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Derrick Purdue

Summary. Social capital consisting of trust relationships between a community and its leaders can contribute to the effectiveness of neighbourhood regeneration partnerships. Engagement with partnerships can also generate vital new resources of social capital for the community. This depends on community leaders, as social entrepreneurs or community representatives. Social entrepreneurs resemble ‘transformational leaders’, combining entrepreneurial skills with a vision for the neighbourhood. Community representatives resemble ‘transactional leaders’ who interact with their followers. Ambivalence over trust between individuals and organisations in both partnerships and community reveals difficulties in accumulating social capital. The degree of social capital accumulated in a neighbourhood affects the path leadership succession takes as partnerships develop.

Introduction

Successive government attempts to regenerate inner-city neighbourhoods and more recently peripheral estates have led to the formation of regeneration partnerships. These partnerships have widened their membership (driven in part by shifts in governmental ideology and in part by practical considerations) to include first the private sector alongside local government in the 1980s and then also the community and voluntary sectors in the 1990s. The National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal has the formation of Local Strategic Partnerships as a central element and identifies them as key drivers of regeneration, charged with the responsibility of developing neighbourhood renewal strategies (SEU, 2001). This continuing process constitutes an opening of the political opportunity structure (Tarrow, 1994; Diani, 1997), allowing community leaders drawn from neighbourhood-based urban social movements to gain access to élite networks.

The concept of social capital is used in this article to focus attention on two types of trust relations that community leaders engage in—communal social capital in their relation with local residents of the neighbourhood and collaborative social capital in the regeneration partnerships. This focus is intended to...
throw some light on the question of whether such community leaders can play an effective leadership role in their neighbourhoods and in the partnerships.

The fieldwork upon which this article is based consisted of nine case studies of community leaders in local regeneration partnerships. The seven English case studies in Banbury, Bristol, Chester, Sefton, Sheffield, Tower Hamlets and Weston-super-Mare consisted of Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) schemes. The SRB has funded over 900 local partnerships to provide integrated social, economic and environmental regeneration in localities in England. Similar partnerships in Scotland (Glasgow) and Wales (Pontypool) were chosen as case studies. Studies of community power and urban leadership suggest that community leaders may be identified by their leadership position or by their reputation (Bonjean and Olsen, 1964). In order to identify community leaders, a combination of the positional and reputational approaches was adopted. First, those who held positions on local partnerships were interviewed, followed by others who had a local reputation for community activism. Eighty-eight interviews with community leaders were held, including 42 women and 22 from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Some of these interviewees later came together in 8 focus groups. Seven of the 9 case-study neighbourhoods were peripheral estates, with 2 that were clearly inner-city neighbourhoods. Leaders in the inner cities came from the voluntary sector and were usually paid workers. On the peripheral estates, most leaders came from tenants’ and residents’ associations, with some from churches or small voluntary projects. In one case study, local councillors controlled most of the community organisations and played a leadership role in the partnership. The community leaders were asked about their role in the neighbourhood and experience of leadership, their experience of partnership working, the local community and its relationship with the partnership, and their own relationship with the local community and other activists.

This article will briefly review the literature on community leadership in regeneration partnerships, then develop the connections between theories of leadership, trust and social capital. From this, two approaches will be developed and applied to the research findings. A social entrepreneur/transformational leadership approach will be linked to the personal charisma and resource mobilisation skills of community leaders, then a social capital/transactional leadership approach applied to themes of community representation and accountability and trust in partnership working. The final section deals with leadership competition and succession and the role played by social capital in this process.

Regeneration Partnerships and Community Leadership

Partnerships have emerged as an important phenomenon within the literature on urban regeneration (Mackintosh, 1992; de Groot, 1992; Bailey et al., 1994; Hutchinson, 1994; Roberts et al., 1995; Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998). Yet the role of individuals as leaders has been underplayed in the literature on partnerships and regeneration. For example, Judd and Parkinson (1990), de/cone leadership capacity primarily in institutional terms. Similarly, the local authority is sometimes portrayed as a ‘community leader’ (LGMB, 1993; Stewart and Taylor, 1993, Clarke and Stewart, 1999).

