

Creative Tensions in the New Community Based Research

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The Goose Approach to Research

I want to start with a little story that has been circulating for a few years now about geese. And let's for the moment say it's about the widely recognized bird known as the Canada Goose.

Next fall, when you see Geese heading South for the Winter, flying along in V formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way: as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in V formation the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front.

When the Head Goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

Geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed.

Finally, and this is important, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly, or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own, or with another formation to catch up with their group.

If only we could have as much sense as a goose. [\[1\]](#)

Well, we're getting there. And we're doing it through a practice that many are calling community-based research or CBR. It goes by many other names—participatory research, action research, participatory action research, collaborative research, community-based participatory research, community-directed research, and popular education. It also goes by no name in those many places where people are doing the work without having read the literature or taken a course in it because they have already achieved the sense of a goose. In short, all of these models have in common a partnership between professional researchers and community groups integrating research and action for social justice.

So how is CBR like a flock of geese?

First, and perhaps most importantly, just like geese migrating, CBR is about getting somewhere. It is not about producing "shelf research" whose only impact is to fill a space in a dusty row of books. Research is but a small part of the overall process. In the best CBR projects, people are also planning strategy, recruiting participants, changing organizations, and producing policy.

When I do CBR training workshops I often use a diagram with two sets of circles. The first set shows a big "research" circle with a little "action" circle inside of it, which is how many professional researchers approach CBR.

The next set of circles shows a big "action" circle with a little "research" circle inside of it, which is how community workers and members more often see the work.

There are times in this research and action combination when different people fly point. In one recent CBR project, my job was to guide the group through planning and outlining a program evaluation and then implement the research. Once we wrote up the report, however, leadership shifted back to the program director, who then took the group through a planning process to make changes based on the research. Leadership also shifts during a project as a result of the varied expertise that community members and academics bring. Sometimes, such as when diagnosing a community problem, community members' in-depth expertise of

their own situation will be indispensable. Other times, such as when a group is trying to develop solutions to a problem, the academic's broad expertise on the array of possible solutions and their theoretical fit will be important. [2]

There is also a lot of honking in a good CBR effort, because of its social justice focus. This, too, can be challenging for traditionally trained researchers who were taught to be dispassionate, distanced, and objective. All that honking can feel like pressure to skew the interpretation. And becoming one of the honkers can lose one's credibility among those who hold to the old standards of dispassion, distance, and objectivity. It is important to remember, however, that objectivity was only ever a method, never a goal in itself. The goal is accuracy, not objectivity. The important thing is to get the group to its destination, and bad data can't do that any more than bad parenting for a goose can get it to its winter feeding ground. There is no more of a problem facing an activist researcher doing research for a social justice cause than there is for a medical researcher doing research on a new treatment for a dreaded disease.

Most importantly, CBR is about partnering with those who have been wounded—who lack decent housing, decent jobs, decent rights and freedoms—to move the entire flock. One of my favorite quotes comes from Lilla Watson, an Australian Aboriginal activist, who says "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time... But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." The community partners in this work are only wounded, not incapacitated. And their participation in our joint work informs the work of academics as much as academic research can inform community work.

The most powerful illustration of the importance of community leadership in research, told by Canada's David Suzuki and others, comes from a deadly disease that struck the Navajo community in 1993. When the Centers for Disease Control tried to investigate what was killing members of the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, they went in without understanding cultural norms of mourning the dead and community privacy standards. As a consequence, the people they interviewed told them anything just to get them out of the way. The CDC ended up, unknowingly, with useless data. In the interim, more people died. Eventually, a Navajo public health researcher, consulting with a local Navajo Medicine Man, helped manage the cultural differences and they discovered the killer was the mouse-borne Hantavirus. It appears that this virus had already been diagnosed through Navajo "myth" which told of the relationship between excess rainfall and growth in the mouse population, and the bad luck that would befall you if a mouse ran across your clothing. [3] The Centers for Disease Control now cites the knowledge of traditional Navajo healers in its information on Hantavirus [4] and has established community advisory committees around the United States to link community-based knowledge with scientifically-derived knowledge. [5] Lives were lost by ignoring community knowledge, and others were saved by treating that knowledge as legitimate. And the Centers for Disease Control is becoming liberated from old damaging and dangerous knowledge models.

