rthinking the nature of community economies: some lessons from post-Soviet Ukraine

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Geographical variations in the nature of community engagement: a total social organization of labour approach

Colin C. Williams

Abstract
Previous studies reveal that whereas community engagement in affluent localities is orientated more towards formal community-based groups, the participatory culture of deprived areas revolves more around informal (one-to-one) community exchanges. Reporting evidence from 861 face-to-face interviews in affluent and deprived urban and rural English communities, and reading participatory cultures through the lens of a 'total social organization of labour' approach, this paper develops a more complex multi-layered understanding of the multifarious forms of community engagement and how participation varies spatially. The outcome is a call for a more geographically nuanced approach that reflects the contrasting participatory cultures in different locality-types.

Introduction
Over the past decade or so in the UK, evidence has emerged that the nature of community engagement differs between affluent and deprived areas. Although such involvement in affluent communities is more orientated towards formal participation in community-based groups, deprived communities have been shown to possess participatory cultures more orientated towards informal (one-to-one) community engagement (Williams, 2002, 2003a, b, 2004, 2005a, b, 2008; Merrill, 2006; Milligan, 2007). The aim of this paper is to further advance this understanding of how...
community engagement varies spatially. To do so, and in order to capture the multifarious forms of community engagement and how they vary spatially, a ‘total social organization of labour (TSOL) approach’ is used as the lens for reporting the findings of 811 face-to-face interviews conducted in deprived and affluent English urban and rural localities regarding community engagement.

To commence, therefore, the previous literature on the spatial variations in the nature of community engagement will be reviewed. This will reveal that grounded in a formal/informal dichotomous classification of forms of community engagement, previous studies have simply differentiate between engagement in community-based groups (‘formal’ community engagement) and the provision of one-to-one help (‘informal’ community engagement). To move towards a more complex multi-layered understanding of community engagement and how participatory cultures vary spatially, a finer-grained typology will be here proposed grounded in a TSOL approach. The second section then introduces an English Localities Survey involving 861 face-to-face interviews in deprived and affluent urban and rural English localities, whereas the third section will present a finer-grained more multi-layered understanding of community engagement and how involvement varies spatially, whereas the final section will discuss the implications for theory, policy and practice of this more geographically nuanced approach and call for further studies to evaluate whether similar findings are applicable in other countries not only in the western world but also in post-socialist societies and the majority (‘third’) world.

**Geographical variations in community engagement**

Community engagement here refers to not-for-profit motivated help provided for and by friends, neighbours or other members of one’s community either on an individual basis or through more organized collective groups and associations. The only difference between this and the usual definition of community engagement (e.g. Field and Hedges, 1984; Lynn and Davis Smith, 1992; Davis Smith, 1998), as will become apparent below, is that community engagement here covers all types of ‘not-for-profit motivated’ help rather than solely ‘unpaid’ help.

Diverse activities, therefore, are covered by this definition. To portray these multifarious activities, the conventional way was to depict a spectrum (or hierarchy) of types of community engagement (e.g. Field and Hedges, 1984; Lynn and Davis Smith, 1992; Davis Smith, 1998; Home Office, 1999; Kershaw et al., 2000; Krishnamurthy, Prime, and Zimmeck, 2001; Coulthard, Walker, and Morgan, 2002; Prime, Zimmeck, and Zurawin, 2002; Choi, Burr,
and Caro, 2007). At one end lies engagement in formal or ‘third sector’ community-based organizations, defined as formal organizations having an institutionalized character, constitutionally independent of the state and self-governing, non-profit distributing and involving some degree of voluntarism (Salamon et al., 1999). At the other end lie ‘fourth sector’ activities or informal aid provided on a one-to-one basis to members of households other than one’s own such as friends, neighbours and acquaintances.

