Community-Based Research:
From Practice to Theory and Back Again

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Community-based research (CBR) is a recently popular model of community–higher education collaboration that combines various forms of action-oriented research with service-learning to support social action for social justice. This paper explores the theoretical strands being combined in CBR—charity service-learning, social justice service-learning, action research, and participatory research. Charity service-learning and action research combine to produce the dominant mainstream CBR model. Social justice service-learning and participatory research combine to produce the radical CBR model. The paper shows how these different models of CBR, based in different theories of society and different approaches to community work, may combine or conflict.

"When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

—late Archbishop Dom Helder
Camara of Recife, Brazil (1909-1999)

This quote from the "Red Bishop" and leader in Liberation Theology sums up the tensions in a new community-based practice being popularized across higher education. Over the past few years there has been a groundswell of interest in a model of community–higher education collaboration called "community-based research" (CBR). As practiced in most settings, CBR combines an emphasis on doing community-based research projects with a focus on student skill development and civic engagement. This would seem to be the perfect combination, bringing together two previously separate strategies: action-oriented research and service-learning (Strand, 2000). CBR is designed to combine community empowerment with student development, to integrate teaching with research and service, and to combine social change with civic engagement. CBR is thus adaptable to all institutions, serving the research emphasis of megaversities, the student development mission of small colleges, and the new community involvement goals that many institutions of higher education are incorporating into their mission statements.

This paper begins by defining CBR, and looking at the service-learning and action-oriented research models it attempts to integrate. In doing so, it explores the split between action research and participatory research, and between service-learning based in Dewey and Freire. Further, it locates those splits in contrasting theories about how the social

world works. Finally, it explores social change models, showing the implications of the two versions of CBR in realizing CBR's goal of social change for social justice.

CBR Defined and Deconstructed

An attempt to expand the practice of CBR nationwide, sponsored by the Corella and Bertram F. Bonner Foundation (2002), has led to three general CBR principles:

- CBR is a *collaborative* enterprise between researchers (professors and/or students) and community members.

- CBR *validates multiple sources of knowledge* and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery and of disseminating the knowledge produced.

- CBR has as its goal *social action and social change* for the purpose of enhancing social justice (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoeker, & Donohue, forthcoming).

In the most concrete sense, CBR involves students and faculty working with a community organization on a research project serving the organization's goals. But there is much variation in how that happens.

Each of the three aspects of this definition can be interpreted in radical ways that fundamentally challenge the structural status quo or conservative ways that preserve it. In its most basic sense, "collaboration" means that researchers and community members should jointly define the research question, choose the research methods, do the research, analyze the data, construct the report, and use the research for social action. Conservatively, however,

the community could be social service agencies rather than grass roots residents, and collaboration could simply mean obtaining approval for a researcher-defined project. Radically, collaboration could mean placing researcher resources in the hands of grass-roots community members to control, thereby reversing the usual power relationship between the researcher and the researched. "Validating multiple sources of knowledge" conservatively could be limited to including community members' experiential knowledge as research data. Radically, it could mean using community understandings of social issues to define the project and the theories used in it, undermining the power structure that currently places control of knowledge production in the hands of credentialized experts. "Social change," defined conservatively, involves restructuring an organization or creating a new program. But it can also be defined radically, including the use of militant tactics to promote massive structural changes in the distribution of power and resources through far-reaching changes in governmental policy, economic practices, or cultural norms.

What is the value of a definition with such broadly different interpretations? The easy answer is that it can have broad appeal while still promoting more or less consistent patterns of program development. A definition too narrow would exclude too many. The definition of CBR above was built out of the practices we saw, studied, and in which we engaged.

The dual interpretations, however, also point to conflicting assumptions being integrated into CBR. Both the service-learning and the action-oriented research components combined in CBR can be constructed from conservative or radical theories. As we will see, there is an increasing amount being written about charity vs. social justice approaches, and Dewey vs. Freire influences in service-learning. And there has been historical writing on participatory research vs. action research (Brown & Tandon, 1983). But nothing has been written exploring how these theories are combined in CBR. This is important, because in an era that provides career tracks for service-learning and CBR experts, there continues to be discrimination against some forms of the practice (Robinson, 2000a). There is a particular split between those doing service-oriented research with social service and government agencies, and those working with grass-roots social change efforts whose jobs are threatened and careers stymied (Cancian, 1993; Gedicks, 1996). That split, and the dominance of conservative forces that militate against true grass-roots social change oriented CBR, are inhibiting realization of the third principle of CBR: social action and social change for social justice.

