Connected Communities

Conceptualisations and meanings of ‘community’: The theory and operationalization of a contested concept

Graham Crow and Alice Mah

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Conceptualisations and meanings of 'community': the theory and operationalization of a contested concept

Graham Crow and Alice Mah

Executive Summary

This Discussion Paper explores conceptualisations and meanings of 'community' as a contested concept, focusing on how 21st-century researchers across the world have gone about capturing 'community' using a variety of methods. It takes stock of recent theoretical and empirical developments in researching communities, identifying continuities and differences between past and present research. It presents an overview of recent developments in the operationalisation of community, drawing primarily on the 100 works in the annotated bibliography 'Researching Community in the 21st Century' (Mah and Crow 2011). In addition to this focus on how researchers have gone about capturing the meaning of 'community' in recently-published research, the paper also draws on interviews conducted with a broad range of researchers with recent experience of undertaking research in the field of 'community', and on input to the project from members of the project advisory board. In contrast to approaches which distinguish between different types of communities, we explore theoretical, empirical and methodological developments in researching communities which highlight four interrelated and overlapping themes: connection, difference, boundaries and development. Future researchers will have much to learn from how these themes have been the subject of debate in contemporary attempts to capture the changing nature of 'community'.

Researchers and Project Partners

Graham Crow (University of Southampton) and Alice Mah (University of Warwick)

Key words

Community, operationalization, research methods, connection, difference, boundaries, development

Conceptualisations and meanings of 'community': the theory and operationalization of a contested concept

Much has happened in recent years to warrant re-examination of approaches to researching communities, including critical appraisals of the community studies tradition of research (Brunt 2001; Crow 2002b; Day 2006). Williams (1976) famously argued that community is treated almost universally as positive. However, many scholars have disputed this understanding, noting the 'darker' side of communities relating to exclusion, inequality, oppression and social divisions (Crow and Maclean 2006; Hoggett 1997). While 'community' still carries positive connotations, recent conceptualisations are more paradoxical than Williams suggested: the term is used positively to represent social belonging, collective well-being, solidarity and support, but also negatively in relation to social problems and 'problem populations' (Mooney and Neal 2008). Further, while Suttles' (1972) and Cohen's (1985) discussions remain relevant, community boundaries have new dimensions in an age of globalisation, internet communication and increased mobility. Similarly, Willmott's (1986) classic distinction between communities of place, interest and identity remains a point of reference, but researchers have identified new issues. Blackshaw (2010) distinguishes community as theory, method, place, identity/belonging, ideology, and policy and practice, for example, while the notion of 'personal communities' also figures in several studies (Phillipson et al. 2001; Spencer and Pahl 2006; Weeks et al. 2001).

Debates about community cohesion (Cooper 2008; Finney and Simpson 2009; Flint and Robinson 2008; Smith 2005; Thomas 2011; Wallace 2010; Wetherell et al. 2007), 'communities of practice' (Amin and Roberts 2008; Kajee 2008; Le May 2009; Unwin et al. 2007; Wenger et al. 2002), internet communities (Boellstorff 2008; Kendall 2002; Papacharissi 2010; Rheingold 2000), sustainable communities (McCright and Clark 2006; O'Riordan and Stoll-Kleemann 2002; Raco 2007), and participatory community research (Aldred 2011; Ghose 2007; Salway et al. 2011; Williamson and DeSouza 2010) provide five examples of how communities continue to evolve in theory and in practice, and of why discussions of the meaning of community and the connections within and between communities necessarily spill over into debates about the research methods needed to capture community phenomena. In addition, recent years have witnessed further developments in the use of the concept of community in policy-related discourse in the areas of care, community resilience, crime, education, health, social exclusion, and welfare (Brill et al. 2011; Butcher et al. 2007; Butler and Hamnett 2011; Chandra et al. 2011; Clements et al. 2008; Cooper 2008; Hamdi 2010; Hughes 2007; Kuecker et al. 2011; Ledwith 2011; Mooney and Neal 2008; Obrist 2006; Somerville 2011; Taylor 2011).