The Theory and History of CBR

For many of us, there are two kinds of research models for working with communities, based in two different theories of society—functionalist theory and conflict theory. The split between these two theoretical approaches have expressed themselves across the social sciences, and especially in sociology, which I will focus on here.

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 maintain some basic degree of equilibrium and place all of their members into the roles for which they are fit. 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.[\[6\]](#) 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.

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's 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.[\[7\]](#)

Functionalist theory fits with social service practices that peacefully integrate people into existing institutional structures.[\[8\]](#) Conflict theory fits with social movement practices that confront and attempt to change existing institutional structures. Likewise, in community-based research, those working from different theoretical worldviews tend to use different research models, which I will call action research and participatory research, using their original labels.

The origin of action research is most associated with Kurt Lewin.[\[9\]](#) He and his colleagues focused on attempting to resolve inter-racial conflicts, along with conducting applied research to increase worker productivity and satisfaction. Action research emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, and does not challenge the existing power relationships in either knowledge production or material production. It has been used in education settings, and in union-management collaboration in research to save jobs and improve worker satisfaction.[\[10\]](#) Action research values useful knowledge, developmental change, the centrality of individuals,

and consensus social theories, and professional researchers are central to the process. The action research model emphasizes collaboration between groups, and does not address the structural antagonism between those groups, reflecting the basic worldview of functionalist theory.

Participatory research and popular education were 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 attempting to take over world agriculture. Their research, education, and planning processes led to sustainable, community-controlled agricultural and development projects. The "participatory research" and "popular education" models resulting from this movement across India, Africa, and South America, have been the leading models around much of the world.^[11] These models also emphasize people producing knowledge to develop their own consciousness as a means for changing oppressive social structures,^[12] consistent with conflict theory. Consequently, the highest form of participatory research is that which is 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, the Applied Research Center, and Project South, are all organizations outside of academia.

Today, however, you can't depend on knowing someone's practice based on the labels they use. Today's action researcher is as likely to be doing participatory research as today's participatory researcher is to be doing action research.

A further complicating factor that effects the CBR model one uses is their organizational or institutional standpoint. United States practitioners tend to divide the community work industry into the advocacy, service delivery, community development, and community organizing. Advocacy--trying to create social change on behalf of others (such as children or illegal immigrants who are unable to advocate for themselves)--and service delivery--what we normally think of as social services--both tend to occur through mid-range mid-level organizations. Community development—defined in the U.S. as providing housing, business, and workforce development--and community organizing--building powerful self-advocacy organizations--are more likely to occur through grass-roots community organizations. Advocacy and community organizing are based more on conflict theory, while service delivery and community development are based more on functionalist theory. As you can see, service provision fits consistently with Action Research and community organizing fits consistently with Participatory Research/Popular Education. Advocacy and community development are "mixed" models, and we don't yet know for sure how well they might combine with action research versus participatory research models.

So why do we call it the new CBR?

Well, a bunch of us academics needed to write about something, and we liked this stuff, so we needed to make it seem new. But, seriously, there is more to it than that. For the first time in its history, the process of doing action- and participation-oriented research with communities is being institutionalized. You can see it everywhere—in federal funding priorities in the U.S. and Canada—and in the development of official college and university programs to engage in a wide variety of “civic engagement” activities. Now, I’m not sure that is necessarily a good thing, even though I and many others have been fighting for it. But despite ourselves we are beginning to institutionalize CBR.

There are two dimensions to the model—one focusing on who is involved in a CBR process and the other on what those people do in a CBR process. The “who” dimension can include community residents, community workers, researchers, students and, sometimes, funders.

The goal is for community residents, whether they are the members of a place-based community such as a neighborhood or a race-, ethnicity-, sexuality-, or other-based identity community, to be integrally involved in the process. Most of us believe that the research question should be generated primarily from community residents, and that they should play a decisive role throughout such a process.

What we often find in CBR projects, however (and this includes mine) is that community workers are often more involved than community residents. Social workers, community development workers, community organizers, and ministers, often have the capacity and time to attend the many meetings required of a good CBR project. This process of “working from the middle” rather than from the grass roots is especially important in disorganized communities. In the best cases, however, those community workers will find ways of building increasing resident involvement into the project.