Most surveys both in the UK and beyond that investigate community engagement, however, view formal and informal community involvement not as a continuum but more as separate realms. This includes the British Crime Survey, Home Office Citizenship Survey, General Household Survey and National Adult Learning Survey (e.g. Krishnamurthy, Prime, and Zimmeck, 2001; La Valle and Blake, 2001; Coulthard, Walker, and Morgan, 2002; Prime, Zimmeck, and Zurawin, 2002; Murphy, Wedlock, and King, 2005; Pennant, 2005; Kitchen et al., 2006; DCLG, 2008). Adopting this dichotomous classification of the types of community involvement, these surveys have revealed firstly that both formal and informal community engagement is higher in affluent than deprived areas and, secondly, that community engagement in affluent communities revolves more around ‘formal’ community involvement, whereas in deprived communities it is more orientated towards ‘informal’ one-to-one aid (Williams, 2002, 2003a, b, 2004, 2005a, b, 2008). The resultant argument has been that the current policy approach which nurtures involvement in community-based groups and neglects one-to-one reciprocity (DETR, 1998; DSS, 1998; Social Exclusion Unit, 1998, 2000; Home Office 1999, 2003; Countryside Agency, 2001; HM Treasury, 2002; HM Treasury 2007; HM Treasury and Home Office, 2002) means that the participatory culture of affluent communities is being not only privileged but also imposed onto deprived communities (Williams, 2005a, b, 2008).

In this paper, however, the intention is to move beyond this dualistic depiction of two separate spheres by uncovering a more complex multi-layered understanding of types of community engagement so as to unravel how participatory cultures vary spatially. Rather than depict a dichotomy of formal and informal community engagement as unified discrete realms, a more nuanced understanding of the multifarious types of community involvement is here developed. Building upon the work of Glucksmann (1995, 2000) on the TSOL that seeks to depict how the labour in any society is divided up between and allocated to different structures, institutions and activities, and Taylor’s (2004) application of this to community engagement, Figure 1 presents a typology of types of economic activity. This portrays a continuum of forms of economic activity along a formal-to-informal spectrum on the x-axis divided by whether it is paid
or unpaid on a vertical \( y \)-axis. The result is a series of eight zones with fuzzy boundaries that when moving from left to right, shift from more formal to more informal economic activities. The hatched boundaries dividing each zone signify that these are not discrete activities but that they blur into one another.

The shaded zones in this conceptual framework represent the different zones of community engagement, and provide a finer-grained understanding of the array of types of community engagement in societies. Formal (group-based) community engagement is revealed not to be a unified whole but rather composed of a range of different kinds of community involvement ranging from holding a formal paid job in a voluntary organization (labelled 1 in Figure 1) through engaging in legitimate types of unpaid work for formal community-based groups (labelled 2) to conducting ‘below the radar’ types of unpaid work for community-based groups, such as working as a children’s soccer coach without the requisite police checks (labelled 6). Informal or one-to-one types of community engagement, meanwhile, are again multifarious in character and range from one-to-one unpaid exchanges for kin, friends, neighbours and acquaintances (labelled 7) through to conducting one-to-one not-for-profit favours for friends, neighbours and acquaintances but with monetary payments or gifts being involved (labelled 3). The remaining non-shaded zones involve types of labour that are not community engagement but

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAL</th>
<th>PAID</th>
<th>UNPAID</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. unpaid work in formal community-based group; unpaid internship</td>
<td>e.g. wholly undeclared waged employment; under-declared formal employment (e.g. undeclared overtime); informal self-employment</td>
<td>e.g. unpaid exchanges within the family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Informal employment</td>
<td>e.g. paid favours for friends, neighbours and acquaintances</td>
<td>e.g. self-provisioning of care within household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Paid community exchanges</td>
<td>e.g. paid exchanges for friends, neighbours and acquaintances</td>
<td>8. Unpaid domestic work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paid household/family work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Typology of forms of community engagement in the TSOL. *Source: extension of Taylor (2004, Figure 2).*
are nevertheless alternative forms of delivering goods and services in contemporary society and form the remaining activities in the TSOL in any society. They include formal paid employment in the public and private sectors (labelled 1), paid household work by household members (labelled 4) and unpaid domestic work that involves household members undertaking unpaid work for themselves or for other members of the household (labelled 8).

Given this finer-grained depiction of the types of community engagement using this TSOL conceptual framework, attention now turns to employing it to provide a more nuanced understanding of the spatial variations in the nature of community engagement.

