



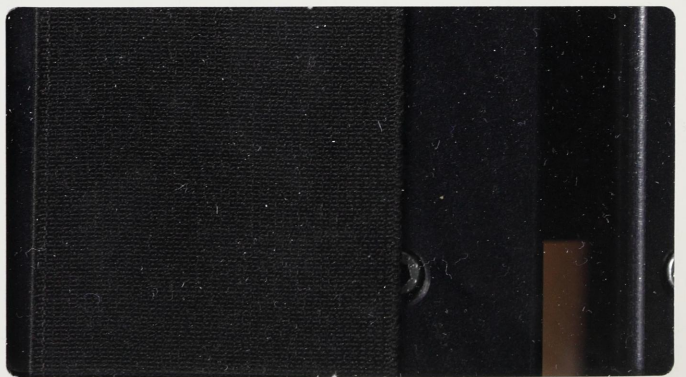
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THE COMMUNITY IDEA

Alexander Kwesi Kassah

HiH Skriftserie 1998/14 - Harstad College



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The Community Idea

Author

Alexander Kwesi Kassah

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Community Development

The interest of social and economic

development in the

community development

is not the same as the

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Sammendrag/Abstract <p><i>Community has been labelled as one of the basic unit ideas in Sociology.</i></p> <p><i>The interest of social theorists in the concept was aroused by the rapid political, social and economic changes in society at the time. Attempts were made to compare «traditional societies», said to be characterised mainly by communal relations to «modern societies», mainly characterised by non-communal relations. Community is not the easiest to define. While some define it in geographic terms, others see it as an individual concept, and yet others in structural terms. The community concept generated many debates, some of which ended up predicting its end. Despite the controversies, the understanding of the concept and its dichotomy seems to be relevant and vital, especially in plans aimed at helping marginalised people in society.</i></p>		
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The Community Idea.

ALEXANDER KWESI KASSAH

Introduction

A characteristic feature of nineteenth century social thought is that of order and change. Attention in this era was directed to the understanding of the causes and consequences of the rapid changes that occurred (Giddens, 1991b). Traditional social order was said to have represented both stability and continuity (May, 1996, Giddens, 1990). There were therefore fears that the new developments in society could breakdown or disorganise traditional forms of association, in other words plunge humanity into disorder (Bell & Newby, 1982). Comparisons made between the traditional and the modern, gave way to many questions, both ontological and epistemological. In other words questions about the nature and principal features of society, the sources of an objective knowledge of society and the practical and moral implications of the changing society, were raised.

The above among others led to the increased interest in the idea of community. The paper will focus on the community concept, throwing light on some major debates and not forgetting the continuous significance of the concept's dichotomy in plans to help the marginalised in society.

The foundations of community.

The Community idea, according to Nisbet, clearly separates the nineteenth century thought from that of the preceding age of reason (Nisbet, 1994). He emphasised that community holds the same pivotal position in the nineteenth century that the idea of contract held in the age of reason. This is to say that while contract gave legitimacy to social relations in the age of reason, the ties of community, either real or imagined, traditional or contrived served as the image of a good society.

Community thus became a way of seeking legitimacy in the state, churches, trade unions, revolutionary movements, profession and co-operation (Nisbet, 1994).

The works of Tönnies and Durkheim cannot be over-emphasised in attempts to understand the community concept. This is however not to play down the contributions of Comte, Weber, Le Play, Simmel, and Marx, to mention but some others. By the introduction of the conceptual contrasts between communal relations (*Gemeinschaft*) and non-communal relations (*Gesellschaft*), Tönnies gave a lasting terminology to community (Nisbet, 1994). He concentrated on blood, place and mind and their sociological consequences of kinship, neighbourhood and friendship (Bell & Newby, 1982). *Gemeinschaft* by blood or kinship denotes unity of being, *Gemeinschaft* of locality or place, is based on common habitat or collective ownership, and *Gemeinschaft* of the mind involves co-operation and co-ordinated action for a common goal. For Tönnies, intimate and enduring relations characterised community life. He noted that in the community, culture seems relatively homogeneous and moral codes are strictly enforced. Solidarity and community spirit, or rather a sense of belonging are important features of community. *Gesellschaft*, on the other hand is associated with large scale,

impersonal and contractual ties. Human Gesellschaft is seen as mere coexistence of people independent of each other. In Tönnies' terms, «all its activities are restricted to a definite end and a definite means of obtaining it» (Tönnies, 1957).

