Community Building in the Twenty-First Century

Introduction

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Community Building in the Twenty-First Century is a plenary seminar-publication project initiated in 1999 by the School of American Research (SAR) and the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA). In light of the growing interest in community and community building, SAR President Douglas Schwartz asked a group of scholars affiliated with the SfAA to revisit the question of the community's role in the twenty-first century. The request was linked to a plenary session at the society's 2001 annual meetings held in Merida, Mexico, in the Yucatan, where Robert Redfield studied and extensively wrote on the "little community" fifty years earlier.

THE DEFINITION OF *COMMUNITY*

Community was specifically chosen as the topic for the opening collaborative program because, as a unit of study, it has been social scientists' focal point for research and action since the rise of industrial capitalism (Nisbet 1966). For anthropologists and sociologists, the concept of community has changed in use and application over the past four generations. Since Redfield's (1955) classic study of the little community, most anthropologists have used the local community (village,

town, neighborhood) as a basic unit of study and analysis in their field research (Arensberg 1961; Arensberg and Kimball 1965). Both archae-ologists and sociocultural anthropologists have adopted the concept of community as a cornerstone of their analyses. In fact, Redfield (1955:3) noted, the local community "has been the very predominant form of human living throughout the history of mankind."

Building on Redfield's research and The Chicago School of Urban Sociology's ecological studies of communities in the 1920s and 1930s, urban sociologists and anthropologists in the 1960s expanded their work on residential ethnic communities to examine the processes of social order (Gans 1962a; Suttles 1968) and political mobilization (Kornblum 1974) in a variety of residential settings such as inner-city neighborhoods, suburbs, and retirement communities (Gans 1967; Hannerz 1969; and Jacobs 1974). During this period, they increasingly applied the concept of community to occupational groups, special interest groups, lifestyle groups, imagined communities, and power configurations as these affect decision making (Jacobs 1974; Anderson 1983; Pilcher 1972; Johnson 1971; Cavan 1972; Hunter 1953; Hawley and Svara 1972; Hawley and Wirt 1974).

The conventional wisdom of the post-World War II period was that the systematic study of the community had developed around the gen-eral focus of shared living based on common locality (Warren 2004:54; Keller 2003). Therefore, *community* was typically defined as a group of interconnected people located in bounded geosocial space, sharing a common origin, and supported by an economic, religious, social, polit-ical, and physical infrastructure—that is, connected to resources (Gallaher and Padfield 1980). In terms of our understanding of cul-ture and globalization, community was the point of intersection between the individual and the larger society and culture (Warren 2004). Community was perceived as a unit that was larger than families, social networks, and groups but smaller than a society's most complex components, such as the city, state, or multinational corporation. Community was also the location of production, socialization, partici-pation, norms, and mechanisms of social control.

By the end of the twentieth century, the definition of *community* had expanded. Etzioni (1993), in his book *Spirit of Community*, elabo-rated on the significance of communities as beacons of moral voices

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that lay claim to their members. Carl Moore (1996:28), a scholar and an activist who participated in the SAR-sponsored advanced seminar "Rethinking Communities in the Year 2000," wrote in *The Chronicle of Community* that certain agreed-upon factors can be used to construct a working definition of *community:* "A community is the means by which people live together. Communities enable people to protect themselves and to acquire the resources that provide for their needs. Communities provide intellectual, moral, and social values that give purpose to survival. Community members share an identity, speak a common language, agree upon role definitions, share common values, assume some permanent membership status, and understand the social boundaries within which they operate."

Anthropologist R. Helperin (1998:5), based on her extensive field research in an inner-city Cincinnati neighborhood, succinctly stated that community "is not just a place, although place is very important, but a series of day to day, ongoing, often invisible practices. These practices are connected to but not confined to place."

Susanne Keller's book (2003:8) titled *Community: Pursuing the Dream, Living the Reality* affirms Moore's multidimensional definition. Of significance to our book, she argues that, for the term *community* to be useful, we must move away from all-encompassing generalizations and misconceptions based on exclusivity. We must emphasize its dynamic quality, that is, its evolution over time through the examination of context.

