The Importance of Community and the History of Community Organization

An Honors Thesis
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We have learned that we cannot live alone, at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations, far away. We have learned that we must live as men, and not as ostriches, nor as dogs in the manger. We have learned to be citizens of the world, members of the human community.

Franklin D. Roosevelt
4th Inaugural Address January 20, 1945
(Beat 781)

Roosevelt, it seems, believed that the American public had finally learned the secret of peace. That is, he believed that the American public had come to realize, as a result of World War II, its dependence on the other nations of the world and the necessity of being "members of the human community." I agree with Roosevelt that a prerequisite for world peace is community, in one sense of the word. However, I am not convinced that we, as Americans, have learned the true meaning of community, its importance, and how to develop it.

As one begins to review the large amount of literature available about the community, and in particular the work concerning the definition of community, it is soon discovered that here is not one comprehensive definition of community which is practical for use in every situation. George A. Hillery, in an attempt to determine the extent of agreement in existing community definitions, analytically examined ninety four community definitions both qualitatively and quantitatively. He stated that those 94 definitions, although they were representative, did not constitute a complete listing of every existing community definition (112). In examining these definitions, Hillery extracted from each of them the various concepts which were used to compose the definitions. From all of the definitions, Hillery identified 16 different concepts, including geographic locality, social interaction, and communities such as self sufficiency and consciousness of kind. Most of the
definitions that Hillery examined had included more than one of the identified concepts, and any particular concept was generally used in more than one definition. However, the only concept that all 94 definitions had in common was the concept that community involves people (113-117). Of the 94 definitions, Hillery found that 69 consisted of the concepts of "social interaction, geographic area, and a common tie or ties" (118), while 70 definitions involved the concepts of social interaction and geographic area. Also, 73 of the 94 definitions consider a community to be a group of people involved in social interaction with one another and also having common ties. In addition, 91 definitions stated that social interaction is a necessity for the existence of community (Hillery 118). Therefore, Hillery's research showed that the most common definition of community was that it consisted of "persons in social interaction within a geographic area and having one or more additional common ties" (111). However, the fact that this definition was the one most used and accepted by theorists does not mean that it is a comprehensive definition of community. It is not all encompassing.

Pranab Chatterjee and Raymond A. Koleski also explored the various approaches that have been used to define community. They summarized these approaches into five different "schools" of community study. The schools that Chatterjee and Koleski outlined were (1) regulatory, (2) integrative and structural-functional, (3) ecological, (4) monographical, and (5) political-stratificational (83). Members of the regulatory school define community based on the principle institutions which serve to "regulate the character of the community" (Chatterjee and Koleski 83). On the other hand, the integrative school consists of theories which go a step beyond those of the regulatory school and focus on the nature of the interaction among the principle institutions of the community.
The ecological approach to community involves the study of community using certain variables and the relationships of those variables to the community. Examples of variables studied in this manner include delinquency, organization of the social welfare system, and ethnic communities within larger communities (Chatterjee and Koleski 83). Mono-graphical approaches to community serve mainly to study extensively a specific community; in other words to do a "case study" of a community. A well known example of such a monographical study is the Lynd's Middletown studies.

Finally, the political-stratificational school approaches the study of community, and its definition, through the examination of the distribution of power, and it does not attempt to identify the units that constitute a community (Chatterjee and Koleski 84). As with Hillery, this review of definitions, in the context of schools of approaches ended with the conclusions that a comprehensive definition of community does not exist, and perhaps is not even possible. It seems as if the study of community contains many definitions that are applicable only for the specific situation for which they were designed. Some of the definitions correspond with one another, while others are contradictory. In Hillery's study, it was stated that at least "two authors could always be found who have presented conflicting definitions" (111). Jacqueline Scherer suggests that the variety of existing definitions are often more likely to confuse the reader, rather than to clarify and simplify the concept of community (1). Scherer states that students of community should not focus on defining community in an intellectually finite manner. Rather, Scherer holds that because communities are in a constant state of change, any attempt at defining should refer to a "moving, changing, 'doing' thing in process (2), and that the definition of
community should be one that can be amended as becomes necessary due to the changes in the community (2).