In looking at the theories underlying CBR, this paper employs an "ideal type" analysis to compare and contrast participatory research with action research, and charity service-learning with social justice service-learning. In sociology, an ideal type analysis attempts to accurately describe the characteristics of pure categories or "types" of phenomena. Such an analysis facilitates comparisons and clarifies studies of the "impure" real world by allowing us to see how specific characteristics of the ideal types are combined. In addition, it allows us to develop theoretical predictions of the pure types that can then be tested empirically against the combined practices more often found in the real world (Weber, 1949 [1904]). Thus, the following analysis will construct and contrast a radical CBR ideal type with a mainstream CBR ideal type, recognizing that much work may combine elements of both. By constructing the ideal types, and showing their potentially contradictory qualities, we can better understand the dynamics of mixed models as well.

From Practice to Theory

Participatory Research vs. Action Research

A plethora of labels is now being used in action-oriented research, and they have all blended together, as practitioners develop their own definitions of their practices. So it may be useful to review the roots of the main division between what were originally called participatory research and action research.[1]

Participatory research was a radical practice influenced by the third world development movement of the 1960s. Academics, activists, and indigenous community members collaborated to conduct research, develop education programs, and create plans to counter global corporations' efforts to take over world agriculture. Their research, education, and planning processes led to sustainable, community-controlled agricultural and development projects. The "participatory research" model resulting from this movement across India, Africa, and South America, along with such practitioners as Rajesh Tandon and Paulo Freire, has been the leading model around much of the world (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Freire, 1970; Hall, 1993; Paulo Freire Institute, n.d.). Participatory research was also promoted in the United States through the famous Highlander Research and Education Center, beginning with its founder Myles Horton, and the ground-breaking work of its later leaders Helen Lewis, Billy Horton, and John Gaventa (Adams, 1975; Glen, 1988; Horton, 1989).

The origin of action research is most associated

with Kurt Lewin (1948). He and his colleagues focused on race relations, attempting to resolve inter-racial conflicts, along with conducting applied research to increase worker productivity and satisfaction. Action research does not challenge the existing power relationships in either knowledge production or material production. Its importance is in emphasizing mixing theory and practice. It has been used in education settings, and in union–management collaboration in research to save jobs and improve worker satisfaction facilitated by William F. Whyte (1991).

Action research values useful knowledge, developmental change, the centrality of individuals, and consensus social theories. The point of reference for action researchers is the profession more than the community, and the practice is very similar to the models used by professional planners. The action research model emphasizes collaboration between workers and management, and denies the structural antagonism between those groups that is recognized by the participatory research model. Action research does not address power differences but seeks to resolve conflicts between groups (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

Historically, it has been very important for participatory researchers (Brown & Tandon, 1983; Hall, 1993) to distinguish themselves from the action research model. An important article by Brown and Tandon showed how participatory research maintains a view of social change that emphasizes the centrality of social conflict and collective action, and the necessity of changing social structures (Comstock & Fox, 1993). Participatory research is about people producing knowledge to develop their own consciousness and further their social change struggles (Gaventa, 1991). As Rahman argues (1991), "domination of masses by elites is rooted not only in the polarization of control over the means of material production but also over the means of knowledge production…These two gaps should be attacked simultaneously wherever feasible" (p. 14). In practice, participatory research is very much a community organizing approach that includes a research process. It begins in the community and ends with structural social change. The highest form of participatory research is seen as research completely controlled and conducted by the community. It is interesting in this regard that the most well-known practitioners of this model, such as the Highlander Research and Education Center (2002), the Applied Research Center (2002), and Project South (2002), are all organizations outside of academia (Hall, 1993).