The research on community participation and empowerment has also underplayed the importance of leadership. Participation in partnerships can have ambivalent effects on community partners (Mayo, 1997). Numerous studies (Thake, 1995; Thake and Staubach, 1993; Power and Tunstall, 1996) have highlighted the importance of community empowerment, stressing the centrality of engaging local communities in regeneration, of offering real stakes in the change process. The same studies, as summarised by Taylor (1995), have pointed out the difficulties associated with the participation of local people in partnerships—difficulties over representation,
accountability, continuity and commitment. Holmes (1992) emphasises the barriers faced by communities in the starting-up stages of regeneration initiatives; Hastings et al. (1996) point to the negative perceptions held about ‘career activists’; Macfarlane (1993) calls participation a ‘minority sport’. Mayo (1997) points to community ‘godfathers’ or ‘godmothers’ and a ‘puppet show’ approach to consultation. Stewart and Taylor (1995, p. 61) identify a range of dangers, which offset the potential for resident empowerment on estates. They begin to address the role of individuals arguing that “it is necessary to unpack what is being asked of representatives”. Parkinson (1996) points to ‘new personalities’ as one catalyst for partnership. Fordham (1995) argues that capacity-building and sustainable community empowerment rely on long-term investment in people. None of these studies, however, focuses explicitly on the role and function of community leaders, even if particular estate-based research (Scottish Office, 1996; Hastings et al., 1996) highlights the combination of power and vulnerability located in community leaders as they engage in multiorganisational partnership working.

The closest approximation to the study of individuals as leaders comes from Skelcher et al. (1996), who distinguish between the individual, institutional and societal factors which support or inhibit network involvement. They illustrate the range of styles adopted by community activists (enthusiasts, activists, pragmatists and opponents) placed on a continuum according their degree of support for partnership working.

Within the ‘partnership literature’ in general, only limited attention has been given to interorganisational settings (Chrislip and Larson, 1994) or to the wider community leadership role of local authorities (Stewart and Taylor, 1993). Despite the rhetoric of collective community involvement, and despite the current emphasis in partnership working on securing representation from community interests, the fact remains that only a few individual leaders will sit at the partnership table. Their contribution will do much to shape both the conduct and outcome of partnership negotiations and the impact of partnerships on neighbourhoods.

**Theories of Leadership, Trust and Social Capital**

Broad theoretical approaches to leadership correspond to the social entrepreneur versus social capital approaches, each of which stresses a different aspect of leadership. Leaders may be viewed primarily in terms of their ability to transform their situation or in terms of the pattern of their transactions with their followers. Theories of transformational leadership (Bryman, 1992; Moscovici, 1993) use Weber’s concept of charisma to focus on the ability of the leader to generate trusting followers. Theories of transactional leadership (Hollander, 1993) give a much stronger role to followers, in that leaders and followers engage in mutually dependent symbolic exchanges (Simmel, 1971; Goffman, 1969; Hannerz, 1980; Hollander, 1993) and are favoured by theorists of new social movements (Melucci, 1996). A third distinct model of leadership from the contingency school (Chemers, 1993) emphasises the demands placed on leaders by their institutional environment and the way in which the tasks required of leaders shape their leadership style. Although the contingency approach is not dealt with in any detail in this article, it is clear that national policy and local government structures and culture have important impacts on how community leaders behave.

The regeneration of a neighbourhood requires a number of relevant actors to come together in partnerships to undertake innovative solutions to persistent problems. Such innovation involves taking risks, yet success in such risky ventures also requires the development of trust between partners and the extension of relationships of trust more widely in the neighbourhood. These two sets of trust relations may also be seen as ‘collaborative’ and ‘communal’ social capital.
Trust

Trust consists of acceptance of risk and vulnerability deriving from the action of others and an expectation that the other will not exploit this vulnerability (Humphrey, 1998, pp. 216–217). Trust can be usefully separated into ‘competence trust’ and ‘goodwill trust’ (Sako, 1998; Humphrey, 1998). Competence trust refers to trusting that the other person or organisation has the capability to control risk by meeting their commitments, whereas goodwill has an emotional acceptance of the moral commitment of the other not to exploit vulnerability. Practitioners in partnership working associate trust with a series of synonyms for goodwill such as ‘openness’, ‘honesty’, ‘respect’ and ‘avoiding large organisations using power unfairly’ (Vangen and Huxham, 1998, p. 4).

