

Chapter 5

MODELS OF COMMUNITY WORK

Introduction

The previous chapters have provided us with an evolving and critical understanding of community work. In Chapter 2 we discussed the emergence of community work from different roots and traditions, and against a number of wider changes in the Western world, as well as considering the activity in relation to, and as part of, the social, political and economic developments within British society. In Chapter 3 we went on to examine the various, often competing, theories that inform community work, recognizing that there is no one theory that meets with universal agreement. In Chapter 4 we examined different sociological theories and social movements that have, until now, played little part in underpinning a theoretical base for community work, but could, if used appropriately, offer us a more critical understanding of the practice. Throughout this work our discussions have recognized that community work comprises both theory and practice, and although they are inextricably linked, for our own purposes it is more productive initially to consider each of them separately. The focus of this chapter is to reflect upon the theoretical understandings already developed by analysing the models which constitute contemporary community work practice. This in turn helps to distinguish community work from other forms of intervention. In this way this chapter acts as a bridge between the theoretical debates of Chapters 3 and 4, and the examination of community work practice to be developed in Chapter 6.

An extensive review of the community work literature fails to provide an agreed number or the exact scope of different community work models.

What has been developed here, therefore, is a discussion that includes the models most readily agreed upon: community care, community organization, community development, social/community planning, community education and community action, together with models developed from feminist community work theory and the black and anti-racist critique which were discussed in Chapter 3. It will be noted that these models have evolved often in an uncoordinated manner to address a particular difficulty or concern, or as the application of a particular theory or approach. It needs to be recognized that aspects of these models are not entirely discrete, but rather there is a degree of overlap between them. The models are, however, an important method of categorizing central approaches to the activity we call 'community work'. They have been ordered on a continuum from those concerned primarily with 'care' to those known for their emphasis on 'action'. This provides a helpful way of contrasting and comparing the models. Table 5.1 provides a typology.

Community care

Community work which is focused on the model of community care attempts to cultivate social networks and voluntary services for, or to be concerned about, the welfare of residents, particularly older people, persons with disabilities, and in many cases children under the age of five. The community care model concentrates on developing self-help concepts to address social and welfare needs and uses paid workers (sometimes termed 'organizers') who encourage people to care and to volunteer initiative. Professional involvement in community care can be on one of three levels. One level is where professionals are expected to fulfil a more or less permanent supportive or monitoring role, using volunteers and low-paid helpers. A second level is where the activity is initiated by professionals who plan to be supportive for only a short period, so that community care can be continued without them. A third level reflects community care as an activity undertaken by laypeople with relatively little help from professionals.

The voluntarism associated with the community care model supports the notion of engaging volunteers in care-giving (and advocacy schemes). In reality, there may be concerns over the level of training of volunteers and their reliability. Similarly, there may be concern about the exploitation of volunteers as free labour, which may also serve to undermine the jobs of paid workers.

In practice, the term 'informal care' refers to care undertaken by families, neighbours and friends, on an informal, unpaid basis and largely in the recipients' own homes. The important contribution of this sector has been recognized for some time. It has been estimated that the value of informal care ranges from £15 to £24 billion per year (Family Policy Studies Centre, 1989). Such calculations are very difficult to make with any accuracy as the defining feature of this sector is its informal and largely hidden nature. The figures were, however, arrived at using a notional rate of £4 per hour,

Table 5.1 Models of community work practice

	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Main role/title of worker</i>	<i>Examples of work/agencies</i>	<i>Selected critical key texts</i>
Community care	Cultivating social networks and voluntary services Developing self-help concepts	Organizer Volunteer	Work with older people, persons with disabilities, children under 5 years	Beresford and Croft (1986) Heginbotham (1990) Mayo (1994)
Community organization	Improving co-ordination between different welfare agencies	Organizer Catalyst Manager	Councils for Voluntary Service Racial Equality Councils Settlements	Adamson <i>et al.</i> (1988) Dearlove (1974) Dominelli (1990)
Community development	Assisting groups to acquire the skills and confidence to improve quality of life Active participation	Enabler Neighbourhood worker Facilitator	Community groups Tenants groups Settlements	Association of Metropolitan Authorities (1993) Barr (1991)
Social/community planning	Analysis of social conditions, setting of goals and priorities, implementing and evaluating services and programmes	Enabler Facilitator	Localities undergoing redevelopment	Marris (1987) Twelvetrees (1991)
Community education	Attempts to bring education and community into a closer and more equal relationship	Educator Facilitator	Community schools/colleges 'Compensatory education' Working-class/feminist adult education	Allen <i>et al.</i> (1987) Allen and Martin (1992) Freire (1970; 1972; 1976; 1985) Lovett (1975) Lovett <i>et al.</i> (1983) Rogers (1994)