Émile Durkheim drew the dichotomy between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity. He likened mechanical solidarity to society founded upon likeness, intolerance of dissimilarity, where a form of rudimentary division of labour takes place. Organic solidarity, on the other hand refers to society founded upon the integration of difference into a collaborative, and therefore harmonious, complex whole (Bell & Newby, 1982). This societal form is characterised by anonymity and clearly outlined division of labour.

The Durkheimian dichotomy was used by the famous Chicago school to draw distinctions between rural and urban societies (ibid., 1982). Rural communities were said to be small, parochial, stable and face to face. Rural dwellers have a comprehensive personal knowledge of each other. They are often related by blood and are bounded by common norms and values. Life here was also described as conservative, and people were self-sufficient as far as production of subsistence consumer goods are concerned (Bell & Newby, 1982). A main feature of the traditional or rural community is its ability to coerce membership and loyalty (Suttles, 1972).

The city was seen to differ greatly from the rural areas. It was described as an aggregation of strangers who come together for the purpose to gain or make a fortune. They are said not to be in the state of co-operation, but isolation (ibid., 1982). Physical contacts may be close while social contacts may be distant. This is to say that contacts in the city may be face to face, but are nevertheless

impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental(Wirth, 1969). Competition and formal control mechanisms seem to substitute for the bonds of solidarity. The city was said to be the home of civilised people or people at the later evolutionary stage. Rural dwellers who venture moving to the cities may have to undergo re-socialisation to be able to fit into the city. The city was thus divided into structural and ecological zones which are distinguishable by population and function.

Although the dichotomies of Tönnies and Durkheim are very important, the strict division of relations into communal/non-communal relations does not measure up to reality. What is more evident is, that in the rural areas people tend to exhibit more of communal relations than the urban areas, which tend to exhibit more of non-communal than communal relations. This is to say that communal relations is not only a rural phenomena. One can thus also think of a city community which could be distinguished from the rural community. This is because just as rural dwellers may adopt some ways of life which are typically urban, rurality may also be imported into the city.

Some conceptions of community.

Despite the fact that the concept «community» has been of great concern to sociologists for more than two hundred years, it is difficult to give it a satisfactory definition (Bell & Newby, 1982; Hillery, 1955). Fischer noted, that even Robert Nisbet, the most forceful contemporary proponent of the theory never quite defines but rather listed the constituents of community(Fischer, 1977). In the same manner as Tönnies categorised gemeinschaft in terms of a trinity; blood, locality and mind,

the concept may be looked as a geographic, subjective and social units. The concept has also been viewed in evolutionary and dialectical terms.

Community as a geographic unit.

The geographic element of community could be traced back to one of Tönnies' trinity; locality. By a geographic unit, is meant a territorial entity, a place which is politically demarcated. Poplin, one of those who view community partly in geographic terms referred to the concept as a territorial organisation of people where they live and work (Poplin, 1972). Helander considers community as consisting of people living together in some form of social organisation and cohesion. He pointed out that community members share in varying degrees, political, economic and cultural characteristics, as well as interests and aspirations, including health (Helander, 1993). Communities, according to Helander, vary widely in size and socio-economic profile, ranging from clusters of isolated homesteads to more organised villages, towns and city districts (ibid., 1993). As already mentioned, the community concept may therefore not be limited to the rural areas. The concept seems to be an universal one, whose applicability extends to both urban and rural groupings in space. For Suttles, community is what politicians pay eloquent tributes to and say they represent it, administrators serve it, and yet others like sociologists deny its usefulness and even announce its decline (Suttles, 1972). Suttles argued that community and other spatial groupings are constructed out of primitive conceptions of space, distance and movements (ibid., 1972).

The spatial conception of community is popular with theorists who seek to understand the differences in social relations at different places. Those who are

interested in a community as an arena for social action may also be placed under this category.