Three broad theoretical explanations of trust have been suggested: that trust depends on rational calculation/prediction of the benefits accruing to the self and other in collaboration; trust depends on shared norms; trust depends on shared cognitive understanding/discourse (Lane, 1998; Hardy et al., 1998). Conceptual problems arise here, as it is difficult to separate the cognitive rules of shared language from the value-laden rules of shared norms. Broadly speaking, competence trust depends on a calculation of the competence of the other and resembles confidence (Giddens, 1990; Pahl, 2000) and can clearly be developed from past experience or reputation. Goodwill too can to some extent develop from experience and moral reputation, but it takes the expressive form of accepting vulnerability, based on an assumption of shared (or at least overlapping) values and goals. Goodwill implies reciprocity in that it depends on return of goodwill in open-ended commitment and the development of shared goals.

Social Capital

Trust between social and economic actors, as a necessary condition for innovation, economic development and democracy, is central to the concept of social capital (Lorenz, 1992; Granovetter, 1985; Storper, 1993; Putnam, 1993, 1995). Social capital has been defined in terms of the personal resources individuals derive from membership of a group (Bourdieu, 1986), especially a prestigious group which allows access to others with considerable stocks of economic and or cultural capital. Equally, social capital has been viewed as residing in relationships between individuals in families or communities. Social capital in a community or neighbourhood has been defined as networks of mutual obligations for outstanding favours, flows of information and enforceable shared norms (Coleman, 1988).

Community activism tends to resemble an ‘urban social movement’ (Castells, 1983), relying on a network structure and lacking the clearly defined institutions of power and legitimacy of a political party. Like the social movements studied by Diani (1997), community leaders are engaged in accumulating ‘internal’ social capital embodied in their accountability to their grassroots following and ‘external’ social capital in their access to wider elite networks, through partnerships. The distinction between social capital as internal or external (Diani, 1997) is similar to that between social capital as community integration or wider linkage (Woolcock, 1998). Linkage includes the ability of individual community members engaged in bottom-up development to make links with big players such as local authorities, banks, private companies and funding bodies. This kind of action by individuals in making new links outside their community is more in line with the literature on innovation, risk-taking and social entrepreneurs (Thake, 1995; Leadbeater, 1997; Dees, 1998) than that of social capital and community development. In analysing the role of community leaders in regeneration partnerships, it is appropriate to think of their pursuit of ‘communal’ social capital in their connection with their supporters in the neighbourhood and ‘collaborative’ social capital within the partnerships.

For Coleman (1988), open social networks lead to an inability to enforce
norms or get individuals to meet their communal obligations. Thus, closed social networks are essential to develop such social capital in a neighbourhood. The research evidence, grounded in the nine local studies, demonstrates that community networks in urban neighbourhoods are typically fragmented rather than closed. A number of social networks may occur in a given neighbourhood, but are often only poorly connected to each other. Community leaders are typically only central to particular social clusters within a neighbourhood. Innovative leaders have to act as ‘brokers’ (Hannerz, 1980), making connections between these competing networks, to establish an effective civil society within the neighbourhood.