In my opinion, despite the difficulties which seem to be inherent in any attempt to define the concept of community, it is still an important task which should not be pushed aside as being impossible and useless. It is only by defining the nature of community that the problems and weaknesses of a community can be identified and addressed.

The previously mentioned concepts which have been used to define community generally are used to describe the more tangible and current aspects of community. In my opinion, community may include any or all of these characteristics. However, I believe that the psychological aspect of community needs to also be included in a definition. Human beings are social beings, and it is for this reason that so many of us long for a "sense of community," whatever meaning the phrase has for each of us. The sense of community that we desire is not a community simply created of tangible characteristics such as shared locality or common ties. If a sense of community did arise from such characteristics, then I believe that most of us who desire to be a member of a true community, and who seek out such a situation, would not need to do so, as most do have the experience of sharing a locality with others or have the experience of having common ties and social interaction with others through work, club membership, or church membership, among others.

I believe that any group of people with regular social interaction and a common tie—a desire for the fellowship of true community—has the potential to be a community in the sense of the word which focuses on the psychological characteristics and benefits of being a member of a community. M. Scott Peck M.D. has written a book about communities. In The Different Drum, he discusses the "true meaning of community" and
the psychological characteristics that represent what so many of us wish to find in a community. The lack of this true sense of community leads many to feel isolated from their fellow man. These characteristics are inclusivity, realism, contemplation, and a safe place (Peck 61-68).

A community is inclusive of all people, regardless of race, sex, politics, age, etc. It is also inclusive and accepting of the full range of human emotions, as this aids the community in communicating with one another honestly (Peck 61-62). Such inclusiveness is difficult to achieve and maintain. Individuals have personalities and opinions that "clash." Individuals also have prejudices. All of these must be transcended and this requires a commitment to building community as well as to being honest and willing to accept. Developing inclusiveness for a community can be a difficult and time consuming task since so much must be overcome, thus making commitment essential.

Peck's second characteristic is that of realism. Realistic decisions and actions on the part of a true community result from the members being individuals who, having personal opinions and separate points of view, are nonetheless willing and able to accept and appreciate the opinions of others. As stated by Peck, "Because a community includes members with many different points of view and the freedom to express them, it comes to appreciate the whole situation far better than an individual, couple, or ordinary group can" (Peck 65).

Peck's third characteristic is contemplation, which, in my opinion, seems to be a prerequisite of the two previous characteristics of inclusivity and realism. "The essential goal of contemplation is increased awareness of the world outside oneself, the world inside oneself, and the relationship between the two" (Peck 66). This awareness of self and others is a prerequisite for the individual who desires to be a
member of a true community because a community is intended to be inclusive of many different people, and is able to accept and appreciate a variety of people, despite differences in background, race, political preference, etc. Most individuals will have to continually work at having this unconditional acceptance of others, and this will require contemplation of oneself and the community. Contemplation is essential to the development and maintenance of a true community.

Peck's final characteristic of community is that a community is a safe place for members to come where they can be themselves; it is a place where they can be vulnerable (Peck 67). I believe that this safe place is the product of a group which is accepting and inclusive to the extent that a true community must be. I also think that the "safe" quality is a part of the "sense of community" that many people in our society find to be absent from their lives.

