 'microworld' of community which develops out of these kinds of informal and spontaneous everyday interactions. Reading this will remind you of the discussions of social capital in Chapter 1. While these mundane practices of kindness and care may be small scale and informal and uneven – not everyone

experiences them – they can be understood and experienced as 'features of social life that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam, 2003: 13) and as such are of interest to social researchers and policy makers. As Moseley and Pahl (2007: 7) note, social capital has been defined in three key ways and these will useful for you as you read this chapter. These are:

- Bonding social capital – this refers to practices that operate to form a sort of internal 'social glue' between homogenous (the same) groups within a community;

- Bridging social capital – this refers to the practices which work outwards to cohere or bridge heterogeneous groups (different) within a community;

- Linking social capital – this refers to the practices that create connections or make links from a community to external sources of power, outside agencies and resources.

The interest in the possibilities of social capital to deliver social welfare is reflected in the extent to which it is the object of social research. For example a large scale quantitative study was conducted by the Health Development Agency (HDA) as part of the General Household Survey 2000/01 in Great Britain into these small acts of community building. The HDA believed that an individual's health and well being is shaped and constrained by their relationships to social and community networks and that 'social capital could play a useful role in helping us to understand the extent to which community level relationships and networks might impact on health in local communities' (Coulthard et al 2002, p.10). The investigators in the HDA conducted 7857 interviews with randomly selected individuals aged 16 or over in each of the 8221 households in the larger General Household Survey. They used a questionnaire – a series of closed multiple choice questions to ask people about the nature of their civic engagement, their relationships with neighbours, their social networks and social support and their perception of their local area. All of these were seen as indicators of social capital. Table 5.1 shows two typical questions on neighbourliness.

Table 5.1

36. Trust
Would you say that you trust...
most of the people in your neighbourhood ....
many of the people in your neighbourhood ....
a few of the people in your neighbourhood ....
or that you do not trust people in your neighbourhood? .....
44. Speak to neighbours
Not counting the people you live with, how often do you speak to neighbours?
Every day ....
5 or 6 days a week ....
3 or 4 days a week ....
once or twice a week ....
once or twice a month ....

| once every couple of months .... |
| once or twice a year .... |
| not at all in last 12 months .... |

(Coulthard et al 2002, Appendix B)

Let us look at a few of their findings on neighbourliness, social networks and social support:

Neighbourliness

- 58 per cent of respondents felt they could trust most or many of the people in their neighbourhood.

- 27 per cent of respondents spoke to neighbours every day; 19 per cent spoke to them less than once a week

- 73 per cent of respondents believed that neighbours in their area looked out for each other;

Social networks

- 30 per cent of respondents had at least five close friends living nearby; 16 per cent had at least five close relatives nearby; 27 per cent had no close friends living in their local area; 44 per cent had no relatives they felt close to living nearby.

- 66 per cent of respondents had a 'satisfactory friendship network' (they saw or spoke to friends at least once a week and had at least one close friend who lived nearby).

- 52 per cent of respondents had a 'satisfactory relatives network' (based on similar criteria for relatives).

- 20 per cent of respondents had neither a network of friends nor of relatives.

Social Support

- 58 per cent of respondents had at least five people they could turn to in a serious personal crisis; 18 per cent had less than three people they could turn to.

- 90 per cent of respondents had at least one person they could turn to living nearby compared with only 2 per cent of respondents who felt they had nobody to turn to locally.

The size of the sample allowed the researchers to look at differences in relation to age, region, housing accommodation, household and gender. They found for example that there was less neighbourliness amongst young people (16– 24) and people without dependent children. London was also a much less neighbourly area in comparison with the North East, North West and South West of England which were the most neighbourly. Women had better social networks, (in terms of people to speak to on the phone) but men were more likely to have large number of close friends living nearby. People living in social sector housing, lone parents and single person households had less social support than those in owner– occupied accommodation, or couples (Coulthard et al 2002). The findings in the HDA study are mixed – clearly overall respondents did have experience of the small acts of community making and social support. However we do not want to suggest that this is an inevitable or constant experience of community.

The HDA study used a multiple choice survey to produce statistics that were turned into a measure of social capital that could in turn be used to draw general conclusions about the relationship between community and well– being. We should note that this study used quantitative methods to draw qualitative conclusions about people's lives, even though quantitative methods are limited in the extent to which they can capture the complexities if people's experiences and feelings (see Chapter 1). A very different study that nevertheless examined very similar questions about the micro world of community and social capital was conducted by social researchers Anne Power and Helen Willmot (2007) in two low income neighbourhoods in Leeds and Sheffield in Northern England and two low income neighbourhoods in East London. The study was conducted over an eight year period tracking 200 families and sought to examine how the conditions of an area impacted on the formation or depletion of social capital. The Power and Willmot study found that their respondents talked extensively about community, social networks, family relations and supports within all four areas. The vast majority of respondents felt they had people to count on and to turn to and most commonly these were family, friends and/or neighbours. Family contact and support was common amongst respondents especially in the Leeds area and especially around child care and support. Most friends were locally based and 60 per cent of respondents have at least weekly contact with their friends who were a source of practical and emotional support. The majority of respondents' accounts revealed a high level of trust in their relationships with their neighbours. These accounts highlighted the prevalence of favours – some long– standing and on– going and some one– off crisis favours – between neighbours. The study found a high level of participation (around 85 per cent) in entertaining and 'fun' community events.

