



The Centre For Business Relationships,
Accountability, Sustainability and Society

WORKING PAPER SERIES No. 45

Supporting Skills and Knowledge to Deliver
Sustainable Communities: An Exploration
of the Conceptual and Policy Context



Julie Newton, Terry Marsden,
Alex Franklin and Andrea Collins



About the BRASS Centre

The ESRC Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) was the first ESRC Centre in Wales. It was established in 2001 with a £3.1 million grant, and has very recently received its second phase funding of £4.8 million which will take it up to 2011. The Centre is a joint venture between the University's Schools of Business, City & Regional Planning and Law. It brings together the three Schools' existing research expertise on issues of sustainability, business ethics, company law, corporate reporting and business communication.

The Centre started work in October 2001 under the leadership of Professor Ken Peattie of the Business School, Professor Terry Marsden of the Department of City and Regional Planning and Professor Bob Lee of the Law School. The Centre exists to understand and promote the vital issues of sustainability, accountability and social responsibility, through research into key business relationships.

Published by

The Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability & Society
(BRASS)
Cardiff University
55 Park Place
Cardiff CF10 3AT
United Kingdom
<http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk>

© BRASS Centre 2008

ISBNs 978-1-906644-02-4 (print)
978-1-906644-03-1 (web)



Supporting Skills and Knowledge to Deliver Sustainable Communities: An Exploration of the Conceptual and Policy Context

Julie Newton, Terry Marsden, Alex Franklin and Andrea Collins

Abstract

Delivering ‘sustainable communities’ is increasingly recognised as an implicit component of the wider goal of sustainable development. Within the UK, sustainable communities are currently understood as “places where people want to live and work, now and in the future” (*ODPM, 2005*). However, a lack of appropriate skills as well as an understanding of which skills are necessary has remained a significant obstacle to attaining this goal. This has been highlighted by the Sustainable Communities Plan (*2003*) in the UK followed by the Egan Review on Skills (*2004*). This paper responds to a growing academic and policy interest in the role of skills in delivering sustainable communities.

It briefly explores the conceptual underpinnings of sustainable communities and makes links to issues of community governance and engagement. It then provides an overview of the wider policy context underpinning the growing interest in skills for sustainable communities. It concludes with an introduction to a new project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Academy for Sustainable Communities at the ESRC centre on Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) on ‘Motivating, Engaging, Leading and Supporting Skills and Knowledge for Sustainable Communities- Applying Models of Sustainable Localised Economies’.

1. Introduction

The concept of ‘sustainable communities’ has gained increased attention from academia and policy over the past few decades. It has become intrinsically linked with the wider goal of sustainable development and the UK government’s ‘place-making agenda’. In the UK, both the Sustainable Communities Plan (2003) and the Egan Review on Skills (2004) have raised the profile of sustainable communities and the skills debate at a policy level. These have offered a new understanding of sustainable communities as “places where people want to live and work, now and in the future” (ODPM, 2005). On the ground, however, a lack of the appropriate skills as well as an understanding of which skills are necessary has remained a significant obstacle to achieving sustainable communities.

This paper briefly explores the building blocks behind the concept of sustainable community and discusses how the pursuit of sustainable communities is embedded in broader issues of community governance (i.e. engagement). It then provides an overview of the wider policy context of sustainable communities and sets the scene for a growing interest in the role of skills in delivering sustainable communities. The paper then turns to a discussion of the relevance of ‘sustainable consumption debates’ to the sustainable skills agenda. It concludes with an introduction to a new project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and the Academy for Sustainable Communities at the ESRC centre on Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society (BRASS) on ‘Motivating, Engaging, Leading and Supporting Skills and Knowledge for Sustainable Communities-Applying Models of Sustainable Localised Economies’.

2. Conceptualising Sustainable Communities

There is currently no single agreed definition of a sustainable community. Although most approaches tend to explore it in the context of a community of place, it remains a contested concept which broadly captures the notion of a ‘community’ adhering to the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, any discussion of sustainable communities needs to consider the equally elusive concepts of sustainable development (SD), sustainability and community.

2.1 Sustainable development and sustainability

The most widely used and cited definition of sustainable development (SD) originates from the Brundtland report at the World Commission for Environment and Development in 1987. Sustainable development is defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (*WCED, 1987: 43*). This definition revolutionised subsequent approaches across the world following the Rio Summit in 1992 making SD one of the key policy agendas of the 21st century. Rather than a narrow focus on environmental sustainability, the Brundtland report emphasised a more holistic approach to sustainability that considers environmental factors *together* with social and economic factors (*Littlewood & While, 1997*).

This is concisely captured by Agyeman et al (2002:78) who state that:

“...sustainability...cannot be simply a ‘green’, or ‘environmental’ concern, important though ‘environmental’ aspects of sustainability are. A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity are integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems”.

Although SD and ‘sustainability’ are often used interchangeably, they mean different things. SD can be considered more action-oriented and dynamic (i.e. the process of achieving sustainability) whilst sustainability in turn refers to an ideal dynamic state (*Agyeman, 2005; Lozano, 2007*). Baker (2006) further explains that sustainability has its roots in ecology and was used to describe how an ecosystem can sustain itself over time. In this respect, the addition of ‘development’ to sustainability (i.e. SD) has served to focus the attention on ‘steering societal change’ to include environmental considerations by focusing on the interface of the social, economic and ecological.

2.2 Community

The concept of ‘community’ has a long history of theorisation and debate¹. It is also a notoriously contested concept that can either be geographically specific, refer to a local social system or a type of relationship and mutual identification/identity (Hillery, 1955). Mayo (1994:51) warns that community ‘seems to describe everything, and therefore nothing’. Nevertheless, Day (2006: 1) describes ‘community’ as one of the “most common points of reference” for social scientists, policy makers and the wider public. He also notes that there is consensus that it “represents a particular kind of social bond, involving direct personal relations and intimate knowledge of others” (Day, 2006:19). The emphasis on relationships is shared by others. For example, Nisbet (1967: 47) describes community as all forms of relationship which are characterised by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion and continuity in time”. Similarly, Lee & Newby (1983: 52) note how the term is often used to indicate:

“...a sense of common identity, enduring ties of affiliation and harmony based upon personal knowledge and face-to-face contact”.

Gilchrist (2000: 147) encompasses all these aspects into her definition of community as the:

“...layer of society in which interaction takes place between people who are neither close family and friends, nor yet total strangers. Community is neither private nor fully public. It shapes our social identity and helps us make sense of a complex and dynamic world”.

Marsden & Hines (2008)² note that communities involve people, social interaction, interaction between people and their physical, social or economic environments, and can be interpreted as fixed to a place or relating to groups or communities of interest.

Much ‘community’ theorisation revolves around discussions about a loss of sense of community and place attributed to processes of modernisation and industrialisation linked to the urbanisation and globalisation in the 20th century. Tönnies’s (1955)

¹ For a comprehensive account of the theorisation of community see Day (2006).

² It broadly captures the idea of a common sense of identity shared between individuals based on site specific knowledge and face-to-face contact (Marsden & Hines, 2008).

distinction between *gemeinschaft* (community) and *gesellschaft* (society) is often used to describe the transition from a rural-type community to an urban society where relationships were not close or enduring, but heterogeneous, distant and highly mobile.

More recently, postmodernists dispute the ‘loss of community’ and more extreme ‘death’ of community, arguing instead that modernisation in the 20th century has transformed the nature of communities (*Lash & Urry, 1994; Massey, 1994; Urry, 2000; Bauman, 2000; Harvey, 2000*). The result is a more fluid and hybrid notion of community that is not necessarily place-based but can emerge from shared interests and more complex and mobile identities. This is attributed to the rise of ‘hypermobilities’ associated with the multi-dimensional mobilities and flows of people, goods, services, knowledges and peoples (*Scheller & Urry, 2006*). Barton (2000) and Taylor (2000) note that these changes have had profound impacts on economic structures and lifestyles that manifest themselves differently across different production/consumption spheres with notable environmental repercussions. The rise in car ownership linked with increasing mobility, increasing size of retail centres and changing labour markets are all key examples of this.

Some scholars link this to the emergence of the ‘New Economy’³ and the growth of ‘alternative economic spaces’ (*Leyshon et al, 2003; Daniels et al, 2007*). The concept of New Economy originated in the US and describes the rise of the information-technology, accelerating globalisation, new entrepreneurialism and new political neoliberalism (*Martin, 2007*). Some have characterised this shift as involving the replacement of physical and human capital with knowledge and creative capital as the drivers of wealth and prosperity (*Burton-Jones, 1999*). The result is a new ‘creative capitalism’ driven by a new class of knowledge-intensive and enterprising individuals (*Florida, 2003*). Examples include the rise of media, film, fashion, film, music, architecture and design. A key concern of these changes is the ‘death of distance’ where geography no longer matters (*Cairncross, 1997*). Quah (1996) attributes this to

³ Martin (2007:23) explains that there are several different models of the new economy: “ those that focus on a renewal of macro-economic performance; those that emphasize the reconfiguration of micro-economic structures and processes; those that point to an historic information-based technological revolution; those that detect the emergence of a new post-industrial ‘dematerialized’ cultural capitalism; and those that stress the shift to a new neo-liberal political-ideological mode of socio-economic regulation”

the rise of the 'weightless economy' where dematerialised commodities (i.e. goods that can be consumed by other simultaneously) have no respect for space or geography. With the rise of information communication technologies (ICTs) and the internet, there is no longer the need for a physical proximity between the client and service. Martin cites Cairncross (1997: xii) to explain that the New Economy with its host of online services:

“de-spatialises labour markets and communities of practice in that the ‘horizontal bonds among people performing the same job in different parts of the world will strengthen. Common interests, experiences and pursuits rather than proximity will bind these communities together”.

Martin concludes (2007: 32) that the new informational technologies of the New Economy “confer functional propinquity without the need for spatial proximity”. He continues to describe a central characteristic of the New Economy as the:

“...delocalization of socio-economic activity, the lifting of economic relationships out of local knowledge networks and circuits of exchange”.

In spite of these trends, the importance of space, place and distance continues to matter (Perrons, 2007). Social scientists have been quick to note the inequalities arising from new forms of non-place-based mobilities caused by uneven development linked to a highly mobile form of neoliberal capitalism and state (Daniels et al, 2007). These have real and stark geographical manifestations. Indeed, the UK government is repeatedly using the discourse of 'place-making' in relation to community regeneration (ODPM, 2003). Perrons (2007) adds that these widening social divisions are gendered and take spatial form. As a result, community is no longer defined or characterised by a sense of loss, a critique of modernisation or planning. Rather, it has become intrinsically embedded within social and civic relationships which are perceived as central for tackling the major social problems (e.g. social exclusion and deprivation) including unsustainability (Marsden & Hines, 2008). Observers have described these changes as the rise of a new communitarianism and growing

popularity of localism and localisation (Barton, 2000). Etzioni (1995) has written extensively on the need to recapture communitarian social values that emphasise the moral dimension and a move away from radical individualism towards the need for a collective responsibility. He advocates a shift towards communitarianism which adopts a more balanced approach between personal autonomy and respect for others. However, the problem with such an approach as noted by Day (2006: 246) and others (Young, 1990) is that the ideal notions of community described by theorists rarely match the reality of communities on the ground as revealed by empirical research.

Nevertheless, there is agreement within that literature that there is a need to address the 'decay of the community' through revitalising active citizenship. Social capital and community engagement have subsequently emerged as critical to securing community regeneration and SD (Marsden & Hines, 2008). Indeed, Giddens (1998: 79) argues that the theme of community is key to the welfare reform programmes in the UK and Europe:

"The theme of community is fundamental to the new politics, but not just an abstract slogan. The advance of globalization makes a community focus both necessary and possible, because of the downward pressure it exerts. 'Community' doesn't imply trying to recapture lost forms of local solidarity; it refers to practical means of furthering the social and material refurbishment of neighbourhoods, towns and larger local areas"

2.3. Sustainable communities

The sustainable communities' movement is regarded by many as a reaction to the inability of planners to manage urban sprawl which has been accompanied by a range of social and environmental problems (Agyeman & Angus, 2003; Hempel, 1999; Marsden & Hines, 2008). It is also embedded in backlashes at the local level (often kickstarted by communities themselves) as a reaction to the effects of globalisation and capitalism and also a concern for the environment. The emphasis on communities being 'sustainable' is now centre stage due to the increasing threat of climate change and calls to reduce carbon emissions and ecological footprints. Currently, the UK is said to be consuming three planets worth of resources (WWF, 2006; nef, 2007). Strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change are calling for radical changes in behaviour at individual and community level to secure a goal of 'one planet living'

(i.e. living a lifestyle that is consuming one planet's worth of resources rather than three) with mixed reception. This has been accompanied with growing recognition that there is a need to understand the choices people make and the lifestyles they adopt (*Jackson, 2005*). It is in this context that the concept of 'community' has risen up the policy agenda and its association with 'sustainability' has become increasingly salient under the banner of 'sustainable communities'

At a conceptual level, the emphasis on sustainable communities represents a shift from a narrow focus on environmental sustainability towards a more holistic recognition of the environmental, social and economic principles of sustainability and the role that communities play in this. Agyeman and colleagues have written extensively on the need to shift focus away from an exclusive focus on environmental sustainability (as advocated by the New Environment Paradigm) and move towards a more inclusive and balanced approach enshrined within the Just Sustainability Paradigm (JSP) ⁴. This draws on an earlier definition of sustainability as:

“the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, while living within the limits of supporting ecosystems” (Agyeman et al (2003: 5).

Agyeman (2005) explains that such an approach prioritises justice and equity but also acknowledges the crucial role of the environment in supporting life. Marsden and Hines (2008) note how these arguments reiterate the importance of using a broad interpretation of sustainability in communities and this has been echoed by others. For example, Roseland (1998:14) recognises that a sustainable community is “continually adjusting to meet the social and economic needs of its residents while preserving the environment's ability to support it”. This supports Hempel's (1999: 48) earlier assertion that a community is sustainable where “economic vitality, ecological integrity, civic democracy, and social wellbeing are linked in complementary fashion, thereby fostering a high quality of life and a strong sense of reciprocal obligation

⁴The Just Sustainability Paradigm (JSP) introduced by Agyeman and colleagues (2003) emerged as a bridge between a continuum of Environmental Justice Paradigm (EJP) and the New Environment Paradigm (NEP). EJP can be described as a framework that integrates environmental concerns with class, race, gender and social justice concerns (Taylor, 2000a). The NEP (Catton & Dunlap, 1978) characteristics much of the current sustainability agenda with a focus on environmental stewardship and little mention of justice or equity.

among its members”. Less understood is the role of skills in knowledge in stimulating behaviour change that will secure the goal of sustainable communities.

Marsden & Hines (2008) argue that it is useful to explore sustainable communities along three different dimensions/parameters. The first distinguishes between spatial/geographical communities and communities of interest. The former describes communities that are usually identified as a physical entity or delineated by physical boundaries (e.g. a particular village or town). The latter describes communities that are not necessarily bound by geography or social structures but emerge from a shared/common feeling or thought in response to a certain issue (e.g. a community group concerned with waste or an online forum discussing renewable energy). However, communities of interest can also exist within a specific location or organisation/institution (e.g. community group focused around issue of waste focusing in a particular local authority/town/village).