The researcher can also take a variety of different roles in the new CBR, which can roughly be divided up into the initiator, the consultant, and the collaborator.[\[13\]](#) In many cases, for good or bad, researchers find themselves in the position of being an Initiator, approaching the community with a project. As we will see, there are many potential challenges with this. In other cases, the community approaches the researcher, looking for consulting on specific research services. Rare, but in some ways the most enriching, are those situations where community members and researchers combine their talents in a truly collaborative fashion.

Because CBR has become so higher education centered lately, and so connected to service learning, students have also become important to the process. Their involvement ranges from providing basic labor, to sometimes even taking leadership on projects.

Finally, we must not forget funders, who may seem an unlikely group of people to include in a CBR project. And yet, I have worked with two CBR projects where funders were integrally involved, and the project was better for it as the funders became better informed of the

challenges facing the project and project organizers were able to more directly negotiate the funders' expectations.

The CBR Research Process

When you think of all the possible ways that these five categories of people can be involved in a CBR project, you quickly realize that there is no single best combination of roles and actors. I regularly do training workshops where I ask people to try and determine which of the five categories of actors should be involved at each stage of the research process: Choosing the question, designing the method, gathering the data, analyzing the data, and reporting or acting on the research. Every time I do such a workshop people find new combinations and new justifications. So let me just discuss a few of the possible combinations here.

Choosing the question:

Choosing the question involves building a relationship with a community or community group, understanding how the research will fit in with their social change goals, and combining the academic's research expertise with the community group's situational expertise. The Appalachian Center for Community Service at Emory and Henry College held focus groups that involved over 100 people from area community organizations to identify research and service opportunities and support relationship-building between the organizations themselves in the hopes of doing mutually beneficial projects. A number of higher education CBR centers also send a request for proposals to area community organizations to identify possible research questions, and to make an initial contact that can lead to lasting relationships.

Designing the method:

Designing a research method is not a purely technical task. It may also include considerations of how involved the community group wants to be in the actual research, perhaps to build members' skills, to facilitate community education, or even to build community relationships. Surveys might get good information, but face to face interviews might also build relationships. When Professor Thomas Plaut started working with a local physician to improve health care in the communities around Mars Hill College, they started by doing surveys of people's health care needs. But community people who had been surveyed before, and stereotyped by them as poor and dumb, were very reluctant to participate. Instead, the researchers began an 18 month focus group process that ultimately led to a regional emergency 911 phone system. Research methods can also involve intensive water, soil, air, and other testing procedures when health and environmental factors are involved. Helping communities effectively deploy these highly technical research methods becomes paramount in such cases. [\[14\]](#)

Collecting the Data:

Collecting data goes beyond simply getting good information to also involving community members, as they may be able to build and skills and relationships by collecting data together and from each other. Students also enter into this equation as a cheap and eager labor force who can learn a great deal from the hands-on experience. Academic researchers may need to be closely involved when the stakes are high and measurement accuracy is paramount. At the University of Denver, Professor Nick Cutforth and a group of graduate students conducted an evaluation of area after-school programs in partnership with the Piton Foundation and the school administrations. The graduate students designed an evaluation instrument, and trained high school students to interview middle-school students participating in the after school program.

Analyzing the Data:

Academics used to data analysis being a quiet solitary process may find data analysis to in fact be quite boisterous. The academic researcher might only do a rough categorization of information for community meetings where the meaty interpretation is done. Students and community members might sit around a table going over rough drafts to collaboratively shape a report. In Washington DC, the Georgetown University-sponsored Youth Action Research Group gave a workshop on tenant issues in the Mt Pleasant/Columbia Heights neighborhood, using their research data and the workshop analysis led residents to form a tenant's association and start focusing on the problem of absentee landlords.

Reporting the Results:

Finally, the research report could be an oral report at a community meeting, it could be testimony at city council, it could be a glossy brochure, it could be a web site, it could even be (gasp!) a protest. One result of the Old Ashboro mapping project, done with Guilford College students in Greensboro North Carolina, was a mailing to all the absentee landlords owning property in the neighborhood reminding them of the importance of maintaining their properties. In Toledo, Ohio, a neighborhood conducted intensive research on the city budget, and presented their recommendations for dealing with a a severe city budget shortage on the steps of city hall to the tune of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" retitled "We Wish you Would Fix the Budget."

Creative Tensions in the New CBR

As CBR has been brought into institutions of higher learning, combined with compromised forms of service learning, controlled by university grants budgeting formulas, and subjected to traditional academic standards, we are seeing a number of tensions in its practice.