Our review includes research that relates to key themes of community yet uses alternative concepts. Corcoran et al. (2010) frame their research in terms of 'social capital', 'locality' and 'affiliations', which all relate implicitly to community. Other researchers focusing on particular geographical areas prefer the terms 'neighbourhood' or 'street' to 'community' (Dorling and Thomas 2011; Forrest and Kearns 2001; Lupton 2003; Miller 2008), avoiding the definitional problems associated with community as a contested concept (although 'neighbourhood' and 'street' come with their own definitional challenges (Attlee 2007; Hall 2009)). These works are important to consider because they demonstrate some of the analytical limitations of 'community' which can also be problems for alternative concepts.

Alongside these conceptual developments there have been equally far-reaching developments in the methods employed in community-based research (Root 2007). One example of the need for reconsideration of how community is researched is the finding of surveys that reported giving in communities exceeds reports of receiving assistance from other community members; people prefer not to present themselves to researchers as dependent on others (Crow 2002a; Crow et al. 2002). Researchers need to be mindful that observations of people's actions do not necessarily tally with what people say they do. More positively, network analysis exemplifies approaches to community research where consideration of the operationalisation of the concept of community aids assessment of what is currently known and how further research can make the most of recent methodological innovations (Bærenholdt 2007; Blokland 2003; Blokland and Savage 2008; Gilchrist 2009). In addition, collaboration between researchers and people being researched, using methods such as collaborative ethnography (Lassiter et al. 2004), is claimed to produce more reliable as well as more ethical results compared to those of conventional methods. This reflects the broader trend towards the democratisation of the research process. However, the rise in participatory methods in community-based research (Aldred 2011; Ghose 2007; Salway et al. 2011; Williamson and DeSouza 2010) – in which community members are co-producers, co-researchers and co-authors of research findings — also presents methodological challenges related to the critical role of the researcher, the valorisation of community 'voices' in claims about authenticity and truth, and the 'ownership' of research outputs.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods approaches have much to offer community research, either separately or in combination. Community research has traditionally used mixed methods to facilitate triangulation of multiple perspectives. Ethnographically based research using several methods was the approach associated with community studies, for example. Most of the studies in our review of 100 pieces of community research published since 2000 (Mah and Crow 2011) use two or more methods, with the following breakdown: 40 interviews, 24 ethnographies (or participant observation), 22 case studies, 23 policy analyses, 15 statistics or surveys (with 6 purely quantitative), 14 discourse, media or textual analyses, 14 visual methods, 14 historical and archival

methods, 12 participatory methods, 7 focus groups, 6 online/virtual, 6 network analyses, 3 mobile methods, 2 GIS, 1 complexity, 1 ethnology, and 1 ethnomethodology. Although not based on a representative sample of recent studies, this review nevertheless reveals that triangulation remains popular among researchers attempting to capture 'community'. However, despite the rise in visual, online, mobile, network and participatory methods, these relatively new methods have not displaced more established methods for researching community such as ethnography and interviews. Photo elicitation is a good example of how visual methods can supplement interviews (Harper 2001).

This discussion paper is guided by questions about what is new in the theory and practice of community research and how these developments stand in historical and comparative perspective. The Community Development Projects of the 1960's and 1970's provide several points of contrast to the present (Craig et al 2011), while it is also useful to study how the past is remembered in the present (Dicks 2000). Recent historical studies of community also enable comparisons between the present and past (Bastian and Alexander 2009; Capp 2003; Orford et al. 2002; Raco 2007; Tarbin and Broomhall 2008). For example, Capp's (2003) study of gossip in early modern England reinforcing particular codes of appropriate behaviour and fostering information support and exchange has parallels with recent debates on social capital (Blokland and Savage 2008; Corcoran et al. 2010; Forrest and Kearns 2001) and community morality (Laurier et al. 2002). Similarly, the understanding of what is distinctive about the present situation in the UK is usefully informed by comparisons with the situation elsewhere, such as with urban regeneration in the USA and France (Pierson and Smith 2001) and urban social networks in the Netherlands, Italy and Australia as well as these countries (Blokland and Savage 2008). A theme which has only recently emerged in the UK, 'community resilience' (Brill, et al. 2011; Gilchrist 2009), has been more widely researched in the United States and Africa (Brown 2011; Chamlee-Wright and Storr 2010; Chandra, et al. 2011; Holton 2011; Obrist 2006).