Charity Service-Learning vs. Social Justice Service-Learning

In higher education, CBR has also been heavily influenced by service-learning models. But partic-ularly in its early formation, no forms of service-learning promoted the idea of social change (Barber, 1992; Brown, 2000; Eby, 1998; Kahne & Westheimer, 1996). A social change emphasis has developed in some service-learning programs only recently, and now service-learning too seems to be dividing into conservative and radical approaches. A main distinction is between the "charity" model and the "social justice" model of service-learning.

Charity service-learning is the overwhelmingly dominant model in the field. In this model, service-learning is about providing service (Crews, 2000)—feeding the poor—rather than social change—asking why the poor have no food and then acting on the answers. O'Meara and Kilmer (n.d.) review the definitions of civic engagement, and nowhere is "social change" part of the definition. Mooney and Edwards (2001) distinguish six forms of "experiential learning" and find only one—service-learning advocacy—with an action component. Even when "community organizing" is included, it is lumped in uncritically with community building and community development, which are politically mainstream community development approaches distinct from community organizing (Stoecker, 2002). Robinson (2000a) notes recent research showing that only 1% of service-learning programs were involved in grass roots social change work, and apolitical service work is officially promoted by organizations such as the Corporation for National and Community Service. This is because, in the charity model, service-learning is organized as a system of cooperation across differences rather than focusing on the conflict between differently positioned groups in society. A charity model service-learning program would fit quite well with a management-worker collaboration and quite problematically with a militant social movement. Again and again in the service-learning literature the "community partners" are not social change organizations, but "agencies." The "community-based organization resources" Web page of the Learn & Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (n.d.) does not identify a single resource focused on service-learning with grass-roots organizations, but of the 17 resources listed, 8 specifically focus on working with agencies. The charity model is thus consistently used as an expert-based process (which fits an agency-based social service perspective) linking faculty *expertise* and interests, and student *needs* and interests, with community individuals' and groups' defined and prioritized *needs* [italics added] (Dorsey, 2001).

In the social justice model, social change does become part of the practice, but not yet in a uni-

form way. Hironimus-Wendt and Lovell-Troy (1999) compare Dewey, the progressive era American educational philosopher, and C. Wright Mills, the American critical sociologist, to develop a more critical social justice model of service-learning, but does not develop the broader social conflict implications of such a model. Robinson (2000b) asserts the importance of integrating participatory action research with service-learning in the justice model, but does not fully discuss how to do that. Marullo and Edwards (2000) pose a justice service-learning model to move students toward critically examining root structural causes of social problems. They also address resource inequalities issues in university-community collaborations and integrate community development principles. Marullo (2000) helped put this into practice with a youth-based CBR project on neighborhood housing conditions that support resident tenant organizing. The difficulties of practicing such a model are illustrated by Robinson's (2000a) story of engaging students with housing activists rather than with housing agencies. In the course of their work, their service-learning program came under fire from federal, state, and local nonprofit officials, pressuring them to shift their partnerships from activists to agencies, and clearly showing the structural divisions between power holders and residents.

One way to clarify the distinction between the charity model and the social justice model is to examine their distinct theoretical roots. The charity model draws its inspiration from John Dewey (1944), who has been called everything from a fellow Marxist traveler (Brooks, n.d.) to a conservative communitarian (Kosnoski, 2000). His influence has been linked to the progressive social work of Jane Addams, the critical sociology of C. Wright Mills (Hironimus-Wendt & Lovell-Troy, 1999), and to functional psychology (Brennan, 1998). We could also charge Dewey with being a social Darwinist, though we need to understand the historical context in which Dewey was working, where the application of Darwinian thinking to human social dynamics was considered progressive. In Dewey's case, that context influenced his role in the development of functional psychology (Brennan, 1998). But it is also important to note that Dewey attempted to work with Hegel's ideas (who so influenced Marx), but was more taken with Darwin (Field, 2001). Cummings (2000) argues that Dewey conceived of community as successfully overcoming, rather than eliminating, social divisions. Deans (2000) reveals how Dewey's critique of social inequality stops short of a critique of capitalism, and particularly avoids support for radical social change (p. 38). Saltmarsh

(1996) describes Dewey's approach to change as one of mediation and gradual reform.