Examining community engagement in English localities

To advance understanding of the nature of community engagement, evidence is here analysed collected between 1998 and 2001 during 861 face-to-face interviews in deprived and affluent urban and rural English communities. Using data from the UK government’s Index of Multiple Deprivation (ODPM, 2000), maximum variation sampling was used to select localities among the highest and lowest ranked in terms of multiple deprivation (Table 1), whereas households were selected for interview in each locality using a spatially stratified sampling technique (Kitchin and Tate, 2001).

Data on community engagement was gathered as part of a survey of household coping practices. Using a relatively structured face-to-face interview schedule, this firstly gathered background information on their age, gender, employment status, work history and gross household income. The interviewer then asked about the type of labour, the household last
used to complete 44 common domestic tasks, and whether they had conducted any of these tasks for other households. This explored which of the eight sources of labour outlined in Figure 1 had been used to undertake these 44 tasks along with their motives for using each form of labour and supplying such labour. In order to ensure that the survey covered all types of community engagement, furthermore, a series of open-ended questions with prompts were used to elicit any other forms of community engagement in which they had been involved over the past 12 months.

This resulted in comparative data being produced on the extent and nature of participation in each form of community engagement depicted in Figure 1 as well as the participatory cultures of different communities. Below, the results are reported. Firstly, however, a brief ‘health warning’ is required. This data set does not provide a representative sample of England and as such, the overall results cannot be taken as representative of England as a whole. However, this is not the point of the current paper. It is to analyse the geographical variations in the nature of community engagement and it is precisely this type of comparative evidence that this data set does provide.

Spatialities of community engagement

This English Localities Survey reinforces the finding of previous national government surveys that unpaid community engagement is higher in affluent than deprived areas and that affluent areas have a more formally orientated participatory culture, whereas deprived areas are more orientated towards informal community engagement (Williams, 2002, 2003a, b, c, 2004, 2005a, b, 2008; Merrill, 2006; Milligan, 2007). Some 72 per cent of the respondents living in affluent areas had engaged in unpaid one-to-one aid in the past year compared with just 64 per cent in deprived areas, and 42 per cent had participated in community-based groups in the affluent areas but just 12 per cent in the deprived areas. This indicates not only the higher level of (both formal and informal) unpaid community engagement in

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1 The 44 tasks examined covered house maintenance (outdoor painting, indoor painting, wallpapering, plastering, mending a broken window and maintenance of appliances), home improvement (putting in double glazing, plumbing, electrical work, house insulation, putting in a bathroom suite, building a garage, building an extension, putting in central heating and carpentry), housework (routine housework, cleaning windows outdoors, spring cleaning, cleaning windows indoors, doing the shopping, washing clothes and sheets, ironing, cooking meals, washing dishes, hairdressing, household administration), making and repairing goods (making clothes, repairing clothes, knitting, making or repairing furniture, making or repairing garden equipment, making curtains), car maintenance (washing car, repairing car and car maintenance), gardening (care of indoor plants, outdoor borders, outdoor vegetables, lawn mowing) and caring activities (daytime babysitting, night-time babysitting, educational activities, pet care).
affluent areas but also the existence of a more informal participatory culture in deprived localities and how formal engagement is a relatively foreign form of participation for the vast majority living in such areas.

The real value of this data set, however, derives from its recognition of an array of forms of community engagement and how participation varies spatially. Table 2 displays that in deprived localities, although participation rates in community-based groups and one-to-one aid on an unpaid basis are lower than in more affluent localities (in both the rural and urban areas), reinforcing previous national government surveys, those living in deprived localities participate to greater extent in informal unpaid activity in community-based groups (e.g. soccer coaching but without the police check, caring for groups of children without registering to do so) and in paid favours for kin, friends, neighbours and acquaintances. It is not the case, therefore, that people living in affluent localities have higher participation rates in all forms of community engagement. They have higher participation rates in unpaid and legitimate forms of community engagement. People living in deprived localities, meanwhile, have higher participation rates in paid (in terms of money or gifts) and ‘below the radar’ forms of community engagement. Until now, this has gone unrecognized because the concentration has been near enough solely on unpaid and legitimate forms of community engagement in the literature.