The second dimension involves focusing on the relationships between the state, businesses or firms and communities in the management of natural resources within a geographical area or local scale ‘interest’ group. This recognises that communities do not operate in a vacuum and that each of the aforementioned stakeholders plays a different role in the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the community.

The third dimension involves an investigation of the degrees of governance and engagement of the community and will be explored in the following section. This aspect is important for determining how actions at the community level are equitable, inclusive, strategic and sustainable. It considers the extent to which interventions aimed at sustainability are ‘top down’ or ‘bottom up’; and explores how these affect the levels and quality of engagement and their implications for sustainability.

3. Sustainable Governance: Engaging Communities to Become More Sustainable

Much of the discussion on sustainable communities at both the conceptual and policy level has raised the centrality of governance, particularly in relation to community engagement and public participation. Social capital is often identified as playing an important role in this process.

3.1. Defining sustainable governance

Although the balancing of environmental, economic and equity concerns are key elements of sustainable communities, they are useless without ‘democracy’ to manage the process (Agyeman & Evans, 2003). This echoes earlier assertions of the Brundtland report that the participation and empowerment of citizens is a crucial component of sustainable development and sustainable communities as illustrated below:

“The law alone cannot enforce the common interest. It principally needs community knowledge and support, which entails greater public participation in the decisions which affect the environment. This is best secured by centralising the management of resources upon which local communities depend, and giving these communities an effective say over the use of resources. It will also require promoting citizens’ initiatives, empowering people’s organisations, and strengthening local democracy’ (WCED, 1987: 63).

Governance⁵ for sustainable development can be described as the “processes of socio-political governance oriented towards the attainment of sustainable development” (Meadowcroft, 2007: 299). Agyeman & Evans (2004) explain that good governance is essential for ‘just sustainability’ and this requires the deliberate involvement of citizens and stakeholders to ensure that all voices are heard. However, this relies on a range of practical skills to facilitate and manage successful partnerships which are essential for good governance (ASC, 2006).

3.2. Role of social capital in building sustainable communities

The debates above are often linked to discussions of the role of social capital in building sustainable communities (Stewart, 2000; Purdue, 2001; Taylor, 2000b). Indeed, many have argued that the regeneration of social capital is an essential prerequisite for sustainable communities (Agyeman & Angus (2003). Stewart (2000) has noted that social capital lays the foundations for a more reciprocal and supportive

⁵ It is worth noting that the term ‘governance’ is commonly used in debates of changing patterns of state/societal interaction (Meadowcroft, 2007). Meadowcroft explains that governance refers to the practices through which societies are governed. ‘Good governance’ is linked to a range of different characteristics such effectiveness and efficiency, rule of law, participation, accountability, transparency, respect for human rights, absence of corruption, toleration of difference and gender equity. Stewart (2000: 178) describes it as the “process of multi-stakeholder involvement, of multiple interest resolution, of compromise rather than confrontation, of negotiation rather than administrative fiat”.

approach to governance. Here, social capital⁶ is broadly understood as the “glue which holds communities together” (*Selman, 2001:14*). It includes the norms and networks of social relations characterised by norms of trust and reciprocity that facilitate collective action (*Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993*). Drawing on Putnam’s original distinction of bonding and bridging social capital, Woolcock (*2001; 1998*) identifies a third type: linking social capital. Bonding social capital describes the connections between groups characterised by ‘internal strength’ and a strong sense of identity (i.e. within family, between friends and neighbours). Bridging social capital describes weaker and more cross-cutting relationships between people within and outside a community (i.e. between different communities). Linking social capital describes hierarchal relationships between people of different status and power (i.e. between a community and the state or a business).

Why is the engagement of citizens of vital importance to building sustainable communities? And what does the role of social capital play in this? Many of the explanations are embedded within wider debates of behaviour and attitude change linked to the rise of consumerism and a highly individualistic society in the West driven by materialist values. *Selman (2000)* explains that in order to stimulate citizen engagement on sustainability, it is necessary to generate a sense of ‘ownership’ and empowerment. As a result, increased local level decision-making (often under the rubric of civic renewal and engagement) where people participate as competent citizens is offered as an essential pre-requisite for sustainability. Increased stocks of social capital are perceived as crucial for facilitating/lubricating this process. *Church & Young (2001)* argue that building social capital is an essential component of sustainable communities because it revolves around building trust and confidence in institutions. *Jackson (2005)* relates these arguments to behaviour change by emphasising the role of social norms. He concludes that social support (which can be built through strengthening social capital) is crucial for shifting unsustainable norms, but this change is most effective at the level of groups and communities.

⁶ It is beyond the remit of this paper to give a comprehensive account of social capital. It is a contested term with a long history of theorisation dating back to Durkheim and Marx. The works of Putnam (1993), Coleman (1988) and Woolcock (2001) are often cited. For a useful overview of key arguments see Lehtonen (2004).

The recognition of the importance of public participation to the local sustainable agenda has resulted in a proliferation of what Agyeman & Angus (2003) call “the politics of inclusion”. The rise of sustainable communities is a key manifestation of this. Indeed, Raco (2005; 2007ab) notes that the emphasis on sustainable communities has been accompanied by a broader shift in the nature of governance away from direct government intervention towards the mobilisation of communities and citizens to take on more responsibility for their own socio-economic wellbeing. He also recognises that the new emphasis on community-focused citizenship has profound implications for the form and character of local governance within the planning process (Raco; 2007a: 308).

Most attempts to promote environmental citizenship have focused on promoting greater awareness of responses to sustainability or focused on directly involving citizens in decision making and practical action (Blake, 1999; Evans & Percy, 1999; Selman, 2001). In spite of the recognition of the importance of public participation, many attempts to date are largely top-down and expert led in nature. Sceptics have also questioned whether meaningful citizen participation does take place when it is devolved to communities (Abel & Stephan 2000; Yaffee & Anderson, 1998). Advocates of the environmental justice movement have argued that it shifts the responsibilities to those who are disadvantaged (Agyeman, 2005).

3.3. Models of public participation

In the literature, two models of public participation in environmental policy prevail: informational deficit model and the ‘deliberative and inclusionary processes and procedures’ (DIPS). Each has different implications for the pursuit of sustainable communities and subsequently requires different skills. Agyeman & Angus (2003) warn that they should not be considered as polar opposites but reflect different needs of the public and environmental planning system. The key features of these models, as described by Agyeman and Angus (2003), are summarised below:

The **information deficit model** is based on the assumption that transfer of information promotes greater environmental values and pro-environmental behaviour. It provides people with knowledge and confidence to access the policy arena as ‘change agents’. It is the dominant model used by environmental organisations who

believe that providing information is sufficient to trigger activism. The model assumes that people have no knowledge of environmental issues and when they have the knowledge they will act appropriately. It focuses on the right of the citizen to have access to information and the policy making process (*Rydin & Pennington, 2000*). However, it is criticised for failing to create the transformative politics required to move from an exclusively environmental focused sustainability to a more holistic consideration of sustainability (*Burgess et al, 1998; Blake, 1999*). Another problem is that such an approach is rarely translated into meaningful action as illustrated in the context of the Going for Green initiative in the UK (*Blake, 1999; Collins, 2004, 2008*).

In contrast, the **deliberative and inclusionary processes and procedures (DIPS) model** represents a more active attempt to engage the public in all areas of policy formation and implementation. It adopts more inter-linked social, economic and environmental ideals of a sustainable community and advocates more work on planning, collaboration, communicative approaches and deliberation (*Innes, 1996; O’Riordan & Burgess, 1999; Forester, 2000*). This approach explicitly recognises that information based approaches have many flaws and consequently includes a range of new techniques such as citizen juries, consensus conferences, future search conferencing and round tables (*Bloomfield et al, 1998*). DIPS concentrates on opening up the decision making process and making it more transparent and accountable focused on hearing different perspectives. It includes more responsive forms of decision making based on institutional transparency and accounts for a diversity of values

The significance of this shift from information deficit to DIPS is important because it recognises that knowledge is insufficient on its own, and there are a host of barriers to action which are not reliant on filling a knowledge gap (*Owens, 2000*). Rather, there is a range of social, political and institutional constraints. Indeed much of the sustainable consumption literature is useful in elaborating on these and highlighting the importance of habitual behaviour as a key constraint for meaningful change. Jackson (*2005*) discusses in depth the different ways in which we are ‘locked’ into unsustainable behaviour. Agyeman and Angus (*2003*) also note that these ‘other’

factors are best understood by exploring the difference between 'broad' and 'narrow' focus of civic environmentalism.

Civic environmentalism emerged in the US as a framework to explore different forms of public participation in the environmental movement. Layzer (2002:2) defines civic environmentalism as "using local, collaborative decision making processes to generate innovative non-regulatory solutions to a host of environmental problems". Agyeman & Angus (2003) explain this is closely related to the European notion of 'civic science' which emphasises that science needs to incorporate a more interactive process of knowledge exchange between experts and the public. Warburton (1998: 3) adds that science needs to engage more with transfers of power and respect through empowerment and activism. These debates relate strongly to the different rungs of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation (1969) which describes the different forms and levels of participation that range from providing information to citizen control. Agyeman & Angus (2003) proceed to identify two types of civic environmentalism:

Narrow focus: Emphasises the complex, interdependent and place-based-nature of contemporary environmental problems. Barriers to meaningful behaviour change include time and resource constraints, collective action and free-rider problems. This approach focuses more on reform and policy change to incorporate community perspectives with limited power delegation. It can be equated with the lower rungs of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation based on limited citizen power (i.e. often tokenistic).

Broad focus: Emphasises the interdependency of contemporary environmental, social and economic issues that are the focus of sustainable communities, calls for a civic renewal and power sharing between communities and local governments with new forms of public participation to create innovative solutions. This can be equated with upper rungs of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation involving more partnership, delegated power and citizen control.

The main lesson to take from these debates in relation to skills is the recognition that providing people with knowledge and information is not sufficient on its own to stimulate behaviour change to create sustainable communities. What is needed is an approach that is more characteristic of the 'broad' focus civic environmentalism

which adopts a holistic approach to sustainability which is more participatory and inclusive.

Agyeman & Angus (2003: 348) argue that:

“...civic renewal and regeneration of social capital is an essential prerequisite for any sustainable community and that only the political analysis and approaches to public participation presented by ‘broad focus’ civic environmentalism can fully contribute to this process of civic renewal”.

Selman’s (2001) argument for a ‘learning society’ has particular relevance to this paper’s focus on skills. Selman (2001) makes the case for ‘learning society’ where responsible citizens are assisted to build the capacity for adaptation. He explains that this requires ‘social learning’ in both formal and informal arenas. Social capital is identified as key in promoting this process of social learning and the learning process itself will reinforce and produce social capital. He concludes that:

“...communities-of-common-interest and communities-of-place will co-operate with external institutions where there has been sufficient trust-building to assure them that a shared, consensual and mutually beneficial approach will be pursued”. (Selman, 2001: 16)

In summary, community engagement is clearly an important ingredient for creating and maintaining sustainable communities. However, Marsden & Hines (2008) argue that there remains a need for ongoing work to investigate different modes of community engagement. Equally important is an exploration of the barriers of effective community engagement and an understanding of how more participation and motivation can be instilled.

4. Sustainable Communities in Policy & Practice

The rise of sustainable communities within the wider policy context internationally, within Europe and the UK has advanced in parallel with its academic conceptual

development. This section gives a brief overview and then provides some examples of different approaches to sustainable communities in practice.

4.1. International policy context: Brundtland report and Local Agenda 21

The Brundtland report was crucial at the international level in emphasising a more holistic approach to achieving sustainable development. This was translated into a programme of action for SD with the launch of *Local Agenda 21* (LA21) at the Rio 1992 Earth Summit. LA21 emphasised that SD had to begin at the local level and the local participation was essential for its success (*Warburton, 1998; Barton, 2000*). It contained numerous references to the importance of community participation, empowerment and capacity building. LA21 was adopted by over 178 governments across the world with the notable exception of the US. At the follow up to the Earth Summit in Johannesburg in 2002, *Local Action 21* was launched to move local authorities from ‘agenda’ to ‘action’ to ensure accelerated implementation of sustainable development. The overarching aim was to strengthen the abilities of local governments across the world to create sustainable communities and cities and protect global common goods⁷. This shift emphasised that local governments are the level of governance closest to people and therefore have a crucial role in driving the adoption of sustainability principles at the local level. Agyeman (2005) describes how these changes culminated in a worldwide local movement for sustainable communities. Some have described this as the rise of new localism (*Marvin & Guy, 1997; Gibbs, 1998*)

Krueger & Agyeman (2005) describe the US response to the call for action as schizophrenic. The Bush Administration’s approach to sustainable development focused primarily on greening its foreign aid with little attention to its domestic SD agenda. Critics argue that this negligence is largely due to the reluctance to change American lifestyles and curb consumption. Nevertheless, there have been more positive attempts to strive towards sustainable communities. Key examples include smart-growth programmes, individual municipality programmes and ICLEI’s Communities 21 Programme (*Agyeman, 2005*). Although there are many examples of individual case studies in the US of individual sustainable community development,

⁷ See <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=802>

there remains a gap in the literature that explores federal level attempts to implement sustainability. Chifos (2007) provides a detailed account of the US government's attempt to adopt the concept of sustainability after 1992. She explores three prominent federal-level sustainable community programmes⁸ in the US and concludes that in spite of serious efforts to instil sustainability within federal programmes, there remained significant barriers. Most notable were the lack of political will and a lack of engagement from the planning profession. Nevertheless, Chifos (2007) argues that these initiatives did set the scene for a renaissance in community planning with a new emphasis on addressing linked objectives related to sustainable communities such as improved natural environment, job creation and equity. More examples of local initiatives aimed at delivering sustainable communities in the US can be found at the Sustainable Communities Network website⁹. The network was founded in 1993 by CONCERN and the Community Sustainability Resource Institute to identify resources on sustainability and disseminate them to the public.

4.2. UK policy approach to sustainable communities

In the UK, LA21¹⁰ stimulated various initiatives that broadly tackled aspects of sustainable communities (although they were not specifically named as such at the time). For example, in 1995 the UK government launched a SD public awareness campaign 'Going for Green' in an attempt to promote a community approach to sustainable development with 6 pilot sustainable community projects (Smith *et al*, 2000; Blake 1999; Collins, 2004, 2008). In 1997/1998 the government published guidance notes for local authorities preparing LA21 strategies that included a list of characteristics of sustainable communities. Building sustainable communities was also specifically mentioned within the consultation paper for the first sustainable development strategy in 1998 (DETR, 1998).

⁸ The department of energy's Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD), the EPA'S Sustainable Development Challenge Grants (SDCG), and the department of Transportations' Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Programme (TCSP). These examples were selected as they have been the most discussed in the US context.