I believe that Peck's definition of community works well and can be used in a variety of situations. Peck's willingness to accept the fact that any group has the potential to be a community contributes greatly to the definition's flexibility. This flexibility is a quality that Scherer states is necessary, as people and the groups they interact within are not static. Furthermore, Peck's emphasis on the psychological component of community is also necessary, as human beings are social animals whose social needs can only be met through positive interpersonal relationships. As a member of a true community, an individual's needs are more likely to be fully met on a regular basis. Finally, Peck's definition of community can serve as a goal for groups; it is an ideal state for a group and there are methods to achieve that state. The definition also describes a state that once a group attains, it must continue to work to maintain. Because this definition addresses tangible
characteristics in an unrestrictive manner, places a great deal of impor-
tance on the psychological aspects of community, and sets a goal for
the future, I believe that it is a quite appropriate definition for use
in many situations. It is also the definition which will be used
throughout this paper.

The study of the community and how to develop it have been areas of
interest in many different disciplines, with each discipline, as well as
schools within the disciplines, taking a unique approach to the definition
of community. Social work is a discipline that has a history of in-
volvement at the community level.

Prior to 1941, interventive practice at the community level was
referred to in the Social Work Year Book as "Social Welfare Planning."
This method was basically concerned with the planning and administration
of social welfare services (Chatterjee and Koleski 87). However, social
workers prior to 1941 were active in community organization in ways other
than the organization of social services. In fact, most of the individuals
who became settlement workers during the 1920's considered themselves to
be social workers, and many were graduates of professional schools of
social work (Davis 231).

The settlement movement, which began in the last decade of the
nineteenth century, was based on an interest in changing society to
meet the needs of individuals, as well as social action to promote
social legislation. Settlement workers were motivated to develop an
institution that would help to preserve a neighborhood's "sense of com-
munity" within an urban environment that they saw as impersonal and de-
moralizing. It was the goal of the settlement movement to "reconstruct
neighborhood life, raise moral standards, and improve community facili-
ties as well as resources" (Santiago 74). The method of the settlement workers, most of whom came from middle and upper class families, involve relocating to poor neighborhoods so that they could experience the harsh realities of inner city poverty on a first hand basis. While at the settlement house, workers "used the missionary approach of teaching residents how to live moral lives and improve their circumstances" (Zastrow 44). They were involved in politics, education, and labor, as well as many other arenas of public life.

As noted above, settlement workers attempted to involve themselves in many aspects of the community, and it is not an easy task to assess the rate of success or failure of the settlement house movement. It seems that each settlement house had its own individual amount of limited successes and failures in each of the many areas in which it was involved, instead of an overall reformed society resulting from the settlement workers actions. In fact, Davis states in his book about the settlement movement, that after 40 years of working to improve society, workers who had been active since the beginning looked at the conditions during the 1920's and realized that, despite all the struggles to change situations for the better, the conditions of the inner city neighborhoods had not really improved (Davis 239).

An analysis of the methods of settlement workers relative to Peck's theory of community development highlights some interesting differences. As stated previously, settlement workers took a missionary approach to changing the neighborhood situations. They came to the neighborhoods with their own agenda for change, and this agenda was quite heavily based on middle class values. The workers wanted to bring a middle class culture to the neighborhoods, and instead of beginning their work with what the individuals indigenous to the neighborhood wanted,
they attempted to impose their own values and opinions. The residents were simply "directed and guided by outside professionals" (Santiago 75). This lack of involvement of all concerned individuals in the planning and implementing stages of change is perhaps why the movement lacked the extensive success it had hoped to generate. The movement, because it neglected the opinions and knowledge of the neighborhood residents, lacked realism, a quality that Peck stated is essential to a true community.

The settlement workers also wanted to develop and maintain a sense of community in the neighborhoods where they worked. However, it is unclear just what they believed that sense of community was, and their activities focused primarily on improving tangible characteristics of the neighborhood. While it was very important to improve the dire conditions of the neighborhoods, it is possible that the workers would have had more success in achieving the goal of better living conditions had they developed a sense of community within the neighborhood. A true community, as described by Peck would have been all inclusive, realistic, contemplative, and a safe place (Peck 61-68). The neighborhood that was also a community would have involved the resident more, been more accepting and appreciative of cultural and social differences, and would have fostered an increased amount of commitment and cooperation in everyone. Perhaps the settlement movement would have been more successful if the workers had focused less on changing the residents and their neighborhoods and more on being contemplative and inclusive.