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	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Main role/title of worker</i>	<i>Examples of work/agencies</i>	<i>Selected critical key texts</i>
Community action	Usually class-based, conflict-focused direct action at local level	Activist	Squatting movement Welfare rights movement Resistance against planning and redevelopment Tenants' action	CDP literature (see Appendix A) Craig <i>et al.</i> (1982) Jacobs and Popple (1994) Lees and Mayo (1984)
Feminist community work	Improvement of women's welfare Working collectively to challenge and eradicate inequalities suffered by women	Activist Enabler Facilitator	Women's refuges Women's health groups Women's therapy centres	Barker (1986) Dixon <i>et al.</i> (1982) Dominelli (1990; 1994) Flynn <i>et al.</i> (1986)
Black and anti-racist community work	Setting up and running groups that support the needs of black people. Challenging racism	Activist Volunteer	Racial Equality Councils and Commission for Racial Equality funded projects	Ohri <i>et al.</i> (1982) Sivanandan (1976; 1990) Sondhi (1982; 1994)

irrespective of the level of care provided. This calculation takes no account of the additional expenditures (travel, adaptations, etc.) or of the opportunity costs in terms of careers and wages forgone by carers. Neither does it take any account of costs of childcare. The figure is useful, however, if only to offer an illustration of this sector's contribution in comparison to total government expenditure on social services in 1987-8 amounting to £3.34 billion (HM Treasury, 1987).

An optimistic view of the role of volunteers in community care is provided by Heginbotham (1990), who argues that a 'communitarian' approach to community care empowers people through their defining and participating in services for their own needs. He argues for a new vision of volunteering in which local services are managed by local people, an argument also persuasively made by Beresford and Croft (1986). Cutting across the arguments posited by different political groupings, Heginbotham (1990: 42) believes that there needs to be a balance between

individual worth with collective responsibility, to fuse liberal economic ideals with market socialism, and to recognise the interplay between the central and the local state, on the one hand, and the community (often represented by voluntary organizations) on the other.

Heginbotham's laudable brave new world will attract few dissenters although his thesis has few practical examples of how it would work, and does not convincingly counter the criticism that a central tenet of the drive in the 1980s and 1990s towards community care can be viewed as minimizing state welfare expenditure (Walker, 1989).

Numerous studies have supported the view that women are much more likely to be engaged in community care than men (Croft, 1986; Equal Opportunities Commission, 1984; Finch and Groves, 1983; Lewis and Meredith, 1990; Ungerson, 1987). These findings are also reported by Parker (1981) who states that to talk about community or family care is to 'disguise reality':

In fact, ... 'care by the community' almost always means care by family members with little support from others in the 'community'. Further care by family members almost always means care by female members with little support from other relatives. It appears that 'shared care' is uncommon; once one person has been identified as the main carer other relatives withdraw.

(Parker, 1981: 30)

Community care policies have been criticized by a number of social policy writers who point to the dominance of familist ideology, and its links with the wider ideology of possessive individualism (Dalley, 1988; Finch, 1984; Finch and Groves, 1985; Wicks, 1987). Dalley, for instance, argues that community care has been actively promoted by the Right for a number of reasons. These usually revolve around the need to avoid the expense of institutional care, but also because this form of care is perceived as the most 'appropriate' and 'natural' form of care for the dependent. This view is derived from the residualist or anti-collectivist approach to welfare whereby

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the family is seen as the locus of care, and the role of the statutory sector only comes into play when that unit has broken down in some way. The Barclay (1982), Griffiths (1988) and Wagner (1988) reports developed the policy and practice of community care models, endorsing the early development of localizing social work services that had been taking place in some areas (Hadley and Hatch, 1981; Hadley and McGrath, 1980), while hastening the development of community-based social work in local authorities elsewhere. The intention throughout was for social work departments to account more effectively for, and deliver, their services in the changing political, social and economic climate (Hadley *et al.*, 1987).

Considerable discussion has been allocated here to the community care model. This is because during the late 1980s and the 1990s the model rapidly developed as a significant and relatively well-resourced form of community work which had clear connections with the ascendancy and influence of the New Right ideology of the same period (Leavitas, 1986; Loney *et al.*, 1991). However, it needs to be noted that since the 1960s a number of social scientists have developed a critique of the failure of institutional care to provide people with humane treatment (Foucault, 1967; 1977; Goffman, 1961; Jones and Fowles, 1984; Morris, 1969; Robb, 1967; Scull, 1977; Townsend, 1962), while more recently the UK disability movement has stressed the desire of disabled people for independent living in mainstream housing rather than institutional care (Morris, 1990).

Community organization

Community work formulated on the community organization model has been used widely in Britain as a means of improving the co-ordination between different welfare agencies. Through such co-ordination it is thought possible to avoid duplication of services and poverty of resources while attempting to provide an efficient and effective delivery of welfare. Examples of community organizations are councils of voluntary service, older person's welfare committees, and 'similar organizations that are engaged in the co-ordination, promotion and development of the work of a number of bodies in a particular field at local, regional or national levels' (Jones, 1977: 6). The community organization model, which tends to be service-orientated, has been engaged in pioneering and experimental work and has often led to the state funding and managing the services developed by such organizations (Kramer, 1979).