**Leadership**

The recent arrival of ‘social entrepreneurs’ in the community leadership debate is often presented as an immaculate conception, despite their antecedents in previous leadership theories. The concept of social entrepreneurs draws on a long theoretical tradition that emphasises the catalytic effects of ‘great men’, charismatic or transformational leaders. This approach took sociological shape with Max Weber’s concept of charisma, the psychological force of an individual that can become a major form of social authority (Weber, 1978). Charismatic leaders are visionaries with a strong sense of mission and the ability to create a deep emotional resonance with their followers. The theory of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978) revived the notion of the visionary leader, but restricted it to leaders with an approved moral dimension. Transformational leadership has been widely applied to the business world (Bryman, 1992; Chemers, 1993). Like the transformational leader, the social entrepreneur has hardheaded pragmatic organisational skills, but must also have a moral vision and the ability to inspire others to follow (Thake, 1995; Leadbeater, 1997; Dees, 1998). The concept of the social entrepreneur is a direct descendent of Weber and Burns.

The social entrepreneur is a key change agent. The entrepreneurial side of the social entrepreneur includes: an ability to cope with risk and uncertainty; creativity in solving problems through divergent thinking; highly competitive, yet collaborative, efficiency in use of available resources. Unlike business entrepreneurs, the market cannot be the arbiter of success, hence the inclusion of a social mission and accountability to a constituency in definitions of social entrepreneurs (Dees, 1998). While a sense of mission is typical of charisma, restricting it to the goals of the voluntary sector is less convincing. More significantly, accountability runs against the nature of charisma, which is self-justifying. Accountability fits more easily with transactional leadership and a social capital approach. Yet transformational social entrepreneurs must secure the trust of others to be effective. They win confidence through their reputation for competence in acquisition and management of resources, and goodwill by their personal attributes of vision, commitment and energy.

In the transactional model, leadership is a relationship between leader and followers (Simmel, 1986; Hollander, 1993) embodied in transactions. The leader does not create the constituency, but responds to it. Leadership involves a constant bargaining between leaders and followers, in which each side attempts to maximise the benefits and reduce the costs of involvement (Melucci, 1996). Transactional leaders attract trust in their competence because of their reliability as accountable representatives. Unlike transformational theory, which focus on the personal ability of leaders to inspire goodwill from others, transactional theory explains innovation by leaders by their possession of ‘idiosyncrasy credit’ (Hollander, 1993) or earned goodwill trust. These credits are earned by competence, conformity to group norms, length of participation or a prior good reputation. The accumulation of idiosyncrasy credits allows leaders to innovate without losing their followers.

Transformational and transactional theories of leadership are complementary in that
Table 1. Leadership, social capital and trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Competence trust</th>
<th>Goodwill trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>Reputation for skill in resource management</td>
<td>Charisma (vision, energy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>Reputation for accountability</td>
<td>‘Idiosyncracy credits’ (earned support for innovation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal social capital</td>
<td>Meeting commitments</td>
<td>Creating new norms (for example, collaboration)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative social capital</td>
<td>Delivery of partnership workload and community support</td>
<td>Recognition as leaders; access to resources (expertise and money)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

each has different strengths in explaining the role of community leaders in neighbourhood governance, as will be developed in the next two sections. For either explanation of leadership, the relationship of leaders to followers can be put in terms of communal social capital. The communal social capital of a group or network is concentrated and embodied in its representatives or leaders (Bourdieu, 1986). Leaders prove their competence by meeting their obligations to the community, however conceived, and gain goodwill towards their innovative projects, which involve creating new norms, including norms governing collaboration with the local authority and local business.

Community leaders engaged in regeneration partnerships are attempting to accumulate collaborative social capital by gaining access to an elite group. Their degree of success can be measured by their ability to gain the trust of their partners. At the first level, this involves recognition that they are competent members of the partnership, who can be relied upon to read the papers and act responsibly. At the higher level of goodwill, the community members would have to be accepted as recognisable leaders of the local communities and given access to the partnership’s stocks of economic capital (funding) and their cultural capital in the form of expertise and insider knowledge.

The relationships between transformational and transactional leadership and competence trust and goodwill trust are summarised in the upper half of Table 1, while the relationships between communal and collaborative social capital and competence trust and goodwill trust are summarised in the lower part of Table 1. The aspects of leadership illustrated in the table are discussed in turn in the following sections.