William I. Thomas and Florian Ananiecki agreed with the philosophy of the settlement movement in that it was important to build a strong community, and that such a community could be a powerful force to reduce the community's problems (Santiago 75). They also saw that many of the
inner city neighborhoods were not cohesive. However, they did not agree with the settlement house movement's method. They believed that the values of the workers were often imposed on the residents and that the residents were not adequately involved in the change process. Thomas and Znaniecki stated that the settlement house was:

"...an institution imposed from the outside instead of being fully developed by the initiative and cooperation of the people themselves and this in addition to its racially unfamiliar character, would be enough to prevent it from exercising any deep social influence" (1526).

Thomas and Znaniecki believed that the key to developing a community was to join the people together in a common cause (Santiago 75). Community action was therefore seen as not only a way to improve the tangible characteristics of a neighborhood, but also as a way to develop a sense of community among the residents. These ideas were presented by Thomas and Znaniecki in *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America* which was first published in 1918. However, the ideas were not tested until quite some time later through the initiation of area projects.

Clifford Shaw studied juvenile delinquency in the Chicago area and found that the delinquent behavior was a more common occurrence in those neighborhoods whose tangible characteristics were in a state of disorganization and deterioration. Shaw believed that these neighborhoods were in a state of change which caused it to lose the power of social control (Shaw 204). Thus, it seems that Shaw saw the community as an institution with the purpose of keeping its members under control and preventing their delinquency. However, Shaw did not believe that the disorganized state of the neighborhoods was a result of the poor living conditions or that improving the living conditions would directly influence the development of an organized community. Rather, he believed
that the residents themselves needed to change so that social control could be restored.

Shaw's area projects were designed to involve the neighborhood residents in planning, organizing and operating the social welfare programs. Also the programs were to "provide an opportunity to all residents to use their talents, energies, interests, and understanding in a community effort to strengthen, unify, and extend the constructive forces of the community" (Shaw and McKay 322-323). The programs included efforts to provide recreational opportunities, improve the quality of education available, improve local sanitation, and law enforcement. It was expected that if the residents would work together to reach a common goal that was good for everyone, improved standards of behavior would follow.

The techniques of the area projects correspond more closely with Peck's definition of community when compared to those of the settlement movement. The area projects were more inclusive of the neighborhood residents by encouraging them to participate in the local social welfare programs. This was perhaps expected because of the strong American values of self-sufficiency, self-help, and local autonomy. It was expected that the disorganized neighborhoods would be able to reorganize themselves with some outside guidance so that the community's social control could be restored.

Shaw's primary concern was with the delinquency rate in the areas where the neighborhood had become disorganized and the living conditions had deteriorated. He believed in bringing the people of the neighborhood together to work to improve the tangible community characteristics. He thought that in addition to improving the living conditions in the neighborhood, the residents would also become a community group that
was able to increase and maintain standards of behavior. It was expected that this group would provide a positive peer pressure upon other members of the community. Shaw's emphasis on the importance of an organized community group suggests that Shaw thought the residents were lacking a sense of community, but it is not clear what this sense of community meant to Shaw. He simply believed that the residents of the neighborhood needed to be linked as a group. On the other hand, Peck was specific about the characteristics necessary for a sense of community. The characteristics of inclusiveness, realism, contemplation, and a safe place are what create a sense of community. These characteristics do not occur naturally as a result of activities intended to do something else, such as improve living conditions. To achieve a sense of community, direct methods must be used. Yet while it seems that Shaw desired the positive, controlling result of community, his activities did not directly address developing this type of community.