Numerous disciplines have useful contributions to make to researching community, both separately and together. The disciplines that are considered include architecture and planning, communications and information science, criminology, development studies, disability studies, ecology, education, ethnic and racial studies, geography, history, housing studies, law, literature, media studies, philosophy, political science, psychology, social anthropology, social policy, social work and community development, sociology, theology, and youth studies, amongst others. Five edited collections provide examples of imaginative interdisciplinary work: Bastian and Alexander (2009) on community archives; Christensen and O'Brien (2003) on children in the city; Haworth and Hart (2007) on well-being; Howley (2010) on community media; and McCright and Clark (2006) on community and ecology.

This discussion paper does not aim to arrive at a definition of community on which everyone can agree. Rather it accepts that there are good reasons why community is a contested concept, and that the existence of different approaches actually makes for vibrant and productive debate about what community relationships are, what their challenges are, and what they have the potential to achieve. The discussion of the different meanings of community is necessarily linked to the multiple ways of operationalising community using a range of research methods, and to the array of approaches arising out of various disciplines. Our underlying philosophy is one of methodological pluralism and interdisciplinarity. The basic premise is that when they are brought together the varying approaches to the study of community have the potential to be greater than the sum of the individual parts. The final part of the paper discusses recommendations for future research to be structured around themes of community connection, difference, boundaries and development.

Recommendations for future research

We identify four interrelated and overlapping themes: connection, difference, boundaries and development. These themes do not relate specifically to communities of place, interest, identity, attachment, or other 'types' of communities, but rather to broader concepts which link various dimensions of current community research. The first theme follows directly from the AHRC theme of Connected Communities, suggesting various ways in which 'connection' can be conceptualised and empirically researched in relation to community. By thinking critically about 'connection' and 'connectedness', the idea of disconnection is also raised, along with ideas of conflict. The second theme addresses 'difference' in relation to communities, both in a positive sense, in terms of celebrating social and cultural diversity and different identities and interests, and also in a negative sense, in terms of social exclusion which separates communities and maintains boundaries between outsiders and insiders. The third theme relates to the first two through identifying a key problem of researching communities: that of boundaries. This theme highlights the existence of different types of boundaries which are relevant in contemporary contexts, particularly boundaries related to place and mobility across these. Finally, the fourth theme is of 'development', mainly in the context of the social policy and social work sub-discipline of 'community development' and its widening scope to include areas such as health, welfare, sustainability, resilience, crime, regeneration and recession, participatory methods, and recognising that 'development' is also a contested term. These four themes are closely interconnected, and together they provide a useful agenda for addressing cross-cutting themes of researching communities in the 21st century.

The four themes are all open to empirical investigation using methods that have been shown by recent researchers to be profitable. Many studies use the idea of networks because of the capacity of social network analysis to reveal various aspects of community connectedness. For example, Gilchrist (2009) demonstrates in *The Well-connected Community* how informal and formal networks strengthen communities and improve partnership working, while Papacharissi (2010) examines the idea of networks

in relation to the internet and social connection within online networks. A strength of network analysis is that it shows how connections can be between community members or cross physical and other community boundaries, fulfilling 'bridging' as well as 'bonding' functions, to use Putnam's (2000) terminology. Social network analysis also has the potential to transcend the quantitative/qualitative methodological divide, and is in addition very powerful as a visual representation of connectedness. Forms of connection have also been explored through the notion of communities of practice, and here interviews and case studies are among the methods that have been used to capture the interaction between community members who are connected through shared practice, for example as they adopt innovations (Wenger et al. 2002).

