Social Capital
&
Community Cohesion

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Social Capital
a new Name for an old Idea

1) In **sociology**, **social capital** is the expected collective or economic benefits derived from the preferential treatment and cooperation between individuals or groups.

2) Different **social sciences** emphasize different aspects of social capital, they tend to share the core idea "that **social networks** have **value**".

a) Just as a screwdriver **(physical capital)** or

b) a university education **(Cultural capital** or **human Capital)** can increase productivity (both individual and collective), so do social contacts affect the cohesion within the parish.

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CPPC   Urban Parish

6,000 Homes 16,000 People

7 Parish Wards / 19 councillors and 11 staff

Huge diversity

From affluent wards to ward in lowest quartile of indexes of deprivation.

55% ethnicity

Surgery and schools at breaking point

School 25 languages and 45% ethnicity

A challenge or !!

Difficulties in integrating some groups.

The Challenge
Evaluating Social Capital

a) Facilitate communication in the community across ethnic lines

b) Research the facts.

c) Help partners carry out their tasks, building a

   happy
       prosperous and
           cohesive society.

d) But NOT Bricks and Mortar

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CPPC has produced a comprehensive parish appraisal giving a detailed range of facts

Challenges

Integration is not being achieved

East European communities not interested they tend to be transient being resident in the parish for between 3 and 6 months

Somali community want isolation in education and socialising

White working class boys fail at a rate higher than any other grouping

Black African group seeing highest level of unemployment in MK

One parish ward has highest level of AIDS in MK

For us there is a desperate need to tackle the social issues not the "bricks and mortar"

Definition of Social Capital

1) Social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy

2) Television and urban sprawl have a significant in making parishes far less 'connected'

3) Social capital can be measured by the amount of trust and 'reciprocity' in a community

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These are 3 bullet points which affect us greatly

To maintain a viable democracy Council has to actively to find and promote BME councillors

Following some difficult media reporting we use our magazine, website and face book to communicate with our hard to reach groups

We support a dedicated local radio station which operates on air and on the internet

We have worked closely with our local equality council on a number of tailored programmes

We have worked with a local ethnic film group producing films and videos targeting hard to reach groups

Defining Issues

1) The term **"Capital"** is used by analogy with other forms of economic capital, as social capital is argued to have similar (although less measurable) benefits.

2) However, the analogy with capital is misleading to the extent that, unlike traditional forms of capital, social capital is not depleted by use; in fact it is depleted by non-use **("use it or lose it").**

3) In this respect, it is similar to the now well-established economic concept of **"human capital"**.

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There are for us Considerable Challenges around many issues which are not strictly speaking within our remit.

However our parishioners are increasingly turning to us for understanding and leadership.

Unemployment is for us a big issue, to which we cannot simply say 'not my job' and turn away.

Working with our local Equality Council and our local College we have provided 2 major Employment projects aimed at getting some of our BME (in particular Black African) community into or back into employment. But NOT forgetting our indigenous community for whom we provided a different programme.

A second programme aimed to tackle what is for us a significant population of Somali womenfolk, aiming to give them some of the necessary skills to be able to work.

Social Capital:
A New Name For an Old Idea

1) Social capital can only be generated collectively thanks to the presence of communities and social networks, but individuals and groups can use it at the same time.

2) Community cohesion using the collective social capital of an area cannot best be done by Principal authorities working in silos and at arms length

This can better be achieved by Town and Parish Councils working at grassroots level

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We have sought to tap into existing net works

Our Flagship Initiative has been the organizing if two 'diversity balls' to one of which we achieved nearly 700 people coming together.

Preceded by a series of 20 'Spotlight on.....' seminars, taking a different culture within the Parish, gathering community leaders together, each group explaining their particular culture, with food music and dress. The various community leaders then returning to their own communities and disseminating information.

This successful programme had a significant impact in reducing community tensions.

Working with partners to achieve Social Cohesion.

▸ The problems that cannot be changed by Parishes alone.

▸ Partners Who to use. Third Sector?

▸ Actions   Direct or indirect.

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The greatest challenge for us has been the sheer diversity of the problems, and the management of public expectation across that diversity.

**Drugs like any community in England we face drugs problems.
Whose responsibility is it ? Not the parishes?   Principal Authorities Police Others ? We choose not to turn our backs and say not my job.**

A very major problem was the open sale of KHAT (an African drug) openly on our streets.

**Working with our Somali Community the police and our MP we provided (paid for by council) 2 specific Somali wardens to work in that community,
We lobbied, took any action open to us to work towards the banning of Khat, even to going on a cold February Saturday to demonstrate in Downing Street.**

Currently we are working with a number of partners to address the problem of the numbers of our parishioners who have aids (we have the highest figure in MK)

Our Initiatives to address this most pernicious of problems have been Surgeries at our Office to facilitate needle exchange. (Better this than our children pick them up from bushes) and in the provision of some educational support.

Social Capital and Health

1) Social capital affects health risk behaviour in the sense that individuals who are embedded in a network or community rich in support, social trust, information have the resources that help to achieve health goals

   Those who languish in wards high in depravation. cannot achieve health goals, or indeed any degree of social fulfilment. Something which can lead to heightened community tensions.

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A long standing issue for council has been the disparity of age in the life expectancy of our people.

Life expectancy in our more affluent wards is 10 years longer than those in our ward with the highest indices of depravation

Other social issues we are seeking to address are lack of fitness, obesity and poor diet.

To address some of these issues, council has embarked on a green gym walking project.
Promotes allotments to encourage exercise and healthy eating.

We have recently installed a FULL outdoor gym in our flagship park.

Change

❑ The continuous change in social structures i.e.

❑ Will the localism Bill is bringing about a change in social capital, which may be causing a change in community cohesion?

There is a continual change in social structures.
No change not being an option.

Yes I would contend that the localism bill has not been without problems in particular the raising of 'undeliverable aspirations' in many areas, coupled with the lack of necessary skills to carry projects through and insufficient levels of funding

Thank you

Questions

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