Saul Alinsky, noted for his conflict approach to community organization, began his career as a social activist in the Back-of-the-Yards area of Chicago in 1938. During his work there, he was able to organize the residents into a united group with enough power to win concessions for improvement. In the end, the Back-of-the-Yards area had become a model working class community. It seems that this experience probably served to solidify his commitment to militant social action with and for the disadvantaged of society.

Alinsky saw modern American society as being divided into the "Haves" and the "Have-nots." The Haves are those who have more power, money, food, etc. than they need. The Have-nots are those who seem to be lacking in everything but number (Rules 18-19). Alinsky also
identified the monotonous, hopeless life of the have-nots as a serious problem. He believed that modern society had led many people to feel isolated in their own neighborhood and society (Reveille 43-44). Therefore, Alinsky attempted to develop methods that would bring people together, as well as improve their living conditions. It was this that led to the development of the "People's Organization."

Alinsky focused on the local neighborhood as the unit for social change and sought to organize the people of the neighborhood into a "People's Organization." Alinsky states in Reveille for Radicals that a People's Organization has two major functions: (1) "...the organization will generate power which will be controlled and applied for the attainment of a program," and (2) "...only through organization can a people's program be developed" (54). According to Alinsky, the true People's Organization program would realize that all problems are interrelated and that it is futile to try to compartmentalize the issues. A people's program must address all issues at their source if it is to be truly effective.

Also, Alinsky stated that a People's Organization must be initiated by the people of the neighborhood, and not by an outside organizer. Indigenous leaders must be used (Reveille 64-75). It was also considered important to use indigenous organizations and to have knowledge of the traditions of the people (Reveille 76-88).

In Reveille for Radicals, Alinsky begins his chapter about conflict tactics with the statement "A People's Organization is a conflict group." Alinsky considered the Have-nots of society to be nonparticipants in their own destiny and that any attempt to change this would be blocked by the Haves, who wished to maintain the status quo. Alinsky, it seems, felt that power was what the Have-nots lacked and could benefit from the
most, but that this power must be taken from the Haves forcefully, as they would not willingly give it up. Alinsky aimed to use his conflict tactics to gain an equal amount of power and influence as those who are challenged, and perhaps at that point negotiation could occur.

Alinsky states, "Conflict is the essential core of a free and open society. If one were to project the democratic way of life in the form of a musical score, its major theme would be the harmony of dissonance" (Rules 62).

In examining the characteristics of Alinsky's methods, it is clear that while there are some similarities to Peck's approach, there still remain some important differences. Alinsky believed in an inclusive community to the extent that he involved the neighborhood residents in the change process, and even went so far as to insist that they also be the leaders of the group. However, Alinsky also believed that for the group to get what it needed, it must take it from someone else. He saw society as being and "us" against "them" competition, and this violates the true spirit of community, which is a spirit of peace, acceptance, and cooperation. Of course conflict cannot always be avoided, but it should ultimately lead to a true community. However, Alinsky's conflict style and its purpose would seem to only intensify the competitive feelings exchanged between "us" and "them," and that perhaps the conflict served to polarize the two positions even further.

Alinsky was also concerned about what he saw as man's alienation. Although he is not clear as to exactly what he believed man felt alienated from, it seems that the thought that the common man was missing a sense of power and control. While it is possible that this is what the common man is lacking, it may also be true that what man is alienated from is his fellow man. However, none of Alinsky's methods were in-
tended to directly foster a sense of belonging among participants. The development of a sense of community was expected to occur secondary to the attainment of material resources and power.