LOCAL COMMUNITIES UNDER ASSAULT

Early community studies by anthropologists such as Goodenough (1961), Arensberg (1961), and Arensberg and Kimball (1965) contributed to an understanding of the persistence of community life patterns through cooperation in the context of globalization and increasing outside threats to local control. In the post-World War II period, numerous community studies emphasized the living dynamics of peasant communities (Roberts 1978) and urban villages and subcultures (Gutkind 1973; Hannerz 1969; Mangin 1970). During the 1960s, however, community studies increasingly focused on the overwhelmingly negative impacts of macro changes on the life patterns of localized communities. This trend led to a growing anthropological concern for uprooted rural

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families who faced problems of adaptation to urban areas (Gmelch and Zenner 1996; Foster and Kemper 1996; Southall 1973). Addressing the causes of the migration streams, in 1965 Art Gallaher and Douglas Schwartz initiated a discussion of classic anthropological and sociological questions about the demise of the local community—why and how do local communities function through time?

Broadening this discussion, in 1976 Art Gallaher and Harland Padfield led an advanced seminar at the School of American Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to examine the dynamics of dying communities. They argued that too little critical analysis had focused on the "need to develop a conceptual and theoretical framework for examining the decline and dissolution of community" (Gallaher and Padfield 1980:xi). In contrast to a plethora of studies on community development, very few social scientists were addressing concerns regarding the decline and demise of local communities.

Gallaher and Padfield began with the paradox that community is a critical sociocultural adaptation used by all human groups but that it needs to be nurtured with resources. Otherwise, the local community will decline and die. They note that "all associational forms share what we believe to be the most basic of all purposes—the development of collective solutions to meet the needs of group survival. If these needs cannot be met in a specific case, the psychological sense of community diminishes, and a community begins to die" (Gallaher and Padfield 1980:2). Their thesis was that both the resources and the decision-making prerogatives for allocating those resources must be present.

The cross-cultural case studies published in Gallaher and Padfield's *The Dying Community* illustrate the growing influence of global forces on local groups and demonstrate the necessity of controlling resources at the local level. Since publication of this book, outside change factors have transformed the nature of local community life at an accelerated pace. These factors include growing economic inequality, natural disasters, human degradation of the environment, global diseases, public policy and the shifting of economic resources (capital), and concomitantly increasing economic disparity among groups. As the twentieth century came to a close, the centralization created by information technology (the digital divide), global transportation, and marketing had blurred the boundaries defining local community identity and action.

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THE GROWING DISCOURSE

As global forces have taken an increasing toll on local communities, social scientists have begun to focus their research on how local community-based groups react to these macro forces. Responses range from adaptation, social networking, organizing, and coalition building, to various types of resistance. Social scientists, policy makers, planners, developers, marketers, and activists are now expanding their discussion of and applications for community, with respect to change, development, building, and the commodification of community (Warren 2004).

By the year 2000 the international and national discourse about community had assumed great significance. The discourse was largely attributed to the publication of three widely read books, notably, Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000), which advances the notion of social capital; Keller's *Community* (2003), which revisits the question of how a sense of community takes hold; and Kretzmann and McKnight's (1993) *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, which advocates an asset-based approach to community building.

Putnam's work on social capital and community generated a national debate on its application to the restoration of a civic society in which ideologies of rugged individualism and capitalism are associated with a widening economic gap between the rich and the poor, as well as decreasing participation in political and social associations. Putnam notes, "Over the last three decades or so, the gap between haves and have-nots has grown steadily and alarmingly.... At the same time, Americans of all classes and races, and in all sections of the country, have become increasingly disconnected from their communities and from one another" (Saegert, Thompson, and Warren 2001:xv). Central to his work and the chapters in this book is the concept of social capital, the idea that resources such as skills, knowledge, reciprocity, norms, and values facilitate community members' working together to make substantial improvements in the entire community's living conditions. Parenthetically, as each contributor to this book points out, anthropologists have been describing social capital and its link to community development in their ethnographies of local populations for decades. Irrespective of this, social capital by Putnam's definition is an essential dimension of community building.