The tensions are not fatal, however. They may even be something to look forward to. What

are creative tensions? Kenneth Benson's "dialectical methodology"[\[15\]](#) uncovers the contradictions between the goals of an organization and the practice of those goals which may create internal tensions. For any project trying to do something creative, such contradictions, or tensions, will exist. In fact, tensions give rise to many creative projects, as people struggle to define their dissatisfaction with the status quo.

Dealt with openly and constructively, creative tensions are healthy conflicts. They are not weaknesses in a program, but simply realities--usually rooted in social structural conditions. Understood this way, participants can see personality conflicts as rooted in external conditions of inequality and make the outside world, rather than each other, the target.[\[16\]](#) People's collective identification of creative tensions, and their collective attempts to manage them, lead to even more program innovations.[\[17\]](#)

What are the creative tensions in CBR?

Community vs. Academy:

This may be the most important creative tension in CBR. It begins with the different structural realities of communities and higher education institutions. First, there is the problem of schedules. Community issues arise and must be dealt with sometimes on a daily basis. A community organization that suddenly finds out about a government proposal to reduce bus service, with a hearing one month away, needs to marshal its troops and its data in short order. But universities and colleges set their course schedules, and academics make their research commitments, far ahead of time, with little flexibility left for last minute projects. Never mind that community projects rarely start and end on an academic term schedule, requiring academic researchers and students to commit to the project outside of the regular academic term schedule.

This creative tension also manifests itself in the different standards for knowledge that exist between universities and communities. Remember, it took the urgency of death to get the Centers for Disease Control to think differently about how it treated the oral traditions of indigenous communities. Those researchers who are sympathetic to less formal forms of knowledge used by communities may find their status and even employment in the university threatened by showing too much sympathy.

Of course, there is also the challenge of who leads in a partnership where the partners may have such different knowledge cultures and power positions. Some researchers attempt to impose their own agendas on communities rather than finding out the community's agendas. The Australian community-based researcher Ernie Stringer cautions that, "When we try to 'get' people to do anything, insist that they 'must' or 'should' do something, or try to 'stop' them from engaging in some activity, we are working from an authoritative position that is likely to generate resistance."[\[18\]](#)

There are, of course, many other more specific forms of this tension, over who controls the data being produced by the research, what responsibilities each side has for the overall project, who gets what proportions of any grant funds supporting the project, and other issues that are endemic to any partnership.

Research vs. Action:

In some ways this could be seen as an extension of the academy vs. community tension, but it occurs even when the project is managed completely within a community. I do a lot of participatory evaluation research with community organizations and community-university partnership efforts. One of the challenges we confront time and time again is that community staff and leaders are running full out just trying to make the program happen. They have little time to devote to planning and contributing information to an evaluation effort—even when it may help them in the end. This can be a serious issue. If the evaluation is dependent on getting access to individuals for interviews, for example, someone has to supply the names and contact information. Making the situation worse, many funders still require recipients to conduct formal evaluations, but provide no extra funds to support those evaluations.

Beyond the resource-derived source of this tension, there is also a cultural source. I am currently engaged in a project trying to understand the research and data needs of Toledo's nonprofit organizations—basically asking what research and data they need to write better grant applications, conduct more useful evaluations, and plan better programs. After one week, with a survey sent out to over 200 organizations, we have a grand total of 10 replies. Research is still seen as something that gets in the way of action, slows it down, and even misdirects it. We could even call it anti-intellectualism if there weren't so many examples to support the groups' charges about the negative impacts of research. Those of us doing CBR, of course, have seen how a very different form of research—one that is controlled by community participants and is focused on meeting community-set goals—can benefit organizations. But we have not been able to fully impact the anti-research culture of community people who have filled out too many forms, submitted to too many externally-controlled evaluations, and been subjected to too many demands for their information without ever seeing a practical result.