'Difference' presents a particular methodological challenge because differences within a community are often hidden or unacknowledged. It is all too easy to assume that because community members have something in common that they have everything in common, and for uncomfortable differences to be overlooked within the discourse of community as a place of consensual gathering. Yet it is a common finding of research that individuals seek to associate with people like themselves and to live among 'people like us' (Butler and Robson 2003), reflecting sensitivity to cultural affinities (Rosenlund 2009; Savage et al. 2005) and to areas' reputations (Brent 2009). Sense of community distinctiveness continues to be associated with place, especially among poorer groups (Cole et al. 2011; Imrie et al. 2009), in contrast to those cosmopolitan communities whose members value the ideal of difference (Delanty 2010). Rural/urban differences also persist (Byrne 2001; Hillyard 2007; Maginn 2004; Winson and Leach 2002). Fine-grained ethnographies pick up what surveys of attitudes about differences may not (Charles et al. 2008), while detailed analysis of census data can correct misperceptions of how community differences play out on the ground (Finney and Simpson 2009), and collaborative research methods can give voice to 'hidden' marginalised groups that would otherwise be beneath the radar (Block 2008; Griffiths et al. 2005). Researchers examining the nature of internet communities have also found less difference than the distinction between 'virtual' and 'real' worlds led them to expect (Boellstorff 2008; Kendall 2002; Rheingold 2000).

Boundaries other than that between virtual and real life also have the capacity to confound expectations. Case studies of gated communities show that they do not necessarily result in an impermeable boundary between insiders and outsiders (Bagaeen and Oduku 2010; Salcedo and Torres 2004), while the concept of 'boundary spanners' (or brokers) who facilitate interaction across boundaries is central to communities of practice. People's membership of more than one community has the potential to be turned to good advantage, and may facilitate the development of 'gateway communities' for people on the move (Lippard and Gallagher 2011). Nevertheless, not all community boundaries are easily crossed, and studies of apparently open cities reveal the durability of insider/outsider distinctions, for example in relation to ethnicity (Holgersson et al. 2010). The boundary between kinship and community also needs to be kept in mind,

given that the solidarity of kinship networks does not readily extend to wider community relationships (Dench et al. 2006; Mumford and Power 2003; Phillipson et al. 2001).

Discussions of community development highlight the challenges of working with contested concepts. Analyses of the discourses contained in policy and other documents reveal competing perspectives of community development's relationship to the state and to the market (Craig et al. 2011; Otsuka and Kalirajan 2010). The conclusion to which case studies of particular policy initiatives point is the crucial importance of geographical, historical and socio-economic contexts, so that successful initiatives in one context cannot be guaranteed to work in another. Despite this concern about contingency, there are healthy debates about what lessons can be learned in the global North from the global South (Hamdi 2010; Kuecker et al. 2011), about the relationship between dreams of community and their achievement in reality (Keller 2003; Rosenblatt et al. 2009), and – most importantly for this discussion paper – the potential of researchers working with communities to contribute to bringing about change.

References and external links

Aldred, R. 'From community participation to organizational therapy? World Café and Appreciative Inquiry as research methods', *Community Development Journal* 46(1): 57-71, 2011.

Amin, A. and Roberts, J. (eds) *Community, economic creativity, and organization*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Attlee, J. *Isolarion: a different Oxford journey*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Bærenholdt, J. O. *Coping with distances: producing Nordic Atlantic societies*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007.

Bagaeen, S. and Uduku, O. (eds) *Gated communities: social sustainability in contemporary and historical gated developments*, London: Earthscan, 2010.

Bastian, J. A. and Alexander, B. (eds) *Community archives: the shaping memory*, London: Facet, 2009.

Blackshaw, T. *Key Concepts in Community Studies*. London: Sage, 2010.

Block, P. *Community: the structure of belonging*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2008.

Blokland, T. *Urban bonds: social relationships in an inner city neighbourhood*, Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2003.

Blokland, T. and Savage, M. (eds) *Networked urbanism: social capital in the city*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Boellstorff, T. *Coming of age in Second Life: an anthropologist explores the virtually human*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Brent, J. *Searching for community: representation, power and action on an urban estate*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2009.