⁹ <http://www.sustainable.org/index.html>

¹⁰ Church & Young (2001) note that any discussion of the impacts of LA21 needs to consider the role of social capital and civil society. Social capital is another contested term but broadly refers to trust. Building social capital is an essential component of sustainable communities because it revolves around building trust and confidence in institutions.

“Building sustainable communities involves considering how to encourage employment, decent housing, good health, and access to services and recreation, in ways which make good use of natural resources, protect the environment, promote social cohesion, and contribute to local, regional and national prosperity. It brings together matters such as land use planning, an integrated transport policy, housing and construction, and regeneration of cities, towns and rural areas” (DETR, 1998: 18)

It was not until the election of the new Labour government that sustainable communities were considered a key policy instrument. Its rise up the policy agenda was closely linked to the urban regeneration policy of the new Labour government (Raco, 2007a; Colomb, 2007; Thomas & Littlewood, 2007). What followed was a multitude of urban policies and interventions focused on the ‘urban renaissance’ of British cities. These tackled issues of urban decline and deprivation with a firm commitment to social and economic regeneration. This agenda was closely tied to the wider problem of a lack of housing in the UK. Most notable amongst these were the report of the Urban Taskforce titled ‘Towards an Urban Renaissance’ (1999) and the Urban White Paper ‘Our Towns and Cities: The Future-Delivering an Urban Renaissance’ (2000). Raco (2007a:306) notes how these policies promised:

“high-quality urban design, a new awareness of environmental responsibilities, a focus on social well-being, and effective and accountable systems of local and regional governance”.

These policies lay the foundations for a focus on sustainability and sustainable communities as a key element of spatial and urban planning in the 2000s.

Sustainable communities came to the forefront of UK policy in 2003 with the publication of the government’s ‘Sustainable Communities Plan-*Sustainable Communities: Building for our Future*’ (ODPM, now the Department of Communities and Local Government)¹¹. This committed the government to adopt a holistic

¹¹ Much of the focus was on the housing crisis. This included tackling low demand, which affects 850,000 homes in the North and Midlands housing shortages in the wider South East. Four ‘growth areas’ and ‘new growth points’ were identified to play a key role as national priorities for regeneration and growth. These include the Thames Gateway, Ashford in Kent, London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough (LSCP) and Milton Keynes/South Midlands (MKSM).

approach to create and maintain sustainable communities. At its core was the recognition to simultaneously promote strong local economies, address environmental impact and encourage a sense of community.

"A wider vision of strong and sustainable communities is needed to underpin this plan, flowing from the Government's strong commitment to sustainable development. The way our communities develop, economically, socially and environmentally, must respect the needs of future generations as well as succeeding now. This is the key to lasting, rather than temporary, solutions; to creating communities that can stand on their own feet and adapt to the changing demands of modern life. Places where people want to live and will continue to want to live" (ODPM, 2003: 5)

The plan identified twelve key requirements of sustainable communities covering a range of different issues such as a flourishing local economy, good public transport, diverse vibrant culture and a 'sense of place'. These are detailed in Figure 1 of the Appendix. This was followed by two five-year plans in 2005 ('Homes for All' and 'People, Places and Prosperity'¹²) which presented a strategy for delivering sustainable communities. More importantly they offered the first concrete definition of a sustainable community as:

"Places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer quality of opportunity and good services for all" (ODPM, 2005).

The plans also unpacked the following eight components of sustainable communities in detail. While all sustainable communities are diverse and differ according to local circumstances, all sustainable communities should reflect the following components

1. **Active, Inclusive and Safe-** fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities;

¹² 'Homes for All' focused on the original theme of the Plan which involved promoting more choice and affordability in the housing market. 'People, Places and Prosperity' widens the Government's focus on sustainable communities to recognise the role of better governance, strong leadership and the revitalisation of neighbourhoods.

2. **Well Run**- with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership;
3. **Environmentally Sensitive**- providing places for people to live that are considerate to the environment;
4. **Well designed and built**-featuring quality built and natural environment;
5. **Well connected**-with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services;
6. **Thriving**-with a flourishing and diverse local economy;
7. **Well served**-with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all; and
8. **Fair for everyone**-including in other communities, now and in the future.

Throughout the development of the Sustainable Community Plan, a lack of skills was identified as a significant obstacle to the goal of attaining sustainable communities. The Egan Review was commissioned by ODPM (2004) in an effort to find out how serious a constraint this was and identify the range of skills that were necessary to build and maintain sustainable communities. The review played an important role in distilling the definition of sustainable communities and identified seven key components of sustainable communities which closely overlap with the components later agreed by the ODPM in 2005 as illustrated in Figure1 below¹³. The remainder of the paper uses the definition proposed by ODPM in 2005 as described earlier.

¹³ More detail about these components can be found in Table 1 and 2 of the Appendix.

Figure 1: Components of sustainable communities



Source: Academy of Sustainable Communities

In parallel, the UK Government's Sustainable Development Strategy: *Securing the Future* (2005) coordinated by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) emphasised sustainable communities as one of its four key priorities for action¹⁴ and used the ODPM's definition and sub-components of sustainable communities¹⁵. In 2005, 'community action-2020-together we can' was launched to re-energise community action in the delivery of sustainable development and building upon the LA21 experience. This was later replaced by Defra's Every Action Counts campaign¹⁶.

The recent local government white paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* (2006) has further revitalised the sustainable communities' movement and linked it closely to the social cohesion agenda. It has re-emphasised the duty of local authorities to prepare 'Sustainable Community Strategies' which provide a strategic sustainable vision for the area. These are delivered through Local Area Agreements (LAA) which are the plans for delivering the strategy. These are managed by county and

¹⁴ The other three include sustainable consumption and production, climate change and energy, natural resource protection and environmental enhancement.

¹⁵ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/sustainablecommunities/whatis/>

¹⁶ <http://www.everyactioncounts.org.uk/>

unitary authorities in consultation with local partners. The whole process is overseen and managed by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP¹⁷) which brings together the views of local private, voluntary and community sectors. Lambert (2006) explains that LSPs and Sustainable Community Strategies play an important role in the wider goal of democratic renewal by facilitating greater involvement and engagement of the community in local decision making.

The recent approval of the *Sustainable Communities Act* (2007) is further testament to the importance of sustainable communities. It is premised on the belief that “local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area” and provides a channel for communities to request action from central government (DCLG, 2008). The main thrust of the act is to give local authorities more influence and financial control of various issues that may be threatening or challenging their communities. It will enable local authorities to request central government to take action on a range of issues that local authorities believe will enhance the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area. For example, it will permit local authorities to request local spending plans to help prioritise actions. The Act has also been designed to strengthen the role of communities through a new process of passing on ideas generated by the community to central government. Efforts are also being taken to ‘better inform’ local communities about how public funding is spent in their area through new ‘Local Spending Reports’.

Much of the Labour policy discourse on sustainable communities is spatial. Raco (2007b) explains that the government understanding of what a sustainable community comprises represents a hybrid of sustainable development principles and pro-growth strategy for global economic competitiveness where spatial planning is presented as the panacea for making space and place more functional, cohesive and competitive. Raco (2007b: 172) draws on key policy documents (ODPM, 2003, 2005) to describe a sustainable place as one where a:

¹⁷ LSPs were originally created to act as a key driver of the neighbourhood agenda. Their aim was to stimulate a more joined up and integrated approach to local policy, with a particularly focus on neighbourhood renewal (Lambert, 2006)

“...balance of employment, housing, and social facilities are co-present and available to a range of socio-economic groups. It is populated by sustainable citizens who are politically, socially, and economically active and self-reliant. They are ‘non-dependent’ of the state and provide for themselves through private sector (market) provision”.

Raco recognises how the rhetoric of sustainable communities is commonly used by policymakers as a tool to address social exclusion and promote social cohesion whilst simultaneously creating new forms of place competitiveness. Strengthening social capital is frequently portrayed as the bridge that connects the two.

Indeed, a recent report by the Academy of Sustainable Communities (ASC, 2007a) identifies building sustainable communities and community cohesion as cross-cutting policy themes. Communities with strong social capital are presented as being more cohesive and sustainable. The Faiths and Cohesion Unit within DCLG (ASC 2007a: 11) defines a cohesive community as one where:

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

These overlap strongly with some of the key components of sustainable communities as advocated by the ODPM (2005¹⁸). For example, the need for communities to:

- Be fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities;
- Have a strong sense of community identity and belonging;
- Respect and engage with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs;
- Be socially inclusive with good life chances for all;

¹⁸ (See Table 1, Appendix).

- Have a sense of civic values, responsibility and pride; and
- Respect the rights and aspirations of others.

4.3. European policy approach to sustainable communities

In Europe, the concept of sustainable community has also gained currency. The way it has been used in policy discourse shares many similarities with the UK. There is agreement that it “encapsulates a vision for what sustainable development means in respect of the particular characteristics of places” (ASC, 2006: 8). The Aalborg Charter¹⁹ (1994) laid the foundations for a vision of sustainable communities. The first reference to sustainable communities and skills²⁰ was made at the Rotterdam ministerial informal in 2004 resulting in the ‘Urban Acquis’ (Thomas & Littlewood, 2007).

However, it is the more recent Bristol Accord²¹ signed in 2005 by all member states towards the end of the UK presidency which is of greater significance. The Bristol Accord was a landmark event resulting in the endorsement of the eight sustainable communities characteristics advocated in the UK Sustainable Communities Plan (2003). It is also worth noting that the Accord recognised the importance of governance as a prerequisite for creating sustainable communities (ASC, 2006) and re-emphasised the importance of skills for sustainable communities. Sustainable communities were subsequently recognised as a key mechanism for securing the wider goal of sustainable development within the ‘renewed EU sustainable development strategy’ (2006).

However, Evans (2007) concludes that the overall impact of the Bristol Accord on European member states within European Policy was limited for a number of reasons. Namely, the UK-centric nature of the policy agenda where the key sustainable community characteristics were drawn from UK examples and were mainly urban focused. This point has also been raised by Thomas & Littlewood (2007) in relation to

¹⁹ The Aalborg Charter (1994) launched the European sustainable Cities and Towns campaign and committed 38 countries across Europe to a vision of sustainable community as a key tool for implementing LA21 action plan

²⁰ Although this was in the context of urban development

²¹ The Bristol accord complements the Rotterdam Urban Acquis which provide basis for coherent approach to urban policy on five key areas: development priorities, mechanisms for successful urban policy, engaging stakeholders, achieving the right spatial balance, encouraging good practice, policy learning and capacity.

the two day Symposium on skills for Sustainable Communities held in Leeds (2006). Evans also blames the wide-ranging nature of the sustainable communities' agenda which arguably makes it difficult for policy makers to engage with. The failure of member states to submit good practice case studies was also a significant factor behind its limited impact. He speculates that the skills agenda may be the part of the Bristol Accord that will have the longest lifespan.

Nevertheless, these events have put 'sustainable communities' back on the EU policy agenda. Prior to the Bristol Accord, countries within the EU had no agreed definition of a sustainable community. Similar to the UK, much of the policy discourse was linked to the wider agenda of urban regeneration and territorial cohesion (*Thomas & Littlewood, 2007*). A variety of studies carried out by the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (EPSON) have noted that in spite of the positive economic outcomes associated with the growth of capital cities and 'Metropolitan European Growth' areas, there have been negative outcomes. These include increased inequalities and negative environmental impacts linked to increases in work-related travel. The rise of trans-national and intra-regional movements of goods and people as key features of globalisation and European integration has also had an undeniable impact on communities. These include a range of environmental and social problems related to spheres of production and consumption (*ERBEDU & CUDEM, 2007*). The sustainable communities' agenda in Europe is widely regarded as a means to deal with this rapid change which clearly has spatial dimensions.

To date, there have been a variety of different initiatives used across Europe emphasising different pillars of sustainability that engage with the community. For example, the new 'Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment' (2006)²² aims to facilitate better implementation of EU environmental policies at the local level through the exchange of experience and good practice between Europe's local authorities. One of its key proposed measures is further training and capacity building for local authorities to develop the skills necessary for managing the urban environment. The URBAN Community initiative encouraged an integrated approach to urban development tackling issues of social and economic cohesion, barriers to

²² The strategy is one of seven under the 6th Environmental Action Programme.

employment and investment whilst also dealing with social and environmental goals. This has been followed by URBACT²³.

4.4. Sustainable communities in practice

The ecovillage movement at an international scale and the ‘Transition Towns‘ and ecotown movement within UK can be regarded as attempts to put sustainable communities into practice.

At the global level, the ‘ecovillage‘ movement is a key example of an attempt to attain sustainable living (*Barton & Kleiner, 2000; Bang, 2005*). It also provides an illustrative example of the backlash of local communities against the effects of globalisation and capitalism at the local level combined with a concern for the environment. An ecovillage can be defined as:

“...urban or rural communities of people, who strive to integrate a supportive social environment with a low impact way of life. To achieve this, they integrate various aspects of ecological design, permaculture, ecological building, green production, alternative energy, community building practices and much more”. (Global Ecovillage Network website²⁴)

Although ecovillages did not receive widespread recognition until the 1990s, earlier examples enshrining these principles were found in the 1960s with the spiritual based projects, such as Findhorn in Scotland, Auroville in India and the Farm in Tennessee, USA in the 1960s. The movement really gained momentum in Denmark in the early 1990s following support from the Gaia Trust resulting in the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). In 1998 they were named among the United Nations top rated models of sustainable living. The ecovillage approach adopts a holistic approach to sustainable living along three key dimensions: social/community, ecological and cultural/spiritual. These dimensions are embedded within a wider commitment to reverse the environmental degradation and preserve supportive social/cultural structures to live in a world with environmental limits (See Figure 2)

²³ The URBACT Programme aims to develop exchanges of experience between European cities and the actors, which have been involved in the URBAN Programmes, initiated and implemented by the European Union since the late 1980s (URBAN Pilot Projects and URBAN I and II), <http://urbact.eu/urbact-programme.html>

²⁴ <http://gen.ecovillage.org/> and <http://www.ecovillage.org/> [accessed January 2008]

Figure 2: Ecovillage principles

Social/community	Ecological	Cultural/spiritual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising and relating to others • Sharing common resources and providing mutual aid • Emphasizing holistic and preventive health practices • Providing meaningful work and sustenance to all members • Integrating marginal groups • Promoting unending education • Encouraging unity through respect for differences • Fostering cultural expression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing food as much as possible within the community bio-region • Supporting organic food production there • Creating homes out of locally adapted materials • Using village-based integrated renewable energy systems • Protecting biodiversity • Fostering ecological business principles • Assessing the life cycle of all products used in the ecovillage from a social and spiritual as well as an ecological point of view • Preserving clean soil, water and air through proper energy and waste management • Protecting nature and safeguarding wilderness areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared creativity, artistic expression, cultural activities, rituals and celebrations • Sense of community unity and mutual support • Respect and support for spirituality manifesting in many ways • Shared vision and agreements that express commitments, cultural heritage and the uniqueness of each community • Flexibility and successful responsiveness to difficulties that arise • Understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all the elements of life on Earth and the community's place in and relation to the whole • Creation of a peaceful, loving, sustainable world

Adapted from Global Ecovillage Network (2008)

The ecovillage movement has gained global popularity and there are also examples of such communities in the UK. There are two in Wales (Anglesey ecological village and Brithdir Mawr) and four in Scotland including one of the world pioneers at Findhorn. In England, there are nine examples of ecovillages at various stages of development. These include Braziers Park in Oxon, Camphill: Ochil Tower scholl in Perthshire, Dorscoh in Dorset, Eco-spiritual community Rosehill in Lyme Regis, Eco-Village Network in Bristol, Groby Ecohamlet in Grooby, Isle of Avalon Foundation in Glastonbury, and the Sunrise Project in York²⁵.