Community as a subjective unit

Labelling community as a subjective unit is to highlight an individualistic view of the concept. The subjective view, just like the social or structural view below can be connected to Tönnies view of the «mind». This view of community may also be likened to how the individual constructs boundaries, which according to Cohen may be thought of or exist in the minds of their beholders (Cohen, 1985). Individuals often associate with the community's territorial boundary, solidarity, cohesiveness to mention but few of the characteristics that define the concept. The individual is here seen as an agent capable of creating and re-creating community. In other words the individual's role as a creator of communal relations is central to this point of departure. Community here is how it is constructed by the individual or what meanings individuals attach to it. Following Berger, community relations may be constructed by an individual through the dialectical processes of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). This is to say, that individuals categorise their relations to people they interact with. After the formation of stereotypes, individual views assume objective existence, which is then internalised. The internalised stereotypes and/or norms then serve as internal controls that shape or guide individual behaviour. The individual is thus instrumental in making or unmaking communal relations. As to whether the community relations are entirely individual products is not easy to answer.

Following Comte, community precedes the individual logically, and psychologically (Nisbet, 1994).

Community as a social unit

Community as a social unit on the other hand may refer to an over-individual view of community. Auguste Comte, one of the theorists who totally rejects individualism, made it clear, that society cannot be decomposed into individuals, but into elements which share the essence of society, that is into social groups and communities. Fischer see the community as a social construct. For him, individuals are directed by their selves and act in concert with the collective will (Fischer, et al., 1977). Stinchcombe pointed out that individuals are only left with the option to choose between socially structured alternatives (Stinchcombe, 1975:12). This bares relations with Durkheim's view of the social or social facts which could be seen as external to the actors. The community concept may thus be understood as external to the individual actors who create and recreate communal life. This may imply that individual actors on the communal arena may have similar or structured understanding of communal relations. That is, similar views and interpretations or better still, knowledge of the rules that govern how to relate to each other in time and space. Community members, whether they are interacting within or beyond geographic borders or even in virtual space, identify with and interact in accordance with the existing norms that govern communal life. In other words, even though individuals in communal relations may be scattered in space, they may have similar views, and a sense of belonging, based on how they live their daily lives (Scott, 1996). It could however be argued that individuals be not seen as

Following Collins, community prescribes the historical, linguistic, and psychological (Mead, 1934).

Community as a social unit

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view of community. Augustin Comte, one of the founders who really refers

individualism, states that society cannot be defined and the individual

but the elements which show the essence of society, that is into social groups and

communities. Taylor and the community as a social unit, but in his view

the social unit is not a group but a collection of individuals (Mead, 1934).

1917, Comte's position that individuals are only defined in relation to

others, rather than as individuals in themselves (Mead, 1934). The basis

relation with Durkheim's view of the social unit which could be seen as

external to the social unit. The community, however, may be understood as external

to the individual, but the social unit may be defined as the way individuals

define each other in the social unit, they have similar or different

understanding of external relations. That is, similar laws and institutions in

fact, all knowledge of the social unit is derived from each other in the

and social. Community studies, whether they are conducted within or beyond

geographic borders or even in virtual space, study with and across it.

accordance with the existing times that govern existence. In other words,

even though individuals in communal relations may be scattered in space, they

may have similar views, and a sense of belonging, based on how they live their

daily lives (Scott, 1990). It could however be argued that individuals do not see as

punch cards, but actors, able and willing to take relate to others as they desire.

After all what may be good for one may not be good for another.

Community: A geographic, subjective or social unit.

Even though it is possible to categorise community as done above, it might not be easy to strike differences between them. While Louis Wirth(1945) saw physical factors as the best conditioning factors offering the possibilities and setting the limits for social and psychological existence, Nisbet view the concept as being far beyond mere local community (Wirth, 1945; Nisbet, 1994). Nisbet made it clear that, the idea of community encompasses all forms of relationships which are characterised by a high degree of intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time (Nisbet, 1994). Members of a community, be it in the city or the rural areas draw psychological strength from the interdependent relations they have with each other(ibid., 1994). The individual and social relations cannot be separated from locality. A high degree intimacy, emotional and moral commitment and social cohesion, which are characteristic of communal relations do not take place in vacuum. Simply, all action, whether mental or social, takes place at a place in time.