Training Students vs. Solving Problems:

In those cases of CBR projects that engage students, we confront another manifestation of the academy vs. community tension, this time focusing on the role of students in CBR, and based in institutional definitions of service learning that have been imported into CBR. Too often, the purpose of service learning is to provide students with a better education rather than to provide communities with better service. Service learning trainers even go so far as to say that the community should be used as a laboratory for students, an approach which leads a

community activist friend of mine to ask “what does that make us, dead frogs?”[\[19\]](#) There is also an overwhelming bias within the service learning field toward charity service learning—providing back-end services to those excluded from the system—rather than social change service learning—creating structural change that reduces the need for charity. [\[20\]](#) Among other negative impacts of such a bias is a danger that it reinforces students' stereotypes of the excluded as helpless and incompetent.[\[21\]](#)

The tension in such cases is that communities are looking for qualified and committed assistance in social change projects, but receive students who are neither fully trained nor fully committed to taking guidance from the community and discover that the supervision and training burden they have to endure actually reduces their organizational effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, students are typically unable to commit to a CBR project beyond the end of the term, leaving either the community or the supervising professor to try and pull the project together and actually meet the community's needs.

Service vs. Social Change

Service versus social change is the biggie. This tension goes back to our early discussion of functionalist versus conflict theory, and whether one believes cooperation or confrontation is the most fundamental social change strategy. This tension is as basic as the debate between whether we need to train individuals to make them ready for the responsibilities of homeownership, or whether we need to change the regulation of the mortgage and housing markets to make homeownership more realizable.

This is a particularly important tension for those of us working in, or partnering with, social service organizations. For most service organizations are not organized to promote the participation of their clientele in organizational goal setting. Imagine, for example, a homeless service organization run by a board of homeless individuals. I am told of one homeless agency that commissioned a study of the most important issues facing the homeless. Well, as you might guess, the results came back with the usual stuff like education, employment, mental health services, etc. But then a community organizing group came along, and involved homeless folks in determining what their greatest needs were. Their greatest expressed need focused on the indignity of having to stand in line every day to receive three sheets of toilet paper. That was the issue they cared about the most, and was the starting place for building a sense of dignity from which they could move on to other issues.[\[22\]](#) It's not that social service agencies oppose social change. Indeed, the staffs of such organizations are often on the front lines of advocacy efforts. But their organizations are not structured for such efforts any more than educational institutions are. In many cases, then, using CBR for actual social change often rests on the shoulders of mavericks both on the higher education side and on the nonprofit side.

Creative Tension Innovations

So what innovations can come from such tensions?

Academy vs. Community

One of the most interesting innovations being produced by this tension is what one day may be called the “flash seminar.” In the two cases of this that I know of, an organization received a grant that included funds for community-based research. Those funds released a professor from a regular course, in its place creating a special seminar for students interested in working on the community project. I was one of those professors. It wasn't easy—kind of like setting up dominoes. You have to find someone to teach the course you were originally signed up for, and you have to find students willing to sign up for your seminar. In these two cases only a handful of students signed up. Thankfully, in my case, three of those students were willing to continue through independent study to finish the project in the summer.

Another important innovation that has come from the tension between community and academy is the memorandum of understanding, also called a memorandum of agreement. This is a semi-formal document detailing what responsibilities each partner has in the project, what resources they will contribute, the project timeline, and ownership and use of the data. It is not quite at the level of a legal agreement, since that would require the university lawyers getting involved and who would want that! But it forces each party to make a commitment to the project and be held accountable for its part. [\[23\]](#)

A third innovation to come from this creative tension is the publication of CBR work, in some cases by community-university author teams. There are now many journals that will consider CBR-related papers. Journals such as the Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, which also publishes CBR work, have seen exponential growth in subscribership. And we are getting books published as well, including the joint-authored book on CBR that I was part of and a second book I am currently finishing. It's still not getting into the top disciplinary journals except in rare cases, which makes it difficult for junior faculty at the most haughty PhD-granting institutions to do CBR, but for the rest of us there is now a margin of safety.

Research vs. Action

Integrating research and action continues to be challenging under our current resource-poor circumstances. But even here there are some interesting innovations. The Centers for Disease Control in the United States is pouring large sums of money into community-based participatory research centers devoted to public health concerns. Canada's own Community-University Research Alliances program is actually a step ahead of the United States program in supporting not just university-based CBR projects, but real community-based CBR projects. I also sit on the board of the Sociological Initiatives Foundation, which funds projects integrating research and action.

The struggle to change cultural attitudes toward research both within and without the academy has also produced innovations. The Loka Institute has sponsored regular gatherings of community organizations who are doing their own community-based research. A recently completed project, sponsored through the Corella and Bertram Bonner Foundation, helped build CBR networks in five metropolitan areas and Appalachia. This symposium is one of many local gatherings occurring to help academics and community workers and leaders think further about the integration of research and action, and I tip my hat to the organizers who scraped this thing together even without the grant they had worked so hard for.