Most critics of the community organization model underpin their arguments with theories from the radical and socialist approach. They include Dearlove (1974), who has cited the role of community organizations in employing 'expert' professionals whose job it is to offer advice to working-class people in an attempt to stifle the anger and frustration felt in a particular locality or community. The role of the 'expert' in this model is to channel these feelings into acceptable and approved structures. Dominelli (1990) takes up this point, arguing that community organization has been used by

the local state in rationing its declining resource base. The Community Development Projects were also critical of the community organization model. They argued, for instance, that the Urban Deprivation Unit created by the Department of Environment in 1973 was based on the community organization model, operating with managerialist methods, and ignoring the needs and concerns of people living in the communities they professed to serve (CDP, 1977). Feminists have similarly criticized the community organization model (Dominelli, 1990: 10), although there has been evidence of feminists developing new styles of community organization (Adamson *et al.*, 1988).

Community development

The community development model of community work is concerned with assisting groups to acquire the skills and confidence to improve the quality of the lives of its members. With its emphasis on promoting self-help by means of education, this model is thought to reflect the 'uniqueness of community work' (Twelvetrees, 1991: 98). The community development model, which was championed in North America in the early 1960s by Biddle and Biddle (1965), evolved in Britain from the work initiated by Batten (1957; 1962; 1965; 1967) which, as observed in Chapter 3, initially derived from his experiences with such a model when working in the colonies. We also observed in Chapter 2 that this model of community work was used as a tool by British administrations overseas to harness the local communities into colonial domination. The rationale for the model being used by the British Colonial Office can be seen in HMSO (1954), while a similar notion is given in the United Nations statement on community development in developing countries (United Nations, 1959: 1). The use of the community development model in developing countries has been criticised by Ng (1988), who documents how the model was used in the colonies to integrate black people into subordinate positions within the dominant colonizing system.

The experience of community development in Britain has been characterized by work at the neighbourhood level and, as noted earlier, has focused upon a process whereby community groups are encouraged to articulate their problems and needs. The expectation is that this will lead to collective action in the determination and meeting of these needs. The typical worker in this model has been described by Dominelli (1990: 11) as 'usually a man who helps people learn by working on problems they have identified. He is typically a paid professional interested in reforming the system through social engineering'.

There are, of course, numerous examples of women being employed as community development workers. For example, a black woman, Anionwu (1990), has written up her community development work in relation to a marginalized health problem, sickle cell anaemia. Anionwu believes that the community development approach was successful in enabling her to meet and work with discriminated black sufferers, which led to her setting up the Brent Sickle Cell and Thalassic Centre.

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Social/community

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Barr (1991) reviews and analyses Strathclyde Regional Council's programme of community development which is considered to be the most substantial of its kind in British local government. Discussion of his two field studies of the Social Work Department's community workers leads Barr to consider the role and practice of community development as a major policy initiative. In his findings Barr (1991: 166) argues that community development has a legitimate part to play in providing opportunities for 'radical alliances of professional, political and community interests to promote redistributive, anti-deprivation policies and practices'. Similarly, Roberts (1992) argues that community development workers based in local authority social services departments are in a position to contribute to the establishment and practice of imaginative community care proposals. He believes the skills and knowledge that are inherent in the community development model can be used to provide opportunities for people to achieve power and control over their own lives. This, he argues, will give community development a role within local government administration where the practice is under threat.

In his own work Barr draws the conclusion that community development workers would be more effective if they laid more emphasis upon social planning approaches. This was a concept established by Rothman (1976), who placed community development alongside social planning, and this has since been developed by Twelvetrees (1991). Twelvetrees (1991: 7) argues that whereas community development is involved in working alongside a particular community (whether locality or community of interest), social planning involves the community worker 'liaising and working directly with policy-makers and service providers to improve services or alter policies'. In some typologies of community work, and in particular those developed by Jones (1977), Rothman (1976), Thomas (1983) and Twelvetrees (1991), social planning is considered to be a discrete model of community work and it is to this area we now turn.

Social/community planning

As noted above, the social/community planning model of community work is considered to be similar to community development and has been described as

the analysis of social conditions, social policies and agency services; the setting of goals and priorities; the design of service programmes and the mobilisation of appropriate resources; and the implementation and evaluation of services and programmes.

(Thomas, 1983: 109)

The social/community planning model is believed to be the most common of community work models (Twelvetrees, 1991: 98). However, as Twelvetrees points out, this is complicated by the breadth of the term 'social/community planning', which can include economic planning and national planning. According to Twelvetrees, this means that although most community workers

are engaged in social/community planning, not all those involved in this activity can be termed 'community workers'.

One of the advocates of social/community planning, which he calls simply 'community planning', is Marris (1987), who argues that it should be possible to incorporate the demand for open, democratic planning into political struggles for social justice. Marris believes that the failure of the Community Development Projects was due in part to their classical Marxist analysis of class relations which failed to recognize the subtle, complex and changing nature of working-class communities. He also believes that this focus on class antagonism led to an inability to work within the state to achieve improvements for the people who lived in the neighbourhoods the projects were intended to assist. Instead, Marris argues that if community work is to effect anything more than marginal change it needs to find common ground with the government even if the ideologies of the two are at variance. Marris suggests that social/community planning is one strategy that can be used to help protect working-class communities from the uncertainty and lack of control they suffer when redevelopment takes place in their locality. In Marris's view, then, community workers, including radical community workers, have more to gain for the communities they serve by developing a partnership with the state, and by practising the community planning model.