The HDA and Powers and Willmott studies are both concerned with small aspects of well being in daily life. Recalling the earlier categorisations of social capital in the latter study in particular we can see evidence of bonding but also bridging social capital. Increasingly these informal social interactions are seen by policy makers and politicians as crucial for social stability and social cohesion.

3 Organised acts: community activity and its influences on policy making

In the previous section we focussed on the small scale and everyday ways in which people enacted community and the informal welfare and support networks that these practices gave rise to. We noted above that in the Power and Willmot study they found a high level of participation by their respondents in convivial community events which provided respondents with a sense of community togetherness and unity. Power and Willmot's findings showed that participation went beyond once a year type involvement in the fun community events. Participants in their study would often be active in a range of local social welfare and crime control related activities. For example they comment that:

> Across [...] the neighbourhoods, respondents were involved with, and in some case had set up, local groups and initiatives that helped the community and provided links to wider networks. Involvement in short term local campaign groups provided some respondents with a 'chance to make a difference'. Participation in ongoing informal neighbourhood crime tackling initiatives actively reduced crime and respondents' work

setting up mother and baby groups filled a gap in the provision of local family services.

(2007: xxx)

In this part of the chapter we examine some of the more organised forms of community activity for three key reasons – first to understand how people enacting community can deliver more organised forms of welfare and care and second to suggest that bottom up activity can highlight issues and third such activity can influence and interact with policy– makers and practitioners (see Chapter 2).

Activity 5.2

Read through the short examples of community activity below and make notes on the following questions:

- How is the community being defined or imagined?

- What kind of community activity or mobilisation is involved?

- What is the relationship between this mobilisation and social policy?

- Can you see examples of linking social capital?

Examples

1   The Bogside and Brandywell Women's group – this group emerged in the Bogside and Brandywell area of Derry in Northern Ireland. These were areas of the city with significant levels of poverty, unemployment, deprivation and political conflict. It was the gendered experience absence of local social amenities and childcare facilities and the prevalence of marriage breakdown, teenage pregnancies, lone parent families, domestic violence and social isolation led to a local recognition of the extent of these combined and shared problems and the formation of the Bogside and Brandywell Women's Group in 1994 and its work in creating locally based projects to support women and children (http://freederry.org/bbwg/aboutus.htm accessed 09.01.08)

2   Community kitchens in Latin America – these emerged out in the impoverished and politically active urban communities across Latin America in the 1970s. For example in Peru there are over 10,000 community kitchens or ollas commun (common pot). Community kitchens were a response to a chronic lack of basic resources and amenities and a desire to pool those few that did exist and a create senses of solidarity and sociality.

3   South Side Against Closure – this was an umbrella grouping that organised a campaign to save the Govanhill Swimming Pool in Glasgow in 2001. It was a multi– ethnic, multi– age organisation that also included a range of local user groups as well as political groupings from across the centre and left of the Scottish political spectrum… the campaign to save the Pool was initiated by parents groups and other pool users groups, …this was an issue that mobilised considerable support from throughout the Govanhill area and the wider city (Mooney & Fyfe, 2006).

4　Community gardens in the Lower East Side New York – in the 1960s a series of gardens were created out of abandoned brown field sites by and for local people living in the tenement area of the city. The Lower East Side has been the site of diverse immigration settlements in New York's history and has a strong associations with political and community activity. Regentrification process in New York in the 1980s and 1990s meant that some of the gardens were sold off to developers in the face of local community oppositions and new incoming residents raised concerns about safety and crime in the areas around the gardens and Tomkins Square Park where homeless people would gather and live. Some gardens still remain and can be visited. The community gardens represent community efforts to create nature spaces and they represented migratory histories and identity – some gardens had small buildings made in the style of architecture from countries of departure Puerto Rican Casitas for example and gardens reproduced English cottage garden styles (Cresswell, 2004:3– 5)

5　In 2004 local Shetland Islanders organised to campaign to stop the deportation of failed asylum seekers who were living on the Islands: 'Furious islanders tell Home Office: 'We won't let you take these families from our community'…Here in Shetland a campaign is gathering pace to keep the families in the islands, by means of direct action if necessary. …Willie Ross, a campaign organiser, said they were not having to work very hard to generate support for both families. … "There's a lot of us involved who certainly won't let them forcibly remove Tanya and Magnie or Hazel and the two boys without making a noise about it."' (Source: Alan Crawford, *Sunday Herald*, April 11, 2004)

6　Neighbourhood Watch schemes – these emerged out of the concerns of local people about crime and safety and since the early 1980s these are now widespread across the UK. As describes on the Home Office website Neighbourhood Watch 'is a partnership where people come together to make their communities safer. It involves the Police, Community Safety departments of local authorities, other voluntary organisations and, above all, individuals and families who want to make their neighbourhoods better places to live. It aims to help people protect themselves and their properties and to reduce the fear of crime by means of improved home security, greater vigilance, accurate reporting of suspicious incidents to the police and by fostering a community spirit' (http//www.crimereducution.homeoffice.co.uk)

Comment

In contrast to our earlier discussion, these extracts illustrate ways in which communities mobilise in a more organised way around a wide range of issues: to provide or save local services or amenities, to pool resources and address poverty, to create shared spaces, to support disadvantaged women, to lobby for vulnerable groups from other countries, and to protect spaces perceived as unsafe. In all cases there is a sense of shared concerns or grievances or identity and a collective response made to address these. Taken together these examples raise questions about the extent to which living in a particular locality makes people into a community. Even though activities take place in a local area, it isn't always place that gives people their common interest, indeed Martin (2003) argues that a shared identity in relation to place may have to be imagined in order to mobilise.