Social Entrepreneurs as Transformational Community Leaders

From the research, two aspects of community leaders’ behaviour mark them out as social entrepreneurs: first, their vision and sense of vocation; and, secondly, their role as resource managers with limited time and money.

Charisma: Vision and Vocation

Social entrepreneurs are relatively rare in the regeneration world, but not non-existent. All were good learners, quick to spot an opportunity to turn contingencies to their advantage. Their willingness to work with the available conditions included taking advantage of the political opportunity structure as well as personal career development or connections with the community networks. They integrated new ideas into their thinking and tried them out. All had a sense of mission and were horrendously overworked—they
‘eat and sleep’ community. All were good collaborators in that they pursued their sectional goals with a competitive vigour, but also had a wider vision that included a sense of justice that allowed them to co-operate with others by appreciating their collaborators’ own agendas. In contrast with these social entrepreneurs, were some community representatives who lacked vision and had become dependent on partnerships for their identity and status as community leaders. These had little impact on the working of the partnership and often acted as gate-keepers for sectional interests within their neighbourhood.

Those that saw themselves as engaged in community politics, often ethnic community leaders confronting racial exclusion, were more comfortable with the term community leader than those who were not. Others, for whom community was less political, were less keen on self-identifying as leaders. Many of the white women in our sample identified confidence in the face of authority rather than strategy or innovation as their key leadership characteristic.

Resource Management

Community leaders gave many hours a week to partnerships. Some were highly skilled at juggling competing responsibilities and stretching the time available to achieve an enormous amount. Not surprisingly though, many of our sample identified time as the resource that most limited their effectiveness and that pressure of time led to burnout. Some felt unable to participate in partnerships at all because of time constraints. Partnerships were ‘a full time job’ for many of those involved, with burnout as the inevitable result.

Community representatives in one case study spoke of their time being squandered on unnecessary meetings and of working as dogs-bodies delivering newsletters or keeping information points open to the public. Volunteer time was not equally acknowledged as a resource contribution equivalent to the time of paid workers (from the private and statutory sectors), yet each key activist was struggling to fit in the workload. Activists often felt unable to participate in the partnership because of time constraints. For one such enthusiast, working nights, looking after children, training in the evenings and doing advice work in the day left little time to sleep and none for partnership meetings.

Voluntary-sector professionals too were overcommitted. For them, time was money and they had to maximise the outcomes for their own organisations, as well as contributing to wider partnerships. Individual workers ended up working long hours (60–70 hours per week) and missing their families.

Community leaders had to bridge the gap between the communities’ perception of time and money, and that of the partnerships. Local people lived on small personal incomes, spent immediately and expected quick results. Partnerships controlled large budgets, but took years to spend them and often longer to produce results. Community leaders often found themselves playing a mediating role, explaining to the community how long the partnership would take and bearing the burden of fundraising for additional funds, such as running costs for community centres.

Thus an approach based on the social entrepreneurial qualities of key individuals is useful in highlighting some of the personal dimensions of community leadership and counteracting an overly structural view. However, this approach has been criticised from a social interactionist perspective for isolating leaders from followers, community leaders from communities. For an approach which emphasises the social networks that lie between individuals and institutions, we need to turn to transactional leadership theory.

Social Capital and Transactional Leadership

The theory of transactional leadership, like that of social capital, places trust, embodied in social transactions, at the centre of its model and stresses the importance of social networks. Leadership in social networks in-
Involves maintaining a flow of transactions with the constituency. Thus leaders are those who place themselves in key points in the networks that channel information or build the networks up around themselves. One such key point is at the centre of the whole network or a cluster within the network. For example, the secretary of a voluntary association may well be involved in practically all communication between members. A second key point may be a bridge point between two clusters or networks, where the broker sits, invested with power to make and control connections between networks. In a neighbourhood, numerous social networks and clusters could be fairly autonomous, held together, if at all, with extensive brokerage (Hannerz, 1980). Community representatives on partnerships act as brokers connecting informal community networks to more formal institutional networks.