In contrast, the social justice service-learning model is increasingly linked with the popular education approach of Paulo Freire (1970; also see Paulo Freire Institute, n.d.). Brown (2001) advocates that service-learning be based in Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy and especially his process of dialogue, praxis, and historical analysis. Heavily influenced by Marxist theories, Freire built his model working with rural Latin American communities. It is now a well-developed popular education model used in many social change efforts. Brown uses the Freire popular education model in working with service-learning students but does not carefully discuss how to also use the model in working with community partner groups. Myers-Lipton (1998) also discusses the importance of integrating critical pedagogy into service-learning, but only applies that process to pedagogy with students and not with the community.

Only in an atheoretical context can Dewey and Freire be lumped together, and then only in the similarity of their support for experiential education. It is through exploring their theoretical underpinnings that differences are revealed. Dewey's commitment to the philosophy of pragmatism, compared to Freire's Marxist theoretical stance, shows these differences. Dewey did not see structural barriers to the increasing democratization of society under capitalism. For Freire, capitalism and the unequal structural power it creates builds barriers to democracy. Thus, for Dewey, education itself is not political, but only prepares people to operate progressively in the political sphere. For Freire, there is no separation between education and politics (Deans, 2000, p. 38-41). Margonis (1993) similarly argues that Dewey links the problem of democracy to the practice of the scientific method. But for Freire, the method is praxis. The problem, as Margonis poses, has to do with the liberal question of the relationship between the individual and society. For Dewey, the integration of the individual with society is a real possibility. For Freire, oppressive social structures must be changed by collective social action for the individual to be free.

We can see Freirian influences in critiques of the charity service-learning model. Eby (1998), citing McKnight (1996), argues that service-learning is seen as, "filling community needs," and often to the extent of reinforcing victim-blaming (Ryan, 1976) on the part of students. Eby also notes that many service-learning programs, by providing client services such as tutoring, implicitly individualize social problems. This diverts attention from structural, systemic explanations. Brown (2001), a CNS National Service

Fellow, similarly argues that service-learning is based in the theories of experiential education and civic engagement, following Dewey's *Democracy and Education* (1944), and consequently lacks the critical perspective that can help students go beyond a surface level analysis to see social structural causes. This is a telling critique, since one of the current concerns about service-learning is that it has not been able to significantly move students from volunteerism to social action (Center for Human Resources, 1999; Loeb, 2001).

Two Models of CBR, One Practice?

Dewey's educational philosophy, charity service-learning, and action research fit together to create a *mainstream CBR* model that sees reform as a gradual, peaceful, linear process. This model attempts to mediate divisions across social structural boundaries, implicitly reflecting that common interests between the rich and the poor, for example, are more powerful than their differences. All follow an expert model, either through choosing agencies rather than grassroots groups as partners, or through professional control over both the research and teaching processes. Smith (2001) compares Dewey's method directly with Lewin, showing how they both use a problem-solving planning approach. Exemplifying this model, Parsons (n.d.) argues that the teaching mission comes first in education-based action research, the teacher controls the research process, and the teacher owns the research.

In contrast, Freire's popular education, social justice, service-learning, and participatory research fit together to create a *radical CBR* model. In this model, structural barriers, particularly of race, class, and sex/gender are crucial impediments to individual and societal progress. Oppression and conflict are seen as endemic to such structurally divided societies, and conflict strategies as necessary for eliminating the divisions. In addition, this approach emphasizes the importance of making the process part of the goal. Thus, hierarchies in the process of knowledge production are as oppressive as other hierarchies and must be eliminated in the process of research and teaching. Knowledge in this model is grass-roots based and directed rather than primarily expert-based. The focus is on the grass roots community, rather than social service agencies, students, institutions, and professional researchers.