Let us consider these examples further. In most of them place based identities are complicated by questions of who belongs, or by other identities. In Bogside and

Brandywell in Derry, Northern Ireland, it was women in the community who organised around common interests and concerns, developing their own welfare services. Although not run solely by local women community kitchens are activities in which Latin American women have been particularly active. The community kitchens can be viewed as part of the resourcefulness in the most impoverished urban areas that have influenced the social capital centred policy initiatives increasingly favoured by international organisations such as the World Bank (Newman and Yeates 2008; Chapter 2).

Figure 5.2 [Insert illustration of community kitchens or Bogside area of Derry/women's activities.]

The anti– deportation community campaign in the Shetland Islands, the Govanhill swimming pool campaign and the community gardens in New York can all be understood as forms of organisation that are based on local social bonds but that also incorporate more globally inflected identities – remember that the community gardens in the Lower East Side were attempts to recreate notions and reminders of home – the little brightly coloured *Casitas* draped in Puerto Rican flags for example – in a new home in the United States (see the discussion of diasporic identities and community in chapter 1). The Govanhill campaign involved multicultural and ethnically diverse groups of people acting together to try to save a local amenity (an issue we return to in more detail in section 3.1 below). The Shetlands campaign can be understood as being about local attachment to particular individuals but it also represents a concern with national and international policy on refugees and asylum seekers. Its goal is the inclusion of 'outsiders'. This campaign is part of a large UK and international network of successful campaigns called 'Schools against Deportation' (http://www.irr.org.uk/sad/index.html.) Our earlier discussion in section 2 on the microworld of community can help us to understand the wide support for such campaigns; schools are often places of informal social interactions that can foster social bonds across different ethnic communities.

However, as Marilyn Taylor (2003) cautions it is important not to over– romanticise community actions or the commonality of local concerns. We saw for example that in the Lower East Side gardens example that there were tensions between New York City regeneration policy, property developers, and long term residents' attachment to the gardens and new residents concerns about crime and safety in the area. Such tensions can be particularly acute in relation to difference and diversity. We saw in Chapter 4 how communities activity can be organised in hostile and violent and protectionist ways. This mobilisation in Shetland can also be contrasted with attempts in other areas to exclude rather than include asylum seekers. In the UK in 2000 the New Labour government's proposals to build asylum seeker detention centres in rural and semi rural areas gave rise to some of the most vociferous and well– organised local anti– asylum campaigns e.g. Sittingbourne in Kent and Binham in Worcestershire. This community organised opposition was to be successful as this policy was abandoned. Similarly in South Yorkshire in 2000 local residents objected to plans for an asylum seeker hostel in a private residential area because 'there would be an increase in crime, including vandalism and "social disorder", and that property prices would fall.' (Humphries, 2000). Concerns about crime and safety are of course key drivers in Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Of all our vignettes it is this one that most explicitly represents the direct relationship and integration of community activity with partnership organisations – in this case with the police and local

authorities (see Chapter 4). It is the ways in which community activity works with and make links to other policy making and practitioner agencies that we consider below.

3.1 'Bottom– up' acts and community mobilisations, participation and the policy system

We have suggested that these mobilisations demonstrate the capacity of communities to act autonomously – independently of, or even in opposition to policy. In the context of community based policy making, Chapter 2 also looked at the emphasis placed by policy makers on communities having high social capital and being able to act for themselves. So, we can ask to what extent the kinds of 'bottom up', that is 'from below' or 'grass– roots' level mobilisations discussed in this chapter are seen by politicians and policy makers as examples of empowered active communities with high social capital that should be encouraged? It could be argued that such community mobilisations build on and strengthen existing social capital. This has certainly been a key interpretation by policy makers and deliverers as we have seen in Chapters 2 and 4 as the partnership other agencies and participation of people within their communities has been a specific policy aim and strategy in the UK and more transnationally. In the UK what has become known as the Third Sector is an obvious example of this aim. The Third Sector can be understood as the layer that exists between the types of community activity we have been examining and government agencies. In this layer are grouped community organisations, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and charities. The Third Sector is non– government based and community organisations are central to it. In recognition of the growing importance of non– government social welfare delivery the Labour government did rather ironically create an Office of the Third Sector in 2006. This represents the policy emphasis on the need to move to the local and to the delivery at and through community levels that we have seen in previous chapters in this book. For us the emergence of the Third Sector category raises broader questions as to the extent to which community organisations position themselves in relation to formal policy systems. As Marilyn Taylor notes this has been a long standing debate for grass roots or bottom up community mobilisations. She argues that 'there are always difficult decisions to be made by communities about whether to be insiders or outsiders in the policy process […] some communities prefer to work outside the system or at least approach government on their own terms rather than allowing themselves to be absorbed into government agendas' (2003: 175– 6). However Taylor goes on to note that there are concrete gains to be made from partnership working and she advocates as balance between being outside enough to remain critical and inside enough to engage with policy agencies and influence decision making. We shall explore these questions further by looking in a bit more detail at one of our case studies – the Save Our Pool/South Side Against Closure campaign in Govanhill.