A way of drawing lines between the spatial and non-spatial views of community may be to see the concept in terms of institutional and non-institutional fact. Institutional facts, according to Searle, are so called because they require human institutions for their existence (Searle, 1996). Non-institutional facts or brute facts on the other hand do not require human institutions for their existence (ibid., 1996). The geographic conception of community can be understood in terms of

After all, what may be good for one may not be good for another.

Community: A geographic, subjective or social unit.

Even though it is possible to categorize community as being either a social or a geographic unit, it is not always clear. It is not always clear to make a distinction between them. While Lewis (1991) has argued that the best distinguishing factor between the two is whether the unit is defined in terms of social or psychological distance, Lewis views the concept of community as a social unit. Lewis (1991) also states that the idea of community encompasses all forms of relationships which are characterized by a significant amount of similarity, emotional depth, and involvement.

social capital, and community. Lewis (1991) defines a community as a group of people who live in the same geographical area and who share a common identity. Lewis (1991) also states that the concept of community is not limited to geographical boundaries. The inclusion of social relationships cannot be restricted to a single area. A high degree of similarity, emotional involvement, and social capital, which are characteristics of community relations, do not have to be restricted to a single area. Lewis (1991) also states that the concept of community is not limited to a single area.

A way of viewing Lewis' definition of the social and non-geographic community may be to see the concept in terms of relational and psychological fact. Institutional facts, according to Lewis, are all social relations that require human institutions for their existence (see for 1991). Lewis (1991) also states that facts on the other hand do not require human institutions for their existence (Lewis 1991). The geographic conception of community can be understood in terms of

non-institutional facts or brute facts. This is not to abandon the fact that we require the institution of language to express geographic facts. Searle made it clear that we must distinguish statement of fact from the facts stated (Searle, 1996). While a geographic unit or local community exists outside the human definition of it, it takes language to state a geographic facts. The subjective and social definitions of community may on the other hand be placed under the institutional facts.

Even though the social definition of community requires human institutions for its existence, the problem as to whether community is an individual or social construct still needs to be elaborated. The conceptions man and society underlie most approaches aimed at understanding human behaviour. While one stresses the human agent, the other stresses the structure or system (Allardt, 1972, Burns et al, 1985, Etzioni, 1970, Wallace, 1969). The individual as exemplified by Schumpeter's entrepreneur, or by Weber's charismatic leader enjoys an extensive freedom to act within and upon social systems. Social actors on the other hand are either not found or are faceless automata following rules or given roles and functions in social structures or systems which they cannot basically change (Burns et al., 1990). The problem here is that it takes individuals to construct communal and non-communal relations. Humans are in fact involved in the reconstruction of these relations. Community cannot therefore be understood solely in structural terms. Following Beck, it might be appropriate to conceptualise community in terms of an «and»(Beck, 1997). This is because it may not be easy to determine whether it is solely the subject or only structure which is instrumental in the construction of communal and non-communal relations. A form of dialectical process seems to be responsible for its construction.

non-institutional facts of pure facts. This is not to disregard the fact that we require
the institution of language to explore geographic facts. But to make it clear that
we must distinguish between the fact from the fact stated (Baker 1989). While a
geographic fact or fact, however, exists outside the human definition, it takes
language to state a geographic fact. The exclusive and social definition of
community may be the other side of the coin, where the institutional fact
exists through the social definition of community, which is a social institution
in its essence. The problem is to whether community is an institution or social
institution will make a big difference. The expectations and the social institution
will be different. It is not surprising that Baker (1989) has
the human agent, the other states the structure of events (Baker 1989). Baker
et al. (1989) claim that Baker (1989) The institutional is established by
Sommers's argument of de Waard's characteristic social agent or structure
territory. It will still use social agents, social agents on the other hand are
other set found in the social agents, looking into the other side of
institution in social structure or events when they cannot discuss change (Baker
et al. 1989). The problem here is that a social institution is a social institution
and non-social institution. There are two in the construction of
these relations. Community cannot be defined as a social institution
because Baker's social institution is a social institution, community is a form
of an agent (Baker 1989). The argument may not be easy to get, but whether
it is solely the aspect of only social which is a social institution or construction of
community and non-community relations. A fact of social institution seems to be
responsible for its construction.

