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Community Organizing Models

Assessing unique social action approaches throughout history to determine their ongoing influence and to assess new or adapted models emerging today.

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Models Summarized:
Alinksy
Faith-Based Community Organizing
Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Civil Disobedience
Conciousness-Raising
Asset-Based Community Development
Spiritual Activism
Social Entrepreneurship
Emergent Change
Highlander School
Midwest Academy

Alinsky Model of Community Organizing

Overview of model

The community organizing model developed by Saul Alinsky owes its inspirations to the Communist theories of mass mobilization. Alinsky, on the lines of Marxist philosophy views the current capitalist economic and social systems problematic and the cause for all social issues such as crime, unemployment, inequality, discrimination, declined morality and environmental degradation. Alinsky emphasizes working within the system to change the system. Just like Carl Marx, Saul Alinsky has little discussion of how a society should be structured and its function after the successful revolution overthrows an oppressive dominant system.

How is it unique?

Six key components make this model unique:

1. **Radical revolution.** Social pathologies of a capitalist society are caused by the inherent problems of its economic, political and social structures and the ways they communicate with each other. Therefore the goal is to revolutionize these structures and relationships rather than chip away at the existing system with minor reforms.[1]

2. **Class struggle**. A large-scale social change requires an alliance between the poor ("Have-nots") and the middle income ("Want-mores") against the elite ("Haves"). Community organizers seek to agitate the feelings of Have-nots and Want-mores and maneuver them to act.

3. **Mobilize the middle class**. In Alinsky's view of the class struggle, the poor have no power. The real target is the middle class. The organizers must begin from where we are if we are to build power for change and those people and power are in the middle class majority.[2]

4. **Ends justify means.** Replacing the current system with a better one is a higher goal than morality or purity of means used to achieve that goal. To explain the subjectivity of these concepts, Alinsky says that judgment of morality or ethics of means is dependent upon the political position of those sitting in judgment.

5. **Infiltration**. Good community organizers should not merely be a separatist and should know how to exploit the current system to achieve favored end.

6. **Personalized enemy**. "Pick the target, freeze it, personalize it and polarize it"[3] Community organizers should cultivate and provoke anger towards a personalized enemy of the opposite social class. The target should be well defined. The personalized enemy is used as a conflict point to polarize the issue and social classes.

Theory of Change

This model sees a radical revolution as the ultimate objective of change. It sees organizing as the most important step towards revolution. Unless people think that all avenues of systemic maneuver are

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[1] Seal, Mike (2008) Saul Alinsky, community organizing and rules for radicals', *the encyclopaedia of informal education* [www.infed.org/thinkers/alinsky.htm]

[2] *Alden*, *Diane (Jan. 7, 2003)* Saul Alinsky and DNC Corruption [http://www.tysknews.com/Articles/dnc_corruption.htm]

[3] Alinsky, Saul (1972) Rules for Radicals

exhausted, they would not embrace change. Alinsky sees the involvement and active participation of aligned middle class with the poor in the issues where they had real concerns, as the key, both to radicalism and democracy. He suggests "identifiability" and innovation in strategies, meaning strategies should never go outside the experience of the people but wherever possible, should go outside the experiences of the enemy. Most importantly, he emphasizes the necessity of having a constructive alternative to the dominant system.[4]

Concept/ role of power

Power is key to a societal revolution. Community organizers gain power for the people through aligning interests of the community. In action, Alinsky claims, power is not what you have but what your enemy thinks you have. He encourages organizers to indulge in power games without losing the sight of the ultimate objective of change[5]. The target of a revolution is to redistribute power from the Haves to the Have-nots. Alinsky opposed the concentration of power within big corporations, big government or organized labor.

Noted practitioners using this model

- Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama, Cesar Chavez, Rober Kennedy, Gregory Galluzo, Van Jones (STORM and Apollo Alliance)

Prominent case studies

- Alinsky and his staff organized communities through the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF) established in 1940. IAF today is headquartered in Chicago and has affiliates across 21 states and 3 foreign countries.
- The Developing Communities Project in Chicago helped vitalize Chicago's South Side. Barak Obama was a director of the project from 1985 to 1988.
- TakeActionMN organized an anti-banker-bonus demonstration in Minneapolis in December 2011. http://www.takeactionminnesota.org/

Is it still in use or historical?

Most community organizing models have been influenced by Alinsky's model. Its influence is still very much prevalent in the recent Occupy Wall Street Movement. http://occupywallst.org/

Strengths

- The model has a greater societal vision for change rather than being issue based.
- A mass base that consists of the middle class and the poor

Criticisms

- The model has little discussion of the structure of the society after the revolution.
- The American Dream: The capitalist society effectively creates an illusion of upwards social mobility to paralyze the willingness of the middle class to change and therefore weakens the class-struggle view.

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[4] Alinsky, Saul (1972) Rules for Radicals

[5] Alinsky, Saul (1972) Rules for Radicals

Relevance to today's issues

Conservatives often see Barack Obama as an Alinsky "termite" that has worked successful within the American system and ascended presidency. His domestic policies (including the economy-rescue package and the nationalized healthcare system proposal) are therefore viewed as "revolutionary" plans to lead the United States towards the utopian socialist society visioned by Saul Alinsky. While debatable, this perspective does reflect the relevance of the Alinsky model to the discussion of today's American domestic policies.