The community organization movements which are explored in this paper are fairly representative of the trend in community organization in American society. The series of movements have led to an increase amount of involvement on the part of the residents of the community which is targeted for change, perhaps this is due to a less blaming attitude on the part of society towards the disadvantaged residents. However, even though less blame is placed on the individual for his or her condition, the individual is still held responsible for helping himself and all of the community organization movements expected some change on the individuals part. The settlement movement expected their residents to adopt a middle class cultural and value system, as it was believed that the individuals who were poor were somewhat morally responsible for their plight. The area projects took the approach that the residents were victims and perpetuators of a disorganized community that was unable to provide appropriate standards of behavior. The area projects attempted to utilize the residents' individual talents to bring about improved living conditions, as well as to provide educational programs for the residents. It was Shaw's belief that such programs would increase the power of the community and decrease delinquent behavior. Finally, the Alinsky approach to community organization also required some change in the residents. Alinsky emphasized the necessity of total resident involvement, and this commitment to involvement was a behavior change that needed to be made by the residents. They were expected to change from passive, disadvantaged residents to involved
citizens willing to fight for their democratic rights.

Additionally, all of the community organization movements discussed the problem of the individual's isolation from society and fellow man. The settlement movement was spurred on in part by a desire to be an institution that would help to develop and to preserve a sense of community in inner city neighborhoods, which they believed to be impersonal and demoralizing. Shaw also saw a lack of community within the targeted neighborhoods and he believed that here was a need to bring the residents of the neighborhoods together for a common purpose. This was not only for the purpose of improving tangible living conditions, but also for the sake of encouraging the residents to bond with one another. Alinsky, in his afterword to a reprint of Reveille for Radicals, stated that Americans have a sense of missing something. "That something is a sense of ourselves as individuals, as people, as members of the human family" (206). He also believed that this sense of lacking would be dissipated by involving people in a fight for a common good. All of these community organizations believed that developing a sense of community among the residents was important, and they all also believed that this would develop out of efforts to improve the neighborhood's tangible characteristics. It seems that the development of a sense of community was a secondary goal for which few specific methods were developed and utilized. While I believe that it is important to address the physical needs of individuals, and that this should not be made secondary to any other less pressing needs, the psychological state of an individual must also be considered important enough to address directly and effectively.

The approach of social work to helping an individual improve his or her life situation goes beyond the consideration of a problem as the in-
dividual's sole responsibility. Rather, social work also explores the possibility of the generation of problems by the individual's environment. There are many elements of an individual's environment which need to be considered when attempting to identify problem areas. A trained social worker will look into the individual's family situation, relationships with friends, situations at work, the community where the individual resides, and the individual's interaction with various social service organizations. When a social worker intervenes at the community level, the intervention generally involves community organization for the improvement of services that are valuable to the community, or the improvement of the community's tangible conditions.

Social work community organization is an area of service intervention which is classified as a type of macro social work practice. The Encyclopedia of Social Work identifies two broad approaches found in community organization. One approach focuses on building a group which will ultimately be capable of deciding what it wants and carrying out the necessary tasks (85). This approach stems from the enabler role which is found in micro social work practice and generally focuses on building the group as the primary goal (Encyclopedia 85). The other approach is considerably more task-oriented and focuses on "orchestrating activities and skills to ensure that some specific job is completed, some specific goal achieved" (Encyclopedia 85). The roles involved in this approach often include that of advocate, planner, and activist.

These two approaches are each broken down into four more specific approaches in Community Planning and Social Organization. The first broad approach to building and maintaining groups consists of two approaches identified as (1) 'strengthening community participation and integration' and (2) "enhancing coping capacities" (Perlman and Gurin 37).
Murray G. Ross is the best known proponent of this approach. His methods focus on building a community association which consists of the leaders of the various indigenous community organizations (Ross 197). Ross believes that by developing and encouraging cooperation within the community associations, feelings of friendship, commitment, and conviction will develop (Ross 202). The development of such feelings is what Ross believes to be the focus of community organization, even as other more tangible goals remain important.

The approach of enhancing coping capacities considers its goal to be to facilitate the improvement of methods of communication and to interact with the intent to further develop "the ability of a community... to cope with its environment and with change" (Perlman and Gurin 37). The focus of this approach is on teaching the community about what its realistic perception should be. It is then assumed that this new, realistic perception will lead to new behavior, which then leads to new attitudes and values (Perlman and Gurin 41).