Brill, L., Athwal, B., Chesters, G. and Quiggin, M. *'Recession, poverty and sustainable livelihoods in Bradford'*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2011.

Brown, D., L. *Rural people and communities in the 21st Century: resilience and transformation*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.

Brunt, L. 'Into the community' in P. Atkinson A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland and L. Lofland (eds) *Handbook of Ethnography*, London: Sage, 2001.

Butcher, H., Banks, S., Henderson, P. and Robertston, J. *Critical community practice*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2007.

Butler, T. and Hamnett, C. *Ethnicity, class and aspiration: understanding London's new East End*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2011.

Butler, T. and Robson, G. *London Calling: The Middle Classes and the Re-making of Inner London*. Oxford: Berg, 2003.

Byrne, D. S. *Understanding the urban*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Capp, B. *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Chamlee-Wright, E. and Storr, V. H. (eds) *The political economy of Hurricane Katrina and community rebound*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2010.

Chandra, A., Acosta, J., Stern, S., Uscher-Pines, L., Williams, M. V., Yeung, D., Garnett, J. and Meredith, L. S. *'Building community resilience to disasters: a way forward to enhance national health security'* Technical Reports, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2011.

Charles, N., Davies, C. A. and Harris, C. C. *Families in transition: social change, family formation, and kin relationships*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2008.

Christensen, P. M. and O'Brien, M. *Children in the city: home, neighbourhood and community*, London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Clements, D., Donald, A., Earnshaw, M. and Williams, A. (eds) *The future of community: reports of a death greatly exaggerated*, London: Pluto Press, 2008.

Cohen, A. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, London: Tavistock, 1985.

Cole, I., Batty, E. and Green, S. *'Low-income neighbourhoods in Britain: the gap between policy ideas and residents' realities'*, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2011.

Cooper, C. *Community, conflict and the state: rethinking notions of 'safety', 'cohesion' and 'wellbeing'*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Corcoran, M. P., Gray, J. and Peillon, M. *Suburban affiliations: social relations in the greater Dublin area*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2010.

Craig, G., Mayo, M. and Popple, K. (eds) *The community development reader: history, themes and issues*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2011.

Crow, G. *Social Solidarities*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002a.

Crow, G. 'Community studies: fifty years of theorization', *Sociological Research Online* 7(3) 2002b http://www.socresonline.org.uk/7/3/crow.html

Crow, G., Allan, G. and Summers, M. 'Neither busybodies nor bodies: managing proximity and distance in neighbourly relations', *Sociology* 36(1): 127-145, 2002.

Crow, G. and Maclean, C. 'Community' in G. Payne (ed.) *Social Divisions*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, second edition, 2006.

Day, G. *Community and everyday life*, New York: Routledge, 2006.

Delanty, G. *Community*, 2nd Edition, London and New York: Routledge, 2010.

Dench, G., Gavron, K. and Young, M. *The New East End: kinship, race and conflict*, London: Profile Books, 2006.

Dicks, B. *Heritage, place, and community*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000.

Dorling, D. and Thomas, B. *People and places: a 2001 census atlas of the UK*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2004.

Finney, N. and Simpson, L. *'Sleepwalking to segregation'?: challenging myths about race and migration*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2009.

Flint, J. and Robinson, D. (eds) *Community cohesion in crisis: new dimensions of diversity and difference*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2008.

Forrest, R. and Kearns, A. 'Social cohesion, social capital and the neighbourhood', *Urban Studies* 38(12): 2125–2143, 2001.

Ghose, R. 'Politics of scale and networks of association in public participation GIS', *Environment and Planning A* 39(8): 1961-1980, 2007.

Gilchrist, A. *The well-connected community: a networking approach to community development*, 2nd ed., Bristol: Policy Press, 2009.

Griffiths, D. J., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. *Refugee community organisations and dispersal: networks, resources and social capital*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.