Faith-Based Community Organizing (FBCO)
Also known as Congregation-Based Community Organizing (CBCO)

Overview of model

FBCO has its roots in the organizing of Saul Alinsky. In his organizing work in Chicago's working class neighborhoods in the 1930s and 1940s, Alinsky drew on the Jewish community for both human and financial capital. However, following Alinsky's 1972 death, Ernesto Cortés, Jr., a young organizer from San Antonio, began to explore the benefits of going beyond Alinsky's use of religious institutions as sources of people to a model of organizing that integrated faith traditions into the organizing itself. Through his efforts organizing among the lay leadership, mostly female, of Hispanic Catholic parishes in San Antonio, Cortés developed a unique model of organizing. This model– traditionally local in nature – has grown in prominence on the national level since 2008, building political power through new alliances and national organizing tactics.[6]

How is it unique?

Six key components make this model unique:

7. **Institutional base**. By focusing on organizing at the institutional level versus the individual level, faith-based organizers ground their efforts in the mobilization power of well-respected leaders (i.e., pastors and lay leaders) and institutions that already structure the lives of families in a community (i.e., congregations).
8. **Values orientation**. Action is grounded in central social justice themes and values from religious traditions.
9. **Relational organizing**. Relationships, not issues, take priority.
10. **Multiracial approach**. FBCOs are intentional about mobilizing whites, blacks, and Hispanics (as well as smaller numbers of other racial and ethnic groups) across a community to work towards common goals.
11. **Independent power**. FBCOs seek to build power on behalf of communities by building alliances across faith communities.
12. **Professional organizers**. Instead of running campaigns and administering programs themselves, faith-based organizing groups are staffed by a small number of professional organizers who cultivate democratic participation by recruiting and training people to take public action.

Theory of Change

Relationships and faith-based values are the basis for public action. By aligning and conversing across faith communities, issues for action are identified and broad support mobilized to promote social justice.

Concept/role of power

Social justice is sought by communities through building alliances across faith communities (*power with*) and countering the power of public officials (*power to* effect a desired change).

Minnesota-based FBCOs

- The **Joint Religious Legislative Council** - the largest and most inclusive interfaith public interest group in Minnesota - is governed by four sponsoring members: the **Minnesota Catholic Conference**,

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[6] Swarts, Heidi J. 12 Feb. 2010. "Organizing Nationally to Win Locally: Faith-Based Community Organizing's New Frontier." *Shelterforce.* Retrieved from: http://www.shelterforce.org/article/print/1869

the **Minnesota Council of Churches**, the **Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas**, and the **Islamic Center of Minnesota**. http://jrlc.org
- In addition to operating "a family of social service programs helping struggling Minnesota families remain self-reliant," the **Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches** "unites people of faith to serve people in need." http://www.gmcc.org/
- **ISAIAH –** a non-profit coalition of 90 congregations from various faith traditions working in the Minneapolis, Saint Paul and Saint Cloud regions – organizes around racial and economic justice. http://www.isaiah-mn.org

National Case Studies

As selected and highlighted by FBCO scholar Dr. Mark Warren:[7]
- In San Antonio, Communities Organized for Public Service and Metro Alliance founded the innovative job training program Project QUEST, which won an *Innovations in American Government Award* from Harvard University.
- The Industrial Area Foundation's (IAF) East Brooklyn Congregations have built over 2,200 moderately priced homes in one of New York's poorest communities, developing a model for the Nehemiah Homes legislation passed by Congress.
- BUILD, the IAF's affiliate in Baltimore, worked with the local AFL-CIO to get the city council to pass the nation's first "living wage" bill, requiring all recipients of city contracts to pay workers enough to support a family. This started a movement for such local ordinances that has spread across the country.
- The Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO) California Project got the state government to increase the funding for primary care health clinics by $50 million.

Is it still in use or historical?

A study sponsored by Interfaith Funders in 2001 confirmed that FBCO was active across American congregations and communities.[8] According to the survey, ten years ago, 133 local FBCOs operate in 33 states across all regions of the country and claim more than 4,000 institutions as members. Anecdotal evidence suggests these numbers have continued to grow over the past ten years. Brad Fulton of Duke University is currently conducting research for a follow-up 2011 study commissioned by the Interfaith Funders.[9] Most FBCOs are members of one of four national networks: the Industrial Area Foundation (IAF), the Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO), the Gamaliel Foundation, and the Direct Action Research and Training Center (DART).

Strengths

- Faith and religious values can contribute energy, passion, and vision to civic action.
- A mass base, mobilized locally through congregations

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[7] Warren, Mark. R. 2001. "Building Democracy: Faith-based Community Organizing Today." *Shelter Online.* National Housing Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/115/Warren.html

[8] Warren, Mark R. and Richard L. Wood. 2001. *Faith-Based Community Organizing: The State of the Field.* Jericho, NY: Interfaith Funders. Retrieved from: http://comm-org.wisc.edu/papers2001/faith/faith.html

[9] Interfaith Funders. 2011. "New Study Being Launched: Congregation-Based Community Organizing: State of the Field 2010-11." Retrieved from: http://www.interfaithfunders.org/StateoftheField201011.html

Criticisms

- Without broad collaboration, there can be an appearance or reality of FBCOs trying to impose a particular dogma through organizing efforts.
- There is the critique that FBCOs need to reach out to more secular institutions and to faith communities beyond their historic base, including Muslim communities and the faith traditions of growing Asian-American populations in the U.S.
- A local bias, inadequate resources, and decentralized, highly democratic authority structure pose a challenge for FBCOs attempting to organize at a national level.

Relevance to today's issues?

Harvard social scientist Theda Skocpol has written that the decline of federally-organized veteran, fraternal, and civic organizations with mass memberships has left a void in the mobilization of action effectively targeted at all three levels of government - local, state, and national.[10] As FBCOs develop the capacity to act not only locally, but also nationally, this is an organizing void they can fill.