In order to find out more about the campaign Mooney and Fyfe (2006) conducted semi– structured interviews with 12 of the main activists involved (men and women from a diverse range of age, ethnic and occupational backgrounds) during and immediately after the campaign came to an end. The campaigners were asked about the background to the campaign, why they became involved and how they saw it changing, challenging or reinforcing 'a sense of community' in Govanhill itself.

Activity 5.3

Read the following extract taken from Mooney & Fyfe's findings. Why did this community mobilisation become problematised by the local formal policy system rather than be incorporated into it? How is this 'active community' different from the ones discussed in Chapter 2?

Extract 5.1

Govanhill pool was built in 1914 and was equipped with a large pool, a smaller pool and a teaching pool, frequently used by four different 'special needs' schools. In addition it also provided much needed private washing and laundry facilities in an area where around 800 houses lacked bathing and washing facilities (these particular services were withdrawn in the 1990s)….While it is easy to romanticise about these buildings, we should also

understand the role that they played in the daily fabric of working class life

in tenemental Glasgow.

[….]

However, Govanhill pool also occupied a unique position, catering as it did

for the different ethnic groups in the Govanhill area. The existence of three

separate pools meant that different groups in the community could make

use of the pool. Containing the only secluded pool in Glasgow, the smaller

of the main pools was heavily used by women from the local Muslim community whose faith prevents them bathing where they can be seen by men [...] Within days of the announcement of the closure, pool users groups, soon

to be supported by community and political activists started to hold public

meetings against the closure, drawing substantial numbers in the process.

From this the Save Our Pool campaign was launched with the goal not only

of keeping the pool open but transforming its use as a health facility for all

residents in Govanhill. The campaign sought to mobilise support from

across the entire Govanhill community…in the process drawing in people from very different cultural and religious backgrounds and from different age groups, political persuasions and different occupations. These included the Muslim Ladies Swimming Group, the Orthodox Jewish swimming groups, mother and toddler groups and the elderly ladies of Queen's Park Swimming Club.

[….]

'Save Our Pool' was not only about direct action through occupation and protest. With the support of local health officials and other local groups, campaign organisers were also keen to show that the pool could have a future and a new lease of life as a healthy living centre.

[…]

The occupation was to end abruptly. 141 days following the start of the

occupation it was forcibly ended by Sheriff Officers, acting for Glasgow City Council and supported by Strathclyde Police.

(Mooney & Fyfe, 2006, pp 142 – 145).

Figure 5.3 [Insert photo from Govanhill Campaign.)

Comment

Before considering the nature of the community mobilisation, it is important to note what the pool (or 'Calder Street baths as it was known locally) represented for the community. Mooney and Fyfe claim that the pool was symbolic of traditional tenemental life in Glasgow. By this they refer to the reliance across many generations of a large proportion of the city's working class population on publicly provided washing and laundry facilities. Public baths, such as of the kind typified by Govanhill pool, offered leisure facilities but their historic role was in some ways much more welfare oriented – providing the kinds of services that were either absent in the majority of Glasgow's poorer tenements or which ordinary working class people could not afford to access elsewhere – and of course as a meeting place within a particular community setting.

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3 such symbols are important both for identity and community membership. Although different groups used the services separately, they came together to try to save it.

The extract also shows that the mobilisation went beyond a protest about closure. The community group was also transformative in that it brought together previously separated groups and in doing so was able to suggest ways in which new services could be developed. As discussed earlier this might be interpreted as a community developing social capital, willing to act in partnership with the local authority – even if in this case such willingness was hardly reciprocated by the council. The experiences of some of the campaigners supports this:

> I have met so many people, you wouldn't believe. People that I didn't know were my neighbours and whom I hardly spoke to in the past. One example of what we've done is the garden in front of the pool. Before it was just a disused dumping ground. Volunteers got together and removed twenty bags of rubbish and needles. We painted the entire fence, planted flowers that were donated from local gardening businesses and built a wooden pagoda. There were street parties here, Sunday barbecues, a May feast, arts events. We have singsongs every Wednesday night . . . It's incredible. I have never seen a group like this, there are sub groups, there is a children committee, children are welcome at the public meetings.
>
> (Woman campaign member, Mooney & Fyfe, 2006, p. 146)

> I have never been involved in a campaign like this in my life. It's incredibly creative; this campaign has got housewives, doctors, academics, homeless people, people with drug problems. It's a cross–section of the community life you wouldn't believe and look at this; we get on surprisingly well. I am really proud of people in Govanhill.
>
> (Male Asian student campaigner, ibid.)