In Kreztmann and McKnight's work with social capital and community assets, they targeted the community-activist practitioner concerned with revitalizing largely forgotten areas. Their work advocated new tools and skills employed at the local community level to empower local community members and build social capital. Kretzmann and McKnight's work is notable among the new approaches that extend the earlier discussion by Schwartz and Gallaher to address dying (troubled) communities, not by studying them but by developing tools for rebuilding them. At that time, applied anthropologists such as Steven L. and Jean J. Schensul (1978) were pursuing similar paths in developing advocacy anthropology and participatory action research that engaged community partners in the research and outcome process. All this research has resonated through the foundation, government, and community activist worlds, which continually seek new approaches to revitalization.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

In light of the growing international and national policies focusing on strengthening communities through new approaches and tools, this book is an effort to pull together disparate areas of community and community-building studies and link them to the development of a new conceptual framework for future anthropological work. Specifically, *Community Building in the Twenty-First Century* aims to stretch our understanding of community and community building, especially stock definitions based on traditional social and physical features. We emphasize the human processes of relationship building by which people live and work together in place and time (Moore 1996). The chapters in this book examine how old definitions of place associated with community are linked with the creation of newer ones in the context of change. In turn, new definitions of place and community are used to reconstitute relationships and institutions that integrate and anchor, to varying degrees, new and old institutions and people.

Furthermore, this work aspires to scrutinize the limitations of customary approaches to community development, which have come to dominate the liberal welfare state in advanced industrial states. Typically, such approaches stress a deficiency-oriented understanding of low-income people and neighborhoods and recommend outside

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expert intervention. Kretzmann (2001), in his address at the 2001 SfAA meeting in Merida, noted that "government policies supported by problem-focused social science research, as well as philanthropic relief and relentless violence-seeking spotlight of the mass media, have combined to obscure the internal resources of struggling communities and reinforce an 'outside in' set of problem-solving assumptions and strategies." Kretzmann's presentation (2001) further described the six major community-building observations that challenge all future research and practice:

1. The focus on local communities is now a national and even an international phenomenon. From the developing world through the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, to Western Europe and North America, policy makers are rediscovering the importance of the local forms of civil society and social capital.

2. Why is this happening? A growing body of evidence suggests that many of the outcomes we value most highly—food, health, strong families, a clean environment, a vibrant economy, safe and secure communities—are actually produced, to a significant degree, by strong and active local communities.

3. What obstacles stand in the way of community building? There are many, but one major difficulty is the inclination of our most powerful institutions (for example, universities, private and public funders, and media) to focus relentlessly on the needs, problems, and deficiencies of struggling communities while ignoring their assets.

4. What is the alternative to deficiency-focused policies and strategies? Vital communities recognize and mobilize their own unique combination of five categories of community assets: the skills of local residents, the power of local voluntary associations, the resources of local institutions, their natural and built physical resources, and their local economic power.

5. Communities are inventing powerful strategies to engage all five kinds of assets, but mobilizing the first two is often the greatest challenge. Capacity inventories and gift interviews are

tools to invite even the most marginalized citizens to contribute to the community. Also, mapping and mobilizing local associations (block clubs, sports teams, choirs) add power and depth to community-building efforts.

6. Providing effective support from the outside (for example, the government or a funder) remains a challenge. But creative community-building supporters are finding ways to move from a "charity" to an "investment" strategy and to create important "citizen space" in which local communities can act.

The chapters in this volume address Kreztmann's community-building observations from various geographic contexts, research perspectives, and literatures—resettlements, rural villages, inner-city neighborhoods; voluntary associations and faith-based organizations; multinational corporations and virtual communities; and community health. All the contributors take issue with past approaches that emphasized the effectiveness of top-down and expert-oriented practices focusing on local deficiencies.

Each chapter in this book emphasizes community assets as a critical factor in community building. At the same time, each considers the various political, economic, and social factors that divide a community and cannot be resolved simply by an optimistic view that people will come together around assets and resources. In chapter 5, Hyland and Owens discuss the inner-city tensions between drug dealers and community activists debating whose vision for the neighborhood should win out. In chapter 8, Jean Schensul suggests an example from her fieldwork in a small rural community where past firings intimidated teachers from challenging corrupt local practices. In chapter 6, Baba describes a series of cultural and political factors that undermine community building in corporations. The documentation, analysis, and confrontation of divisive internal factors within a community-building framework are critical to all future work.

Broadening the scope of community development approaches, each chapter in this book recognizes the importance of strengthening human relationships to build communities based on the mobilization of local assets and collaborative approaches, in contrast to processes

that encourage the status quo or even demise of communities. One cannot talk about community and community building without, first, acknowledging the existing relationships within the community and examining the myriad other relationships that develop, either consequently or intentionally, and, second, considering the various political, economic, and cultural factors that are divisive in all the processes involved in building and sustaining community.