Thus community leaders are engaged in accumulating communal social capital in their transaction with their own community, which becomes a resource community leaders bring to a partnership (Taylor, 2000). They also accumulate collaborative social capital in their transactions with the partnerships, which becomes a resource maintaining their leadership role in the community. Maintaining and accumulating stocks of social capital in both of these relationships simultaneously is difficult. In the first case, leaders need to be able to prove their representativeness and develop adequate methods of maintaining accountability to their community. While in the second case, they must gain the confidence and goodwill of their partners in the private and statutory sectors. Success at gaining support in the partnership can be accompanied by a loss of interest or support in the community.

Connecting to the Grassroots: Representation and Accountability

The neighbourhoods targeted for regeneration partnerships seldom make up a single community with closed social networks conducive to accumulating communal social capital in a straightforward manner. Residents living on the estates that made up any particular SRB area often perceived a status hierarchy between these estates and were often divided by mutual hostility. Leaders were sometimes polarised between older council tenants and younger incoming homeowners. Established community leaders sometimes used kinship and friendship with immediate neighbours to recruit new community representatives producing tight nepotistic leadership cliques. Youth was widely perceived as the source of problems on the estates, problems such as intimidation, vandalism, drug-taking and teenage sex. Yet young people were largely missing from any decision-making structures. The make-up of the community in the inner city was more complex than on peripheral estates, divided along ethnic lines as well as by locality. Community representatives in inner-city partnerships were usually drawn from voluntary-sector projects, which professionally organise and represent this myriad of communities. Black and Asian leaders were much clearer than white leaders as to their prime support-base. One Asian leader explained the difficulties in building support across religious divisions, and the mechanism employed to develop such support. White community leaders on the peripheral estates by contrast often had little clear idea of the nature of the community they actually represented, or their methods of keeping in contact with this base. Realistically, they represented a single organisation such as a residents’ association, a voluntary project or a local political party ward branch. The reporting back and information distribution mechanisms were weak in all our case studies. Even where there were structures in place, they were undermined by lack of active membership of community groups.

The population of any neighbourhood was fragmented into numerous social groups, the leaders were distributed unevenly between these groups and lacked contact with their potential grassroots supporters. All these factors prevented leaders from being able effectively to accumulate communal social capital
and concentrate this social capital in their own persons. The difficulties that community leaders face in maintaining adequate relations with their grassroots supporters need to be taken into account when evaluating any success they may have had in accumulating collaborative social capital through membership of partnerships.

Access to Governing Elites: Trust and Partnership

The existence of partnerships does not automatically guarantee the accumulation of collaborative social capital by community leaders. Local authorities were usually the authors of the bids for partnership funding and remained the leading partners and financial controllers of the SRB schemes. Thus major power inequalities persisted between local authority and community representatives. This illustrates that collaboration can be based less on trust than on power and dependence (Hardy et al., 1998). The more powerful partner can therefore demand goodwill trust without reciprocating.

In one case, an apparently popular partnership was viewed as a ‘one way street’, built on power not trust. The community was obliged to trust the council, but the council did not trust the community. The community representatives felt that they could not trust the council to deliver the services they had promised. Nor could the council be trusted to act out of goodwill. The community leaders felt undervalued; their time was used as if they had nothing else to do. They were not able to make any significant decisions, but were merely informed of the decisions made by others. They felt manipulated into the partnership to serve the interests of the council, rather than being properly consulted. In other cases, community partners felt they had responsibility, but no power, or were ‘just making up the numbers’ on the board. In yet others, the partnership seemed to be ‘obsessed with hierarchical structures’ and wanted to recreate these structures in the partnership, or partnership working was described as ‘frustrating’, ‘a struggle’ and as ‘a constant battle’. Community organisations felt undermined with officers often closing ranks and discouraging learning.