Within the UK, the Transitions Town movement pioneered by Rob Hopkins²⁶ shares some of the same principles of the ecovillage movement. It is based on the belief that communities are on a threshold of 'peak oil' and need to prepare for life after oil.

²⁵ For more detail, see <http://www.ecovillage.org/>

²⁶ Rob Hopkins has an academic background in sustainable living specialising in permaculture and is taking an active role in pioneering sustainable living in Totnes <http://transitionculture.org/about/>. He first piloted this approach in the town of Kinsale in Cork, Ireland.

Totnes in Devon is the first example of a UK town claiming it is preparing for a 'carbon constrained, energy lean world'²⁷. It is underpinned by the following beliefs:

- The need for a move away from oil dependency is urgent;
- That a world consuming less oil could, if properly thought out and planned, be a preferable place to the present; and
- That creating a 'roadmap' to a sustainable future is a process that can unleash a community's creativity and collective genius.

Key strategies towards achieving this centre around community change with an emphasis on 'relocalising' food, energy, transport and wider economies (*Ferry, 2007*²⁸). A key mechanism of enforcing 'economic localisation' has been the launch of the 'Totnes Pound' in March 2007 with the aim of strengthening the local economy and preventing the leakage of money from the community. Anticipated benefits include a more resilient local economy which will foster new community relationships; get people to think about how they spend their money and reduce food and trade miles by encouraging local trade and encouraging tourists to use local business.

Governments are increasingly recognising the need to engage with the drive for sustainability on a spatial scale. In the UK, the 2003 Sustainable Communities Plan followed by the designation of growth points, and more recently Prime Minister Gordon Brown's commitment to build 'ecotowns', represent key strategies dealing with the threat of climate change at the 'local level'. In May 2007, Gordon Brown committed the Government to build new free-standing settlements of between 5000 and 20,000 new homes. Ecotowns are described as:

"...a complete new settlement to achieve zero carbon development and more sustainable living using the best new design and architecture" (DCLG, 2007).

²⁷ <http://www.transitiontowns.org/Totnes/>

²⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2007/apr/19/energy.ethicalliving>

They differ from ecovillages in the respect that the initiative tends to be top-down and the emphasis is biased towards the physical design of the settlement using sophisticated building technology aimed at zero carbon living.

The overarching aim is to build new communities that are resilient to climate change. However, Shaw (2007) warns about the tensions between actions aimed at ‘adapting’ to climate change and those aimed at ‘mitigation’. The latter includes a range of actions such as renewable energy, cooling networks to improve efficiency of energy supply, energy efficiency of buildings, promoting the use of public transport, walking, cycling etc. The former includes green space planning measures. On the whole, most advocates of ‘eco-towns’ believe that they represent an opportunity to adopt a more holistic approach to sustainability which combines the three pillars: economic, environmental and social. They also offer a pioneering opportunity to test and pilot different ways of delivering zero-carbon developments. Shaw (2007:6) argues that there are two key elements that need to be addressed in creating eco-towns: adaptability and integration. New developments need to provide space for adaptation that go beyond the predictions of future climate-change scenarios. For example, they should allow for adaptations related to more frequent and intense rainfall, higher temperatures and unknown societal change. Second, an ‘integrated’ approach is required to respond to the four key climate change risk areas of high temperatures, flood risk, water resources and quality, and ground conditions. Of particular significance to this paper is Shaw’s (2007: 8) conclusion that

“to be successful in dealing with the challenges of housing growth and climate change, planning must attract and retain high-calibre people not just with appropriate skills but also with an ability to look beyond the bounds of planning as an individual discipline. They must be able to see planning as an activity at the heart of delivering a sustainable future, and they must be able to inspire others to view it in the same way”

There is concern that current efforts to create sustainable communities in practice (as illustrated by ecotowns) remains biased on the physical planning and housing

aspect²⁹. In particular, there is a real danger that the social dimensions of sustainable community are ignored (i.e. generating a sense of community and place). The recent protests against ecotowns by communities living near proposed ecotown sites in January and February 2008 echo these concerns³⁰. Protestors argue that extensive funding would be required to provide the infrastructure necessary to make these communities viable. Unease about proposed ecotowns has also been expressed by the Sustainable Development Commission, the government watchdog on sustainable development. A recent report recommends that the next phase of delivering the Sustainable Communities Plan needs to focus on integrating the social, environmental and economic components (*SDC, 2007*). These issues highlight the importance of the roles of skills for creating and maintaining sustainable communities. This will be explored in the following section.

5. Skills for Sustainable Communities

There is consensus that the policy context has played an important role in broadening the debate on skills from an exclusive focus on professionals and practitioners working on sustainable communities to fostering the wider engagement of community members (*Peel, 2005*). This section begins with an exploration of policy agenda driving skills for sustainable communities in the UK and Europe and then focuses on the problems with such an approach.

5.1. Wider policy context

A lack of appropriate skills, knowledge, learning and training has been identified as key obstacles to the sustainable communities' agenda in the UK and Europe. Key issues that have been raised include questions concerning the types of skills and competencies that are absent and how these can be acquired. Indeed, a recent report

²⁹ Currently, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) together with the assistance of Professor David Lock, have been commissioned by the DCLG to provide advice to potential bidders and local authorities on how to go about delivering eco towns (TCPA & Lock, 2007). A series of consultations with academics and policymakers is underway to identify key criteria for building eco-towns. Efforts are being made to learn from existing examples of settlements built for sustainable living including BedZed in Sutton, UK and Vauban, Freiburg, Germany. Key conclusions will be offered in early 2008. Other examples include: Hammarby Sjöstad, Stockholm, Sweden; Northstowe, Cambridgeshire, UK; Malmö, Sweden; Kronsberg, Germany; Upton, UK; Great Linford and the Energy Park, Milton Keynes, UK; Letchworth Garden City, UK.

³⁰ <http://www.24dash.com/news/Housing/2008-02-04-Villagers-stage-protest-march-over-proposed-eco-town>

by the Academy of Sustainable Communities (2006) identified that there is a major skills gap in the UK and insufficient people with the appropriate skills in the right places to create sustainable communities. This gap has also been highlighted as a significant issue across Europe during the signing of the Bristol Accord (2005) and at the recent symposium on Sustainable community skills held at Leeds involving European Member states (2006).

Several key policy documents have been influential in bringing the skills gap to the forefront of the UK sustainable communities' agenda. The Urban Task Force (1999) was the first to make a big impact by highlighting the problems of uneven and segmented skill-sets including the institutional divisions between different professions working on regeneration (Turok & Taylor, 2006; Rogers, 1999). It advocated the creation of a network of Regional Centres of Excellence (RCE) to:

“...act as a resource to the public, private and voluntary sector, to raise standards across the board and fill gaps in existing provision” (Rogers, 1999: 165).

However, it was heavily criticised for placing too much emphasis on skills necessary for physical design-led regeneration as opposed to social and economic solutions (Bailey, 2005; Turok & Taylor, 2006). Nevertheless, the Urban Task Force report was the first to make a case for a more integrated and holistic approach to the skills gap.

Shortly after, the Social Exclusion Unit (2000) carried out its review on training for regeneration and social inclusion. It included a number of recommendations which emphasised that formal training was not necessarily the key route to acquiring new skills and that there needed to be more emphasis on informal learning. A key outcome was the creation of the National Centre for Neighbourhood Renewal (later called the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit NRU) with the remit to promote improved skills, a knowledge management system sharing best practice and research and improved leadership (Bailey, 2005; Pemberton, 2006).

In 2002, the NRU published the knowledge and skills strategy called *The Learning Curve* which was significant on two accounts. First, it recognised the importance of

addressing the needs of all stakeholders and sectors involved in regeneration (i.e. residents, civil servants, policy makers, professionals and practitioners). In doing so, it went beyond a focus on the built environment to integrate social and economic dimensions of community regeneration. Second, it went beyond developing skills and building knowledge to include behaviour change. Further, the report identified three approaches to learning: training (formal), doing (action learning) and observing others (social learning). However, a subsequent review of the strategy concluded that there was little clarity of the specific skills required for those involved in regeneration (*MacDonald, 2003*).

In 2004, the ODPM commissioned a review of skills (Egan Review) required to implement the Sustainable Communities Plan (2003). It was a landmark document in the skills debate. Although its initial focus was on the built environment (in response to the housing shortage crisis), it subsequently broadened its remit to explore the skills, training, knowledge and behaviour of over 100 occupations. It also explored the overall *process* of delivering sustainable communities, highlighting the major role of Sustainable Community Strategies. It reiterated many of the recommendations of previous reports, for example, the emphasis on greater collaboration between key stakeholders (employers, professional institutions, educators and government agencies), and the role of employers in continuing professional development. It reasserted the role of RCEs in disseminating good practice (*Turok & Taylor, 2006*). By far its most important finding was through the assertion that although core occupations are important, stronger generic skills, knowledge and training are required to deliver sustainable communities. These include skills such as inclusive visioning, project management, leadership and so forth.

From its analysis of occupations, the report identified three groups of relevant occupations which require specific skills³¹:

Core occupations: people who spend almost all their professional time in activities to do with planning, delivering and maintaining sustainable communities. (E.g. built environment professionals, regional and central

³¹ The full list of the core occupations and generic skills identified as necessary to build sustainable communities is available in the Appendix (Table 3 & 4).

government, developers and investors, staff from voluntary and community associations).

Associated occupations: individuals whose contribution is extremely important to creating sustainable communities but who are not involved full time in the development process (e.g. police officers, educators, health services etc).

Wider public: people who have legitimate interest in sustainable communities but are not necessarily employed in the sector (e.g. public, media, resident and neighbourhood groups, students).

The emphasis on generic skills presented a crucial breakthrough in the sustainable communities' agenda. It raised the legitimacy of what can arguably be called 'informal' skills that are not necessarily taught through a formal teaching arena and often gained through lived experience (i.e. people skills, leadership etc). The Egan review recognised that skills were needed at varying levels and to different degrees. Equally important was the recognition that providing skills to professionals alone would not suffice. Rather, a fundamental change in behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of all the key actors is required as illustrated below:

“We firmly believe that attempting to upskill professionals in isolation will not produce the outcomes we are seeking. Instead success will lie in changing the behaviour, attitudes and knowledge of everyone involved, many of whom may not have realised in the past that they have anything to do with each other, or with sustainable communities” (Egan Review, 2004: 13).

The review and subsequent reports argues that a 'skills dividend' can be secured by providing the relevant occupations with the capacity (i.e. formal skills) and generic skills to allow them to play their role in securing a sustainable community. Underpinning this is the belief that a multi-disciplinary and collaborative approach involving different stakeholders working together is crucial. However, generic skills are essential for facilitating this process (ASC, 2007b). To coordinate the skills agenda, the review recommended the formation of a coordinating centre. The result

was the establishment of the Academy of Sustainable Communities (ASC) in 2005 with the mandate to ensure there are sufficient people with the right skills to create and maintain sustainable communities.

The ASC has strengthened the work of the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCEs) which were set up in response to the lack of urban design skills following the Urban Task Force report³². The RCEs currently play a crucial role in delivering the sustainable communities skills agenda and work closely with the ASC (sometimes as the delivery mechanism). They have also played an important role in raising the profile of the sustainable communities in the UK³³.

In Europe, there have been a range of policy drivers that have driven the sustainable communities' skills agenda. Many are directly linked to the wider goal of creating sustainable communities across Europe, with a specific focus on urban regeneration and 'place-making'. These are summarised in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Drivers of sustainable community skills agenda in Europe

- The Lisbon Agenda (2000) with an economic, social and environmental pillar³⁴ aimed at making the European Union (EU) the most competitive economy in the world and achieving full employment by 2010. This was followed by a range of initiatives aimed at increasing the focus on skills and employment
- Review of European Cohesion Policy in relation to the EU Jobs and Growth Strategy (2005)³⁵
- Community Strategic Guidelines (2006) guiding the National Strategic Referencing Frameworks. These promoted an integrated approach to territorial cohesion and prioritised the goal of making Europe a more attractive place to work
- Growing urban emphasis of European Policy: e.g. URBAN I & II programmes
- Growing emphasis on sharing knowledge and experience on regeneration and sustainable urban development. Culminated in the creation of new networks such as URBACT (Integrated Urban Development Transnational Exchange) and the European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN)
- Bristol Ministerial Informal resulting in the Bristol Accord (2005)
- European Skills Symposium, Leeds (2006)

Source: ASC (2006, 2007c)

Section 4 has already highlighted the influential role of the Bristol Accord in committing EU member states to agreeing a common European approach to sustainable communities and agreement on the eight characteristics. At this point, it is

³² An overview of the key policy drivers of the sustainable communities skills agenda is summarised by Bailey (2005) in Table 5 in the Appendix.

³³ For more detail of their role see ASC (2006: Case study 7).

³⁴ http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/lisbon_strategy_en.htm

³⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm

important to note that it also called for investment in new skills to create and deliver better sustainable communities. It also kick-started a European debate on skills for sustainable communities through the European Skills Symposium: *Skills for the Future* in Leeds 2006. The European Urban Knowledge Network (EUKN) is forum that facilitates the transfer of knowledge and experience between policymakers, practitioners, researchers etc on a range of urban issues. It works closely with the ASC to advance the sustainable communities skills agenda at the European level³⁶.

Both the ASC and EUKN played an important role in organising the Symposium. Research drawing on evidence from 17 countries was used to identify common issues and transferable lessons on the importance of skills to the sustainable communities' agenda. A summary on the symposium compiled by the ASC (2007d, 2007c) presents the following headline messages:

- The European level debate on skills for sustainable communities is fuzzy. The focus remains on the economic competitiveness and innovation of the region.
- Individual Member states recognise the importance of generic skills to their wider goal of urban/territorial development and have taken a range of actions on this front.
- Multidisciplinary working, working across different occupations is an important feature of a sustainable communities approach. Member states need to develop clear strategies and structures to identify and react to need for generic skills.
- Skills development has historically adopted a sectoral approach and there is an opportunity to review existing evidence on skills gaps across sectors to inform understanding and responses to generic skills gaps.