By juxtaposing these two ideal types, it becomes clear just how difficult it is to develop radical CBR in higher education. In charity service-learning, the primary focus is on serving students (Crews, 2000; Belbas, Gorak, & Shumer, 1993). Service-learning in general, in stark contrast to participatory research and Freirian popular education, is a product of higher education institutional structures. Further, service-learning in higher education is constructed and constrained by standards of teaching, grading, and assigning credit hours, as well as by curricular demands. So great is the embeddedness of mainstream service-learning and CBR models in higher education institutional structures that when tensions are discovered they are not seen as tensions between the community and academy but only within the academy itself (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001). Even those who develop a Freire-based service-learning model apply it primarily to working with students, rather than to working with the community, and consequently get pulled back toward the charity service-learning/action research model. Mooney and Edwards (2001) do not see any form of service-learning as engaging the community in social action. Their "service-learning advocacy" model only speaks to engaging students in collective action. Eby's (1998) critique of service-learning leads him to argue that agency partners must have authentic roots in the community, the process must include analysis of structural issues, and the action part of the process must include advocacy and community development. But advocacy and community development are both problematic strategies for community empowerment (Beckwith & Lopez, 1997), as we will see. Absent from the literature is discussion of how to integrate service-learning with social movements and community organizing. In addition, reference to the broader literature on popular education is sorely lacking in the social justice service-learning model, missing the lessons of such notables as Myles Horton (Horton & Freire, 1990), the famous founder of the Highlander Research and Education Center, and Augusto Boal (1982), the founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed model.

Considering the imbalance of influence these two approaches exhibit in higher education, the question arises whether they constitute a spectrum containing mix and match components that practitioners can combine as they see fit, or whether they are built on foundations that contradict each other. To address that question, we turn to a long term theoretical dispute in the field of sociology.

Theories of Society and Versions of CBR

Theoretical discussions are not particularly popular, but they are absolutely crucial here. Our attempts to develop a CBR model that will support and promote far-reaching social change efforts will succeed to the extent that we understand how the two models of CBR disagree. Brown and Tandon (1983) established the relevance of social theory

for participatory research and action research. They argued that participatory research was based in a conflict theory of society, and action research was based in a functionalist theory of society. The split between these two theoretical approaches have expressed themselves across the social sciences, but perhaps nowhere as well as in sociology.

In sociology, functionalist theory argues that society tends toward natural equilibrium and its division of labor develops through an almost natural matching of individual talents and societal needs. For functionalists, healthy societies place all of their members into the roles for which they are fit. The implication (though few today admit it) is that the poor and the oppressed are supposed to be poor and oppressed. Of course, those who do not belong there (i.e., those who are willing to work hard) are provided new roles. This theory also assumes that people have common interests even when they have different positions in society. Healthy, persistent societies are in a constant state of gradual equilibrium-seeking improvement. Thus, a group organizing to force change is actually unhealthy, as it can throw off equilibrium, and cooperation to produce gradual change is a better alternative (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 2000; Morrow, 1978). In this model, poor people only need opportunity, not power, and cooperation between the haves and the have-nots is the best means to provide opportunity. But because the model does not recognize structural barriers to equality, it can only provide opportunities determined by existing power holders.

In contrast, conflict theory sees no natural tendency toward anything but conflict over scarce resources. In this model society develops through struggle between groups. Stability in society is only fleeting, and to the extent that it is achieved even temporarily, it is not because society finds equilibrium but because one group dominates the other groups. Conflict theory sees society as divided, particularly between corporations and workers, men and women, and whites and people of color. The instability inherent in such divided societies prevents elites from achieving absolute domination and provides opportunities for those on the bottom to create change through organizing for collective action and conflict (Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 2000; Morrow, 1978).

There have been attempts, of course, to reconcile these two perspectives (see Eitzen & Baca Zinn, 2000), but many argue that their respective assumptions are just too contradictory to do this. How do you, for example, reconcile the assumption that society is characterized by domination, with the assumption that everyone in society naturally finds the role that best fits him or her? While the intense debates between proponents of these theories are no longer as prominent as they once were, that is not because the contradictions were resolved (Demerath III, 1996). Rather, grand theories have become marginalized in intellectual circles (Bordwell & Carroll, 1996; McQuillan, MacDonald, Purves, & Thomson, 1999). Even as late as 1992, however, Sanderson and Ellis (1992) documented the divide between proponents of these two theories and their corresponding political ideologies. They found, with a strong significant correlation, that those who defined themselves as conflict theorists also defined themselves as politically radical, while those who defined themselves as functionalist theorists saw themselves as politically conservative or moderate.