Deprived communities also more heavily rely on community support. Table 3 examines the relative importance of community support in overall household coping practices by examining the sources of labour last used by households to conduct 44 common domestic service tasks in different localities. This displays that deprived communities are significantly more likely to rely both on formal unpaid group activity, informal unpaid group activity and one-to-one aid, as well as paid favours, to get tasks

### Table 2. Participation rates in different types of economic activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Per cent respondents in last 12 months participation</th>
<th>Deprived urban</th>
<th>Afluent urban</th>
<th>Deprived rural</th>
<th>Afluent rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paid activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal employment</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal employment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid favours</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid household work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal unpaid group activity</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal unpaid group activity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid one-to-one aid</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid domestic work</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s English Localities Survey.
completed than households in affluent areas. The implication is that even if participation in community engagement is higher in affluent areas, people living in deprived areas rely more on such engagement for the provision of material support in getting completed everyday domestic services than those living in affluent areas.

To further unravel the nature of community engagement and how this varies spatially, each of the five forms of engagement are now evaluated in turn.

One-to-one unpaid community exchanges
One-to-one unpaid community engagement involves one-to-one help provided either on a one-way or reciprocal basis by or for kin, friends, neighbours or acquaintances. Akin to the previous national surveys (Krishnamurthy, Prime, and Zimmeck, 2001; La Valle and Blake, 2001; Coulthard, Walker, and Morgan, 2002; Prime, Zimmeck, and Zurawin, 2002; Williams, 2002, 2003a, b, c, 2004, 2005a, b, 2008; Murphy, Wedlock, and King, 2005; Kitchen et al., 2006; DCLG, 2008), this survey reveals that participation rates in such endeavour are greater in affluent than deprived areas. However, people living in deprived areas are more likely to rely on one-to-one unpaid community exchanges as a source of material support for completing everyday domestic services in deprived than affluent localities (Table 3).

This, however, is not always a chosen coping practice by households. To see this, it is necessary to distinguish between help provided for and by kin compared with help for and by neighbours and friends. Unpaid kinship exchange was widely supported, frequently referred to as ‘done out of the kindness of
our heart’, ‘we like to help out’, ‘there were family reasons’ or ‘we did it out of love’. Providing unpaid support for others beyond kin was not. Such unpaid aid was largely only provided in situations where it was unacceptable, inappropriate or impossible for payment to occur, such as when a task was too small to warrant a payment (e.g. when somebody lends a drill) or when the social relations between the customer and supplier mitigate against payment, such as when the customer may want to do something in return instead of paying, the customer may be unable to afford to pay and thus has no choice but to offer a favour in return or when the supplier does it because s/he wants a favour in return rather than payment. Indeed, it was precisely because such situations more commonly occur in deprived localities due to the inability of households to pay that unpaid non-kin one-to-one exchange was more prevalent in such areas. Unpaid one-to-one community exchange, in consequence, is not largely a chosen practice in deprived communities. Rather, it is conducted due to a lack of choice, not as a matter of choice.

On the one hand, therefore, there is an unwillingness to receive unpaid material help from others, largely because they want to avoid owing others a favour. Interviewees also expressed great anxiety about accumulating such ‘debts’. Instead, people prefer to pay for help received so that they have a ‘clean slate’ and owe nothing. In most cases, this was because they perceived themselves as being potentially unable to repay favours such as due to their ill health, caring responsibilities or perceived lack of ability to offer anything in return.

On the other hand, there was also an unwillingness to offer unpaid help. First, this was often because it was realized that the recipients would not accept ‘charity’, or one-way giving, as Kempson (1996) has previously argued, so one-way support was seldom, if ever, offered for fear of ‘insulting’ the recipient. Secondly, unpaid help was avoided and payment seen as preferable because the widespread perception was that you could never trust people to repay a favour. One respondent summed up this perception in the following manner: ‘most people don’t return favours these days so I don’t do anything for anyone else unless I’m paid for it’. The result is that the norm in deprived areas is to pay friends and/or neighbours so as to avoid any souring of their relationship if a favour is not returned, reflecting how money oils social networks in situations where trust is lacking or absent. In other words, token payments act as a lubricant for community exchanges that would otherwise not occur. To what extent, therefore, has money penetrated the provision of one-to-one aid?