The main criticism that can be levelled at this view is that it assumes that the knowledge gained by community workers will be used by decision-makers in a rational manner for the benefit of the members of the community in question. Evidence from Marris is not entirely convincing. For example, he cites the redevelopment of London's docklands and the evolution of the Docklands Strategic Plan which attempted to involve and take account of the people living in the affected area (Newham Docklands Forum and Greater London Council Popular Planning Unit, 1983). He later admits, however, that the plan actually had little effect because

plans are so often ignored, whenever they attempt to set priorities and guarantees in the interests of the most vulnerable, or constrain the freedom of action of those more powerful so as to reach some resolution which is both fair and practicable, [so that] planning even at its best often comes to seem merely a distraction from more effective forms of political protest, and so co-optive.

(Marris, 1987: 160)

However, Marris continues to believe in the potential of the social/community planning model because political struggle without it leads only to 'competitive bargaining between different kinds of interests, and that cannot protect the weaker and more vulnerable members of society' (Marris, 1987: 160).

Community education

The community education model of community work has been described as 'a significant attempt to redirect educational policy and practice in ways

which bring education and community into a closer and more equal relationship' (Allen *et al.*, 1987: 2). Community education has a long tradition in the United Kingdom which, according to I. Martin (1987), has evolved from three main strands. The first is the school-based village and community college movement initiated by Henry Morris in Cambridgeshire during the late 1920s (Morris, 1925). (For a discussion on the life and work of Morris see Rée, 1973; 1985.) This was followed by the establishment of similar integrated educational provision in Leicestershire under the guidance of Stewart Mason during the following decade (Fairbairn, 1979). The second strand of community education were the experiments developing from the Educational Priority Area projects (1969-72) which attempted to provide 'compensatory education' in selected disadvantaged inner-city areas as recommended by DES (1967). (For a detailed discussion of these experiments, see also Halsey, 1972; Midwinter, 1972; 1975.) The third strand was the working-class adult education work undertaken by a number of the Community Development Projects in the late 1960s and the early 1970s (for examples, see Lovett, 1975; Lovett *et al.*, 1983).

Community education has been further analysed as having three 'qualitatively different ideologies': consensus, pluralism, and conflict (I. Martin, 1987: 22). Martin argues that the consensus or universal model is focused around the secondary school/community college; the pluralist or reformist model is linked to primary schools and their neighbourhoods; and the conflict or radical model is focused around working-class action. To this can be added the feminist analysis of community education which is clearly articulated by Rogers (1994). The conflict or radical model shares with community development an emphasis on innovative, informal, political education, and has been greatly influenced by the Brazilian adult educator, Paulo Freire, whose work has served as a significant challenge to school-based education. It is because of his influence upon the practice of community work that we need to consider Freire's work in greater detail.

Working with poverty-stricken South American communities during the 1960s, Freire, who at the present time is resident professor of education at the University of São Paulo, Brazil, and visiting professor at Harvard's Centre for Studies in Education and Development, found ways of developing approaches by which people can express their feelings and experiences. He developed an educational process which rejects the traditional hierarchical 'banking system', where knowledge is considered to be a commodity accumulated in order to gain access to positions of power and privilege. In its place Freire developed an 'education for liberation' where learners and teachers engage in a process in which abstract and concrete knowledge, together with experience, are integrated into *praxis* (which can be defined as action intended to alter the material and social world). The fundamental features of this *praxis* are critical thinking and dialogue (as opposed to discussion) which seek to challenge conventional explanations of everyday life, while at the same time considering the action necessary for the transformation of oppressive conditions.

The extensive work of Freire (1970; 1972; 1976; 1985) centres on the

concept of 'conscientization', otherwise known as politicization and political action. According to Freire, before people can engage in action for change they have first to reflect upon their present situation. However, the nature of ideological domination means that subordinate groups accept, and frequently collude with, the reproduction of a society's inequalities and the explanations and justifications offered for the status, power and privilege of their oppressors: an idea similar to notions developed by Gramsci. Overcoming this false ideology means overcoming people's pessimistic and fatalistic thinking. Freire understood this was not an easy task, but his great optimism and purpose have led to educators around the world taking up the challenge.

Freire believes that educators have to work on the wide range of experiences brought by oppressed people. The educational process entails providing opportunities for people to validate their experiences, culture, dreams, values and histories, while recognizing that such expressions carry both the seeds of radical change and the burden of oppression. Freire's position coincides with that held by many community workers that it is necessary to start from a person's own understanding. According to Freire, the skill is to work with people by a 'problematizing' approach rather than a 'problem-solving' stance as advocated in the banking system of education. 'Problem-solving' involves an expert being distant from a person's reality while engaging in an analysis that efficiently resolves difficulties before dictating a strategy of policy. Freire believes that this reduces human experience and difficulties to that which can be 'treated'. 'Problematizing', however, means immersing oneself in the struggle of disadvantaged communities and engaging in the task 'of codifying total reality into symbols which can generate critical consciousness' (Freire, 1976: ix).