However, local policy makers and agencies saw the campaign as being 'hijacked' by political elements with particular agendas reflected in its direct action tactics: '(W)hile active communities that engage in "approved" forms of local action are to be welcomed, those who challenge the authority of local government can experience the full coercive force of the state' (Mooney & Fyfe, 2006 p.148). The police claimed that

a 'violent minority' of 'political agitators' had orchestrated a 'riot' in August 2001 outside the pool during which five police officers were injured. In contrast the campaigners argued that the Strathclyde Police and Glasgow City Council attempted to criminalise both the pool protestors and the Save Our Pool campaign itself.

This case study illustrates some of the conflicts and contradictions between on the one hand ideas of partnerships with active communities delivering policy and on the other hand grass roots mobilisations which may act in opposition to policy. The campaign ultimately failed to stop the pool being closed. While it had sought to go beyond the pool itself and suggest ways in which services in the area could be more broadly improved and developed, the campaign was not interpreted as evidence of valuable local bonding and bridging social capital but rather as an explicitly political – and given its tactics – *criminal* rather than *community* activity. We continue to address this issue in the following section.

4   Unruly acts: community activity challenging policy– making?

We have seen how community mobilisations can interact with, influence and, as in the example of the Govanhill campaign, oppose formal policy frames. In this final part of the chapter we develop our focus on what we have called 'unruly acts' by which we mean community activity that very explicitly and dramatically challenges policy frames and practices. The particular example we shall consider is that of 'urban unrest' and we ask here can urban unrest be understood and explained as community action or mobilisation by a 'troubled' population or as a manifestation of social disorder by a 'troublesome' population? We also examine the ways that as a result of such urban unrest, communities can become the focus of governance as a series of agencies and interventions targeted at and which are designed to manage those perceived as 'problem populations' (see Mooney, 2008 and Chapters 2 and 4).

Figure 5.4 [Insert images of urban unrest – Brixton 1981; Los Angeles/Detroit 1967; Paris 2007.]

4.1 Unruly acts: a long and transnational history

Although there were a number of outbreaks of urban unrest in the early part of the twenty first century in the UK, violent disorder has a long history. As John Benyon notes (1987: 26) 'in many respects this country's history appears remarkably turbulent with frequent outbursts of disorder. In the eighteenth century, civil commotion occurred over grievances such as the price of flour and bread, wages and conditions, political reform…enclosures and turnpikes and excise duties'. Social unrest from the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, the Gordon Riots in 1780, the Luddites in the 1800s, the Rebecca disorders in Wales in 1839; Tonypandy in 1910, Glasgow in 1919 through to the anti– poll tax riots of 1990 are all examples of this turbulence. In the last quarter of the twentieth century unrest in the UK took place predominantly in the early and mid 1980s in multicultural inner city areas of Bristol, London, Liverpool and Leeds. Smaller scale outbreaks of urban unrest occurred in predominantly white working class suburban council housing estates during the 1990s, for example, in Newcastle in 1991 and Luton in 1995. In 2001 major urban unrest took place in Northern England towns and cities such as Bradford, Oldham and Burnley in 2001.

Bea Campbell argues that social unrest as 'what people do with their troubles and their anger'. (Campbell, 1993 pp x). According to this view, unrest can be viewed as part of the way social inequality, poverty, alienation, hardship and despair is expressed. Unrest can be understood as community based because it incorporates a shared localism of what happens in particular places but it can be an articulation of a broader communal experience that is not tied to a single geographical place. For example the urban unrest in the UK in 1981 began in Brixton but spread to other cities where multiculturally identified local communities recognised the same grievances and responded in a similar way. Community related urban unrest is not a phenomenon confined to the UK. An obvious example is the urban unrest that was a feature of numerous US cities during the 1960s as part of the Civil Rights Movement for racial equality and justice (see Abu–Lughod, 2007). Most significant were the Harlem Riot of 1964, the Watts Riot of 1965, and the Detroit Riot of 1967. These civil disorders were about community in that they were about a geographically based community action and they can be understood as being about communities of shared identity and experience as African–Americans (see Chapter 1's discussion of community as place and identity).

In 2005 and 2007 France experienced extensive urban unrest in the suburbs of Paris and cities such as Toulouse where French Arab and North African origin communities are residentitally concentrated (see Mooney, 2008; Wacquant, 2008). As in the UK unrest in the 1980s and 2000s and the US in the 1960s the French unrest can be linked to notions of community via a particular localism and a broader shared community of identity politics. In late 2005, Nikolas Sarkozy (who was then the Interior Minister and subsequently elected as Prime Minister of France in 2007) denied suggestions that deprivation, social exclusion and racism had prompted the unrest and condemned those who took part in the unrest as criminals and the unrest as criminal acts to be dealt with by tougher police action.

John Benyon (1987: 26–27) argues there are three competing perspectives which explain urban unrest. The first of these is the conservative perspective which Sarkozy's response to the unrest in Paris and other French cities represents. This view denies any legitimacy to disorder and interprets it 'as an aberration perpetrated by irresponsible and criminal elements who may be motivated by greed and excitement'.