³⁶ The ASC is the National focal point for the EUKN in the UK. <http://www.eukn.org/eukn/>

Further key themes are summarised in Figure 5 below:

Figure 5: Key themes emerging from European³⁷ Skills Symposium

- **Improving place-making skills** is critical to successful achievement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. If towns and cities are to remain globally competitive they need to attract knowledge-economy investment and highly skilled individuals
- Increasing urgency of the environmental sustainability agenda implies a need to **increase momentum for the skills for sustainable communities agenda**. The rapid build up of climate change evidence and arguments is forcing a compression of the time available for decisions to improve place-making.
- There is **already a great deal of knowledge about skills for sustainable communities** and many examples of good practice. However not enough of this knowledge has been translated into learning that is accessible and useful for practitioners.
- This lack of knowledge suggests there is **something wrong with ways practitioners learn from others about what works in place-making in Europe**. There is a deficiency in learning styles and resistance amongst professions and employers to cross-disciplinary work
- Main barriers to delivering skills for sustainable communities include:
 - **Skills vocabulary:** different views on defining and categorising necessary skills
 - **Resistance to current skills for sustainable communities agenda:** the complexity of the debate makes it difficult to translate to other languages and governance cultures. Some believe it is too driven by the UK agenda.
 - **Resources for skills delivery:** there is widespread belief that there is limited resources to invest in skills across Europe
 - **Inclusion and exclusion in the skills debate:** questions about the inclusivity of the skills debate, how the community is defined, whether they are key participants of 'place-making'.
 - **Strong sense of nostalgia for the present or past forms of places which can create resistance to positive change:** professions are presented as having a role in applying positive emotional logic to counter nostalgic responses.

Source: ASC (2007d)

5.2. Problematising the current sustainable communities skills agenda

In spite of the growing attention that the skills agenda for sustainable communities has received, there have been a number of critiques. Most notable has been the issue of terminology related to the concepts of 'skills', 'knowledge', 'learning' and 'training'. There has also been considerable debate on the process of acquiring skills and knowledge (learning and training), particularly whether they have been gained through formal or informal means. The following discussion explores these criticisms in more detail.

³⁷ For more information on the skills agenda in Europe see ERBEDU & CUDEM (2007) and the EU's website on the expert group for the urban environment which has details EU's current work on sustainable communities http://ec.europa.eu/environment/urban/expert_group_urban_env.htm#050517

Beginning with the first major criticism related to the confusion of terminology, it is important to note that ‘skills’ are rarely defined in the strictest sense. Often the term is used to broadly capture ‘a sense of methods acquired through learning or practice’ and is ‘used interchangeably with capabilities, competences and attributes’ (*Bailey, 2005: 342*). Many of the reports highlighted so far, including the Egan Review, broadly distinguish between generic and specific skills. The former refers to skills that are transferable between different professions and disciplines and not confined to a particular profession. These cover a range of skills which could be labelled ‘informal’ in the respect that they do not necessarily originate from the ‘taught’ arena. Rather, they can be acquired through ‘lived experience’. The latter, in contrast, are skills that are particular to a profession and as such, are of a more ‘formal’ nature.

It is important to recognise that these terms are used differently across different disciplines such as management, education and psychology. For example, models of learning within education paradigms and organisational change often draw on the work of Penrose (*1959*), Rosner (*1995*) and Orr (*1992*) to explain that learning is a process of acquiring knowledge that can originate within a formal arena (such as teaching) or through life experience (*Lozano, 2008*). ‘Learning’ is identified as something very different from training. The latter is described as the ‘inculcation of rote habit and acquisitions of skills’ whereas learning is much broader and comprises the ‘increase in intelligence throughout teachings, theories and life experiences’ (Orr, 1992). These debates are accompanied by various models of learning such as linear and circular learning (*Posch & Steiner, 2006*), individual, group and organisational learning (*Senge, 1999*), single, double and triple loop learning (*Argyris & Schon, 1978*), lower and higher level learning (*Dobes, 2003*) and Doppelt’s (*2003*) typology of adaptive, anticipatory and action learning.

It is beyond the remit of this paper to explore these various models in depth. What this summary does serve to illustrate though, is the wealth of approaches focused on how individuals and groups learn, gain knowledge and acquire skills. Yet there appears to be gap in terms of applying these to the context of creating and maintaining sustainable communities. Particularly in terms of exploring how people use their skills and put knowledge into practice. The main challenge is to explore how existing models of acquiring skills can be applied in the sustainable communities’ context and

how these manifest across different spheres of production and consumption in place. At this stage, the paper will rely on the broad notion of skills used in mainstream sustainable communities discourse as described by Bailey (2005) above. As the Egan review explains, these can be specific to particular occupations or be generic to include a wide range of attributes such as inclusive visioning, people skills etc.

A second major criticism is that there tends to be more emphasis on 'skills' rather than the process of learning and acquiring these skills (Bailey, 2005; Peel, 2005). Bailey (2005: 342) argues that the current focus on skills deficiencies within policy discourse has largely been biased towards practitioners' perspectives with little emphasis to how learning takes place, how skills are acquired and transferred and 'which forms of learning are most effective in a complex organizational framework and rapidly changing policy context'. Bailey (2005: 349) concludes that the:

"...debate about skills is biased towards the needs of employers, the assumption being that new and improved skills can be 'bolted on' to practitioners through the establishment of national and regional centres. Very little or nothing is said about how learning takes place, what contribution higher education and other providers can make to increasing provision and the extent to which organisation and cultural changes are needed within the world of practice in order to reinforce the learning process".

This concern is also shared by Peel (2005) who has written about the skills debate in the context of citizen training and capacity building. Peel supports the widespread argument that the community governance and engagement agenda needs to connect with the skills debate. She explains that the broadening of the skills debate to include citizens (i.e. through the focus on generic skills) and build capacity has been accompanied by an interest in 'social entrepreneurship'. This implies that communities need to 'develop the drive, commitment and problem-solving skills in order to make a difference in neighbourhoods that need to be renewed' (2005:444). This is problematic on two fronts. First, it assumes that communities are homogenous and ignores the tensions that exist in communities, which may result in a

differentiation in skills. It is also embedded within a ‘deficit model’ of learning (rather than learner-centred)³⁸.

It assumes that communities do not have the skills or capacity to engage in sustainability issues (*Pemberton, 2006*). This implies the ‘transfer of knowledge and practices, and the replication of behaviours in the mode of the professional’ which is in stark contrast to local bottom-up generated solutions (*Peel, 2005*). It also suggests that capacity is built to fit the view of external agencies’ perceptions of what a community should be able to do. This ignores what motivates and supports adults to learn and what makes learning personally meaningful.

Bailey (2005) explores the debate on skills from the perspective of how higher education can supply the right skills to professionals working to create sustainable communities. Peel (2005) also explores these models in the context of citizen training. Both Bailey & Peel comment on two models of learning: transfer and situated learning. **Transfer learning** assumes that skills can be transferred easily through a direct transmission of facts and knowledge usually through a formal setting (teaching and training) where people are ‘talked at’ in class-room type format. The **situated learning** model in contrast notes that learning takes place through engagement in specific social contexts. Bailey (2005) cites Bennett et al (2000: 16) to explain:

“...much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned, that is, the nature of the situation and circumstances in which knowledge is acquired is likely to influence the subsequent deployment of that knowledge in other situations and settings”.

For this reason an understanding of the particular social, cultural and technical context is crucial (*Rose, 1991*). It is under situated learning, those other concepts such as ‘active learning’ and ‘experiential learning’ have received increasing attention in a

³⁸ Peel (2005) draws on terminology used by London Regeneration Network (1999) working on community skills. The ‘deficit’ model of learning assumes that a learner has gaps, weakness and problems. The ‘learner-centred model’ views the individual a whole and does not perceive training as an ‘add-on’, but is sensitive to the life world of the individuals. It advocates ‘action learning’ which emphasises learning by doing. Such an approach supports Kolb’s (1984) work on linkages between education, work and personal development. He believed that it is the dynamic interplay between education, meaningful work and personal development that allows individuals to achieve their full potential and it is this that is important in supporting active citizenship.

range of formal and informal settings. This has been associated with the rising popularity of ‘learning by doing’, which is important for engaging communities.

Although certain elements of transfer learning may be necessary in some contexts, the importance of situated learning emphasises the necessity of exploring the ‘type of training required by individuals, its content, how it is delivered, and by whom’ (Peel, 2005:454). It also highlights the importance of exploring what motivates and supports adults to learn as well as what makes learning personally meaningful. Underlying this is a call for a greater understanding of how to empower the community by generating a sense of self and one’s intrinsic value as a person. This is in stark contrast to a ‘simplistic and instrumental interpretation of community training’, which is not sensitive enough to the individual. These are components known to play an important role in psychological wellbeing (Kasser, 2002, Kahneman et al, 1999).

More importantly, Peel³⁹ also connects this argument to wider government policy on learning and education. Various key policy documents⁴⁰ have linked learning and the acquisition of knowledge to broader social goals which have been shown to be important components of sustainable communities such as social cohesion, fostering a sense of belonging, identity and developing values and attitudes of good citizenship. Learning is subsequently presented as a key strategy for mitigating over-reliance on the state and fostering independence. Learning fosters ‘capacity-building’ which in turn is important for creating sustainable communities because it promotes stronger social ties, trust and responsibility (Chapman & Kirk, 2001). Doing so, has the potential to increase social capital and social cohesion. She concludes that these issues highlight the importance of being sensitive to the diversity of learners involved in community capacity building.

Although the policy activity around skills has generated consensus that there is a need to move beyond an exclusive focus on professionals and practitioners working in

³⁹ Peel also raises important issues regarding the policy rhetoric of building community capacity:

- Does/should capacity in communities exist to take on responsibility for particular activities and public services
- Does the emphasis on ‘building’ capacity appear patronising
- Complexity of communities indicators that skills of different groups will overlap and generate different skill patterns and potentials

⁴⁰ Green Paper: *the Learning Age: A renaissance for a new Britain* and the Social Exclusion Unit’s report on ‘Learning Lessons’. For more detailed discussion, see Peel (2005).

sustainable communities, to exploring how to encourage the wider engagement of community members (Peel, 2005), a number of tensions remain. Bailey (2005:342) argues that the policy activity around skills for sustainable communities has insufficiently explored:

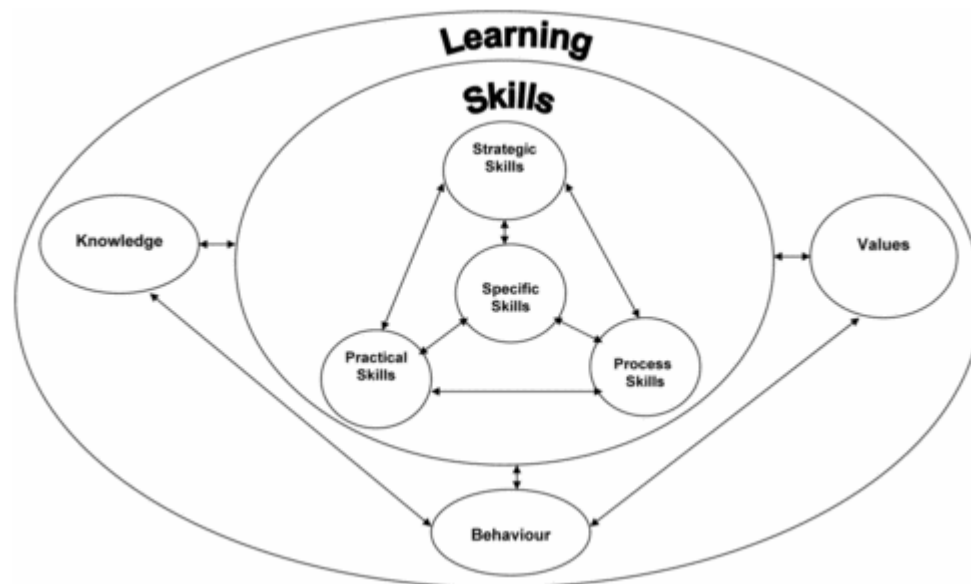
“...how learning takes place, how skills are acquired and transferred between practitioners and which forms of learning are most effective in a complex organisational framework and rapidly changing policy context”.

There is now growing recognition that communities can act as sites of innovation that can generate their own solutions for sustainable development (Seyfang & Smith, 2007). This is reiterated by Turok and Taylor (2006) who agree that there is consensus on the need to enhance the skills and competencies of different groups, but a lack of understanding and detailed analysis of the actual learning needs of individuals. Turok and Taylor’s (2006) review of key skills for community regeneration in Scotland, for example, concluded that the most important mechanism of learning regeneration skills was from observation (rather than formal training). However, they warn that this should not discount a more structured approach to learning. They support the call for more inter-disciplinary training.

Turok and Taylor (2006) provide a useful distinction of the four groups of skills required for regeneration (strategic, process, practical and specific). **Specific skills** describe the individual skills that are specific to their role and function in regeneration. For example, these include the specialised technical skills of a professional, or the unique place-based experience of a resident or expertise of a political representative. **Strategic skills** help to initiate and promote change. They describe the skill set of people who are responsible for the direction and management of a regeneration programme (e.g. leadership, lateral thinking, ‘sound judgement’). They are not necessarily restricted to positions of authority. **Process skills** play an important role in enabling change to happen. They are also called ‘people skills’ or ‘soft skills’ and include communication and negotiation, being adaptable, flexible and understanding. **Practical skills** are key to delivering change and contribute to the day-to-day running of a initiative (e.g. writing funding proposals, developing action plans, managing projects, maintaining good administrative systems). What makes this distinction of skills useful to a sustainable communities’ context is its recognition of

how this connects to knowledge, behaviour and values (See Figure 6 below). The details of the different skills within their case study are illustrated in Figure 2 of the Appendix.

Figure 6: Broad skills and competencies for urban regeneration



Source: Turok & Taylor (2006: 502)

An additional tension highlighted by Turok and Taylor is of particular relevance to this research. They note that the existing literature has failed to produce a 'robust evidence-based framework to locate the full range of skills and to understand their relative importance' (2006: 500). Most research tends to focus on skills gained for particular professions related to sustainable communities that tend to be acquired through formal means rather than through lived experience or 'learning from doing'. With the exception of the Egan Review, few have explored the importance of 'generic' skills which could be labelled 'informal. Moreover, few have investigated the link between learning generic skills and attitude and behavioural change. Indeed, to our knowledge there is little research that explores the importance of skills over a range of production/consumption areas or how this manifests itself at a spatial level.

6. The Relevance of Behaviour Change and Sustainable Consumption to the Sustainable Communities Skills Debate

The sustainable communities skills agenda is embedded within the broader goal of stimulating pro-environmental behaviour change both at the individual and community level. Over the last decade there has been widespread recognition that understanding the choices people make, how they behave and the lifestyles they adopt is central to securing sustainable development (*Jackson & Michaelis, 2003; Marks et al, 2006*). As a result, any discussion of skills in sustainable communities needs to give equal consideration to issues of sustainable consumption and behaviour change. Indeed, consumer behaviour is widely considered an undisputed driver of environmental degradation. Equally important is the task of relating consumption back to production as the two are intrinsically linked (*Tukker et al, 2006*).