To the extent that people's social theories and political ideologies are consistent, we can say that those following functionalist theory will support practices that peacefully integrate people into existing institutional structures. They will look for social service approaches to social problems (see, for example, Munson, 1978). Those following conflict theory will support practices that confront and attempt to change existing social structures. They will look for social movement approaches to social problems. Participatory research and popular education, historically operating outside of the confines of higher education, attempt to expose, undermine, and de-legitimize existing institutional structures. Charity service-learning and action research, historically operating inside the confines of higher education, attempt to integrate those left out, build bridges between the haves and have-nots, and reinvigorate the existing system through an emphasis on civic engagement.

Which one of these theoretical world views a practitioner works from, however casually, has enormous implications for what kind of CBR they use and what kinds of partnerships they find most comfortable. As Brown (2001) notes, practice reflects theory even when the theory is not made explicit. Those from middle-class, white backgrounds, for whom structural discrimination is often just background noise, are less likely to appreciate the importance of conflict theory than people who have suffered from structural discrimination. And indeed, influential white academics and professionals have been moving away from conflict models of social change over the last decade, emphasizing instead models of community building, consensus organizing, community development, and other non-conflict forms of community action whose theoretical foundations are more consistent with functionalist theory (see, for example, Gittell & Vidal, 1998). Thus, there is a tension

between the structural social change goal and occasional confrontational strategy of CBR based in conflict theory, and practices more consistent with functionalist theory that emphasize cooperation and the centrality of individuals rather than social structures in seeking change (Brown & Tandon, 1983).

From Theory to Practice

How might these two versions of CBR play out in practice? To address that question, we must first define "the community." Many CBR practitioners are tired of trying to define the community, either because they have found the concept undefinable or because they suspect their practice reflects the wrong definition. For me, the answer is quite simple. In the context of CBR, the community is the people living with the problem and those organizations that they democratically control. It may be a tight geographic community such as a neighborhood or a more widely dispersed identity group such as a gay community. The outsiders trying to solve the problem or the funders who are paying the outsiders trying to solve the problem are typically not part of the community, though there may be bridge people who have roots in the community and can help build relationships between the community and outsiders.

It is possible that the community may not act like a community, and its members may not even define themselves as a community in the way we casually think about it in North American culture. Furthermore, the emphasis on community empowerment in the radical CBR model requires a form of community practice that most academics are not skilled at—community organizing (Stoecker, 1999). These two matters can have serious implications for practicing CBR. So, it is in juxtaposing the practices of community organizing and the social service casework approach that we can see the important differences between radical and mainstream CBR. Figure 1 draws on the distinctions made by Beckwith and Lopez (1997) between different forms of community work, adds a theoretical dimension, and links them to their corresponding CBR models.

The clearest distinctions are between the social

services casework approach and the community organizing approach. Reisch and Wenocur (1986) clarify the split between community organizing and professional casework approaches to social work that parallel the differences between the two versions of CBR: social service casework developed as a professional model quite similar to charity service-learning and action research in its structural control by professionals, its lack of focus on political action, and its emphasis on social integration rather than social change. Social service casework requires technical expertise and cooperation with power holders that make community-based decision-making difficult. Given these parallels, it makes sense for the charity service-learning/action research form of CBR to gravitate to social service agencies rather than grass-roots partners.

Community organizing focuses on local settings, empowering individuals to build relationships and organizations, and create action for social change (Beckwith & Lopez, 1997; Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991; Kahn, 1991). Successful community organizing can lead to a larger social movement. The practice is often confrontational and explicitly avoids developing alliances with power holders, instead developing strong community-based organizations that can hold independent power. In the United States, community organizing is most attributed to Saul Alinsky (1969; 1971), but is also exemplified by small local organizations like the Montgomery Improvement Association, which helped lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott (Morris, 1984) and provided the early momentum for the Civil Rights Movement. The emphasis on conflict, the belief in grass-roots control, and the goal of social change make community organizing a good fit with radical CBR.