Activity 5.4

Read through the headlines reporting urban unrest in France in 2005 and the UK in 1985 and 2001. Consider the ways in which notions of criminality and illegality are conveyed and presented to audiences in the language and images used in the media.

Figure 5.5 [Insert illustration to include a collage of media headlines relating to riots in Paris, Brixton 1981/Tottenham/handsworth 1985, Bradford 2001]

Comment

Media reports of such events which use a language of 'mindless destruction' 'sheer criminality', 'vile orgy of violence', 'thugs' and 'bloody riot' present a particular narrative of those people and communities involved (as in the case of official responses to some of the Govanhill pool protestors which we discussed previously). It is important to note that the various terms are used to analyse these events such as urban unrest, violent disorder, riot or uprising all carry nuanced and different political meanings which convey the political legitimacy or otherwise of the unrest. The

language with which unrest is categorised also has juridical consequences. For example, according to McGhee (2003) the official classification of the 2001 Bradford disturbances as 'riot' rather than 'violent disorder' as in the Burnley and Oldham disturbances, had implications for sentencing. 'Violent disorder' carries a maximum sentence of 5 years compared to a charge of 'riot' under Public Order Act 1986, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years (Worley, 2005).

In these criminal acts perspectives unrest becomes predominantly reduced to simple acts of illegality and linked to notions of 'dysfunctional' or 'problem' communities which require targeted crime control interventions.

The second perspective highlighted by Benyon on unrest is the liberal or welfarist explanation which focuses on social issues such as poverty, unemployment, declining industry, poor housing and education provision and political and social marginalisation. Benyon identifies the third explanatory approach to unrest as a radical one in that it 'interprets collective violence as purposeful, structured and politically meaningful. It is seen as a normal, legitimate and effective means of protest by groups who have no other opportunities.' For example this interpretation is reflected in the work of the social theorist Siva Sivanandan who commented that 'it took kids burning cars in Toxteth before policy makers started to seriously listen to the black community in Liverpool' (Sivanandan, 1982: xx). These interpretations of unrest and community mobilisations reflect the uneasy boundaries between social welfare and crime control policy making and practice. For example, the criminal justice system, politicians of the centre and the right and some sections of the media tend to work with conservative approaches to unrest while the liberal view tended to inform those in the centre and the political left, community organisations some sections of the media and most significantly was reflected in the reports and inquiries into some of the disturbances. It is these policy responses that we now consider.

4.2 Themes in the policy responses to urban unrest

In the wake of the US riots in the 1960s the Report of the Kerner Commission (1968) called for the addition of one million government– created jobs, the institution of a higher minimum wage, significantly increasing welfare benefits, more resources for education and housing. The Kerner Report can be viewed as a welfarist or liberal policy response in that the riots were predominantly explained in terms of social causes. Like the Kerner Report the Scarman Report (1981) into the Brixton disorders in the early 1980s generally also took a welfarist view although it did maintain some elements of the conservative perspectives. While the Scarman Report found that the police were not institutionally racist (as had been claimed by protestors) the report highlighted that a largely 'white' police force policing ethnically and culturally diverse communities was a concern and suggested that some police officers would benefit from further training in community and race relations (McLaughlin, 2007). Alongside his recommendations around policing Scarman also addressed issues of racial discrimination within education, housing and employment and political alienation. For example, it is particularly pertinent to our interests in this chapter that Scarman concluded that 'local communities should be more fully involved in the decisions that affect them. A "top down" approach to regeneration does not seem to have worked' (Scarman, 1981: para 2.36). In the most recent reports into outbreaks of urban unrest in the UK the liberal view is still in evidence but the emphasis on the communities involved in the unrest has become more pronounced. There were a number of policy reports produced over a very short time period all related to urban

unrest in northern English towns and cities in 2001. The Ouseley Report (2001) was produced before the disturbances but investigated the issues of diversity in Bradford. The Cantle Report (Home Office, 2001a) was produced after the urban unrest in Bradford. In the same year reports relating to disturbances in Burnley (The Clarke Report, Home Office, 2001b) and Oldham (The Ritchie Report, The Home Office, 2001c) were published. The Denham Report (The Home Office, 2001d) was the Government response to the previous 4 reports and provided an overview of the urban unrest in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

Activity 5.5

In this activity we ask you to read an extract from an official government and policy report. As you do so, think about the following questions:

- What are seen as the causes of the unrest?

- In what ways is the concept of community being identified?

- What solutions are proposed?

The extract comes from the Cantle Report (Home Office, 2001a) into disturbances in Bradford in 2001:

Extract 5.2

Whilst the physical segregation of housing estates and inner city areas came as no surprise, the team was particularly struck by the depth of polarisation of our towns and cities. The extent to which these physical divisions were compounded by so many other aspects of our daily lives, was very evident. Separate educational arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks, means that many communities operate on the basis of a series of parallel lives. These lives often do not seem to touch at any point, let alone overlap and promote any meaningful interchanges.

A Muslim of Pakistani origin summed this up:

> 'When I leave this meeting with you I will go home and not see another white face until I come back here next week'

Similarly, a young man from a white council estate said:

> 'I never met anyone on this estate who wasn't like us from around here'.