The evolutionists conception of community.

That organisms become increasingly refined and well adapted to changing circumstances, was not restricted to natural sciences, but occupied and steered the thoughts of many social theorists. Herbert Spencer for example was one the social theorists who shared the view that the world was growing progressively better (in Ritzer, 1988). Darwin, the chief advocate of evolutionism postulated that organisms which cannot develop are destined to perish. The widespread set of beliefs about the direction of modern society and the quality of individuals in social relations seems to point to this prediction. Pachard who observed the general shattering of group life in America, remarked that «we are becoming a nation of strangers (Pachard, 1972: 1-2). Observing carefully the nature of societal change due to urbanisation, industrialisation, social and geographical mobility, and the correspondent movement of societies from essentially ascriptive to society based on legal agreements, theorists were tempted to predict an emergence of a new society, which could replace the previous one. In other words, efforts were made to predict the end or loss of community.

The views of Tönnies and Durkheim on community were also seen by many as evolutionary in form. *Gemeinschaft* or communal relations were seen as disappearing and would be replaced by *Gesellschaft* or non-communal relations. In the case of Durkheim, mechanical solidarity is viewed by many theorists as gradually being replaced by a society characterised by organic solidarity. The collapse of many marriages or families and reduced social cohesion and solidarity were seen as signs in direction of this prediction. Also associated with this claim of

The evolutionary conception of community

That organisms become increasingly refined and well adapted to changing circumstances, was first noticed in natural sciences, but noticed and stated in thoughts of many social theorists. The first question for example was: why the social theorists who shared the view that the world was growing progressively better in 1800? (Giddens, 1984) The first solution of social theorists pointed out that organisms which cannot develop are bound to perish. The widespread out of the world and the division of modern society and the change of individuals in social relations seems to point to that direction. Parsons who observed the gaps in the development of group life in America, stated that the first step was taking a step of the first step (Parsons, 1954). Organisms naturally die unless all social changes due to that step in the evolution, social and geographical mobility and the consequent movement of individuals from essentially negative to sunny field on social spectrum. Theories were proposed to predict or anticipate in a new society, which could predict the previous one in other words, which were made to predict the gain or loss of community.

The ideas of Tönnies and Durkheim on community were also seen by many as evolutionary in form. Gemeinschaft or community, which were seen as disappearing and would be replaced by Gesellschaft or non-community, in the case of Durkheim, mechanical solidarity is viewed by many theorists as gradually being replaced by a society characterized by organic solidarity. The collapse of many managers or leaders and the social cohesion and solidarity were seen as signs in direction of the direction. Also associated with the class

loss of community is the fast growing globalisation and its implication for humans. While there are views which interpret the community concept mainly in evolutionary terms, there is the possibility of seeing the dichotomies in dialectical terms. This is because Ferdinand Tönnies, who is an advocate of the community dichotomy may be viewed as a dialectician, not an evolutionist. Tönnies work antedated the neo-Kantian doctrine which can be said to be evolutionary in content. The processes of evolution are conceptualised as calm, smooth and continuous rather than as transcending or going beyond themselves, into new, unknown phases. The Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft dichotomies can be looked at as two counter positions which can give birth to a synthesis. Tönnies' dichotomies thus separate not two epochs, but two sides of a contradiction. Adhering strictly to the evolutionary or lineal conceptions, will mean predicting an end to communal relations, and replacing them with non-communal relations. It may be preferable to think of communal/non-communal relations in terms of dialectics, where a relation and a counter relation may lead to the formation of new forms of relation altogether. The implication is that, the clash of the community dichotomies which seem to have opposite characteristics, may thus lead to the proliferation of more personal communities, each more supportive and more compatible to the individual than ascribed corporate group.