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[10] Skocpol, Theda. 19 Dec. 2001. "Associations Without Members." Retrieved from: http://prospect.org/article/associations-without-members

Pedagogy of the Oppressed

Overview of the Model

The silenced are not just incidental to the curiosity of the researcher but are the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world. In this context research becomes a means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim the world." - Paulo Freire

Paulo Freire's model embeds community organizing in an education model, claiming that the purpose of education is to build an ethic of democracy through literacy and the development of critical consciousness. Freire has drawn upon, and woven together, a number of strands of thinking about educational practice and liberation. His social analysis is rooted in the branch of Marxist theory of 'diabolical materialism', and therefore sees the class struggle as relationships between two primary groups, 'the oppressors' and 'the oppressed'. Friere's analysis goes deeper to explore more complex relationships between these groups and how both of their class identities or self-images are derived from how the other class views them. Educationists and community organizers all over the world have drawn heavily from Paulo Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed."

How is it unique?

Six key components make this model unique:

13. **Praxis** is the key theme of Freire's philosophy. He defines it as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." He links the work of critical reflection with action for concrete change arguing that just reflection on social matters cannot be authenticated unless it is linked to action. Freire argues that being human is exercising freedom. If a person does not think critically about social and political oppression and act to overcome it, but simply accepts it as it is, this person is participating in a world prescribed to him or her. According to Freire, this is less human.

14. **Conscientization:** Freire emphasizes the importance of learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions so that individuals can take action against the oppressive elements of reality[11]

15. **Dialogue:** Freire emphasizes the importance of informal, conversational education over formal curriculum. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of *respectful* conversation that does not involve one person trying to persuade another of their perspective, but rather people in emergent dialogue with each other.[12]

16. **Banking versus Liberatory Education:** Freire criticizes traditional education as "an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor[13]. In this framework, the teacher lectures, and the students "receive, memorize, and repeat." He defined a new approach of liberatory education, which raises students' consciousnesses, preparing them to engage in larger social struggles for liberation. It attempts to empower learners to critique and challenge oppressive social conditions and to envision and work towards a more just society.[14]

Theory of Change

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[11] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1996, (1970), translator's note

[12] Smith, M. K. (1997, 2002) 'Paulo Freire and informal education', *the encyclopaedia of informal education* [www.infed.org/thinkers/et-freir.htm.]

[13] Freire, Paulo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1996, (1970), translator's note

[14] Authors unaccredited, Key Terms and Concepts Related to Critical Pedagogy and Educational Theory and Practice [http://mingo.info-science.uiowa.edu/~stevens/critped/terms.htm]

The process of critical education drafts 'oppression and its causes' as objects of reflection by the oppressed and from that reflection will be inspired to engage in the struggle for their own and other's liberation.

Concept of Power

Freire's model does not explicitly talk about power, but symbolizes conscientization as having the power to transform reality. This power arises from literacy, self reflection, cultural identity and political organization. Freire reiterates a fear of oppressed themselves becoming oppressors as a result of the revolution because that is the only way they know the use of new-found power.

Prominent case studies

- From 1980-86, Freire supervised a highly successful, two month long adult literacy program in Sao Paulo. This program combined training in reading, writing with self reflection, cultural identity and political agency. Central to Freire's method was that once individual objects had been visually identified within the pictures, the words referring to them would themselves be projected in turn, then broken down syllabically and, finally, the phonemic families of the syllables would be revealed as 'pieces' (Freire, 1973, p. 53) by which participants could construct new terms. [15]
- Populist Education Movement: Educational populism asserts that academic knowledge must be a reflection of cultural and social experiences of common people and not become a brainwashing tool in the hands of oppressor elites. Populist educators work within a range of stakeholders like the government, nationally, and with parents' groups, regionally, to establishing the content of the school curriculum closer to realizing this goal.

Is it still in use or historical?

Many education activists are influenced by Freire's model and claim that the currently prevailing education system qualifies as "banking education," undermining critical thinking. Several emerging models of experimental education draw from this model. For example, the concept of learner centered teaching and the organization Human Rights Education Associates.

Strengths

- The model has a greater societal vision for change rather than being issue based.
- This model recognizes oppression as not only a societal but a psychological state; and therefore emphasizes not only community action, but also self reflection.
- Uses education, with critical dialogue at its core, to derive meaningful community action

Criticisms

- The model has little discussion of the structure of the society after the oppressed rise up against their oppressor.
- Being an education model, it does not discuss scenarios where self interests of even well-meant people and communities will conflict.

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[15] KAHN, RICHARD & KELLNER, DOUGLAS; Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich: technology, politics and the reconstruction of education, Policy Futures in Education, Volume 5, Number 4, 2007
http://richardkahn.org/writings/tep/freireillich.pdf

Civil Disobedience

Overview of model

Civil disobedience was defined by political philosopher John Rawls (1971) as a "public, non-violent and conscientious breach of law undertaken with the aim of bringing about a change in laws or government policies"[16]. Individuals are motivated to engage in civil disobedience by a range of values such as justice, transparency, security, stability, privacy, integrity and autonomy.

How is it unique?

Six key components make this model unique[17]:

17. **Conscientiousness:** This feature points to the seriousness, sincerity and moral conviction with which a civil disobedient breaches the law. The breach of law is not only an act for self-respect and moral consistency but also for the activist's perception of the interests of their society. It is an act to draw attention to the opinion that the principles of justice governing cooperation amongst free and equal persons have not been respected by policymakers.
18. **Symbolism**: In civilly disobeying the law, activists typically have both futuristic and historical aims. They seek not only to convey her disavowal and condemnation of a certain law or policy, but also to draw public attention to this particular issue and thereby to instigate a change in law or policy.[18]
19. **Publicity:** Civil disobedience is never covert or secretive; it is committed publically, openly, and with fair notice to legal authorities. Usually it is essential to the activist's purpose that both the government and the public is aware of their cause.
20. **Non-violence:** This is an extension of the component of conscientiousness. It ideally preserves the honor of the desired outcome in the public's eyes as well as the activist's own sense of his or her morality. This is a feature of civil disobedience that is often used to justify the breaking of law.