**Paid favours**

Paid favours involve one-to-one help to kin living outside the household, friends, neighbours or acquaintances where either a monetary payment
and/or a gift is exchanged. Until now, few have investigated the degree to which a culture of paying for favours exists and how this varies geographically. Examining the third column of Table 4, it is displayed that well over one-third of one-to-one favours involve monetary payment in deprived areas and around a quarter or less in more affluent localities. As such, a culture of paying for favours is more prevalent in deprived than affluent areas, and in urban than rural areas.

However, this includes kinship as well as non-kinship exchanges and as shown above, there is a greater willingness to provide and receive help on an unpaid basis when kin are involved. The fourth column in Table 4 thus examines the extent the culture of paying for favours when only friends, neighbours and acquaintances are involved. This uncovers the depth of the penetration of payment for favours in contemporary society. In deprived areas, over three-quarters of the instances where material support was provided to friends, neighbours and acquaintances involved payment and even in affluent urban areas, payment prevailed in around half of all such instances, although in affluent rural areas this figure was lower. In consequence, as societies have commodified, the use of payment appears to have become more common whenever favours are exchanged, even if profit, as displayed above, is not always the primary or sole intention of either the customer or supplier when engaging in such exchanges.

### Formal unpaid work in community-based groups

Akin to the previous national surveys, this study reveals that participation rates in unpaid work for community-based groups are greater in affluent than deprived communities across both urban and rural areas. Around one-fifth of respondents in deprived areas engage in such activity compared with one-third in affluent areas. Such activity, however, and as discussed earlier, is not largely used to deliver material aid, as displayed in Table 3 where it is shown that less than 1 per cent of the 44 common domestic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Per cent of tasks conducted using paid and unpaid one-to-one community aid</th>
<th>Per cent of favours that involve payment</th>
<th>Per cent of all non-kinship favours involving payment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deprived rural areas</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deprived urban areas</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent urban areas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affluent rural areas</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Author’s English Localities Survey.*
services are provided through community-based groups. This is the case in all the areas studied.

If such unpaid engagement in formal community-based organizations is not providing material support to households, then what is it doing? In some 93 per cent of cases where interviewees participated in such groups (e.g. in sports clubs, hobby groups, campaign organizations or various types of social club), the primary purpose was said to be to receive social or emotional support. Just 7 per cent of participation in community-based groups was asserted to be for the primary purpose of providing material aid to others. This raises a crucial issue. If the intention of community engagement is to provide more material, rather than social, support to deprived populations, then nurturing this type of community involvement in groups is inappropriate. Not only are they hardly ever used for such a purpose but few engaged in community-based associations do so to deliver material support to others.

‘Below the radar’ unpaid work in community-based groups

In some cases, those participating on an unpaid basis in community-based groups may be doing so on what I here call an informal or ‘below the radar’ basis. Overall, however, instances identified of this type of community engagement were few and far between. One example recounted more than once, however, was in relation to sports volunteering. Several who volunteered running children’s sports teams, notably in football, had not submitted themselves for an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check, as required under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This involved people acting as coaches, managers, drivers or medics, all of whom are required to do so. On the whole, however, instances of informal or ‘below the radar’ unpaid work in community-based groups were seldom identified. In future, however, further research could usefully be undertaken focused on this issue, especially around the paid/unpaid nexus, where there seems to be some confusion surrounding whether one is less responsible, such as when caring for others children, if one is unpaid and that the various current legal responsibilities only apply to those who are paid.

Formal paid employment

Some participating in community activity do so as a formal paid job, rather than as an unpaid or paid informal activity. This survey reveals that although participation in formal employment is much higher in affluent than deprived localities (Table 2), hold a formal job in the voluntary and community sector is more evenly spread. Whereas just over one-third of respondents in the deprived areas held a formal job compared with
three-quarters in affluent areas, a higher proportion of those in jobs are in the not-for-profit sector in deprived than affluent areas (12 per cent compared with 8 per cent). However, this is but a small sample and further research could usefully analyse how the characteristics of formal jobs in the voluntary and community sector vary spatially.