As globalization and technology expand their influence on communities and bring even the most disparate communities in contact with one another and the world at large, it becomes more complex and also more important for social scientists to attend to these elements. Researchers and practitioners are challenged to develop theories, methods, and tools that will help not only to sustain and grow communities in the face of these global and technological changes, but also to make governmental, social, and business attitudes and policies more responsive to community values and needs.

The contributors to this book are scholars who have spent the past three decades engaged in the field of community development and who possess an expressed sense of social justice. They also reflect a theoretical and political heterodoxy in their approaches to community building for the twenty-first century. Some contributors assume or state directly that community building must be rooted in participatory democracy; others strongly advocate that community development efforts be appropriate to the particular group in question. These positions raise the question of community-building efforts in political settings that dictate nondemocratic solutions. Chapters 3 and 4 offer critiques of corporate capitalism in local community-building efforts; chapter 6 describes community-building efforts to strengthen productivity in corporate capitalism. This book builds the case that community building is not a process that is limited to one approach, one location, one function, or one theory, nor one politics. Community building is a complex, difficult effort with still unresolved conflicts. Each chapter reflects a unique interplay of politics and research. In fact, we argue that there is more diversity of research and application than is captured in the book and that this book is one step in building a more comprehensive knowledge base on community building for the twenty-first century.

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THE RATIONALE FOR SELECTIONS AND ORDER

When considering what to include in this compilation, we decided to select anthropologists whose current work is based on a breadth of experience and effort that comes only with years of research and practice. We also considered their involvement in and contributions to the Society of Applied Anthropology. Finally, we wanted the totality of the compilation to illustrate the wide-ranging types of community that exist in society, as well as the characteristics and challenges both shared by and unique to these communities. Although we believe that our selections meet these criteria and effectively illustrate the variety of communities that exist, we want to emphasize that the compilation is not exhaustive. There are many other communities—rural, homeless, educational, occupational, utopian, gay and lesbian, science fiction, and so on—whose study would be very beneficial in the expansion of literature and creation of knowledge in our field. Our hope is that all applied and practicing anthropologists, especially those up-and-coming, use this compilation as a springboard to research such communities.

With respect to the order, we start with van Willigen's chapter because it provides the historical overview and sets the context for traditional anthropological study of community. Oliver-Smith in chapter 3 and Kemper and Adkins in chapter 4 follow naturally with their place-based examinations of community. Next is the work of Hyland and Owens in chapter 5; their community-rebuilding efforts and examination of an inner-city neighborhood are linked to new information technologies. In chapter 6, Baba extends the work to the application of information technologies and non-place-based studies of multinational corporations. Chrisman's chapter 7 focuses on community in a topical context, that of health systems. This approach would be well applied to other topics of anthropological interest, such as education, environment, and tourism. Finally, we end with Jean Schensul's chapter 8. Schensul simultaneously integrates many components of the other chapters and forecasts future challenges to anthropologists, as well as proposing the tools necessary to meet them. The concluding chapter 9 presents a final overview of implications for those engaged in community building and sets the stage for future engaged scholarship and community building.

MAJOR GOALS

In advancing the purpose of this effort, the book is organized around four major goals. First, we show how not attending to the elements of relationships, both intentionally and unintentionally, can undermine and destroy community and community building. Second, we explore the dynamic approaches and methods currently used by anthropologists and other social scientists to strengthen community-based efforts. The approaches and methods discussed in this book not only use cultural, material, informational, and intellectual resources that foster and develop relationships and partnerships, but also use strong existing relationships and partnerships to develop and expand these various resources. The contributors offer some of the incredible possibilities that culture, social capital, information technology, computer/asset mapping, networking, partnerships, participation, research, and so forth, present in establishing, improving, and sustaining community when good relationships in and with the community are at the foundation. Third, we propose a conceptual framework for future engagement and action that leads to building communities with the capacity to become self-sustaining and self-renewing. Our own work with inner-city Memphis yielded this framework, and the community-building experiences recounted by the other contributors support its substance. Finally, we offer suggestions and direction for future engagement and community building.

THEMES

All the contributors discuss community and their community-building efforts in very distinct contexts; nonetheless, their work converges around several common themes. Attending to existing community relationships, revitalizing or creating community identity and meaning, and encouraging participation and partnerships are integral, cohesive components of community building. Therefore, operationalizing these components are prevalent themes in all the chapters.