Theory of Change

Civil disobedience draws from the arguments that a governing state, firm or family 1) i obligated to govern through rule of law to achieve public good and 2) is obligated to provide legal channels for political participation to those being governed.[19] By using non-violent, highly public and symbolic methods to draw attention to failures of a governing body, individuals or groups can induce shame and inspire mass social pressure for change. This will induce the governing body to right their oppressive actions or policies.

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[16] Brownlee Kimberly, *published Thu Jan 4, 2007,* http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/civil-disobedience/

[17] Cohen, Carl (1970), 'Defending Civil Disobedience,' in *The Monist*, 54 (4): 469-487.

[18] Brownlee, Kimberley (2008), 'Penalizing Public Disobedience,' *Ethics*, 118 (July): 711-716

[19] Lefkowitz, David (2007), 'On a Moral Right to Civil Disobedience,' in *Ethics*, 117 (January): 202-233.

Concept/role of power

Power is seen to be in the hand of state (i.e. law makers and enforcers), and it is enforced through order. Therefore 'disorder' becomes a form of resistance. This disorder brought through disobedience paralyzes state and shifts power towards the activists.

Noted practitioners who have used this model

- Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela govern

Prominent case studies

- The Boston Tea Party
- The Women's Suffragette movement in 1920s
- The resistance of apartheid in South Africa.
- The Arab Spring of 2010

Is it still in use or historical?

Throughout history, acts of civil disobedience have famously helped to force a reassessment of society's moral parameter. The resistance against British rule in India, the resistance to apartheid in South Africa and the Civil Rights movement in U.S. are the most significant instances where civil disobedience proved to be a mechanism of social change. Civil obedience was used as a tactic most recently through activists who initiated the Arab Spring of 2011.

Strengths

- Activism is grounded in a strong moral foundation.

Criticisms

- Because of the inherent conflict in a diverse society, civil disobedience can instigate more divisiveness instead of peace.
- It can encourage a general disrespect for the rule of law.
- Because of its ability to attract public attention, it may be used too frequently and not as a measure of last resort. Because of this, the actions might become only disruptive and lose their constructive capacity.

Consciousness-Raising

Overview of model

Consciousness-raising (CR) as an organizing model originated in 1967 with the New York Radical Women's organization (NYRW) and became the predominate organizing model of the women's liberation movement of the 1960's and 1970's. Though it represented a unique theory for bringing about radical change, CR drew on the experiences of the earlier labor and civil rights movements. In fact, the term "consciousness-raising" came from NYRW member Anne Forer recalling that labor movements had spoken of raising the consciousness of workers who did not know they were oppressed. She asked the other women to give her examples from their lives of how they had been oppressed, because she needed to "raise her consciousness."[20] This model of a dozen or less women gathering to each discuss problems of collective oppression quickly spread from New York to Chicago and then across the United States. At the movement's peak in 1973, it is estimated that 100,000 women across the U.S. belonged to CR groups.[21] As CR gained momentum in the feminist movement, gay rights activists also adopted the model.

How is it unique?

The following three features make this model unique:

21. **Emphasis on truth.** CR has three principles for developing theory and strategy: going to the original sources of the issue, both historic and personal, going to the people -- women themselves – and going to lived experience.
22. **Pooling of experience.** The CR discovery process is to test all generalizations about the oppressed group through the lens of personal experience. CR groups in the Women's Liberation Movement aimed to study the whole gamut of women's lives, starting with the full reality of their own.
23. **Seclusion of oppressed.** In order to break down power dynamics, the women's liberation movement felt it was necessary to exclude men from CR gatherings.

The following two features are found in other social change models, but are key to CR:

1. **Seeking systemic change.** CR groups considered themselves radical in the sense that they wanted to not just treat societal symptoms of gender oppression but get at the root of the problem in order to take radical action.
2. **Long-term perspective.** CR acknowledges that if thinking or action is limited to that which can be done immediately, it is less effective at changing the root causes of oppression.

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[20] Sarachild, Kathie. (1973) *Conciousness-Raising: A Radical Weapon.* Excerpts from a speech at the First National Conference of Stewardesses for Women's Rights in New York City, March 12, 1973. Retrieved from:

http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/scriptorium/wlm/fem/sarachild.html. 6 Jan 2012.

[21] Eller, Cynthia. (1995). *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Theory of Change

Raising both personal and collective awareness and understanding of an issue prompts people to organize and to act on a mass scale. Verifying and clarifying individuals' personal experiences of oppression through collective sharing leads to more effective action and this action will lead to further truths. By collectively studying a situation, communities can discern the truth of a situation and determine what kinds of actions, individual and political, are necessary to resolve the issue's root causes.

Concept/role of power

Imbalanced power dynamics have deep-seated roots in society. In order to change these pervasive power dynamics, oppressed individuals must build collective power through better understanding individual's lived experiences of power imbalance.

Noted practitioners who have used this model

* Kathie Sarachild, original member of the New York Radical Women's organization and coiner of the name "conciousness-raising."

Prominent case studies

* In 1968, a well-known protest of the Miss America Pageant arose out of CR activity.[22]

Is it still in use or historical?