**Conclusions**

Previous studies of the spatial variations in community engagement represented people living in affluent areas as more engaged in community-based groups and people in deprived areas as more involved in one-to-one aid. This paper has transcended this depiction. Identifying a wider array of types of community engagement and drawing upon an English localities survey, this paper has revealed a more complex picture. Although it reinforces that people in affluent localities have higher participation rates in unpaid legitimate forms of community engagement (of both the group-based and one-to-one variety), it reveals for the first time that people living in deprived areas have higher participation rates in those forms of community engagement that are reimbursed (through token payments or gift-giving) and informal ‘below the radar’ activities. Until now, this has gone unrecognized in the vast majority of literature on the voluntary and community sector which concentrates near enough solely on unpaid legitimate forms of community engagement.

It has also revealed that even if participation rates are generally lower in deprived areas, such communities are nevertheless more likely to rely on forms of community engagement for the provision of material support to complete everyday domestic services than those living in affluent areas. In affluent areas, meanwhile, community engagement is much more undertaken as a means of accessing social or emotional support than a source of material support.

This finer-grained understanding of the spatialities of community engagement has implications for theory, policy and practice. So far as theorising community engagement is concerned, this paper has shown the need to transcend the conventional assumption that community engagement is always unpaid and legitimate. Instead, it reveals that a focus upon unpaid legitimate forms of community engagement leads to depictions more in keeping with affluent participatory cultures and that expanding community engagement to include remunerated (either in money, gifts or kind) and ‘below the radar’ activities leads to a more comprehensive understanding of community engagement and one more reflective of the participatory culture of deprived communities. What is now required is for further studies to evaluate whether similar findings are applicable in
other countries of not only the western world but also in post-socialist societies and the majority (‘third’) world.

Turning to the implications for policy, meanwhile, the finding of this paper is that the participatory culture of deprived populations is not only more one-to-one oriented but also more oriented towards remunerated and ‘below the radar’ forms of community engagement. Policy needs to recognize this. Although the current policy approach of nurturing engagement in community-based groups remains applicable to relatively affluent areas (Williams, 2003, 2005, 2008), in relatively deprived neighbourhoods, a different twin-track approach is perhaps required that, on the one hand, seeks to nurture to a greater extent one-to-one aid and on the other hand seeks to formalize remunerated (either in cash, gifts or kind) and ‘below the radar’ forms of community involvement. To achieve this, one option is to develop mutual exchange systems that reflect the existing participatory culture of deprived areas by using a tally/payment system when people conduct favours for each other. Two relevant systems in this regard are local exchange and trading schemes (e.g. Williams et al., 2001) and time banks (e.g. Seyfang and Smith, 2002). Whether these schemes are suited to the participatory cultures of deprived areas, nevertheless, is not clear-cut. Their focus upon developing one-to-one reciprocity suggests that this is the case, although the formal institutional framework used to nurture such reciprocity is not perhaps the most ideal organizational structure. Whether looser organizational forms could be designed to nurture one-to-one reciprocity in such deprived areas thus needs to be further explored.

Finally, these findings have potential implications for practitioners. Until now, for community development workers and for community activists and social movements more generally, the focus when fostering community engagement has been upon harnessing unpaid legitimate participation in community-based groups. However, this paper reveals that greater consideration will now need to be given to developing innovative initiatives that nurture one-to-one reciprocity and seek to formalize remunerated and ‘below the radar’ activities, especially in deprived populations.

In sum, this paper has developed a finer-grained understanding of how the nature of community engagement varies spatially in the context of English affluent and deprived urban and rural localities. The outcome has been a call for a more nuanced understanding of community engagement and a broader geographically nuanced policy approach which reflects the contrasting styles of participation in different locality-types. Now required are further studies of whether this is also applicable in other spatial contexts and also greater exploration of how policy and practice might respond to these multifarious forms of community involvement. What is certain, however, is that the currently dominant approach of
simply fostering engagement in community-based groups is not everywhere and always appropriate and that one size does not fit all locality-types. If this paper encourages such recognition of the spatial variations in the nature of community engagement and more consideration of what a geographically nuanced policy approach might look like, then it will have achieved its objectives.

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