Attending to the Elements of Relationships in Communities

The concept of relationships is easily grasped because it is universally shared at the most basic, personal level—individually. It is also recognized as a concept integral to each and every level of association

and communication that takes place within the broad spectrum of society. Nonetheless, in the same ways we forget, neglect, and undermine the foundational elements of positive personal relationships—mutual trust and respect; shared and connected meanings, goals, and visions; shared participation; shared power and resources (mutual control and investment); and shared knowledge and tools—we can readily forget, neglect, and undermine these in our organizational and institutional relationships within the broader contexts of community and society. Although defining each of these essential elements separately might seem easy, it quickly becomes apparent that, in doing so, each meaning somehow becomes diluted. It is in their cohesive functioning with one another that these elements become fully operational and are best understood.

All the contributors in this volume, explicitly or implicitly, begin their chapters by stressing the importance of understanding relationship building from the bottom-up perspective of the individual or small group. Authors then link this relationship building to the power of local voluntary associations such as the community institutions described by van Willigen; the faith-based organizations described by Kemper and Adkins; the local public, private, and nonprofit organizations described by Oliver-Smith, Hyland and Owens, Schensul, and Chrisman; and the government and large-scale intermediaries, even large corporations, as described by Baba. In each chapter, the discussion of trust, shared values, and social bonds in the pursuit of some commonality, in the context of some outside assault, is critical to the conceptual framework. In turn, all the authors examine how trust, social bonds, and resources are linked to survival, and they discuss growth and increased productivity in terms of defined values such as ethnicity, heritage, identity, and place.

Revitalizing or Creating Meaning and Identity in Community

Each chapter also identifies a set of competencies among human beings. In the course of reconstructing the history of their community, members often find new meaning to that community. Such reconstructions can help create a new or revitalized identity for the community. Typically, revitalizing or creating new communities requires significant vision into the future, with new insights and strong enthusiasm. A very important factor in strengthening a community is an

increase in internal social networking to invigorate the social and civic fabric of the community. Internal social networking contributes to the development of ongoing strategies for more participation that is open and inclusive. Collectively, these chapters demonstrate that a sense of meaningful connectedness among community members is essential for social, physical, and economic endurance and advancement, especially during times of upheaval.

Anthony Oliver-Smith's chapter 3 is an on-point example of how ethnicity, heritage, identity, and place are crucial to the survival of communities displaced by natural or technological disaster, political conflict and violence, and large-scale national and international development projects. By describing the displacement of such communities in Peru, China, and Zimbabwe, he illustrates how uprooted communities draw on the constructs of space, time, and people to re-create the elements of their community, if only in symbols and themes. Oliver-Smith advocates a balance between material resources and cultural resources (collective memory, history, rituals, symbols, and traditions) to successfully reconstruct individuals, families, and communities. Policies that focus only on the material and tend to be donor-designed around budget and efficiency undermine trust, self-esteem, integrity, and identity. In fact, Oliver-Smith shows how these negative effects compound the problems of displacement by intensifying original societal hostilities and thwarting the rebuilding of social networks, ultimately creating dependency. In spite of the tragedy of displacement, Oliver-Smith shows how each community resisted the resettlement in one way or another, invigorating community members to maintain their interconnections and work together for their collective survival.

Robert Kemper and Julie Adkins, in chapter 4, show the ways in which US communities, when threatened by economic decline and/or social injustices such as poverty, unfair labor practices, inequality, and restricted civil liberties, attempt to assert themselves through local, regional, and national faith-based organizations. Congregations (or parachurch agencies) are, for many, institutions of trust that sustain traditional rituals and ceremonies. As such, they can provide valuable services for new and immigrant communities, as well as for established populations. Kemper and Adkins trace the history of faith-based organizations out of their congregational and parachurch roots, from the

nineteenth-century Social Gospel Movement, to the Great Migration and European Immigration period, through post-WWII, and into the present. This history illustrates how faith-based organizations have moved from providing charitable services to promoting community development. In the process, they have concentrated more on the cultural resources (opportunities) necessary to the collective self-determination of specific communities and on building relationships vital to community transformation in the face of external social and economic forces (threats).