As Figure 1 shows, the community work field is more complicated than a simple division between community organizing and social service casework, because the field of community work is much larger than just social work. In fact, much of what is called community organizing today actually better fits community development.[2] Community building, consensus organizing, women-centered organizing, and a host of similar processes do not

Figure 1
Social Theory and Forms of Community Work

	Conflict Theory	Functionalist Theory
Agency-Based	Advocacy *(mixed CBR model?)*	Social Service Casework *(mainstream CBR model)*
Grass Roots-Based	Community Organizing *(radical CBR model)*	Community Development *(mixed CBR model?)*

share the conflict theory approach of community organizing and are much more amenable to develop alliances with power holders (Stoecker, 2002). The main difference between organizing and development is in their focus. Community organizing focuses on building power through resilient community-controlled organizations, while community development focuses on building buildings and programs. As a consequence, community development is more limited to a strategy of cooperation with the powerful compared to community organizing, though there are exceptions. Both community organizing and community development can be community controlled, as the most sensitive community development corporations have shown. But that is extremely challenging, as the need for technical expertise in community development can easily disrupt community-based decision-making.

The other approach often confused with community organizing is advocacy. Advocacy is trying to create social change on behalf of others (such as children, trees, or illegal immigrants who are unable to advocate for themselves). The similarity between community organizing and advocacy is that both see the rules as unfairly benefiting the powerful, and see themselves in a struggle to change those rules. Thus, they see themselves *in conflict with* the powerful. Both are in contrast to service delivery and community development, whose emphasis on cooperation with power holders and working within the existing system makes them more consistent with functionalist theory. But there are a number of important differences between community organizing and advocacy. Perhaps the most important difference is that advocacy is a practice of professionals working *on behalf of* or *for* a group, while community organizing involves the group advocating for itself. There are times when advocacy can actually disempower a community. The lobbyist meets with the legislator, rather than the community members gaining the sense of power and skill by meeting directly with the legislator. In other situations, however, advocacy serves a crucial function for such groups as undocumented workers (who cannot act as public figures), children (who cannot legally represent themselves), and other similar groups.

The cleanest correspondence between social theories, models of service-learning and action-oriented research, and forms of community practice, are with the social service approach and the community organizing approach. The social service approach fits the expert-based gradualism and mediation philosophy of mainstream CBR. The community organizing approach fits best the grassroots, confrontational institutional change approach of radical CBR. Community development fits neither model perfectly, sharing the grassroots characteristic of radical CBR, but the nonconflict process of mainstream CBR. Advocacy fits the expert-based approach of mainstream CBR, but the conflict emphasis of radical CBR.

Does this mean that the community development and advocacy models provide an opportunity to overcome the divisions between the two approaches? Probably not. I have explored previously (Stoecker, 1997) the internal contradictions of the community development model that make it difficult to successfully apply by itself, let alone with a potentially ill-fitting CBR model. I suspect a similar diagnosis can be made of the advocacy model, though that is outside the scope of this paper. This does not mean you cannot do CBR with community development or advocacy. It only means that the process could be messy, as both the internal contradictions of the community practice model, and the messiness introduced by the lack of fit with any particular CBR model both have to be confronted.

Implications for Practice and Research

What are the implications of the two versions of CBR, one emphasizing conflict oriented social change, and the other emphasizing functionalist social integration, for realizing CBR's "social change for social justice" goal?

Those who follow and support the mainstream CBR model are not just acquiescing when they argue that it is the only model that can survive within higher education, as there is plenty of evidence showing the antipathy of higher education to the radical CBR model (Cancian 1993; Gedicks, 1996; Robinson 2000a). They also are honestly arguing against a confrontational social change model. From their perspective, working through social service agencies, helping one individual at a time, is the most successful strategy. It is a long-term strategy, but one that avoids the conflict inherent in the social justice service-learning/participatory research model. From their standpoint, conflict never solved anything.

But the most successful model we have of higher education faculty and student involvement in real social change is the Civil Rights Movement. From desegregating buses to desegregating lunch counters to passing voter rights legislation, the involvement of students and faculty of historically black colleges and universities in the South, particularly through the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (Carson, 1981), has been ignored in the creation of today's service-learning and CBR programs. This is partly due to the fact that, while the philosophy of the movement was

nonviolent, it was also confrontational and it was based in a conflict theory of society. It is difficult for many of us today to imagine how such a conflict-based practice could be integrated into higher education. Even back then, most of the work took place outside of official cooperation with the higher education institutions themselves.