According to Freire, this empowers people to begin to alter their social relations. Freire believes that this is undertaken by a process of critical reflection and action followed by further critical reflection and action. This, he continues, creates conditions for the development of genuine theory and collective action because both are rooted in a historical and cultural reality. However, Freire believes that theory and practice are not conflated into one another. Instead, there needs to be distance between the two. 'Theory does not dictate practice; rather, it serves to hold practice at arm's length in order to mediate and critically comprehend the type of praxis needed within a specific setting at a particular time in history' (Freire, 1985: xxiii).

Allman (1987) believes that Freire's ideas have begun to permeate liberal education in the United Kingdom but because of the structure and underlying ideology of the present system they are likely to be used only selectively. Similarly, Allman (1987: 214) argues that Freire's ideas have been distorted and devalued in the 'futile attempt to incorporate "radical" technique in the "liberal" agenda'. Taking note of these criticisms, Freire's work, together with the writings of Gramsci, has implications for the theory and practice of community work which we will consider in more detail in Chapter 7.

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Community action

In our discussion in Chapter 2, we found that the community action model of community work was both a reaction to the more paternalistic forms of community work and a response by relatively powerless groups to increase their effectiveness. We have also discussed the way in which the Community Development Projects were initiated as a government-supported community work venture based upon the community organization and community development models. Soon after their commencement this direction changed, with the Projects evolving on the lines of the community action model.

The community action model of community work has traditionally been class-based and uses conflict and direct action, usually at a local level, in order to negotiate with power holders over what is often a single issue. Early writings on community action by, among others, Lapping (1970), Leonard (1975), Radford (1970) and Silburn (1971), together with the influential community work series of books published by Routledge & Kegan Paul in conjunction with the Association of Community Workers (Craig *et al.*, 1979; 1982; Curno, 1978; Jones and Mayo, 1975; Mayo, 1977; Mayo and Jones, 1974; Ohri *et al.*, 1982; Smith and Jones, 1981), as well as a number of other significant writings (for example Cockburn, 1977; Cowley *et al.*, 1977; Curno *et al.*, 1982; Lees and Mayo, 1984; O'Malley, 1977) provide a rich source of examples of the practice and debates surrounding the model during the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s. The North American community work literature also contains examples and discussions of community or social action. The texts that have been the most influential in the United Kingdom include Alinsky (1969; 1971); Lamoureux *et al.* (1989) and Piven and Cloward (1977).

Since the 1960s examples of community action have been varied and include the squatting movement, the welfare rights movement (including the Claimants Union), and different forms of resistance against planning and redevelopment. Mayo (1982) believes the most typical form of community action has focused around the issue of repairs and maintenance of council housing. This is reflected in the literature. The Association of Community Workers, for instance, devoted a publication to community work and tenant action (Henderson *et al.*, 1982), and considerable space was allocated to housing-related issues in the now defunct magazine *Community Action*.

An important strand of community action has been that linked with trade union activity (see, for example, Corkey and Craig, 1978; Craig *et al.*, 1979). This has often been as a direct result of the work of the Community Development Projects in a particular locality. Examples of the projects that arose from such an intervention include the Coventry Workshop, the Tyneside Trade Union Studies Unit, and the Joint Docklands Action Group. This type of action has been further developed in the 1980s and 1990s by municipal socialism, which has been based on a broad political group described as the 'new urban left'. Towards the end of the existence of the Greater London Council there were a plethora of supported community projects. However, Goodwin and Duncan (1986) argue that such policies are most effective in

terms of political mobilization and that policy-makers on the left should be aware of the constraints and limitations of policies promising large-scale job creation and local economic regeneration. With rising unemployment, the issue of community action and the problems faced by people without employment became a concern during the early 1980s and have continued to be so to the present day (Cumella, 1984; Gallacher *et al.*, 1983; McMichael *et al.*, 1990; Ohri and Roberts, 1981; Purcell, 1982; Salmon, 1984), while community action and co-operatives have also been an important theme (Roof, 1986).

The role of the community worker in the community action model is an interesting one and highlights the tension within the state towards community work. We have noted in previous discussions that the majority of community work is sponsored by the state which, through its agencies, will define, supervise and regulate the work of practitioners. However, community action, by its very nature, is often engaged in conflict with the employers of community workers, the local authorities. A wider debate on the contradictions surrounding this position is addressed in *In and Against the State* (London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group, 1980). It is for this reason that community action is usually seen as an area of practice undertaken by campaigners and activists who are not employed, directly or indirectly, by the state. Thomas (1983) argues that one cannot conflate the role of community worker with that of community activist. They are, in his view, different, and clearly reflect his own adherence to the pluralist approach and practice theories.

Community work interventions require a certain degree of experience and training; they offer specific skills and knowledge to a community or agency which are different from (though not inherently better than and often overlapping with) those offered by local residents who take on active roles within community groups.

(Thomas, 1983: 11)

In the same book, which reviews the development of community work, Thomas does not discuss the role of community action other than in passing reference. Instead he focuses on community work as a specialist occupation, with 'a particular and limited intervention' (Thomas, 1983: 7), located in neighbourhoods and agencies. The decision by Thomas not to address the community action model highlights his view that community work is a profession, rather than a political activity.