The significance of the community concept

Almost any collective action going on outside the workplace is referred to as «community» action(Cockburn, 1977). The use of the concept has gained currency in attempts to support the disadvantaged in society, especially in areas of poverty

loss of continuity is the fast growing globalisation and its implications for business.
While there are views which liken the community concept mainly to a voluntary
form, there is the possibility of seeing the distinction in different forms. This is
because Ferdinand Tönnies, who is an advocate of the community theory,
may be viewed as a dualist, not a dualist. It seems that what he said is
non-contrastive which can be said to be evolutionary in content. The
distinction of evolution and evolution is not a clear, precise and contrasting
than an understanding of going beyond the scope of the community concept. The
Community Conceptual distinction can be treated as two distinct entities
which can give birth to a new one. Tönnies' distinction is not a
dualist but a contrastive distinction. Addressing issues in the evolution of
linear concepts is not a clear-cut and to contrast concepts and
regarding both with non-contrastive relations. It may be possible to think of
community as a contrastive relation in which it is distinct, where a relation and a
contrastive relation may lead to the formation of new forms of relation. The
distinction is not the case of the community distinction which seems to have
opposite characteristics. This has led to the protection of new concepts
consequently, each more extensive and more extensive to include the
related concepts.

The difference of the community concept

Almost any collective action going on outside the workplace is related to its
community action (Ogburn, 1971). The use of the concept in other contexts
in attempts to suggest the distinction in social relations in areas of family

eradication and health. The world bodies including the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Development Program(UNDP) and many donor agencies both international and private, are examples of those who see the need to fall on community action for the realisation of their goals. The assumption is often that neighbours, «did things for one another, whether they liked each other or not» (Heberle, 1960;9). Community, is here seen in terms social cohesion and solidarity. The spirit of voluntarism is necessary in this direction. The point here is that people in need often undertake collective actions to resolve common problems. This kind of behaviour however vary in terms of the type of relations and the category of people involved. Social solidaric behaviour may be more common where communal relations are predominant than where non-communal relations dominate. It may be more likely for people in communal relations to join hands to solve common problems than people in non-communal relations. Also, some group of people may exhibit oppressive behaviour towards others. This is especially the case when the so called «able» people in society make the laws and norms and demand that the marginalised follow them or face stringent sanctions. In rural communities begging is often seen as a shameful behaviour on the part of relatives of disabled people. Beggars in some developing countries therefore prefer to migrate to the city communities where begging is encouraged in order to avoid societal pressure or sanctions on them(Kassah,1998).

Also in the city community, the bonds of solidarity may not be weak, but the desire for pro-social behaviour might be low. Simply those in the city communities are often in a constant struggle for survival and might not be too willing to exhibit voluntary spirit or helping behaviour. Such behaviour is more often than not

education and health. The world bodies including the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and many other agencies both international and private, are agencies of those who see the health of the community as one for the realization of their goals. The assumption is often that neighbours can help for one another, whether they live next door or not. (Heber, 1987b). Community is here used in terms of social cohesion and solidarity. The spirit of volunteerism is necessary in this direction. The point here is that people in need often undergo various actions to resolve various problems. This need of behaviour between say in terms of the type of relations and the changes of people involved. Social skills in behaviour may be more common when community leaders are present, in that while non-community relations dominate, it may be more likely for people in community relations to look towards solve various problems than people in non-community relations. After some groups of people may exist, a positive relation towards others. This is especially the case where the social relation grows in which the law is not done and demand for the responsibility follow that of the project director, is that community helping is often seen as a natural behaviour on the part of those of different groups. People in some developing countries therefore often go to the city communities where helping is encouraged in order to avoid social pressure or sanctions on them (Heber, 1987).

Also in the city community, the points of solidarity may not be weak, but the desire for pro-social behaviour might be low. Simply there is the city communities are often in a constant struggle for survival and might not be too willing to exhibit voluntary effort or helping behaviour. Such behaviour is more often than not

thought to be the responsibility of others, especially the state machinery. The point here is, that the nature of submergence of the individual differ and will continue to differ in city and rural communities. Meanwhile, the achievement of set goals involves the submergence of the individual will by communal actors. While it might be easier for rural dwellers to support their disabled people without necessarily thinking of attaching economic strings, this may be difficult in many city communities. The city is characterised by a greater degree of individualism and struggle for survival. Also, the sanctions that accompany deviant behaviour are still weaker in many city communities than the rural communities. People may decide not to join clean up programs in the city community. This is however not easy to avoid in the rural communities.