Though most of the feminist consciousness-raising groups prevalent in the 60's and 70's have dissolved, consciousness-raising principles continue to be practiced in many fields today including gender, gay, and immigrant rights.

Strengths

* Having the opportunity to learn about an issue through individuals' personal experiences can build a mass movement with tremendous energy.

Criticisms

* If consciousness-raising is not coupled with action, it may be therapeutic but achieve not true improvement around social equity.

Relevance to today's issues?

Consciousness-raising is a term that has been adopted most recently in 21st century atheism by anti-religion activist Richard Dawkins and gay liberation activists championing LGBT rights.

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[22] Red Stockings. "The Miss America Protest: 1968." Retrieved from:
http://www.redstockings.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59&Itemid=103 6 Jan 2012.

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Overview of Model[23]

Asset based community development grew out of the earlier organizing models pioneered by Saul Alinsky and Jane Adams as well as the community development movement. While serving as Mayor of Chicago from 1983 to 1987, Harold Washington, was interested in experimenting with how a large municipality could effectively govern from the bottom up. John (Jody) Kretzmann, Neighborhood Planning Committee Chair and a policy consultant to the Mayor partnered with John McKnight, then Director of the Midwest Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, to explore this concept in other communities across the U.S. Their research style flipped typical urban social science on its head, not studying deficiency but finding natural leaders and collecting "hope stories" of community change. What they heard repeatedly was individuals saying, "We started with what we've got." The results of this research – described in their key publication *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* – is what is known today as Asset Based Community Development.

Through their research McKnight and Kretzmann outline six categories of assets every community possesses: 1)The gifts, talents, skills, and passions of individuals within that community; 2) The associations in which individuals participate in with no expectation of compensation; 3) The institutions individuals associate with as paid professionals; 4) The physical assets; 5) The economic resources; and 6) The community stories.

They describe three steps for harnessing these assets: 1) Find them (They offer 'asset mapping' as a way to do this); 2) Connect them; 3) Harness them to a hopeful vision of the future.

How Is It Unique?

Four key components make this model unique:
24. **Appreciative approach.** By focusing on the assets of a community instead of its needs, a community is able to see opportunity, more effectively use the resources that already exist internally, and better know what it might need to acquire from external partners.
25. **Mapping AND mobilizing**. This model focuses equally on the upfront strategic mapping of community assets and the mobilization of those assets. If the assets are not identified, any mobilization will be far less effective. If the strategy work does not lead to action, it will be a hollow activity. Furthermore, the community should lead both these steps.
26. **Focus on "locality" and a "bottom-up" approach.** Kretzmann uses the term "locality" to describe the highly place-based nature of this work. Communities in the most local sense are both generating ideas and then carrying out those ideas.   He encourages private investors to consider "investing in locality" and community organizers and public officials to consider this work "mobilizing the energies of locality."

Theory of Change

Instead of fixing or finding solutions for community weaknesses, the unique strengths from within a community are identified and mobilized to contribute to the development of that community.

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[23] Much of this information came from a conversation with John (Jody) Kretzmann at Augsburg College on February 10, 2012.

Concept of Power

With ABCD, communities do not need to be "empowered" but already have the power they need to be vibrant and healthy. The source of this shared power is the collective acknowledgement and use of individual strengths and collective assets.

Key Researchers & Trainers

- Asset-Based Community Development Institute, School of Education and Social Policy, Northwestern University. http://www.abcdinstitute.org
- Coady International Institute, St. Francis Xavier University. http://coady.stfx.ca/work/abcd/
- ABCD Training Group. http://www.abcdtraininggroup.org

Minnesota Case Studies

Selection of community groups who have incorporated ABCD into their community development projects:

- **Mercado Central in Minneapolis, Minnesota**: Established through ABCD techniques, this serves as a business hub for the Latino community in Minneapolis as well as a center for education around cultural diversity.   http://www.mercadocentral.net/
- **Search Institute:** A Minnesota-based organization using ABCD techniques to "discover what kids need to succeed." Their website has a number of resources to encourage the use of ABCD techniques including a description of the principles for asset-building communities, five action strategies for community change, and some tips for getting started in your own community. http://www.search-institute.org

Is it still in use or historical?

ABCD is a model that is being used frequently today in communities across the globe. The Coady International Institute of St. Francis Xavier University is training individuals from across the global south in this and other community organizing models.

Strengths

- The results of this work – a stronger community – create more sustainable change than efforts that are initiated externally or with a top-down approach.
- Asking, "What's working here?" is a positive intervention in itself as it boosts the morale of the community.

Criticisms

- If the community is given full ownership over the process, there may be a lack of technical expertise to address the issue and not enough accountability to equity, effectiveness, or efficiency measures.
- How does one define and ensure accurate representation from the community in a self-selective participation process?

Relevance to today's issues?

ABCD continues to have relevance anywhere people have been labeled and then marginalized based on that label. It is manifesting itself today in particular around employment opportunities such as youth, disabilities, and opportunities. It also has much to contribute to offering solutions to how to help an increasingly elderly demographic age-in-place.

Spiritual Activism

Overview of model

Spiritual activism grew out of a push in the mid-90's to link individual transformation with societal transformation. It is based on the foundations of Eastern philosophy and thinkers such as the Dalai Lama and Mahatma Gandhi, who famously advised, "Be the change you want to see in the world."

How is it unique?

The following principles make this forum of organizing unique:

27. **Balance.** Earlier models of organizing focused on either high levels of activity (Civil Rights Movement) or high levels of learning and thinking (Feminist Consciousness Raising). This model focuses on spirit. It emphasizes balance, reflection, and meditation as the basis for leadership. This model encourages organizations to focus on being healthy environments for justice work.
28. **Connection.** This model focuses less on the individual's actions and more on connection as a basis for inspiration and acts of heroism.
29. **Spirituality, broadly defined.** Unlike faith-based community organizing, spiritual activism is not affiliated with any religious background and the basis for mobilization is not the congregation, but society more broadly.