Hall, S. M. *'A mile of mixed blessings: an ethnography of boundaries and belonging on a south London street'*, Department of Sociology, PhD, London: London School of Economics, 2009.

Hamdi, N. *The placemakers' guide to building community*, London: Earthscan, 2010.

Harper, D. A. *Changing works: visions of a lost agriculture*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Haworth, J. and Hart, G. *Well-being: individual, community and social perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Hillyard, S. *The sociology of rural life*, Oxford: Berg, 2007.

Hoggett, P. (ed.) *Contested Communities: experiences, struggles, policies*, Bristol: Policy Press, 1997.

Holgersson, H., Thorn, C., Thorn, M. and Wahlstrom, M. (eds) *(Re)searching Gothenburg: essays on a changing city*, Gothenburg: Glanta, 2010.

Holton, M. J. *Building the resilient community : lessons from the Lost Boys of Sudan*, Eugene, Or.: Cascade Books, 2011.

Howley, K. (ed) *Understanding community media*, Los Angeles and London: Sage, 2010.

Hughes, G. *The politics of crime and community*, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Imrie, R., Lees, L. and Raco, M. (eds) *Regenerating London: governance, sustainability and community in a global city*, London: Routledge, 2009.

Kajee, L. *Constructing identities in online communities of practice: a case study of online learning*, Oxford and New York: Peter Lang, 2008.

Keller, S. *Community: pursuing the dream, living the reality.* Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 2003.

Kendall, L. *Hanging out in the virtual pub: masculinities and relationships online*, Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002.

Kuecker, G., Mulligan, M. and Nadarajah, Y. 'Turning to community in times of crisis: globally derived insights on local community formation', *Community Development Journal* 46(2): 245-264, 2011.

Lassiter, L. E., Goodall, H., Campbell, E. and Johnson, M. N. *The other side of Middletown: exploring Muncie's African American community*, Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004.

Laurier, E., Whyte, A. and Buckner, K. 'Neighbouring as an occasioned activity: "Finding a lost cat" ', *Space and Culture* 5(4): 346-367, 2002.

Le May, A. *Communities of practice in health and social care*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Ledwith, M. *Community development: a critical approach*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.

Lippard, C. D. and Gallagher, C. A. *Being brown in Dixie: race, ethnicity, and Latino immigration in the new South*, Boulder, Colo.: FirstForumPress, 2011.

Lupton, R. *Poverty street: the dynamics of neighbourhood decline and renewal*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2003.

Maginn, P. J. *Urban regeneration, community power, and the (in)significance of 'race'*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

Mah, A. and Crow, G. *'Researching Community in the 21st Century: An annotated bibliography*', AHRC connected communities project output, 2011.

McCright, A.M. and T.N.Clark (eds) *Community and ecology: dynamics of place, sustainability and politics*, Kidlington: Elsevier, 2006.

Miller, D. *The comfort of things*, Cambridge: Polity, 2008.

Mooney, G. and Neal, S. (eds) *Community: welfare, crime and society*, Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2008.

Mumford, K. and Power, A. *East Enders: family and community in East London*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2003.

O'Riordan, T. and Stoll-Kleemann, S. *Biodiversity, sustainability, and human communities: protecting beyond the protected*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Obrist, B. *Struggling for health in the city: an anthropological inquiry of health, vulnerability and resilience in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania*, Bern and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006.

Orford, S., Dorling, D., Mitchell, R., Shaw, M. and Smith, G. D. 'Life and death of the people of London: a historical GIS of Charles Booth's inquiry', *Health and Place* 8(1): 23-35, 2002.

Otsuka, K. and Kalirajan, K. *Community, market and state in development*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Papacharissi, Z. *A networked self: identity, community and culture on social network sites*, New York: Routledge, 2010.

Phillipson, C., Bernard, M., Phillips, J. and Ogg, G. *The family and community life of older people: social networks and social support in three urban areas*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Pierson, J. and Smith, J. (eds) *Rebuilding Community: Policy and practice in urban regeneration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.

Putnam, R. *Bowling Alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000.