Tim Jackson at Surrey University has written extensively about these issues. At a basic level and according to mainstream economics, consumption can be understood as the provision of goods and services that meet people's wants (needs) and desires that subsequently improve individual and collective wellbeing (*Jackson, 2005⁴¹*). However, this view has been criticised by a number of scholars for not exploring what motivations drive preferences and for failing to distinguish between a range of different needs⁴². Moreover, it has been argued that what we are currently consuming does not fully satisfy our needs and is actually fuelling environmental degradation and deteriorating our wellbeing. This is linked to a wide-spread critique of consumer society driven by materialist extrinsic values⁴³ fuelled by commercial interests (*Kasser, 2002; Marks et al, 2006; Jackson, 2005; Csikszentmihalyi, 2006*). Two main points repeatedly emerge from debates on sustainable consumption (Jackson, 2005). First, the fact that the consumption of material goods plays an important symbolic role related to identity, status, social cohesion, group norms and personal and cultural meaning. Indeed, the wellbeing literature has repeatedly shown how relative status

⁴¹ Consumption is an extremely broad area and it is beyond the remit of this paper to explore these.

⁴² It is beyond the remit of this paper to give a full account of these debates, for more detail see Jackson (2005).

⁴³ As opposed to 'intrinsic values' which are said to be more rewarding on a number levels (less anti-social behaviour, less unpleasant emotions, greater levels of satisfaction, pleasant emotions, self-actualisation, vitality). More importantly, people who display higher levels of intrinsic values are said to care more about the environment and have smaller ecological footprints (c.f. the work of psychologist Tim Kasser (who has written extensively on this issue)

(i.e. how we compare ourselves with others) is an important determinant of wellbeing. Consumer goods play an important role in displaying status. Second, people may not always have an active choice in what they consume, but are 'locked in' to unsustainable behaviours because of institutional barriers, economic constraints, inequalities in access and restricted choice. These can also arise from a combination of habits and routines that are influenced by social norms, expectations and dominant cultural values (*Jackson, 2005*). This then raises questions about what can be done to change behaviour, make it more pro-environmental and what skills are necessary to facilitate this process.

The role of the community in pro-environmental change is continually alluded to by Jackson (*2005*) and by others (*nef, 2006*). It is also the underlying principle of the ecovillage movement. Jackson draws on a range of evidence and models of behaviour change to emphasise the social processes underlying behaviour change which can either work in a positive way to benefit the environment, or to its detriment. He emphasises that there is strong evidence that consumer behaviours are socially negotiated and that pro-environmental change needs to be recognised as a social process that cannot be achieved exclusively by focusing on individuals. This reinforces the importance of community governance in creating and maintaining sustainable communities.

Jackson's review of sustainable consumption identifies a number of ways in which people learn new behaviour: trial and error, persuasion and social learning (modelling our behaviour on how we see others). Although these approaches do not use the terminology of skills, they clearly have relevance to securing sustainable communities. In particular, the literature on social learning emphasises how we learn from observing others (*Bandura, 1977*). This shares some similarities with the literature on sustainable community skills which emphasises 'learning by doing'. Literature on persuasion emphasises the importance of understanding the target audience and using emotional and imaginative appeal. 'Bad habits' can be broken and Jackson cites a number of approaches that may facilitate this process. These include participatory problem solving (*Kaplan, 2000*) and community-based social marketing (*Kassirer & McKenzie-Mohr 1998*). Both involve a bottom up approach to identifying the roots of unsustainable behaviour and devising a response to dealing

with barriers to change. Drawing on Lewin (1951) and Spaargaren & van Vliet (2000), these approaches are believed to ‘unfreeze’ existing behaviour and kickstart a process of ‘discursive consciousness’; which can be described as an awareness that existing beliefs and behaviours need to be examined and challenged. Because of the role of social norms in influencing behaviour, this process is more successful if it takes place in a supportive group environment. Many of these arguments share similarities with the public participation literature reviewed earlier. However, it is not only individuals and communities that need to change; the state and businesses also need to explore their current behaviour as illustrated by Marsden (2008).

“without that sense of collective purpose geared in particular ways around changing the behaviour of firms, state policies and resources sectors, the anatomical structures for actions towards sustainable goals will be restricted, partial and short lived” (Marsden, 2008)

In summary, research on sustainable consumption clearly has relevance to the sustainable communities’ skills debate. However, there appears to be little commentary on how learning new skills can promote pro-environmental behaviour (behaviour change) which can support the creation/maintenance of sustainable communities, how these relate to different spheres of production/consumption and how they manifest themselves in space/place. The BRASS research aims to address this gap.

7. Linking Production and Consumption Systems to Delivering SUSTAINABLE Communities: The BRASS Project

This paper has summarised the key conceptual and policy debates on sustainable communities and community governance and linked this to a rising interest in the role of skills in sustainable communities. Gaps have been highlighted in relation to the absence of a robust evidence based framework to locate the full range of skills necessary to build sustainable communities. Few studies have linked the role of skills to the wider agenda of behaviour change in the context of consumption/production spheres.

The aim of the BRASS one year research project is to start addressing this gap by exploring how production/consumption spheres manifest themselves in place at the

level of the community and what skills are necessary to be sustainable across those spheres. Before the details of the project are described, it is necessary to explain why we are focusing on spheres of production/consumption. This section begins with a discussion of previous work on sustainable communities by colleagues at BRASS, which will be published in an edited volume this year. Their work provides a useful conceptual model that acts as a starting point to inform a new BRASS project on 'Motivating, Engaging, Leading and Supporting Skills and Knowledge for Sustainable Communities- Applying Models of Sustainable Localised Economies'.

7.1. The rise of a 'relocalised eco-economy' and importance of production and consumption spheres

Section 2 introduced three different ways of exploring sustainable communities: communities of place and interest; state, firm and civil society relationships tied to resources; and engagement processes tied to combinations of top-down and bottom up initiatives. Marsden & Hines (2008) argue that it is the coming together of different combinations and interrelationships of these different parameters **set in a spatial context**, which are important in progressing towards sustainable communities. They draw upon a number of case studies from across the world where different production and consumption networks have been modified to contribute more effectively towards sustainable communities. The focus has been upon how resources are mobilised across these networks. Their analysis reveals two important conditions required to progress towards sustainable communities: i) ecological and socio-economic re-localisation and ii) the recalibration of production-consumption networks.

The first point refers to the rise of the eco-economy as an important feature of sustainability. This describes the rearrangement of local-external economic relationships centred around the local economy in conjunction with the wider national and global forces. The way in which these centre around different spheres of production/consumption such as energy, food, the home and transport have important implications for mainstreaming sustainable communities as demonstrated by Tukker et al (2006).

The second point concerns the impact of the ‘ecological re-localisation’ described above on different production consumption networks. A key finding from the forthcoming volume on sustainable communities is that:

“...enlarging the intensity of interactions (economic and social) particularly around resource-based production-consumption chains, becomes particularly significant in creating the economic and organisational capability to be more sustainable”.

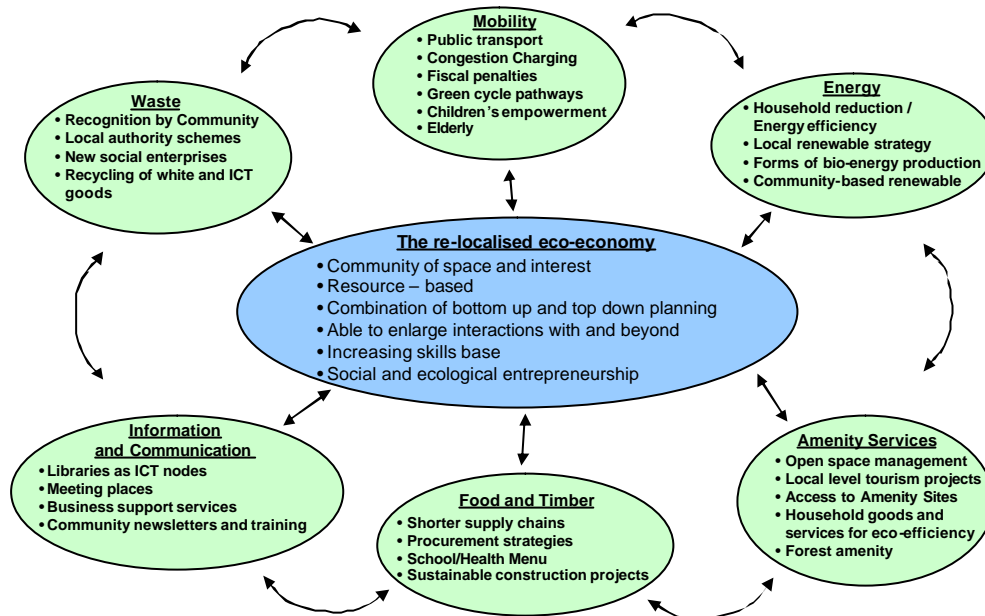
Marsden (2008) subsequently concludes that the state should engage with local communities and explore how to build the capabilities for people to build and enhance these relationships. Ways forward include developing synergies between the governance of markets and production and consumption chains; creating more locally-based environmental goods and services firms; and developing facilitative local and regional institutional arrangements of resource production and procurement (Marsden, 2008). Equally important is the need to develop skills and social capital within communities. This is currently recognised as a significant pillar of sustainable communities in academia and policy. However, as this paper has highlighted, there remains a lack of clarity of what skills are necessary and few studies connect this explicitly to behaviour change, let alone the spheres of production and consumption. The BRASS project seeks to address this gap.

7.2. Developing a conceptual model of sustainable communities linked to spheres of production and consumption

Marsden’s (2008) conceptual model of a ‘re-localised eco-economy’ embedded in spheres of production and consumption presents a useful starting point for our research (See Figure 7). The centre of the model depicts the building blocks of sustainable communities as comprising: effective interactions between communities of space and interest, a combination of bottom-up and top down planning, and the ability to expand the quality and density of interactions within and beyond the locality; and the objective of increasing and readjusting the skill base required for a re-localised eco-economy. The latter includes entrepreneurial, professional and lay skills.

Figure 7: Sustainable production and consumption spheres

Sustainable Production and Consumption Spheres



Building Blocks for a Sustainable Eco-economy

Source: Marsden (2008)

A key aspect of the model of relevance to this project is how these building blocks engage with different production and consumption networks to promote sustainability. The selected case-studies within the volume reveal six spheres of production and consumption: waste, mobility, energy, amenity services, food and timber, and information and communication. This supports a recent life cycle analysis⁴⁴ of products consumed in the EU and paid for by private households and the public sector (Tukker et al, 2006). This study revealed the following areas as having the highest environmental impact⁴⁵ in terms of consumption: food & drink, private transport and housing (Tukker et al, 2006). Together, these account for 70 to 80% of the environmental impact of consumption and 60% of consumption expenditure. This suggests that focusing on promoting sustainability skills in these areas of

⁴⁴ A life cycle analysis involves looking at the whole of product's life cycle from cradle to grave. This allows the identification of problems at different stages of the cycle.

⁴⁵ Environmental Impact was explored over the following eight categories: abiotic depletion, acidification, ecotoxicity, global warming, eutrophication, human toxicity, ozone layer depletion and photochemical oxidation.

production/consumption would have the greatest impact for stimulating pro-environmental behaviour change.

Engaging local communities in the process of modifying interactions along these spheres of production and consumption is vital to secure long term behaviour change. Marsden (2008) notes that:

“...these spheres interact both ways with the re-localised eco-economy in that the latter is dependent upon effectively managing these resources spheres; at the same time the resource spheres themselves rely upon the re-localised eco-economy in order to regenerate themselves and progress more sustainable systems of production and consumption”.

Another important point is the dynamism of the spheres which are in constant state of flux subject to adjustments and modifications by different interactions between the community, firm and state.

A key finding of the research is the way in which various initiatives re-embed production and consumption networks in places and in the interactions between places and people. These result in the creation of new spatial relationships and geographies with profound implications for the creation of sustainable communities. As a result, a key aspect of this new research will be to go beyond a focus on the role of skills in generating sustainable communities across the different production/consumption systems. It will expand the analysis to explore how these interactions manifest themselves in place. In order to narrow the analysis, the research will focus on the four areas of production and consumption identified by Tukker et al (2006) as having the greatest environmental impact: energy, food, the home and transport.

7.3. Project details and methodology

The overarching aim of this new BRASS project is to develop a model to assist communities to identify what they need to do to progress towards sustainability. It will focus on the role of skills, knowledge and training along four spheres of production and consumption: energy, food, the home and transport.

The research is focused on developing an innovative and interactive approach to identifying skills and training needs to build sustainable communities. The aim is to develop a model and framework by which people and relevant organisations within communities can question, or interrogate existing data to find out what is needed for community to make progress in terms of key aspects of sustainable consumption. Using four key areas of sustainable consumption (energy, food, home-based services and transport), and built upon empirical case studies in these fields, the model will be applied to a particular community. The gaps, synergies and skills needs and opportunities between the model and the community will be identified through key interviews and community stakeholder groups. The data gathered will be loaded into the model in ways that will provide information and guidance to such communities on specific areas of intervention and action needed for enhancing training, skills, education and knowledge transfer to upgrade sustainable consumption practices. As well as producing academic papers associated with the question of how to build more sustainable consuming places, the research will provide a model and framework for communities, professionals, stakeholder groups and others- which will identify the priority learning, skills, training objectives and knowledge transfer needs required to lead to more sustainable consumption.

Key research questions the project will seek to address include:

1. How can communities be **engaged and motivated to participate** in developing sustainability strategies, actions and activities at the community level in relation to food, energy, transport and the home?
 - a. What skills, training, learning and knowledge transfer approaches are needed to **support the engagement** and participation of the community in addressing key sustainability issues?
 - b. What skills, training, learning and knowledge transfer are needed to ensure more **effective leadership, innovation, and management of change** necessary to address key sustainability issues.
2. What **demands** are likely to be made on the skills, education and knowledge of people and organisations, to make progress towards

sustainability objectives? How can these demands be identified, managed and effectively addressed?

3. How can communities **identify** their current patterns of skills, training, education and knowledge transfer in relation to specific sustainability issues and objectives? How can communities be best supported to ask the right questions to determine these patterns, their future needs and the right ways to fulfil those needs?
4. Can an **interrogative model assist communities to identify these patterns and likely responses** in order to address sustainability issues/concerns? Can communities be supported to become more sustainable through upskilling, training, education and knowledge transfer through the use of an interrogative model and associated guidance?
5. The project draws upon a range of different empirical methods and compliments new research initiatives with existing BRASS outputs. It is specifically designed to build upon and add value to existing work and data and integrate this with new thinking, ideas and knowledge in the development of the skills and practices required for the pursuit of more sustainable communities. This is being taken forward, primarily, through the use of a case study research strategy.

A key innovation of the project includes the creation of a **virtual community** which provides a snapshot of the key characteristics and sustainability issues/concerns likely to exist in English communities. The model will allow the BRASS research team to highlight a number of issues that communities consider important in addressing sustainability. Key phases in the development of the 'virtual community' will involve a review of relevant literature, case study of analysis of existing and new case studies, and stakeholder interviews.