Community and its dichotomies are very important in community action plan formulation. In other words, policy makers should be aware of the structured differences between community types or the types of communal relations. Examples abound that citing development projects designed for rural communities in the city communities, is most often than not, problematic.

Whether community is a geographic or social unit, subjective or objective unit, institutional or non-institutional, evolutionary or dialectic concept, it will continue to be necessary as long as local relationships play an important part in peoples lives (Cohen, 1989).

Summary

Community has been labelled as one of the basic unit ideas in Sociology. The early nineteenth century social theorists were confronted with a fast changing

thought to be the responsibility of others, especially the state machinery. The core
here is that the nature of submergence of the individual state and will continue to
differ in city and rural communities. Meanwhile, the achievement of our goals
involves the submergence of the individual state by communal action. While it might
be easier for rural dwellers to report their desired people without need for
thinking of attaching economic strings, this may be difficult in many city
communities. The city is characterized by a greater degree of individualism and
struggle for survival. Also, the actions that accompany desired behavior are still
weaker in many city communities than the rural communities. People may decide
not to join their organization in the city community. This is because not every
individual in the rural communities.

Generally, the differences are very important in community development
formation. In rural areas, people prefer to work in their own fields. In urban areas,
differences between community types or the types of community structure.
Examples are the kind of development projects designed for rural communities
in the city communities, is much different than rural communities.
While community is a program of social and economic or political
and institutional arrangements, evaluation of projects cannot be
conducted to be necessary as long as local relationships play an important part in
projects (see Cohen, 1989).

Summary

Community has been called as one of the best unit for Sociology.
The early nineteenth century social theorists were concerned with a fast changing

world, characterised by revolutions and technological advancements. Also characteristic of this era, was the issue of migration of rural dwellers to the bigger towns to sell labour, which has become redundant due to technological advancement in agriculture. The concern of social scientist then was to explain the changes that occurred and the consequences for the future. Tönnies and Durkheim are but two of the early social theorists who made contributions to our understanding of the community concept. While Tönnies differentiated communal relations from the non-communal by use of the concepts «Gemeinschaft» and «Gesellschaft», Durkheim differentiated societal forms characterised by «mechanical» and «organic» solidarity. The interest generated by the dichotomies gave room to many debates. While some view community in geographical terms, others saw the concept as a subjective unit, and yet many others think of community as a structural concept. In other words community was seen as a spatial, individual and an over-individual concept. It is however difficult to strike a reasonable difference between the three forms of looking at the community. Such a task will only mean trying to make the impossible, possible. The community dichotomies were also explained in evolutionary terms. Many who did so ended predicting the end of community. It might however be important to view the concept in dialectical terms and thus eliminating the fear of an end to community. The community concept has gained currency especially in community action programs. It is important for policy makers to take into consideration the community dichotomies during policy formulations to avoid drawing plans that might be difficult to execute.

with, orientated by revolutions and technological advancements, also
characteristics of the era, was the issue of migration of rural dwellers to the larger
towns to seek better, which has become inevitable due to technological
advancement in agriculture. The concern of some scholars has been to explain the
changes that occurred and the consequences for the rural. Thomas and Crompton
are not one of the early social theorists who wrote on this and to our
understanding of the community concept. While Thomas did not intend to explain
relations from the non-evolutionary use of the concept, he was interested in
social structure. He then distinguished social structure into two parts, the
material and the non-material. The material part is the physical environment
and the non-material part is the social environment. While some view community in geographical terms,
others see the concept as a subject, and not many others look at
community as a social concept. In other words, community was seen as a
social, cultural and an overall concept. It is however, difficult to define
community without defining the three terms of social, cultural and
social. Community is seen as a social concept. The community
concept was first explained by Tönnies in his book 'Community and
Society'. He distinguished between the two types of community, the
community and the society. He argued that the community is a natural
concept, while the society is a man-made concept. He also argued that
the community concept has gained currency especially in community
programs. It is important for policy makers to take into consideration the community
dichotomy during policy formulation to avoid drawing parts that might be difficult
to execute.

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