Within the broad approach of task-oriented activities, the two approaches are (1) "improving social conditions and services" and (2) "advancing the interests of disadvantaged groups" (Perlman and Gurin 37). The primary goal of the approach to improve social conditions and services is to identify areas of needed reform and to then develop a planned series of actions to address the needs and deficiencies (Perlman and Gurin 37). In this approach the change agent must identify the needs and be able to select actions and resources that will meet those needs.

The primary purpose of the approach of advancing the interests of disadvantaged groups is "to promote the interests of particular groups by increasing their share of material goods and services and/or by increasing their power, their participation in community decision-making,
and their status" (Perlman and Gurin 38). The two main strategies used in this approach are (1) to get the disadvantaged group involved in the change process by teaching them who to target, and what tactics to use for bringing about change, and (2) once the people are organized they must seek ways to gain a larger share of goods and services and to fight for the elimination of injustices against them (Perlman and Gurin 44).

Peck's definition of community can also be placed in a category of approaches to community organization. Peck's emphasis on communication and interaction as well as the primary purpose of building a group would place it in the same category as strengthening community participation and integration, and enhancing coping capacities. The methods that Peck describes as necessary for building a true community are presented in the form of stages of community development. Those stages are (1) pseudocommunity, (2) chaos, (3) emptiness, and (4) community (Peck 86). These stages represent a process that Peck suggest group that are attempting to develop into a community will pass through. The process itself is one in which the group members first try to pretend to be in agreement with one another to the extent of being a community. But eventually that becomes too much strain to continue, so another stage of actually attempting to change everyone into the same thing begins. Following this chaotic stage there is a stage during which the members begin to empty themselves of feelings, assumptions, ideas, and prejudices that block honest communication. This emptiness then leads to the establishment of a true community with the characteristics of inclusiveness, realism, contemplation, and a safe place (Peck 86-103). This process of community development as described by Peck is very similar to the group process with the stages known mnemonically as forming, storming, norming, and performing.
A review of the various types of community organization reveals a tendency for the approaches to focus either on group building for the sake of the interaction and the support it will provide, or on the organization of individuals with the intent of promoting necessary changes in resources. Also, it seems that more attention is given to the approaches that focus on improving a community's tangible characteristics. The building of a group for the sake of having a supportive group is generally occurring most frequently in small group situations like therapy groups. However, both types of approaches are equally important and equally necessary. Certainly it is obvious that the living conditions in many cities is deplorable, and that many people do not have their daily needs met. Additionally, I believe that a majority of individuals in our society are not having their need for community met, as there are so few true communities to which to belong. Therefore, I believe that the problem of our isolation from one another should be addressed at a community and not individual level. It is the sense of belonging to a true community, and feeling a connection with our fellow human beings that we lack, and thus the solution lies in developing that sense of community.

It is important for individuals to feel a part of a community for several reasons. One reason is the personal fulfillment that can be gained by being a member of a group that is a true community. A community can help to ward off an individual's feelings of alienation from other people and society as a whole.

Another purpose that true communities serve is the promotion of peace, as this is the true spirit of community. As the people of the world are continually brought into closer contact with one another, it becomes essential that the differences encountered be appreciated and
accepted. Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that the American public had already reached a state of understanding that would allow us to peacefully coexist in the world. But we, as a society, have consistently shown that we have not achieved this state through our treatment of our own citizens of different race, and through our sometimes questionable involvement in foreign affairs. We believe that other societies should follow our pattern for society. We believe that our way is the one right way and we seem unable to accept much variance from that "right" way.

Ours is an arrogant American society. It is not humble. It is not inclusive and therefore, many of its ideas and actions are unrealistic. Often is is not contemplative nor a safe place to be for many. Our society lacks a community point of view and the price we may pay for our blindness and overly competitive spirit is our peace.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