Feminist community work

Chapter 3 outlined the evolution of feminist community work theory based on the development, since the 1960s, of feminist theory. Female community workers have applied these theoretical understandings to practice (see, for example, Dixon *et al.*, 1982), both in feminist campaigns and in permeating existing community work practice and principles (Dominelli, 1994; Dominelli

and McLeod, 1989). While there is no agreed single theoretical feminist position, there is a consensus that the central aim of feminist community work practice is the improvement of women's welfare by collectively challenging the social determinants of women's inequality. Although much of the practice is focused at the personal, local or neighbourhood level, it is linked practically and theoretically with wider feminist concerns. For example, women have been active in many localities in providing accommodation, usually in the form of emergency housing, for battered women. This securing of safe accommodation is a response to the immediate suffering experienced by individual women at the hands of violent men, to the inadequate provision made by the state for such women, as well as presenting a stand against male violence (see, for example, Binney *et al.*, 1981; Hanmer and Maynard, 1987; Pahl, 1985a; Wilson, 1983).

Chapter 4 discussed the central role of the women's movement as a feature of new social movements, and how feminist campaigns are an example of practice that links local work with that undertaken at national level. As well as the example of local women's refuges, which are affiliated to the National Women's Aid Federation, we can note a number of other campaigns and networks which have both a local and a national profile. These include women's health groups (Roberts, 1982; Ruzek, 1986; Webb, 1986); women's involvement in the 1984-5 miners' strike (Bloomfield, 1986; Dolby, 1987; Lewycka, 1986; McCrindle and Rowbotham, 1986; Millar, 1987; Seddon, 1986; Waddington *et al.*, 1991; Whitham, 1986); the National Childcare Campaign, which, while influenced by the women's movement, included fathers, trade union members and social services workers (NCC, 1985); the Programme of the Reform on the Law of Soliciting (PROS), a Birmingham-based group of prostitutes whose aim was the abolition of prison sentences for loitering and soliciting (McLeod, 1982); the Wages for Housework grouping (Malos, 1980), the National Houseworking Group (Allen and Wolkowitz, 1986), and the Leicester Outwork Campaign (1987); abortion campaigns (Berer, 1988); campaigns highlighting the link between pornography and violence (Segal, 1990); Rape Crisis Centres (Pahl, 1985b); women's therapy centres (Doyal and Elston, 1986); Incest Survivor Groups (Armstrong, 1987; Dominelli, 1986; 1989; Kelly, 1988); the revolutionary feminist initiative Women Against Violence Against Women (McNeil and Rhodes, 1985); and the women's peace movement, in particular that focused on Greenham Common (Cook and Kirk, 1983; Feminism and Non-Violence Study Group, 1983; Finch, 1986; Harford and Hopkins, 1984). 'Women's issues' were also incorporated into developments in municipal socialism, but not without a degree of resistance from men (Cockburn, 1991).

As well as the commitment to working collectively to challenge and eradicate inequalities suffered by women, feminist community work practice emphasizes the objective of working with women's own personal experiences in groups. According to one influential writer in this area, this helps

redefine social problems and challenges the individualising and pathologising approaches to women's issues marking the practice of

traditional community workers and social workers. Crucial to this challenge has been undoing the division of social problems into private matters requiring individual or family solutions and public issues in which a range of social forces including the state, formal agencies and the public intervened.

(Dominelli, 1990: 43)

This work is often undertaken in the form of consciousness-raising groups which were mentioned in our earlier discussion of feminist community work theory. Women's consciousness-raising groups are intended to break down feelings of isolation and provide participants with a sense of solidarity in order to engage in co-operative struggles. As we have seen above, consciousness-raising groups can also be used to provide women with the strength, knowledge and skill to challenge professionals' definition of their positions. Overall, these groups are considered by feminist community workers as an important first step in the process of change; it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the transformation of social relations.

The use of women only groups, whether in specialist consciousness raising or in more general ways, is a central feature of feminist community work. Among its advocates, Hanmer and Statham (1988) argue that the quality of the group process is likely to be improved in a single-sex group, because the intimate and interpersonal problems are likely to be confronted more quickly. The authors claim that the realization that their problems are not unique should help to reduce women's feelings of personal inadequacy, and thus start to alleviate isolation and stigmatization. Similarly, research has shown that men take over and influence community groups by controlling the 'introduction and pursuit of topics, the use of available time, the lack of emotional content in conversation' (Hanmer and Statham, 1988: 131). This is confirmed by Gallacher (1977), who notes that men hold key positions in community associations.

Feminist community workers have engaged in a variety of creative attempts to develop non-hierarchical structures and more participatory ways of working. Criticisms of traditional forms of organization as being alienating and inaccessible initially resulted in attempts to develop structureless groups. However, there is a recognition that it is 'a mistake to equate structure with hierarchy' (Freeman, 1984: 62). This has led one writer to argue that 'the quest for a structure which is genuinely participatory, which does not alienate people, and yet achieves the goals which the group has set itself must be central to feminist practice within the women's movement and in community work' (Barker, 1986: 87).