The knowledge and understanding gained from development of a virtual community will be used to develop an **interrogative model**. This model will be designed for

communities to interrogate existing data and information specific to their own case, in order that they can then determine for themselves:

- Current patterns of sustainability and objectives for future sustainability in relation to the four areas;
- Gaps in skills, education and knowledge, engagement and leadership;
- Needs for upskilling and training; and
- The most effective interventions and routes to obtain and provide training and education.

This stage of the research will also be supported by ongoing key stakeholder interviews to identify the most effective and relevant approaches. Once developed, the model will be **piloted in one selected community** and if necessary, revised accordingly. The results of the research will be evaluated and then used to produce ‘Guidance for Communities’ providing details of the framework, tools and techniques and case studies. This guidance will be supported by a range of academic journal papers, policy briefing and media outputs and a final project report.

7.4. Summary

This paper has given an overview of key debates on sustainable communities and the relevance of the skills agenda. It has also introduced the BRASS project on ‘Motivating, Engaging, Leading and Supporting Skills and Knowledge for Sustainable Communities’. We are currently in the early stages of the project focusing on the analysis of our key case studies and are in the process of selecting our pilot case study community. For more information and regular updates on the progress of the project, please visit our website at:

http://www.brass.cf.ac.uk/projects/Sustainable_Consumption_and_Production-Sustainable_Communities.html

References

Abel, T. & Stephan, M. (2000) "The limits of civic environmentalism", *American Behavioural Scientist*, 44, 614-628

Agyeman, J. (2005) *Sustainable communities and the challenge of environmental justice* (New York University Press: New York)

Agyeman, J. & Angus, B. (2003) "The role of civic environmentalism in the pursuit of sustainable communities", *Journal of environmental Planning & Management*, 46:3, 345-363

Agyeman, J., Bullard, R. & Evans, B. (2002) "Exploring the nexus: bringing together sustainability, environment justice and equity", *Space & Polity*, 6, 77-90

Agyeman, J., Bullard, R. & Evans, B. (2003) *Just sustainabilities: development in an unequal world* (Earthscan: London)

Agyeman, J. & Evans, B. (2003) "Just sustainability: the emerging discourse of environmental justice in Britain", *The Geographical Journal*, 170:2, 155-164

Argyris, C. and Schon, D. (1978). *Organizational Learning: A theory of action perspective*, Addison-Wesley, Reading MA, 1978.

Arnstein, S. (1969) "A ladder of citizen participation", *Journal of American Institute of Planners*, 35:4, 216-224

ASC (2006) *European Skills Symposium: Skills for the future report*

ASC (2007a) *Promoting sustainable communities and social cohesion*

ASC (2007b) *Mind the skills gap: The skills we need for sustainable communities*(ASC)

ASC (2007c) *European Skills Symposium final report* (Policy Research Institute, Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management, Leeds Metropolitan University)

ASC (2007d) *Skills for the future 2006: European skills symposium: Summary 2*

Bailey, N. (2005) “The great skills debate: Defining and delivering the skills required for community regeneration in England”, *Planning Practice and Research*, 20:3, 341-352

Baker, S. (2006) *Sustainable Development* (Routledge: London)

Bandura, A. (1977) *Social Learning Theory* (Prentice hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ)

Bang, J. (2005) *Ecovillages: a practical guide to sustainable communities* (Floris Books: Edinburgh)

Barton, H. (2000) *Sustainable Communities: the potential for eco-neighbourhoods* (Earthscan: London)

Barton, H. & Kleiner, D. (2000) “Innovative Eco-Neighbourhood Projects” in Barton, H. (Eds) *Sustainable Communities: the potential for eco-neighbourhoods* (Earthscan: London), 66-5-85

Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity* (Polity Press: Cambridge)

Bennett, N. & Dunne, E. & Carre, C. (2000) *Skills Development in Higher Education and Employment* (Buckingham, Society for Research in Higher education & Open University Press)

Blake, J. (1999) “Overcoming the ‘value-action gap’ in environmental policy: tensions between national policy and local experience”, *Local Environment*, 4:3, 257-278

Bloomfield et al, 1998

Bloomfield, D., Collins, K., Fry, C. & Munton, R. (1998) *Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes: Their contribution to environmental governance* (UCL: London)

Burgess, J., Harrison, C. & Filius, P. (1998) “Environmental communication and the cultural politics of environmental citizenship”, *Environment and Planning A*, 30, 1445-1460

Burton-Jones, A. (1999) *Knowledge Capitalism: Business, Work and Learning in the New Economy* (Oxford University Press: Oxford)

Cairncross, F. (1997) *The Death of Distance: how the communications revolution will change our lives* (Orion Books: London)

Catton, W. & Dunlap, R. (1978) "Environmental Sociology: A New Paradigm", *American Sociologist*, 13, 41-49

Chapman, M. & Kirk, K. (2001) *Lessons for community capacity building: a summary of research evidence* (A Research Review to Scottish Homes), (Scottish Homes: Edinburgh)

Chifos, C. (2007) "The sustainable communities experiment in the United States: insights from three federal-level initiatives", *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 26, 435-449

Church, C. & Young, S. (2001) "United Kingdom: mainstreaming, mutating or expiring?", in Lafferty, W. (Eds) *Sustainable Communities in Europe* (Earthscan: London), 107-129

Coleman, J. (1988) "Social capital in the creation of human capital", *American Journal of Sociology*, 94, S95-S120

Collins, A. (2004) "Can we learn to live differently? Lessons from Going for Green: a case study of Merthyr Tydfil South Wales", *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 28:2, 202-211

Collins, A. (2008) "Promoting sustainable communities in the UK: a critical analysis for the 'Going for Green' sustainable communities project", in Marsden, T. & Hines, F. (Eds) *Sustainable Communities: new spaces for planning, participation and engagement (Elsevier), chapter 6*

Colomb, C. (2007) "Unpacking new labour's 'urban renaissance' agenda: towards a socially sustainable reurbanization of British Cities", *Planning Practice and Research*, 22:1, 1-24

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2006) "The Costs and Benefits of Consuming", in Jackson, T. (eds) *Sustainable Consumption* (Earth Scan), 357-366

Daniels, P., Leyshon, A., Bradshaw, M. & Beaverstock, J. (2007) *Geographies of the New Economy: Critical Reflections* (Routledge: London)

Day, G. (2006) *Community and Everyday Life: The New Sociology* (Routledge: London)

DCLG (2000) 'Our towns and Cities: The Future-Delivering an Urban Renaissance' (Urban white Paper)

DCLG (2006) *Strong and prosperous communities: the local government white paper* (HMSO: London)

DCLG (2007) *Eco-Towns Prospectus* (Communities and Local Government)

DCLG (2008) *Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide* (DCLG)

Defra (2005) *Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*

DETR (1998) *Sustainable Development: Opportunities for change* (DETR: London)

DETR (1998) *Sustainable local communities for the 21st century* (DETR: London)

Dobbes, V. (2003) “ Why is slow spread of CP natural and possibilities of EMS in speeding up this process limited and which new approaches can be utilised for higher uptake and effectiveness of CP and EMS?”, (Lund University: IIIIEE. Lund)

Doppelt, B. (2003) “Leading change toward sustainability: A change-management guide for business, government and civil society”, (Greenleaf Publishing: Sheffield)

ERBEDU & CUDEM (2007) “The possibilities for success of the sustainable communities approach and its implementation”, (European Parliament, Director General for internal policies of the Union: Policy Department Structural policies and cohesion) www.lmu.ac.uk/lbs/erbedu/publicat/sustainable_communities.htm
European Regional Business and Economic Development Unit (ERBEDU) and Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Management (CUDEM), Leeds Metropolitan University

Etzioni, A. (1995) *the spirit of community: rights, responsibilities and the communitarian agenda* (HarperCollins: London)

Evans, N. (2007) "Lost in Translation?-the Bristol Accord and the sustainable communities agenda", *Paper presented at the RGS-IBG International conference 2007: communities, civil society and social capital for sustainability, 28-31st August, London*

Evans, B. & Percy, S. (1999) "The opportunities and challenges for local environmental policy and action in the UK", in Buckingham-Hatfield & Percy, S. (Eds) *Constructing Local Environmental Agendas* (Routledge: London)

Ferry, J. 2007 "You are now entering an oil-free zone" , *Guardian April 19th, 2007*

Florida, R. (2003) *The rise of the creative class* (Basic Books: New York)

Forester, J. (2000) *The Deliberative Practitioner: encouraging Participatory Planning Processes* (MIT Press: Cambridge)

Gibbs, D. (1998) "Regional development agencies and sustainable development", *Regional Studies* 32:4, 365-368

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: the renewal of social democracy* (Polity Press: Cambridge)

Gilchrist, A. (2000) "Design for living: the challenge of sustainable communities", in Barton, H. (Eds) *Sustainable communities: the potential of econeighbourhoods*, (Earthscan: London), 147-159

Harvey, D. (2000) *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh)

Hempel, L. (1999) "Conceptual and analytical challenges in building sustainable communities" in Mazmanian D. & Kraft, M. (Eds) *Towards sustainable communities: transition and transformations in environmental policy* (MIT Press: Cambridge)

Hillery, G. (1955) "Definitions for community: areas of agreement", *Rural Sociology*, 20:2, 111-123

Innes, J. (1996) "Consensus building as role playing and bricolage: toward a theory of collaborative planning", *Paper presented to the ACSP/AESOP Congress, Toronto, July*

Jackson, T. (2005) *Motivating sustainable consumption: a review of evidence on consumer behaviour and behavioural change* (SDRN, Centre for environmental strategy, University of Surrey)

Jackson, T. & Michaelis, L. (2003) *Policies for sustainable consumption* (SDC: London)

Kahneman, D., Diener, E. & Schwarz, N. (1999) *Wellbeing: the foundations of hedonic psychology*, (Russell Sage Foundation: New York)

Kaplan, S. (2000) "Human nature and environmentally responsible behaviour", *Journal of Social Issues*, 56:3, 491-508

Kasser, T. (2002) *The high price of materialism* (MIT Press: Cambridge)

Kassirer, J. & McKenzie-Mohr, D. (1998) *Tools of Change: proven methods for promoting environmental citizenship* (National Roundtable on the environment and the economy: Ottawa)

Kolb, A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall)

Krueger, R. & Agyeman, J. (2005) "Sustainability schizophrenia or 'actually existing sustainabilities?'" toward a broader understanding of the politics and promise of local sustainability in the US

Lambert, C. (2006) "Community strategies and spatial planning in England: the challenges of integration", *Planning Practice and Research*, 21: 2, 245-255

Lash, S. & Urry, J. (1994) *Economies of Signs and Space* (Sage: London)

Layzer, J. (2002) *Science, citizen involvement, and collaborative environmental policymaking: a research proposal for Tufts University* (Middlebury: Vermont)

Lee, D. & Newby, H. (1983) *The problem of sociology* (Hutchinson: London)

Lehtonen, M. (2004) "The environmental-social interface of sustainable development: capabilities, social capital, institutions", *Ecological Economics*, 49, 199-214

Lewin, K. (1951) *Field theory in social science: selected theoretical papers* in Cartwright, D. (Eds) , (Harper & Row: New York)

Leyshon, A., Lee, R. & Willians, C. (2003) *Alternative Economic Spaces* (Sage: London)

Littlewood S and While A (1997) "A New Agenda for governance? Agenda 21 and Prospects for Holistic local Decision Making" *Local Government Studies*,23: 4, 101-113

London Regeneration Network (1999) *Capacity Building: The way forward* (London Voluntary Service Council: London)

Lozano, R. (2007) "Envisioning sustainability three dimensionally", *BRASS Working Paper 39*, Cardiff University

Lozano, R. (forthcoming, 2008). "Orchestrating Corporate Sustainability: Strategies to help overcome institutionalisation challenges" (unpublished thesis). Cardiff Business School & BRASS. Cardiff University, UK

MacDonald, K. (2003) *Sustaining Networks: How regeneration partnerships learn and develop* (Joseph Rowntree Foundation: York)

Marks, N., Thompson, S., Eckersley, R., Jackson, T. & Kasser, T. (2006) *Sustainable Development and Wellbeing: relationships, challenges and policy implications*

- Martin, R. (2007) "Making sense of the New Economy? Realities, myths and geographies", in Daniels et al (Eds) *Geographies of the New Economy: Critical Reflections* (Routledge: London), 15-48
- Marsden, T. & Hines, F. (2008) *Sustainable Communities: new spaces for planning, participation and engagement* (Elsevier)
- Marvin, S. & Guy, S.(1997) "Constructing Myths Rather than Sustainability: The Transition Fallacies of the New Localism", *Local Environment*, 2:3, 311-318
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place, and Gender* (Polity Press: Cambridge)
- Mayo, M. (1994) *Communities and Caring: The moral economy of welfare* (Macmillan: Basingstoke)
- Meadowcroft, J. (2007) "Who is in charge here? Governance for sustainable development in a complex world", *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 9:3, 299-314
- Nef (2007) *The Happy Planet Index: An index of human well-being and environmental impact* (nef: London)
- Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2002) *The Learning Curve: Developing Skills and Knowledge for Neighbourhood Renewal* (ODPM: London)
- Nisbet, R. (1967) *The sociological tradition* (Heinemann: London)

ODPM (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future* (HMSO: London)

ODPM (2005) *Homes for All* (HMSO: London)

ODPM (2005) *People, Places and Prosperity* (HMSO: London)

O’Riordan, T. & Burgess, J. (1999) *Deliberative and Inclusionary Processes: a report of two seminars* (Norwich, CSERGE, School of Environmental Sciences)

Orr, D. (1992) *Ecological Literacy* (State University of New York: New York)

Owens, S. (2000) “Engaging the public: information and deliberation in environmental policy”, *Environment & Planning A*, 32:7, 1141-1148

Peel, D. (2005) “Training citizens for a management role in regeneration”, *Planning Practice and Research*, 20:4, 443-457

Pemberton, S. (2006) “Skills to deliver regeneration: building and releasing capacity in the context of Egan: evidence from Merseyside”, *Planning Practice and Research*, 21:2, 267-279

Penrose, E. (1959). *The theory of the growth of the firm* (Basil Blackwell: Oxford)

Perrons, D. (2007) "The New Economy and earnings inequalities: explaining social, spatial and gender divisions in the UK and London" in Daniels et al (Eds) *Geographies of the New Economy: Critical Reflections* (Routledge: London), 111-131

Posch, A., & Steiner, G. (2006). "Integrating research and teaching on innovation for sustainable development", *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 7:3, 276-292

Purdue, D. (2001) "Neighbourhood governance: leadership, trust and social capital", *Urban studies*, 38:12, 2211-2224

Putnam, R. (1993) *Making Democracy work: civic traditions in modern Italy* (Princeton University Press: Princeton)

Raco, M. (2005) "Sustainable Development, Rolled-out neoliberalism and sustainable communities", *Antipode*, 324-347

Raco, M. (2007a) "Securing sustainable communities: citizenship, safety and sustainability in the new urban planning", *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 14, 305-320

Raco (2007b) *Building Sustainable Communities: Spatial Polic, place imaginations and labour mobility in post-war Britain* (Policy Press: Bristol)