In chapter 6, Marietta Baba takes a slightly different approach to the discussion of relation building, culture, common values, and shared meanings, by looking at work communities affected by global economies. She examines the emergence of global distribution as an organizing principle of work communities, and the achievements and shortcomings of information technology that supports professional relationships and their distributed communication and collaboration. By adopting Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework designed for research on human development, Baba gives a better picture of how individuals converge to form a work community and provides a framework that incorporates both micro- and macro-level settings and influences in investigating the context of a globally distributed work group. In her discussion of a fourteen-month-long case study of a globally distributed work team, Baba finds that, ultimately, information technology is necessary but not sufficient for effective performance and collaboration of geographically separated and culturally diverse work groups. Most notably, Baba states that a commonality of mutual understanding, shared goals, and mutual respect for individuals' knowledge and experiences is essential if geographically separated and culturally different work groups are to trust one another and collaborate successfully. To disregard these basic elements, intentionally or not, is to set up work groups, indeed any community, for failure.

Establishing and Encouraging Participation and Partnerships in Community

The relationship building thus far described is more than just an outcome; it is an ongoing process. Increasing the connection to external groups through community members' development of ongoing

strategies for collaboration and partnership helps to strengthen and expand community relations by bringing new social, economic, and political resources into the community. Such bridging of community groups is essential for balancing and maintaining a community's assets, needs, and control throughout stabilization and growth processes. Resources generated through internal and external networking can be distributed in such a way that survival, growth, and reconstruction can take place. Additionally, articulation and negotiation can resolve inter-community conflicts. Another essential result of such networking is expanded information, which, in turn, is helpful for effective engagement in policy development and reformation.

Kretzmann and McKnight (1993), with their asset-based approach of community building and development, have been at the forefront of the idea of using existing relationships and resources to expand a community's participation and networking. This approach focuses on a community's social capital and includes developing a community assets map. The value of social capital and community assets articulated in this approach constitutes an important dynamic in each of these chapters. John van Willigen explores the idea of community assets historically in chapter 2 and finds that, although early perspectives on community assets differed with respect to context and political views, they still valued community assets in some of the same ways as Kretzmann and McKnight.

To illustrate the merits of an asset-based community development approach, van Willigen describes the work he did on the Tohono O'Odham Community development project. The primary value of the approach, he states, is that community is evaluated according to capacities instead of deficiencies. By using the assets and knowledge of individuals, associations, and institutions that already exist, problem solving begins in spite of limited resources, and the potential for long-term success is greater. Because the community needs, circumstances, and goals are primary and community members trust the existing social institutions, van Willigen shows, community members are more likely to participate and become invested in the development process. He notes that this increases the community's capacity for problem solving and self-direction.

The other part of the community assets–based approach is the

allocation of resources. Van Willigen states that resource allocation should be tied directly to the community's felt needs and should enhance the community's capacity to define and achieve collective goals in the long run. He stresses that any approach that does not respect the community's history of physical and social assets will misapply resources and ultimately reduce a community to a state of dependency.

Kemper and Adkins also provide useful examples of an asset-based approach, articulated through faith-based organizations. The evolution of faith-based organizations into strong corporations with an incredible network of partners and resources has increased communities' political and economic power. Because faith-based community development builds on relationships within the community and then expands these relationships to include external individuals, associations, and institutions, the local community's values are sustained. Ultimately, the bottom-up approach favored by many faith-based organizations keeps community relationships, needs, goals, and participation at the heart of the process of community building, a process that Kemper and Adkins appropriately characterize as social capital development.

In Noel Chrisman's discussion (chapter 7) of applied anthropology's role for the purposes of public and community health in community building, he shows the significance of social capital in community collaboration and participation by identifying the basic principles of applied anthropology and stressing their importance in public and community health policies. The basic principles include the following:

- Proposals and procedures must be consistent with the community's culture, values, and beliefs.
- Collaboration with the community is necessary in identifying its wants and needs.
- The participation of community members is integral to realistic planning, delivery, and evaluation of a project.
- Collaboration with existing organizations and their leaders is a must.
- The design and implementation of projects must make sense to the community.
- Anthropologists must respect the people with whom they work.

- Anthropologists must be agents for change by working *with* people, not *on* them.

Chrisman is quick to point out that missing from these principles is the importance of creating partnerships at the macro level: "While we engage in community building, our challenge will be to develop and maintain relationships with political and economic institutions whose money and influence can promote (or inhibit) community growth." His ensuing discussion and practical illustrations of these principles also demonstrate the primary value of social capital with respect to public health in the community-building process.