Similarly, process models in group work have been of concern to feminist community workers who indicate that they can function to exclude and to intimidate group members. Process models are concerned with both the different stages a group moves through (for instance, reflection, planning and action) and the development individual group members achieve. According to Brown (1986), process models have two ideologically different positions. One emphasizes individual emotional growth and development. The other

model is founded upon political and social philosophies and is engaged in achieving change for disadvantaged people. Previously the importance of process has been overlooked by radical community work because of the dominance of the former model. Dixon *et al.* (1982) argue, for instance, that this non-political approach was reflected in the writings of early theorists such as Batten. However, as they go on to state, 'Feminist analysis shows clearly that process is political, and needs urgent consideration if our campaigns are to achieve their aims' (Dixon *et al.*, 1982: 63).

The concern with regard to feminist community work is that the flow of written work in this area has been reduced to a trickle. The lack of recent feminist community work literature is commented upon by Dominelli (1990: 8), who highlights the fact that two of the main exponents of community work literature, David Thomas and Alan Twelvetrees, have 'virtually ignored the implications of gender'. Similarly, more radical texts appear to have included little on gender, something noted by Brandwein (1987) and Lee and Weeks (1991). When one considers the role women play in community work, whether as activists as described by Campbell (1993), or in administering a community work project as discussed by Brandwein (1987), it is clear that women have played a highly significant part in the practice. Dominelli (1990: 122) argues that women's contribution to community work has been undervalued. For instance, while there are texts that track the campaign work women have been engaged in (see Curno *et al.*, 1982; Mayo, 1977), the perception of women themselves has rarely been considered. The paucity of literature in this field indicates the need for further research and dissemination of results, if we are to increase our understanding in this important sphere of community work.

Black and anti-racist community work

Chapter 3 discussed how traditional forms of community work have failed both to meet the particular needs of the black community and to challenge institutional and personal racism. It also discussed the response to this by the black community and those community workers who are engaged in developing an anti-racist critique.

Historically there is evidence that the black community has not passively accepted racism and racist policy and practice. Since their arrival in Britain, black people have been active in their communities, supporting each other and organizing to resist discrimination and defend their rights (Bhat *et al.*, 1988; Hiro, 1992; Solomos, 1989). The focus of discrimination has varied, although frequently it has appeared as if black people have been and continue to be besieged in a number of areas including education, housing, immigration, health, employment, and police relations. Similarly, a range of different and overlapping responses has developed: campaigns; self-help groups; direct action; alternative and supplementary provision. At times these have required coalitions to be built and alliances forged, at others autonomous organization has been preferred. Unfortunately, for our purposes, few

studies have been made of these community-based organizations and campaigns. At the time of writing, a detailed survey of the nature of black voluntary groups, their activities, sources and level of funding, composition and organization, is being undertaken by the Organization Development Unit of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. Those studies that have been made tend to be limited in their scope (Solomos, 1989: 149). There is also evidence of black people being excluded from mainstream political life in Britain, which has led to migrants launching a number of local and national groupings including the Indian Workers' Association and the West Indian Standing Conference (Carter, 1986; Jacobs, 1986). Furthermore, Anwar (1986) argues that racial disadvantage and discrimination will only be solved when black people are included in the political process and in British public life.

The studies that have been made of the influence of black community-based organizations and groups provide useful insights. For instance, the work by Goulbourne (1987; 1990) indicates that certain autonomous black community-based groups have successfully influenced mainstream institutions by placing on the political agenda contentious issues, such as police relations with the black community and the education of black children. Cheetham (1988) meanwhile argues that ethnic associations in Britain have a vitality and energy that has assisted their development as active self-help groups. Kalka (1991) discusses the tension between entrenched local organizations and newly founded ethnic associations and pressure groups. The author describes the situation in the London Borough of Harrow where Gujarati Hindus became increasingly articulate in presenting demands and acquiring new skills to assert their position. Not all black groups have been able to gain effective representation and satisfactory resources. Bangladeshis are thought to be disadvantaged relative to other Asian communities in Britain (Carey and Shukur, 1985-86), while according to Fawzi El-Solh (1991) Somalis living in the Tower Hamlets area of London's East End, who rank as one of the oldest settled migrant groups in Britain's docklands, experience greater difficulties. Fawzi El-Solh argues that Somalis encounter obstacles to effective organization of their community, while their needs are not satisfactorily represented.

Other research that describes and discusses the role of, and work with, black community-based groups includes that by Sondhi (1982). Writing about his work at the Asian Resource Centre in the multi-racial community of Handsworth in Birmingham, Sondhi views the agency as a campaigning one that provides a much needed advice and information service in the locality. The agency also undertook specific work with the Asian elderly (Asian Sheltered Residential Accommodation, 1981). Mullard (1973) argues, however, that state-supported self-help groups channel the energy of black militants away from wider political struggles. This view is supported by James (1990), who believes that politically motivated and articulate black professionals suffer from a constant tension centred on the issue of whom they can best serve. In many cases such professionals have been absorbed into local authorities' hierarchies or into academic posts, and in the process have modified, or have

been required to modify, their demands for improvements in the position of the black community. At the same time such workers retain their loyalty and commitment to their own community. This leads to black workers experiencing burnout, frustration and anger. On the one hand they are

actively working with policy makers and colleagues to address the issues. On the other spending evenings and weekends with volunteers and community activists to help them articulate about the issues so that they may eventually work with the policy makers.