…We believe that there is an urgent need to promote community cohesion, based upon a greater knowledge of, contact between, and respect for, the various cultures that now make Great Britain such a rich and diverse nation. It is also essential to establish a greater sense of citizenship, based on (a few) common principles which are shared and observed by all sections of the community. This concept of citizenship would also place a higher value on cultural differences.

Comment

The physical and social segregation of the different communities was seen as the major cause of the unrest, and following these events in 2001 a degree of consensus emerged about the problem of segregated communities and the way forward that was proposed in the policy reports was to build 'cohesive communities'. This emphasis on the importance of cohesion and integration and commonality rather than the valuing

of cultural diversity and difference has since come to dominate debates about multiculture (see Cantle, 2008 and Chapters 2 and 6).

The issue of segregated communities has been raised as a problem in all the official reports produced after the UK riots of 2001. To understand the way that cities such as Bradford have become segregated in this way involves unravelling the housing policies of earlier periods which helped to create these polarised communities. The Cantle Report recognised that sometimes families chose to live close together for support reasons but that sometimes polarisation was more to do with housing policies and economic constraints. The welfare – crime entanglement becomes visible when we see how welfare policies, in this example in relation to housing, have helped to create segregated communities which are then in turn blamed as one of the main causes of the urban unrest.

The issues of 'ethnic segregation' were discussed extensively following the events in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham (Home Office, 2001a; Home Office, 2001b; Home Office, 2001c; Home Office 2001d; Ouseley, 2001). The level of policy and political concern with the notion of segregated ethnic communities has meant that these reports have been influential in driving through a new language of community cohesion which has replaced an earlier language of celebrating multicultural diversity. The sociologists Bagguley and Hussain (2006) note that this emphasis on community cohesion has worked to so as to establish the notion in a binary opposition to segregated communities. Their concern is the extent to which this has become the dominant frame in relation to how the unrest is interpreted and how an emphasis in the reports that followed the riots on segregation by ethnicity deflects from segregation based on other social relations, such as class and material inequalities.

The challenge provided by gender further complicates, disrupts and unsettles the 'traditional' accounts of urban unrest. One argument is that the disturbances are about clashes between young Muslim males and the police or young Muslim men and white men. This forms part of the re– imagining of community as problem in newly gendered and racialised terms (Alexander, 2004). The Ouseley Report (2001) referred to the difficulty of accessing the views of women and had specifically sought the views of young Asian women and teenage girls as part of their Review within Bradford. Anecdotal evidence of gender inequalities was presented in the Cantle Report. The Denham report argued that sometimes cultural practices conflict with basic values and in particular was concerned with those that deny women the right to participate as equal citizens (Home Office, 2001 d). The evidence was presented within a racialised context where concern was expressed that it was difficult to access the views of women and girls from the communities concerned. We will explore this issue of gender further by using contrasting evidence from social policy sources and a biographic account.

Activity 5.6

Read the two extracts below. The first comes from the Denham Report (Home Office, 2001d) and the second is one woman's account of the way women mobilised during an earlier period of urban unrest in Bradford in 1995. As you read the extract consider the way that biographic evidence is different from that offered by policy reports.

Extract 5.3

The reports of Cantle, Clarke, Ritchie and Ouseley bring to life the feelings, views and aspirations of all the local communities in areas where there were disturbances.

Cantle makes comparisons with communities whose experience had been much more positive. The Ministerial Group is clear that we must listen to and involve local people in developing policies which meet their needs. Young people of all communities must be included, as must women, and Muslim women in particular, whose voice has not been heard clearly so far. Initiating a wide and open debate around the issues raised in this report is, we believe, the essential next step.

(Home Office, 2001 d)

Extract 5.4

A group of eight women – four Asian and four white – decided to go out onto the street with a message of peace to try and calm down the situation and prevent further violence. Most of us were members of an Interfaith Women for Peace group. This group is made up of Asian and white women from Bradford who have been meeting in each other's homes for the past year to discuss …how to promote cross– cultural understanding and racial justice at the local level. Having this kind of network enabled us to contact each other quickly and to be assured that we would all be in favour of such an action.

By about 11.30pm we had all met at the home of one of the women who lives very near to where the trouble first began. We made a banner from a sheet, with "peace" in English, Urdu, and Arabic and decided that would be our main message: we were making a plea to stop the violence. …We intended to call for an inquiry and for talks to get to the heart of the problem. Because the crowd was all male, and because the violence on both sides (youth and police) had been perpetrated by men, we felt that women's presence on the street would be a powerful statement. We planned to walk up to the police station and back with the banner and see what effect we could have. …As we walked up Oak Lane, we began to see just how large the crowd of men was. Several of the youth called out "You should be ashamed – go back home!" or "We respect you – but go home!" Other men took on the role of protectors, helping us to cross the street with the banner and opening the way for us...It appeared to us that this action had dissipated the tension, at least temporarily, and there was no violence that night.

The next day we found ourselves briefly mentioned on the national news and on the front page of the local newspaper with the headline "We must heal these wounds." The image of women in the streets holding a peace banner clearly expressed what many felt. Though our action was brief, it did seem to have an impact, and it was personally empowering for all of us.

(Edited extract from 'Responding to a riot' in Peace News, August 1995).