Yet, some community leaders were clearly able to capitalise on the opportunities that membership of a partnership provided—to access economic and cultural capital otherwise unavailable in the neighbourhood. In some cases, the contacts and experience of SRB partnership led to attracting further funding for neighbourhood projects as well as gathering personal leadership skills that might make them employable in the world of community development and community enterprise. Community representatives chaired the partnerships in two case-study areas. Goodwill in a partnership can therefore become a source of power for the community partners, but can also lead to their dependence on the SRB for their identity and status as community leaders, and hence a certain unwillingness to vacate their positions in favour of anyone new.

In the inner cities, the voluntary-sector professionals who sat on the partnership or advisory boards treated the SRB quite pragmatically as a source of economic capital. Existing projects had to fit into the rules of the funding regime and try to maintain their services. Their personal involvement came in part from their need to keep an eye on others in the sector and make sure that local and central government did not squeeze out what they considered to be legitimate voluntary-sector interests. These organisations were fighting an on-going funding war in order to maintain their resource-base. Each had a strategic stake in networking that had to be balanced against their need to be elsewhere running their own organisations. Thus the social capital available through partnership working can sometimes be more competitive than collaborative in nature, as its purpose is to maintain organisational positions in the neighbourhood.

Exclusion from a partnership in one neighbourhood led to a lack of goodwill trust from the community leaders. The community forum became the medium for local residents to find out about redevelopment plans and to
express their hostility towards the local authority and the partnership. The partnership was perceived to be entangled with the local authority, which used its power to promote economic growth at the expense of environmental quality. Yet community leaders are not powerless. One black community leader, who is an eager champion of partnership working, felt she had to fight her way into the partnership and once in fight hard to develop the profile of the black voluntary sector. Trust can sometimes only emerge from periods of conflict. Community representatives in another case study were able to get the local authority to complete the purchase of a building for a community centre when they threatened to leave the partnership and deal independently with the property owner.

Thus local authorities were often perceived as having a secretive organisational culture with little collaborative social capital of their own. First, local authorities often had a poor reputation for competence in delivering promised outputs, due to internal divisions. Secondly, local authorities were considered not to reciprocate the goodwill extended to them by community partners. Community leaders occupy a position akin to ‘strangers’ (Simmel, 1971)—members of a group yet with their difference remaining difficult to overcome. Their success remains ambivalent in winning goodwill trust in the partnerships and hence in accumulating collaborative social capital in terms of acceptance within elite networks and material gain through control of funding.

Social Capital and Leadership Succession

Another major theme emerging from our fieldwork was that of leadership succession over time. Succession may seem at first glance to be simply the product of competitive entrepreneurialism, yet the resources of social capital available at particular times in the life of a partnership can influence how the succession emerges and is resolved.

Differences in the level of social capital between cities and regions (Putnam, 1993; Leonardi, 1999), or even between countries (Fukuyama, 1995; Woolcock, 1998), have often been used to explain, not always convincingly, the variability of their social or economic performance. The aim of this section is to relate leadership succession conflicts to the level of social capital available in the neighbourhood in the form of community organisations, leadership and participation in partnership working.

A repeated problem across all the case studies was a more or less open conflict between the first generation of community leaders who had been recruited to legitimate the SRB bid, and a second generation of those who emerged once SRB money starts to be spent on capacity-building. At the same time as the first generation of leaders became absorbed into the partnership structure, and thus acquired a certain amount of collaborative social capital as their personal property, most partnerships employed community workers to undertake capacity-building—that is, accumulation of social capital at a broader community-wide level. Capacity-building includes recruiting, training and networking community leaders and usually this process develops and mobilises new leaders originally not attached to the partnership. This second generation of leaders stood in a problematic relation to the more established leadership, often challenging the first generation’s claim to represent and account to significant sections of the local community.