(James, 1990: 32)

The establishment of community projects by the black population is often a response to exclusion from white-dominated provision as well as providing opportunities to develop and strengthen cultural, social and political ties. Although black people do not form a homogeneous group within Britain, they share with each other the experience of racism and of colonization which, as we noted earlier, has given them certain strengths and perspectives. Community work projects funded by the Commission for Racial Equality and Racial Equality Council have, however, met with criticism from two different sources. One argues that public funds should be given to projects that are for the whole community and not one particular group. This argument fails, however, to recognize structural racism, which leads to black people being excluded from mainstream organizations and the need for them to have separate provision. The other source of criticism has come from black radicals such as Sivanandan (1976; 1990), who believe that such projects dissolve and co-opt black protest. Within white-dominated community work the activity has only gradually addressed the issue of racism and it is felt in a number of quarters this has only been partial (Dominelli, 1990; Ohri *et al.*, 1982). According to one writer, the central issue that needs to be addressed by white community workers is the continuing failure of institutions to provide equal treatment of black people while recognizing the specific needs of ethnic minorities (Loney, 1983: 54).

On a wider level, as noted in Chapter 2, since the passing of the 1948 British Nationality Act, and up to and since the 1988 Immigration Act, 'race' and immigration have been central issues in British political life. During the early 1980s a number of mainly Labour-controlled local authorities attempted to operate and implement racial equality policies and practices. In at least one study these were to prove that the local political scene was an important site of struggle, particularly for local organizations committed to racial equality (Ben-Tovim *et al.*, 1986). The abolition of the Greater London Council in March 1986 was believed to have serious implications for black residents of the capital since it left no city-wide commitment to support the black community and no agreement to tackle racism (Adeyemi, 1985). There has been some criticism by black writers that well-intentioned white people incorporated the black struggle in the local authority anti-racist strategies of this period (see, for example, Bhavnani, 1986; Gilroy, 1987). These writers and others (Mullard, 1984; Troyna, 1987; Troyna and Carrington, 1990) criticize multi-cultural education strategies which emphasize cultural pluralism and

equality in a setting of economic and social inequality. With these limitations recognized, it is important not to overlook the contribution from white anti-racists in community work to the struggle for equal opportunities and for the provision of more resources for the black community, and in 'confront[ing] racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination both within ourselves and within society' (Association of Community Workers, 1982).

An example of community workers with an anti-racist approach successfully confronting racism and harassment is offered by Buckingham and Martin (1989). Working in and around a north London housing estate, the workers describe and reflect on their use of community development principles and practice to reduce the harassment endured by the Bangladeshis living in the area. A further example is a training aid for confronting anti-racism in the form of a video that has been produced by Rooney Martin (1987). The video shows a group of white people from a variety of backgrounds including English, Irish, Jewish and working-class, discussing what it means to be white from their particular standpoint. The main function of the video is to sensitize white people to the need to understand whiteness and how their colour affects their culture and their relationships with non-white people.

The national Commission for Racial Equality and local Racial Equality Councils have been active in supporting black and anti-racist community work. The national survey by Francis *et al.* (1984: 11) found that 72% of all Community Relations Councils' community workers came from black groups, and whereas 59% of all community workers were employed in the voluntary sector, 81% of black community workers were employed in this sector. There have been certain criticisms, however, that the black community should not have to rely on government-sponsored bodies or the voluntary sector, but rather they need to be able to deal directly with their local authorities and elected representatives. John (1981) argues, for instance, that black workers should be employed by local authorities rather than by a vulnerable, often unaccountable voluntary sector which serves to place the needs of the black community at the margins of social and political life.

Finally, Ohri *et al.* (1982) argue that the primary issue for the black community and the one which community work must address if it is to remain relevant to the needs and concerns of black people, is the resistance to racism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that although there is overlap between the models discussed, particularly in terms of techniques and skills used, the models reflect the different traditions and ideologies that we have been alerted to in previous chapters. Community care, community organization, community development and social/community planning represent the pluralist tradition in community work. The community action model and the emerging models from feminism and the black and anti-racist critique reflect a radical and socialist approach. Different aspects of community education fit into

different approaches. The radical strand of the model is epitomized in the work of Freire and of Lovett. The work of school-based community education, including the compensatory education programmes, is, however, an example of the pluralist approach. Certain models, for instance community care and social/community planning, are centred upon the premise of delivering a service in a more efficient and often cost-effective or cost-saving manner. Other models, such as those from the radical and socialist approaches, are focused around certain ideological positions and commitments. Together with the remaining models the above offers us a framework in which to understand community work practice.

One important question that emerges from the discussion on the theories of community work and the above discussion on models, is whether all those employed as community workers in organizations practising the pluralist models are in total agreement with the aspirations offered by such models. For instance socialist feminists, who have a particular view of society and on how it should be organized, may be employed in community care, pluralist community education, community development or other community work positions. Traditionally workers in these areas are required to act in a 'neutral' manner and to develop formal links with policy-makers in order to improve services for a particular community in a manner which endorses the status quo. We will return to the question of whether these models, with their particular style, hinder or assist in the achievement of workers' ideological aspirations in the final chapter.