Times have changed, some say, adding that today we do not need confrontational community organizing to make change. And yet even over the last decade, the most important progressive changes have been won on issues, such as municipal living wage laws, which were pressed by conflict-model community organizing. The need is clear for a model of CBR that can match the power being built in community organizations across the country. Many of these groups are going unserved by higher education because of the dominance of the mainstream CBR model in colleges and universities. In a society where the gap between rich and poor continues to widen, and where economic control seems to lie more solidly in the hands of ever fewer people, the insights of Piven and Cloward (1979) become crucial. They argue that the rich and powerful make deals with each other because each side of the deal sees the other as having something they can either bring to the table or take away from it. But poor people are seen as having nothing with which to bargain and nothing to withhold, so they are easily excluded from decision-making. The only way for the poor to gain a seat at the table, then, is for them to counter the power of money with the power of numbers. Just as in the Civil Rights Movement, mass disobedience is a powerful bargaining chip. CBR in the service of assisting the poor to organize on their terms is a crucial service indeed.

This does not mean we should avoid working with social service agencies, especially those interested in democratizing their own practice and organizing the population they serve rather than controlling them as clients. Indeed, those social service agencies that are building collective power among their service populations offer some protection for using a radical CBR approach under a veil of relatively safety. Clearly, what we have now is a relatively undeveloped radical CBR model. We do not know how it can be stretched, adapted, and expanded for structural social change that comes from grass roots work. We also do not know much about the circumstances under which one version of CBR might work better than another. As Brown and Tandon (1983) note for action research, under social conditions of structural inclusion and participatory democracy, radical CBR may in fact be less effective as it will create conflict where it is not needed. But there are regrettably few real examples of those conditions.

There is a need for radical CBR. But can such a model work in higher education? Robinson (2000a) is skeptical, though not hopeless, about the possibility of expanding more activist forms of CBR across higher education. Identifying and developing a distinct practice of CBR is a necessary prerequisite to having it recognized. Those who have been doing the work are still a distance from having a fully developed model. What are the initial practical steps one can take in developing and using radical CBR?

- If you are working with social service agencies, use CBR to bring the people normally restricted to the role of "client" into decision making positions. If, for example, you are helping a social service agency trying to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs, suggest recruiting service recipients for the research design team and then into the program planning process. This disrupts the power imbalances inherent in social service practice and the power imbalances of traditional research.

- If you want to work with a community sympathetic to practice based in conflict-theory, but are not a skilled community organizer, try to find a community organizer and begin partnering with them. This is no different from the typical partnerships with social service agencies, except that a good community organizer will bring community members into the research process from the beginning.

- If you want to develop conflict-based community organizing skills, it may be easiest to begin with using a popular education process in regular classes. Popular education quickly upends normal knowledge hierarchies, putting students in charge of the creation and transmission of knowledge process. It is then, less difficult to transfer that practice to working with community groups.

Of course it is true that most of us work with some combination of the two models. But many of us do so uncomfortably and often unsuccessfully. Understanding how the combination we are using attempts to integrate incompatible assumptions and contradictory practices is the first step to potentially combining aspects of the two models. To better understand the implications of these models in practice, we must recommend research around important empirical questions:

1. To what extent do radical and mainstream

CBR produce different outcomes, especially in relation to realizing the CBR principles of validating multiple sources of knowledge and creating social change for social justice?

2. To what extent is the underdevelopment of radical CBR a result of barriers in higher education or other factors?

3. In what ways might the two versions of CBR productively be combined?

4. To what extent can a version of CBR based in one theory be used with a community practice based in another theory?

It is always easier to work within a given social structure and set of institutional confines than it is to push their boundaries. And yet, the communities we work with are hoping we will join them in pushing those boundaries. This paper pushes those of us in higher education to the next level of practice that many of our potential partner communities have already achieved.

Notes

Thanks to Matthew Lawson and the energetic MJCSL reviewers for comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

[1] The labels are so confused today. People oftentimes use interchangeably "participatory research," "participatory action research," "action research," "collaborative research," "community-based research," "community-based participatory research," and others. My use of the historically distinct labels of "participatory research" and "action research" should not be taken to mean that anything called "action research" today follows the original action research model.

[2] In fact, Reisch and Wenocur (1986) also use a very broad definition of CBR, and still see a split from social service casework. Using the narrow definition in this paper makes the split very pronounced.

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