Rogers, Lord (1999) *Towards an Urban Renaissance: the Final Report of the Urban Task Force* (DETR: London)

Rose, R. (1991) *Lesson-drawing in public policy: a guide to learning across time and space* (Chatham House Publishers: Chatham)

Roseland, M. (1998) *Toward Sustainable Communities: resources for citizens and their governments* (New Society Publishers: Gabriola Island)

Rosner, W. (1995) "Mental models for sustainability", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, (3:1-2), 107-21

Rydin, Y. & Pennington, M. (2000) "Public participation and local environmental planning: the collective action problem and the potential of social capita", *Local Environment*, 5:2, 153-169

Quah, D. (1996) "The invisible hand and the weightless economy", *Discussion Paper 12*, (Centre for Economic Performance: London)

SDC (2007) *Building houses or creating communities? A review of government progress on sustainable communities* (SDC: London)

Selman, P. (2000) "A sideways look at local agenda 21", *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 2:1, 39-53

Selman, P. (2001) "Social capital, sustainability and environmental planning", *Planning Theory & Practice*, 2:1, 13-30

Senge, P. (1999) "The fifth discipline" in *The art & practice of the learning organization*, (Random House Business Books: London)

Seyfang, G. & Smith, A. (2007) "Grassroots innovations for sustainable development: towards a new research and policy agenda", *Environmental Politics*, 16:4, 584-603

Shaw, R. (2007) "Eco-towns and the next 60 years of planning", *Tomorrow series paper 9, The Journal of the Town and Country Planning Association*, 76: 9

Sheller, M. & Urry, J. (2006) The new mobilities paradigm,. *Environment and Planning A*, 38:2, 207-226,

Smith, J., Blake, J. & Davies, A. (2000) "Putting sustainability in place: sustainable communities projects in Huntingdonshire", *Journal of Environmental Policy and planning*, 2, 211-223

Social Exclusion Unit (2000) *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal Report by Policy Action Team 16: Learning Lessons* (Cabinet Office: London)

Spaargaren, G. & van Vliet, B. (2000) "Lifestyle, consumption and the environment: the ecological modernisation of domestic consumption", *Society and Natural Resources*, 9, 50-76

Stewart, M. (2000) "Community governance", in Barton, H. (2000) (Eds) *Sustainable Communities: the potential for eco-neighbourhoods* (Earthscan: London) , 176-186

- Taylor, D. (2000a) "The rise of the environmental justice paradigm", *American Behavioural Scientist*, 43:4, 508-580
- Taylor, M. (2000b) "Communities in the lead: power, organisational capacity and social capital", *Urban Studies*, 37: 1019-1035
- TCPA & Lock, D. (2007) *Eco-towns: scoping report helping to deliver a step change in the quality and availability of homes for the people of England* (TCPA: London)
- Thomas, K. & Littlewood, S. (2007) "A skills dividend for sustainable communities? Recent debates about the skills needed to deliver 'successful places' across Europe", *Paper presented at the Association of European Schools of Planning (AESOP)*.
- Tönnies, F. (1955) *Community & Association* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London)
- Tukker, A., Huupes, G., Guinea, J., Heijungs, R., de Koning, A., van Oers, L., Suh, S., Geerken, T., van Holderbeke, M., Jansen, B., &Nielsen, P. (2006) *Environmental Impact of Products (EIPRO): Analysis of the life cycle environmental impacts related to the final consumption of the EU-25* (European Commission)
- Turok, I. & Taylor, P. (2006) "A skills framework for regeneration and planning", *Planning Practice and Research*, 21:4, 497-509
- Urry, J. (2000) *Sociology beyond societies: mobilities for the Twenty-first Century* (Routledge: London)
- Warburton, D. (1998) *Community and Sustainable Development* (Earthscan: London)

World Commission on Environment & Development (1987) *Our Common Future*
(Oxford University Press: Oxford)

Woolcock, M. (1998) “Social capital and economic development: toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework”, *Theory and Society*, 27:2, 151-208

Woolcock, M. (2001) “The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes”, *ISUMA Canadian Journal of Policy Research*, 2:1, 11-17

WWF (2006) *Living Planet Report*

Yaffee, S. & Anderson, J. (1998) *Balancing Public Trust and Private Interest: Public Participation in Habitat Conservation Planning* A research report commissioned by the National Wildlife Federation (Ann Arbor, School of Natural Resources & Environment, University of Michigan)

Young, I. (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ)

APPENDIX

Figure 1: Key requirements of sustainable communities

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flourishing local economy to provide jobs and wealth 2. Strong leadership to respond positively to change 3. Effective engagement and participation by local people, groups and businesses, especially in the planning, design and long term stewardship of their community and an active voluntary and community sector 4. Safe and healthy local environment with well-designed public and green space 5. Sufficient size, scale and density, and the right layout to support basic amenities in the neighbourhood and minimise use of resources (including land) 6. Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centres 7. Buildings (both individually and collectively) that can meet different needs over time and that minimise the use of resources 8. Well-integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support a range of household sizes, ages and incomes 9. Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, especially for leisure 10. Diverse and vibrant and creative local culture encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it 11. 'Sense of place' 12. Right links with the wider regional, national and international community
--

Source: ODPM (2003)

Table 1: Components of sustainable communities advocated in by ODPM (2005)

Component	Sub-components
Active, Inclusive and Safe: fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities	<p>A sense of community identity and belonging</p> <p>Tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs</p> <p>Friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods</p> <p>Opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities, including for children and young people</p> <p>Low levels of crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour with visible, effective and community friendly policing</p> <p>Social inclusion and good life chances for all</p>
Well Run: with effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership	<p>Representative, accountable governance systems which both facilitate strategic, visionary leadership and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations</p> <p>Effective engagement with the community at neighbourhood level, including capacity building to develop the community's skills, knowledge and confidence</p> <p>Strong, informed and effective partnerships that lead by example (e.g. government, business, community)</p> <p>Strong inclusive community and voluntary sector</p> <p>A sense of civic values, responsibility and pride</p>
Environmentally Sensitive: providing places for people to live that are considerate to the environment	<p>Actively seek to minimise climate change, including thorough energy efficiency and the use of renewables</p> <p>Protect the environment by minimising pollution on land, in water and in the air</p> <p>Minimise waste and dispose of it in accordance with good current practice</p> <p>Make efficient use of natural resources, encouraging sustainable production and consumption</p> <p>Protect and improve bio-diversity</p>

	<p>Enable a lifestyle that minimises negative environmental impact and enhances positive impacts</p> <p>Create cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhoods</p>
<p>Well designed and built: featuring quality built and natural environment</p>	<p>A sense of place</p> <p>User-friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people</p> <p>Sufficient range, diversity, affordability and accessibility of housing within a balanced housing market</p> <p>Appropriate size, scale, density, design and layout, including mixed-use development that complement the distinctive local character of the community</p> <p>High quality, mixed use, durable, flexible and adaptable buildings, using sustainable construction materials</p> <p>Building and public spaces which promote health and are designed to reduce crime and make people safe</p> <p>Accessibility of jobs, key services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling</p>
<p>Well connected: with good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services</p>	<p>Transport facilities, including public transport that help people travel within and between communities and reduce dependence on cars</p> <p>Facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling</p> <p>An appropriate level of local parking facilities in line with local plans to manage road traffic demand</p> <p>Widely available and effective telecommunications and internet access</p> <p>Good access to regional, national and international communication networks</p>
<p>Thriving: with a flourishing and diverse local economy</p>	<p>A wide range of jobs and training opportunities</p> <p>Sufficient suitable land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change</p> <p>Dynamic job and business creation with benefits for the local community</p> <p>Strong business community with links into the wider economy</p> <p>Economically viable and attractive town centres</p>
<p>Well served: with public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all</p>	<p>Well-performing local schools, further and higher education institutions and other opportunities for life-long learning</p> <p>High quality local healthcare and social services integrated where possible with other services</p> <p>High quality services for families and children</p> <p>Good range of affordable public, community, voluntary and private services accessible to the whole community</p> <p>Service providers who think and act long term and beyond their immediate geographical and interest boundaries and who involve users and local residents in shaping their policy and practice</p>
<p>Fair for everyone: including in other communities, now and in the future</p>	<p>Recognise individuals' rights and responsibilities</p> <p>Respect the rights and aspirations of others (both neighbouring communities, and across the wider world) also to be sustainable</p> <p>Have due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions</p>

Source: ODPM 2005

Table 2: Egan Review components and sub-components of sustainable communities

Components	Sub-component
A common-sub component running across all components is:	All provision and/or activity to be high quality well designed and maintained, safe, accessible , adaptable, environmentally and cost-effectively provided
Social and cultural: vibrant, harmonious and inclusive communities	A sense of identity and belonging Tolerance, respect and engagement with people from different cultures, background and beliefs Friendly, co-operative and helpful behaviour in neighbourhoods Opportunities for cultural, leisure, community, sport and other activities Low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour with visible, effective and community-friendly policing All people are socially included and have similar life opportunities
Governance: effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership	Strategic, visionary, representative, accountable governance systems and enable inclusive, active and effective participation by individuals and organisations Strong, informed and effective leadership and partnerships that lead by example Strong, inclusive community and voluntary sector A sense of civic values, responsibility and pride Continuous improvement through effective delivery, monitoring and feedback at all levels.
Environmental: providing places for people to live in an environmentally friendly way	Efficient use of resources now and in the future in the built environment and service provision Living in a way that minimise the negative environmental impact and enhances the positive impact Protecting and improving natural resources and biodiversity Having due regard for the needs of future generations in current decisions and actions
Housing and the built environment: a quality built and natural environment	Creating a sense of place Well maintained local user friendly public and green spaces with facilities for everyone including children and older people Sufficient range, diversity and affordability of housing with a balanced housing market A high quality, well deigned built environment of appropriate size, scale, density design and layout that complements the distinctive local character of the community High quality, mixed-use durable flexible and adaptable buildings
Transport and connectivity: good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services	Transport facilities, including public transport to help people travel within and between communities Facilities to encourage safe local walking and cycling Accessible and appropriate local parking facilities Widely available and effective telecommunications and internet access
Economy: a flourishing and diverse local economy	A wide range of jobs and training opportunities Sufficient land and buildings to support economic prosperity and change

	Dynamic job and business creation A strong business community with links into the wider economy
Services: a full range of appropriate accessible public private community and voluntary services	Well-educated people form well-performing local schools, further and higher education and training for lifelong learning High quality, local health care and social services Provision of range of accessible affordable public, community, voluntary and private services Service providers who think and act long term and beyond their own immediate geographical and interest boundaries.

Source: Egan Review (2004)

Table 3: Egan Review classification of core occupations engaged in sustainable communities

Implementers and Decision Makers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local authority elected members Local authority chief executives and local authority staff Members of Local Strategic Partnerships Regional Assembly members and staff Chief Executives and staff of relevant regional organisations (e.g. RDAs, Regional Housing Board) Infrastructure provider and maintenance managers (e.g. transport, ICT, water and sewage) Regeneration leaders Chief Executives and staff of relevant national agencies (Environment Agency, English Partnerships, Highway agency) MPs and civil servants with relevant policy responsibility (e.g. Home Office, Defra, DTI, Health, Education, Transport, Police) 	Environmental Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental officers (conservation, tree, play) Environmental advisors (e.g. English Heritage, Environment Agency, Forestry Commission) Environmental managers (e.g. nature conservation, environmental health officers)
	Social Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers of housing and social services
	Economic Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers (e.g. housing and commercial) Investors in property (e.g. institutional, private and public) Economic development agency managers and officers
	Community Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional community and voluntary workers Community/neighbourhood wardens and Community Support wardens
Built Environment Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planners (e.g. urban, rural, highways, transport, environmental) Urban designers Area masterplanners Architects (e.g. architects, architectural technicians, architectural technologists, landscape architects, police architectural liaison officers) Engineers (e.g. civil, structural, building services, geotechnical, highways, transport, environmental) Surveyors (e.g. geomatic/land, valuation, quantity, general practice, building, building inspectors) Construction industry managers Educators of built environment professionals 	Cross-cutting Occupations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbourhood renewal and regeneration practitioners

Source: Egan Review (2004)

Table 4: Egan review generic skills

Skills	Behaviours		Knowledge of
	Ways of thinking	Ways of acting:	
Inclusive visioning	Creativity	Entrepreneurial	The seven sustainable community components and how they interact
Project management	Strategic thinking	Can-do mentality	Sustainable development including best environmental practice
Leadership	Open to change	Co-operation	Housing and built environment
Breakthrough thinking/brokerage	Awareness of limitations	Able to seek help	Transport and connectivity
Team/partnership working within and between teams, based on shared sense of purpose	Challenging assumptions	Humility	Wider national and local economy
Making it happen given constraints	Flexible	Committed to making it happen	Governance, citizenship and processes associated with local democracy
Process management/change management	Clear	Respect for diversity and equal opportunity	Spatial, planning and master planning
Financial management and appraisal	Decisive	Able to take action	Urban design and urban coding Attracting financial capital
Stakeholder management: including ability to work with local residents/community groups	Respect for and awareness of the contribution of other professionals	Having a shared sense of purpose	
Analysis, decision making, evaluation, learning from mistakes		Development processes	
Conflict resolution			
Customer awareness and how to secure feedback			

Source: Egan Review (2004)

Table 5: Generic skills identified in four key reports discussing skills for sustainable communities

Urban task force (1999) Interdisciplinary skills	PAT 16 (2000) Skills	The Learning Curve (2002) Core skills	The Egan Review (2004) Generic Skills
<p>Production of design briefs Coordination of procurement methods and competitions to deliver high-quality design alternatives Proactive use of planning system Community involvement Integration of physical development programmes with others Land assembly Land remediation Project appraisal, management and finance Provision of services and infrastructure Creating and managing effective arm's length delivery bodies.</p>	<p>Project management Team building, leadership, management Problem solving Finance Risk-taking Listening/learning Conflict management Accessing knowledge about 'what works' Working with communities Building skills with communities</p>	<p>Residents: Strategic skills Performance management Probity and stewardship Listening, negotiation, consensus building Conflict resolution Confidence Analytical, interpersonal and organisational skills Professional/practitioners: Analysing possibilities Strategic leadership Management of people Valuing diversity Working with partners Working with the community Communication Conflict Resolution Project management Finance and budgeting Research, monitoring, evaluation Risk assessment and management Mainstreaming IT skills Civil servants/policy makers: Analytical skills Ideas leadership Communication Networking, coordinating Influencing, negotiation, brokering Consensus building Partnership working</p>	<p>Inclusive visioning Project management Leadership Thinking/brokering Team/partnership working Making it happen Process/change management and appraisal Stakeholder management Analysis, decision making, learning from mistakes, evaluation Communication Conflict resolution Customer awareness</p>

Source: Bailey (2005: 347)

Figure 2: Detailed skills framework for broad skills and competencies for urban regeneration (based on case study of urban regeneration in Scotland)



Source: Turok & Taylor (2006: 504)