Using Anthropological Skills, Methods, and Tools in Community Building

Social capital development, or the assets-based approach, is offering numerous possibilities in community building with the development of anthropological methods and advances in information technology. In addition to discussing assets-based approaches, van Willigen acknowledges the critical importance of tools and methodologies that anthropologists can bring to the table of community building. In his own work, he advanced a methodological system of rating internal and external community-development resources according to specific characteristics that advance the community's assets/capacity and ultimately lead to sustained community building and development.

The succeeding chapters by Hyland and Owens, Schensul, and Chrisman propose several other tools for strengthening communities: ethnography and storytelling, mapping, community assets, capacity building, social network analysis, participatory action research, needs assessment, and resource mobilization. Social liaisons are particularly critical tools for advancing community interests. Leadership training of community members in a way that is meaningful to the objectives they hold for the community is essential. In research, approaches such as participatory action research and community mapping involve community residents in setting out the objectives, design, and procedures. Similarly, assessment approaches such as evaluation and risk assessments can involve residents in ways that enhance community-building efforts.

Hyland and Owens explore many of these tools in chapter 5, which addresses the timely issue of the role of information in building communities. Hyland and Owens examine the possibility of bridging the digital divide in inner-city neighborhoods and rural villages through the use of computer mapping as a tool for community building. Their chapter draws on the lessons learned from a number of inner-city community-organizing efforts and their applicability to future computer-mapping efforts. Hyland and Owens postulate that " information has become as essential to the creation and maintenance of wealth as the control of capital, land, and natural resources." They propose computer mapping as one way to bridge the digital divide within the context of community and community building: "computer mapping can be used to layer resource information including physical, economic, and social variables," a valuable tool for community-based organizations. Hyland and Owens review three major approaches using community mapping: intermediate data providers, global and local participatory mapping, and computer assets mapping and community building.

Like Baba's analysis of virtual communities, in spite of the unlimited possibilities, they found many challenges to using computer mapping successfully. There was the very real question as to whether the diffusion model of computer mapping is sufficient to bridge the divide. Characteristically, neighborhood leaders seldom view computer mapping as a major priority. As a result, Hyland and Owens examine how to reframe the issues in the community's interest, drawing on three themes of community organizing and community mobilization: the mobilization of multiple stakeholders around critical issues that threaten the community, the power to make decisions that affect the control of community infrastructure such as land and housing, and the ability to generate wealth and social capital through local change within the community. Primary in each of these themes is asset mapping (a la Kreztmann and McKnight)—the inventory of all the gifts and skills of individuals and organizations in and around the targeted area illustrated on a map. Citing several experiences in Memphis, where engaged anthropologists used asset mapping as a part of computer mapping, Hyland and Owens found that it is possible, under specific conditions, to achieve community building through sustained computer mapping.

Jean Schensul considers yet another tool that, together, social

scientists, community researchers, and cultural workers can use to strengthen their communities. She describes the ways in which research can be used in community building, specifically, in communities marginalized by the lack of research-related infrastructure and limited involvement in science-related policy, usually as a result of economic distress and/or social injustices.

Schensul proposes that the use of research theory, methods, and results can strengthen five common structural elements essential to a community's survival. These structural elements follow the themes previously discussed. First, a community must be able to survive under the stress of its specific crisis, specifically, through the reconstruction of infrastructure, relationships, cultural traditions, and economic and property development. Second, a community's cultural conservation and development must be promoted through storytelling, rituals, and institutions; these serve to maintain and preserve, and sometimes recreate, the collective identity, meaning, and goals in new places and circumstances. Third, a community must be able to expand resources, and information—both access to it and control of it—is a key factor that enables this. Fourth, a community must be able to negotiate sociopolitical change. "Research can help local communities gain information to improve their understanding of the structure of power, economy, and social policy. Fully informed, they can prepare effective responses and enhance their capacity for dialogue and negotiation." Fifth, to use information and technology for local development and penetration of the world market, a community must gain computer and Internet literacy.

Schensul's chapter 8 suggests that community research partnerships are central to enhancing the strategies that meet these structural needs. She describes four approaches to community-based research that increase the capacity of local communities to gain local knowledge and expertise through the use of scientific research and to use that knowledge to participate with those experts who have decision-making power. These approaches include conducting participatory action research, building formative research partnerships, testing and evaluating theory-driven community interventions, and conserving, documenting, and representing culture. Such approaches offer communities "opportunities to access new information related to survival issues."