The peripheral estates in the sample represented a state of low social capital, with little history of funding and few community organisations or visible community leaders. Here, the SRB could present itself as an historic break, offering new opportunities, but a layer of community leadership needed to be created very quickly to support and champion the partnership. While unpaid, this first tier of leaders quickly formed a monopoly of access to the partnership. New leaders who emerged from capacity-building often formed a second tier of leadership with smaller, more immediate concerns, and felt inhibited by or unconnected with those who
officially represented them on the partnership. Some of these new leaders felt open hostility to the established community leaders whom they saw as unrepresentative and obstructive gate-keepers, and even moved towards setting up new forms of representation in order to access the partnerships. Tensions arose because the management of SRB schemes was not in general keen on absorbing rival community groupings once a comfortable pattern of community representation had been established. As community leaders moved onto multiple partnerships, they accumulated so much collaborative social capital in the form of their familiarity with the other partners and cultural capital in their stock of relevant knowledge, that the possibility of new leaders entering the game became increasingly difficult. Thus the accumulation of collaborative social capital tended to produce a cartel of accepted leaders with little succession.

In the inner-cities case studies, community leaders had a higher level of social capital at their command in terms of their access to local élites. High levels of need have meant that funding regimes have been coming in waves for some time (Fraser, 1996). The local community leadership has coalesced into an established and professionalised voluntary sector on the basis of earlier cycles of conflict and funding. These leaders are highly entrepreneurial and accustomed to assessing the new government initiatives in terms of their own role in service provision. Inner-city communities are extremely diverse and community leaders often see themselves as representing distinct constituencies and even acting as gate-keepers preventing direct access from partnership to community. Between the SRB partnership that ties down the budget in advance and the community leaders’ professionalism, there is little scope for direct representation of local residents. The community leaders are so well established that they are able to prevent any new leaders appearing at all. In one of our inner-city case studies, capacity-building had been very contentious and, on the initiative of the community representatives in the partnership, was restricted mainly to research into local views of the neighbourhood.

Thus, on the peripheral estates, extended conflicts ensued over rights of succession as collaborative social capital embodied in links with partnerships is pitted against communal social capital residing in community projects or other forms of community links. Institutional partners tend to have little sense of these changes in community organisations during the lifetime of a partnership, choosing instead to concentrate on maintaining—with least inconvenience to the partnership—the community representative positions in the partnership board. In the inner-city neighbourhoods, a high concentration of social capital in developed organisational and leadership structures led to a suppression of succession conflicts by excluding further generations of community leadership due to the high entry threshold of cultural and social capital. Both communal and collaborative social capital was mobilised by individuals in pursuing their goals or interests, yet wider processes of accumulation of social capital also shaped how succession conflicts were played out in different neighbourhoods.

Conclusion
Community leaders act as key points of contact between governmental regeneration initiatives and local residents in neighbourhoods. The effective development of this role, whether conceived of as social entrepreneur or not, requires the accumulation of two types of social capital—internal communal and external collaborative social capital. Each of these requires gaining mutual trust or goodwill in relation to, first, a wide range of community groups/networks and, secondly, regeneration partners drawn from the private and (crucially) the public sectors.

The community leaders studied struggled to connect to their grassroots supporters in the neighbourhood. The fragmentation of community networks and a low level of trust in government initiatives made it hard to gain the trust of a wide range of local residents.
Community leaders seldom had the resources to engage actively in accountable connections with an extensive range of these local community networks open to them. This meant that it was difficult for them to accumulate communal social capital.

Similar problems faced community leaders in their attempts to create a collaborative relationship of mutual goodwill with their statutory partners. All too often they were expected to trust their powerful partners without reciprocation. The collaborative social capital they acquired was limited by this ambivalence. Thus they faced the problem of co-option—engagement without tangible gain. Their active engagement in partnerships sometimes made it more difficult to communicate with other local residents, depleting potential stocks of communal social capital, especially when connected to leadership succession conflicts.

On peripheral estates, where regeneration and community organisations are less developed, capacity-building associated with SRB partnerships could create opportunities for the proliferation of leaders within a given neighbourhood competing for the social capital embodied in partnership connections. By contrast, the high concentration of communal social capital in established community organisations and leadership structures in inner-city neighbourhoods made access to partnerships, and hence external collaborative social capital, difficult for newcomers to community leadership to access. Either way, social capital was used in competition and conflict as well as in collaboration and community development.

References