Theory of Change

Social change is most effectively and sustainably brought about by explicitly linking individual transformation with societal transformation. Stone Circles, a national spiritual activist organization, articulates this theory on their website saying, "Transformational experiences create revelations of mind, body, and spirit that allow people to break patterns of suffering and dissatisfaction."[24]

Concept/role of power

Spiritual activism encourages healing the brokenness and isolation caused by attempts of individuals to power over each other. This healing fosters more interdependent and loving power dynamics.

Noted practitioners/organizations who have used this model

- Parker Palmer, Director of the Center for Courage and Renewal, a nonprofit organization out of Washington, that exists "to nurture personal and professional integrity and the courage to act on it." http://www.couragerenewal.org
- Fetzer Institute: a private operating foundation out of Michigan, that "advances love and forgiveness as powerful forces that can transform the human condition." www.fetzer.org
- Stone Circles: a national organization out of North Carolina, that seeks "to sustain activists and strengthen the work for justice through strategic action, spiritual life, and a sustainable relationship between land and communities." www.stonecircles.org

Strengths

- Social change work is more effectively sustained over the long-term by individuals who feel not only a deep calling to the cause but are balanced, supported, and hopeful.

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[24] http://www.stonecircles.org/

Criticisms

- A focus on spirituality and concepts such as forgiveness, love, and compassion can cause individuals to be so focused on relationships that they do not move to action.

Current Relevance and Use

Spiritual activism continues to grow in use today through the practitioners and organizations listed above. It is also informing the development of an emergent change model.

Social Entrepreneurship

Overview of model

Since the tech boom and rise of neo-conservatism in the early 1980's, a fundamental structural change occurred in society. Instead of looking to business or government to solve societal issues, citizens began to "innovate for social good" using the same entrepreneurial acumen driving new business ventures. Ashoka: Innovators for the Public, founded by Bill Drayton in 1980, was an early fosterer of this movement, funding and connecting social entrepreneurs from around the world. Ashoka has now grown to an association of over 2,000 Fellows in over 60 countries on the world's five main continents.[25] Meg Wheatley and Deborah Frieze have recently merged this concept of social entrepreneurship with systems thinking in their "Walk Out, Walk On" model, dubbing social entrepreneurs as "Walk Outs" that refuse to work from negative dominant values or paradigms, "walking on" to become social change pioneers.[26] Similar to Ashoka, *Walk Out, Walk On* seeks to organize individual entrepreneurs for collective impact.

How is it unique?

Instead of looking to civic organizations to enact social change in society, this model is based on the premise that social change arises from a pioneering or entrepreneurial individual. It also assumes that profit and social good are not in conflict, but can be co-produced.

Theory of Change

Social problems are fixed most effectively and sustainably not through charity or perpetual fundraising, but through making profit that can be reinvested in solutions.

Concept/role of power

Power exists in individual creativity and courage, and can be unleashed through the collective capacity of individual entrepreneurs/pioneers.

Noted practitioners using this model

Internationally & Nationally: A broad field of organizations has developed to highlight and network social entrepreneurs from across the world including the Skoll Foundation, the Omidyar Network, the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship, Social Enterprise Alliance, Athgo, Root Cause, the Canadian Social Entrepreneurship Foundation, NESsT, New Profit Inc., National Social Entrepreneurship Forum, and Echoing Green, among others .

Minnesota: Social Enterprise Alliance, Social Venture Partners, Ashoka – Twin Cities

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[25] http://www.ashoka.org/

[26] http://www.walkoutwalkon.net/

Prominent case studies

- Bangladesh's Muhammad Yunus was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for founding Grameen Bank, an organization and community development bank that inspired an explosion of microfinance globally.
- Case studies of local Ashoka fellows can be found on the Ashoka-Twin Cities website: http://usa.ashoka.org/twin-cities-ashoka-fellows

Is it still in use or historical?

This continues to grow and professionalize as a field, aided by the growth of tools that have proved pivotal to many social entrepreneurs, such as the internet and online social networking tools, and funders investing to bring programs around social entrepreneurship into Universities globally.

Strengths

- Recognizes and supports innovative social change by encouraging individuals to build sustainable models.

Criticisms

- There is currently few and not widely recognized legal structures for emerging social entrepreneurial business models. There is no social contract requiring these businesses to deliver on their mission.
- Social entrepreneurship is a broad term that if used to describe everything, can come to mean nothing.

Relevance to today's issues?

As government and nonprofits continue to see tight budgets and multinational corporations face challenges posed by resource depletion and detachment from communities, there is need for a new, more sustainable model that combines the best of traditional sectors. There is a need for organizations trying to solve complex social problems to establish sustainability while seeking social good.

Emergent Change

Overview of model

At the end of the '90's there was a growing awareness of the need to bring individuals together in more meaningful, participatory conversation and action. A sense developed among some social change pioneers that previous organizing models focused primarily on either will, heart, or mind, resulting in action not systemic or sustained enough to solve the most complex social, economic, and environmental issues in our society. To integrate these three modes of action, various global networks developed over the past fifteen years around a model emphasizing emergent change. The foremost networks include Theory U (Presencing Institute), Walk Out Walk On (The Berkana Institute), and Art of Hosting.