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Schensul states that "methods training, by itself or through collaborative projects, diffuses collective research technology for assessing, analyzing, recording, and re- and co-constructing components of cultural identity and social issues." In addition, people and organizations become united around common problems and issues related to power and resources. Schensul explains that "research partnerships with activist-oriented community agencies and residents use science technology more effectively as a tool for advocacy, mobilizing disenfranchised people to find a voice in claiming more equitable distribution of scarce resources."

In chapter 7, Chrisman also emphasizes anthropological tools and methods in community building—ethnography and participatory action research (PAR)—but in the arena of public and community health. Because of changing views of population health and new conceptions of public health practices, especially regarding chronic diseases that are closely linked with the ways in which people live or are related to social determinants of health, the 1988 Institute of Medicine recommended balancing its concern about disease with equal consideration of working more broadly on health and community. The ensuing mandates compelled community mobilization, which, in turn, requires particular anthropological skills of assessment, community mobilization, and evaluation. Chrisman explains that traditional, top-down public health initiatives are unsuccessful because they are set in multiethnic communities and are explicitly based on coalitions or community governing groups yet have little regard for the issues and nuances of community. When the funding stops, there is no local organization to carry on the endeavor. Consequently, Chrisman describes a trend in public and community health toward recognizing "that macro social forces have powerful effects on the public's health," in contrast to most existing public health programs, which focus on the micro level.

In the face of these forces, Chrisman discusses the value of community-based participatory research. He also discusses the special attention placed on community involvement and control, partnerships among diverse community organizations, and cultural sensitivity and competencies—all of which require anthropological theoretical and methodological abilities.

Chrisman identifies two sets of tools that are necessary to address

these social determinants of health: the conceptual focus on culture and on community and the methodological skills in ethnography and participatory action research—or the rapid assessment process. With these tools, he states, anthropologists can expand public health practitioners' views and methodologies, which are limited by the very nature of their disciplines. Chrisman states that the medical model of research has focused on populations and isolated variables, not on communities and cultural contexts and patterns. In addition, anthropological methodologies aid public health researchers in designing prevention and control programs. They offer a significant set of techniques to gather data for community assessment and mobilization and for evaluation. He states that these methods and the resulting qualitative and quantitative data are more successful in examining chronic diseases correlated to lifestyles and in answering the questions that quantitative analysis cannot. Also, they are more capable methods at *both* the micro and macro levels.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE WORK

The contributors to this book suggest a sequential model for sustaining existing communities: (1) recognize existing community relationships and connections, (2) identify unambiguous needs, (3) establish realistic, meaningful objectives, (4) formulate a skills and assets inventory, (5) develop cooperative relationships, (6) connect to helpful outside resources, (7) build trust through shared experience, (8) express identity through symbols and rituals, (9) advance group identity, (10) engage in collective problem solving and enrichment, (11) acknowledge concrete accomplishments, (12) celebrate achievements, and (13) redefine needs and objectives.

To sustain a community, we assert, the first step is to identify community relationships and connections already engaged in articulating current needs. The needs of a given community change through time. Identified needs that are vague, too far-ranging, or not agreed on by community members undermine the staying power necessary to resolve them. Community members must concur on practical, relevant objectives that can be addressed in a reasonable time. To decide on a strategy, community members and outside experts together must formulate an inventory of existing skills and assets in the community. This

activity enlists greater support and investment by more community members, furthering the identification of available resources that can help advance the entire enterprise.

Without strong, cooperative community relationships and significant connections to outside resources, all efforts will lose momentum. Mutual internal and external relationships nurture trust through cooperative experience.

Shared symbols and rituals that express these relationships help to solidify and advance group identity. In turn, a solid group identity encourages community members and outside experts to act collectively in solving problems and enriching community life.

These critical, meaningful social and cultural processes must be translated into concrete accomplishments recognizable to community members. Celebrating achievements and honoring major contributors in a public forum help to sustain community zeal. After publicly acknowledging that goals have been reached, the community is ready to take another look at its needs, assets, and objectives, and a new cycle of community building can begin.

This approach to community building suggests certain outcomes. Our idea of a successful result is a self-sustaining, self-renewing community. Community members become actively involved in collective problem solving and enrichment. A successful outcome manifests in improved lives, greater equity, stronger relationships within the community and with members of related communities, and expanded networks, institutions, and assets. Working together, people can enjoy new standards and expectations.