Figure 5.6 [Insert photograph of the women's peace march in Bradford during the 1995 riots]

Comment

This is an example of biographic evidence and involves a personal account or perspective on an issue. It is often individual and more informal in presentation rather than that presented in more 'official' sources such as policy reports. When we read biographic evidence we often have an emotional response to the narrator, who is usually telling a personal story. Biographic evidence, together with oral history testimony, is often the only way of accessing some information about an event. In this

way these accounts add further richness and depth to our understanding of these events. In this example, the views are of one woman involved in a peace march in Bradford and shows how women from different ethnic communities were working together. Since the official reports had considered that the views of women were often absent or difficult to access, seeking out other forms of evidence may be necessary to gain access to that which would otherwise be marginalised or absent.

What other kinds of evidence were also absent from the policy reports and how could these have been accessed? The views of children and young people are often marginalised, but initiatives such as Youth Parliaments, which exist in Bradford have attempted to redress this by involving children and young people in issues of local governance following the riots (O'Toole and Gale, 2006). Children and young people have reported through the Youth Parliament they are concerned with issues including drugs, (gun) crime, transport and racism (Rashid, 2007).

In this section we have looked at activities in communities which are commonly constructed as problematic – riots or urban unrest. We have seen how communities involved in unrest are ambivalently viewed as dysfunctional and dangerous and as vulnerable and marginal. The tendency in the reports is to 'diagnose' communities as needing governance rather than as community actions reacting to perceived inequalities and seeking social justice. Unlike the community actions that we examined in the previous section urban unrest is not seen as presenting a forms of social capital that are able to link into the policy system.

5 Review

In this chapter we have explored a diverse range of community practices, activities and mobilisations. The chapter considered how people enact community through everyday and mundane acts of social care. These informal social interactions may themselves constitute small acts of welfare and are seen by policy makers as crucial for social cohesion and stability. In examining a series of examples the chapter then suggested that community activities can become more systematically and formally organised and may interact with and influence policy agendas and may lead to the establishment of new services or facilities, or attempt (successfully or unsuccessfully) to save existing ones and networks of social support. The outcome of community mobilisations may go beyond very specific goals to foster new understandings and recognition of needs for services. Indeed they demonstrate ways in which community can shape policy rather than simply being the object of policy.

It was through the question of the relationship between community activity and policy frames that the chapter examined urban unrest as an extended example of a policy challenging form of community mobilisation. We have suggested that urban unrest constitutes community action given that it combines a shared experience of social grievance/exclusion/hardship and that this has both spatial and identity dimensions. In other words urban unrest can be a response to processes and/or events happening in a particular place and/or it can be a response which is formed through a shared sense of identity which goes beyond any specific place. The focus on urban unrest has also allowed us to see a very specific entanglement between social welfare and crime control interventions as policy responses to the dramatic and high profile nature of urban unrest has tended to either stress the criminality of the action and those involved or responses may stress the need to address the social welfare issues that may be perceived as the causes of the disorder. In our consideration of the various reports that came out of inquiries into urban unrest we have seen that these two

approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive – the Scarman Report for example – and we have seen how, in the UK since the early 2000s, it has been the notion of building community cohesion that has emerged a key policy response to disorder and cultural diversity.

Drawing on a wide range of qualitative and quantitative evidence and sources – social science research; reports and policy texts; media representations; personal accounts – our discussion of community mobilisations has reinforced a central theme of this book – that the concept of community is contradictory and contested. In emphasising its turbulence and stressing that community is not only the object of policy but also what people 'do' and act on the basis of. The chapter has examined this enactment and its policy relationship mainly in the context of the UK but it has sought to suggest that this goes beyond national boundaries and indicated the ways in which we can see community enacted in transnational and international ways (see also Chapters 3, 4 and 6). While the chapter suggested the notion of social capital offers helpful ways of analysing bottom– up community actions it also urged some caution with the concept and highlighted how only certain forms of social capital may be valued by policy makers and indeed, as the community cohesion agenda demonstrates, some mobilisations are seen as of 'too much community'.

Because the concept of community is meaningful in terms of how people chose to act there are number of moments in which this connects to the broader relationship between social welfare and crime control policies. For example what people 'do' can be understood as representing informal and formalised social care; that community activity may be focussed around crime control and issues of safety; that cohesive communities whose members are bound together mean less crime and social harm; that community activity may not always be welcomed or be viewed as problematic by policy systems; that community activity may constitute criminal activity and disorder while highlighting issues of social division, inequality and injustice.

Further Reading

John Benyon and John Solomos (1987) *The Roots of Urban Unrest*, Oxford: Pergamon Press offers a useful and insightful edited collection reviewing the debates as to how to understand urban disorder in the UK in the 1980s and an assessment of the interventions made in response to outbreaks of disorder. Ted Cantle's (2008) *Community Cohesion: a new framework for race and diversity*, London: Palgrave offers an updated discussion of the findings of the original report and includes an extended discussion of the concept of community cohesion. Anne Power and Helen Willmot's (2007) *Social Capital within a Neighbourhood Study*, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion provides a full account of the study discussed in the early part of the chapter and examines the usefulness of the concept of social capital in deprived neighbourhoods.

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