Theory U[27]: The Presencing/Theory U model developed out of a ten year research project conducted from 1996 to 2000 by MIT scholars Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Peter Senge. This concept, as summarized by Otto Scharmer in his book *Theory U*, suggests that the way in which we attend to a situation determines how a situation unfolds. By merging will, heart, and mind, we can generate more effective social change.   In December 2006, 20 leaders from around the world met in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and committed to using this consciousness-based framework to advance their projects, which all span sectors and countries.

Walk Out Walk On[28]: Meg Wheatley and Deborah Frieze of The Berkana Institute propose a "two-loop model" in which as one system is starting to collapse isolated alternatives begin to arise and give way to a new system. The work in this model involves giving hospice to the dying system, pioneering an alternative system and illuminating the choice between the two.

Art of Hosting[29]: The Art of Hosting network is a growing, global community of practitioners who starting in the early 2000's found that their streams of work on developing more meaningful participatory processes were merging. The purpose for this network is to co-create new patterns participatory, relationship-based conversations and interaction to develop transformative social change.

How is it unique?

- **Source of Knowledge:** Moves beyond expert-driven, hierarchical model to a validation of community-based, grassroots leadership.
- **Worldview:** Incorporation of living systems worldview.
- **Networked Functioning:** Co-creation and decentralized leadership is valued.

Theory of Change

The theory of change for each of the leading emergent change models is described slightly differently but all share the assumption that heightened awareness and more meaningful and effective group processes are needed to solve complex issues. These processes should not be burdened by a

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[27] "Theory U." The Presencing Institute. http://www.presencing.com/node/109.

[28] "Our Theory of Change." The Berkana Institute. http://berkana.org/about/our-theory-of-change/

[29] "History and Governance of Art of Hosting." Art of Hosting. http://artofhosting.ning.com/u

presupposed goal or plan, but allow space for innovative ideas to emerge through collective wisdom, presence, and sensing.

Concept/role of power

The wisdom and power to solve tough community issues resides not only in trained experts but in the community itself. By shifting our patterns of organizing and interacting to be more participatory and draw out shared leadership at a grassroots level, we access collective wisdom from the community.

Noted practitioners/organizations who have used this model

- Meg Wheatley and Deborah Frieze, Authors of Walk Out, Walk On (http://www.walkoutwalkon.net/) and Leaders of the Berkana Institute (http://www.berkana.org/)
- Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski and Peter Senge; Presencing Institute: http://www.presencing.com
- Art of Hosting Community (http://www.artofhosting.org/)

Prominent case studies

- Individuals in Columbus, Ohio, are using conversational "Art of Hosting" processes to address complex problems, such as healthcare, homelessness, poverty, and public safety in their community.[30]

Is it still in use or historical?

Emergent change models are very much still new to the scene, being developed and explored by communities worldwide. A Presencing Forum was held in Minnesota in Fall 2011, concurrent with the first Presencing Global Forum in Boston.

Strengths

- Grounded in a worldview that stresses collaboration and welcomes complexity, these models provide a new way forward, grounded in relationship.
- These models provide a new framework and new tools for addressing complex issues in a different way than simple or complicated issues.
- These models move from a traditional "leader-as-hero" model to a "leader-as-host" idea in which the leader's role is not to have the answers but to draw out collective wisdom to discover new answers.

Criticisms[31]

- Emergent change processes among groups take a long amount of time. The problems being addressed do not always afford this long time horizon.

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[30] http://www.walkoutwalkon.net/united-states/

[31] These models are new enough that they do not have a body of published academic criticisms. These are some of the anecdotal criticisms that have been expressed through their recent introduction in Minnesota.

- These models use new terminology and techniques that must be translated or modified to ensure their adoption in more traditional organizational and institutional cultures.

Relevance to today's issues?

Emergent change offers a way to address those complex problems that no one sector or individual can solve alone.

Highlander School's Model of Community Organizing

Overview of the model

The Highlander School model was born in the larger social context of racial segregation in America. The founder, Myles Horton, combined education with community organizing to establish the first Highlander School in his native Tennessee in 1932. His concept of education was revolutionary to the traditional American education system. Drawing from the new Danish folk high school model, Horton introduced a student-led classroom content and interaction to his civic education school program. Later the program moved to South Carolina where Septima Clark and Bernice Robinson joined Horton. Students in the classroom directed what was to be taught, based on their own needs and experiences in the world. Open-discussion, chanting and story-telling were vivid methods for the community teachers to engage the students and foster an integrated group. Later with the Citizenship Schools, Horton's educational model played an important role mobilizing Black Americans and advocating for racial integration and equal rights in the Civil Rights Movement. The Highlander School's teacher-organizers educated and mobilized their Black students to be active participants in American politics and social movements.

How is it unique?

The features of the Highlander model include:

30. **People development.** Horton regarded people development as the centerpiece of community organizing. Developing the capabilities of people who are not from the elite class to participate in democracy is more important than program development that delivers services to help and assist the poor. Highlander attempted to instill democratic leadership in African-American communities that had a tradition of patriarchal leadership. Horton was skeptical of charismatic leaders. For him, the role of charisma should not override grass-root empowerment.

31. **Student-led classroom.** Students direct the content of the school by initiating the discussion of the problems they deal with in their home and community. Teacher-leaders in the Highlander school tap on these issues and integrate literacy, problem solving, trade skills and leadership development into the curriculum. The formats of classes are diverse, with films, meetings, talks, and out-of-classroom experiences. There were no syllabi, lectures, textbooks and traditional sense of teachers. Mutual learning was the norm. Students were encouraged to share their own stories and challenges; nobody was supposed to dominate the meeting. This collective learning experience empowers students. A democratic teaching environment embodies the spirit of democracy.