Raco, M. *Building sustainable communities: spatial policy and labour mobility in post-war Britain*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2007.

Rheingold, H. *The virtual community: homesteading on the electronic frontier*, Rev. Edition, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000.

Root, M. 'Community-based research', in W. Outhwaite and S. Turner (eds) *The Sage Handbook of Social Science Methodology*, London: Sage, 2007.

Rosenblatt, T., Cheshire, L. and Lawrence, G. 'Social interaction and sense of community in a master planned estate', *Housing, Theory and Society* 26(2): 122-142, 2009.

Rosenlund, L. Exploring the City with Bourdieu: applying Pierre Bourdieu's theories and methods to the study of community', Saarbrücken: VDM, 2009.

Salcedo, R. and Torres, A. 'Gated Communities in Santiago: Wall or Frontier?' *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 28(1): 27-44, 2004.

Salway, S., Harriss, K. and Chowbey, P. 'Using Participatory, Observational and 'Rapid Appraisal' Methods: Researching Health and Illness', in J. Mason and A. Dale (eds) *Understanding Social Research: Thinking Creatively about Method*, London: Sage, 2011.

Savage, M., Bagnall, G. and Longhurst, B. *Globalization and belonging*, London: Sage, 2005.

Smith, D. M. *On the margins of inclusion: changing labour markets and social exclusion in London*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2005.

Somerville, P. *Understanding community: politics, policy and practice*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2011.

Spencer, L. and Pahl, R. E. *Rethinking friendship: hidden solidarities today*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Suttles, G. *The Social Construction of Communities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Tarbin, S. and Broomhall, S. *Women, identities and communities in early modern Europe*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008.

Taylor, M. *Public policy in the community*, 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Thomas, P. *Youth, multiculturalism and community cohesion*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Unwin, L., Hughes, J. and Jewson, N. (eds) Communities of practice: critical perspectives, London: Routledge, 2007.

Wallace, A. *Remaking community?: New Labour and the governance of poor neighbourhoods*, Farnham; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010.

Weeks, J., Heaphy, B. and Donovan, C. *Same sex intimacies: families of choice and other life experiments*, London and New York: Routledge, 2001.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A. and Snyder, W. *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*, Boston, Mass.: Harvard Business School Press, 2002.

Wetherell, M., Laflèche, M. and Berkeley, R. (eds) *Identity, ethnic diversity and community cohesion*, London and Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2007.

Williams, R. *Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society*. London: Fontana, 1976.

Williamson, A. and DeSouza, R. (eds) *Researching with communities: grounded perspectives on engaging communities in research*, London and Auckland: Muddy Creek Press, 2010.

Willmott, P. *Social Networks, Informal Care and Public Policy*. London: Policy Studies Institute, 1986.

Winson, A. and Leach, B. *Contingent work, disrupted lives: labour and community in the new rural economy*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002.

External links

See the project website http://www.community-methods.soton.ac.uk/ for the following:

Mah, A. and Crow, G. 'Researching Community in the 21st Century: An annotated bibliography', AHRC connected communities project output, 2011.

Crow, G. and Mah, A. 'Conceptualisations and meanings of 'community': The theory and operationalization of a contested concept', project report, 2011.

Presentations from the dissemination event 'Researching contemporary communities: concepts, methods and policy implications' held in conjunction with the Social Research Association on 29 November 2011: 'Concepts of community across research disciplines' (Marcello Bertotti); 'Methods of community research' (Graham Crow); 'Community research and policy implications' (Valerie Walkerdone and David Studdert).

The Connected Communities

Connected Communities is a cross-Council Programme being led by the AHRC in partnership with the EPSRC, ESRC, MRC and NERC and a range of external partners. The current vision for the Programme is:

> "*to mobilise the potential for increasingly inter-connected, culturally diverse, communities to enhance participation, prosperity, sustainability, health & well-being by better connecting research, stakeholders and communities.*"

Further details about the Programme can be found on the AHRC's Connected Communities web pages at:

www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/connectedcommunities.aspx