32. **Civic education as community mobilization.** Literacy was the main obstacle that prevented African Americans from activating their voting rights. Highlander, therefore, linked literacy with civic responsibility education. The ideology of Highlander was to engage the politically disadvantaged in the democratic system, instead of revolutionalizing the institutional arrangement. To Horton, education was the only nonviolent revolution.

33. **Cross-racial relationship building.** Highlander built up an alliance of Black and White laborers in the labor movement of the 1930's. The common learning and sharing experiences across race built trust and solidarity, moving this alliance to question and challenge the reality of racial segregation in the country.

Theory of Change

Change is brought by engaging the disadvantaged in the democratic process. Educate the poor and empower them by forming a community that bonds the poor and provides a venue for their sharing of

problems, problem-solving and mutual support. Cultivate the capabilities of the poor to activate their agency in democracy and instill the value of democratic participation.

Concept/role of power

Power is decentralized in Highlander. People empower themselves. The role of teacher-leaders is to guide people to think critically of status quo themselves, educate themselves and create social change by being an active citizen. The traditional patriarchal leadership style in African American communities is challenged.

Noted practitioners using this model

- Septima Clark, Anne Braden, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Bevel, Bernard Lafayette, Ralph Abernathy and John Lewis

Prominent case studies

- The Civil Rights Movement and the Citizenship Schools
- The labor movement in Tennessee in the 1930s

Strengths

- Working within the democratic system does not result in the kind of destruction wrought by a revolution
- The education focus raises the civic awareness and sense of responsibility of citizens
- Decentralized leadership style empowers the students
- Student-led curriculum is both engaging and relevant
- People are seen as active agents in promoting change instead of passive recipients of help

Limitations

- The political system and institutional arrangements are not directly challenged.

Relevance to today's issues?

The Highlander Research and Education Center (formerly known as the Highlander Folk School) is still active today in issues of democratic participation and economic justice, with a particular focus on youth, immigrants, ethnic minorities, the gay community and low-income individuals. (http://highlandercenter.org/)

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The Midwest Academy Model of Community Organizing

Overview of model

The founder of the Midwest Academy, Heather Booth, was a student of Saul Alinsky. Many of the training ideologies of the Midwest Academy, therefore, share the organizing principles of Alinsky. The goal of the Midwest Academy is to redistribute economic and political power from elites to the disadvantaged. Practitioners attempt to achieve this goal by getting marginalized populations represented in elected office where they can effect policy. The Midwest Academy model has deep socialist roots, with class struggle as a core theoretical foundation. In her practice of organizing through the Midwest Academy, however, Booth compromised her radical belief of revolutionary change. To make the training more receptive to the American public, she was committed to a pragmatic approach in delivering her training.

How is it unique?

The features of the Midwest Academy model include:

34. **Targeting, direct confrontation and intimidation.** In the "Accountability Session" arranged by an organizer, an elected official is asked to give a community policy briefing. At the Session, trained organizers will confront and intimidate the elected official. These organizers studied the background, connections and personality of the official to capitalize on his or her weaknesses. This targeting strategy is a derivative of Alinsky's "personalized enemy" organizing philosophy and the strategy is used to pressure the elected official to compromise in favor of the organizers' goals.
35. **A pragmatic approach.** Although Booth personally believed in radical socialism, she developed a community organizing training module that was approachable for a wider audience. The Midwest Academy, therefore, claims to bring about progressive social change that improves the social and economic inequity of the country. The trainers couch the radical philosophy of social change in pro-capitalism.
36. **Role-play.** Role-playing is an important training tool of the Midwest Academy. Through role-plays, potential community activists master the appropriate tactics given different circumstances.
37. **Coalition building.** A component of the Midwest Academy's training manual is on coalition building. The purpose of building coalitions is to strengthen the bargaining power of the disadvantaged and leverage the resources of many organizations.

Theory of Change

The Midwest Academy's theory of change is a compromise between the personal philosophy of the founder Booth and the reality of American society. Although Booth defines a true movement as violent and disruptive of the old social order, the Midwest Academy favors progressive changes through election and policy change.

Concept/role of power

Midwest Academy's concept of power is similar to that of Alinsky's. The collective power of the community is used to change the institutional arrangement.

Noted practitioners using this model

- Steve Max, Paul Booth, Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, Andrew Stern (Service Employees International Union (SEIU) President), John Sweeney (AFL-CIO President)

Prominent case studies

- The Midwest Academy played an important role in the Women's Movement of the country in the 1970s.
- The AFL-CIO's "Union Summer" training camp
- Sierra Club, NARAL (the National Abortion Rights Action League), United States Student Organization and Children's Defense Fund
- "Camp Obama" that supported the presidential election of Barack Obama

Is it still in use or historical?

The Midwest Academy is active in training community organizers to advance social, economic and racial justice in the country. As of January 2011, the Midwest Academy had trained more than 30,000 activists.

Strengths

- Working with the democratic system does not result in the disruptive outcomes that often characterize a revolution.
- The targeting and intimidation strategy focuses the energy and work of community organizers at the person that is most likely to bring change.

Limitations

- Radical change to create a more equal social order is compromised. Change is slow.

Relevance to today's issues?

In 2008, the Midwest Academy executive director Jackie Kendall served on the team that developed the first volunteer-training program for "Camp Obama". The "Camp Obama" was a two-to-four day intensive course to train activists who could support election campaign of the Democrat candidate Obama.

The Midwest Academy endorsed the October 2, 2010 "March on Washington" organized by One Nation Working Together, an event whose purpose was to inspire "an intensive voter-mobilization program for Election Day 2010."

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www.discoverthenetwork.com
www.midwestacademy.com