Training Students vs. Solving Problems:

As intractable as this tension seems, here too we are seeing important innovations. One, pioneered by Pat Donohue at Middlesex County College in New Jersey, uses community service, service learning, and community-based research as graduated steps. Community service activities are disconnected from any classroom learning objectives. Service learning takes the model to the next step, linking that volunteer service work with in-class learning objectives. CBR is yet another advance, as students trained in various research methods put their skills into practice on a real community-based project. At Middlesex County College, the Community Service Corps is the recruiting ground for faculty looking for students to participate in service learning and advanced CBR projects. In some cases, students expand their work with the same agency, as when the community service students who were dishing out food at a shelter received training to conduct an evaluation for that shelter that involved getting participation from the people using shelter services. The Center for Assessment and Research Alliances (called CARA) at Mars Hill College recruits students from research methods classes as "apprentices" to CARA for basic data gathering, entry and cleaning work. Those who excel can be trained as CARA staff "sojourners," who help design projects and carry them through to completion. Each year two or three students are named CARA Fellows, who are responsible for running the center, helping organize projects and training and supervising apprentices and sojourners.

There are also those who are pushing the envelope to bring students into social change work. Tony Robinson's work at the University of Colorado at Denver engages students in research with housing advocates, environmental activists, and other groups.[\[24\]](#) And he is not alone. It is harrowing, messy work in some cases,[\[25\]](#) but these and other scholars are building models of how to use CBR to shift students from charity to social change work.

Service vs. Social Change

Service versus social change is the most difficult tension to develop creativity from. We live in very difficult times in the United States, where questioning and confronting power is seen as more treasonous than at perhaps any time since the 1950s. At the same time, United States academic and community cultures have become conflict avoiding at almost any cost. The

rejections of confrontational models of community organizing in favor of unrealistic “win-win” mythologies, where corporate lions and community lambs supposedly can lay side by side for mutual benefit, are at an all-time high. In Canada, where confrontation has not been as necessary to receive minimal levels of social safety net services, a call for more conflict may seem grotesquely characteristic of your naughty neighbor south of the border. But those of us living there are convinced of its necessity as we watch the gap between rich and poor, healthy and sick, powerful and powerless, grow while we all mind our manners. Perhaps the most important innovation in relation to this tension is not connected to what is happening inside the academy, but what is happening outside of it, as more confrontational groups such as ACORN--the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now--engage their members more and more in activist research around issues such as predatory lending.

You, in fact, may be in a much better situation to make innovations out of an integration of service and social change. With a historical culture of a more advanced and humane welfare state, arguably stronger community ties and a greater sense of civic commitment, and less distance between the top and the bottom, turning social service into social change involves fewer shifts in both thinking and relationships, and CBR may provide the bridge to that shift.

Conclusion

So the next time you look up in the sky, to see a flock of geese flying in V formation, think of how well evolution has served them, and how far we have yet to go. And, in classic CBR fashion that seeks and respects knowledge from all things great and small, think of what we can learn from them, what we can learn from each other, and how we can together change the world.

[1] Attributed to Dr. Harry Clarke Noyes ARCS NEWS, Vol. 7, No. 1, January 1992 at <http://www.hotelnewsresource.com/studies/study0195.htm>, but also attributed to anonymous.

[2] For a discussion of these different forms of expertise, see Nyden, P., Figert, A., Shibley, M., & Burrows, D. (1997). *Building community: Social science in action*, Pine Forge Press.

[3] Suzuki, David. 2000. *Hidden Killer: Portrait of an Epidemic*. The Nature of Things, CBC Television, Sunday, June 18 at 5pm. Also Lori Arviso Alvord and Elizabeth Cohen Van Pelt, *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear*, New York: Bantam, 1999.

[4] Centers for Disease Control, 2000, Navajo Medical Traditions and HPS, <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hanta/hps/noframes/navajo.htm>

[5] Chronic Disease Reports and Notes, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION Volume 15 • Number 1 • Winter 2002 http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/cdnr/cdnr_winter0207.htm

[6] Morrow, Paula C. 1978. Functionalism, Conflict Theory and the Synthesis Syndrome in Sociology. *International Review of Modern Sociology*. 8, 209-225. Eitzen, Stanley, and Maxine Baca Zinn. 2000. In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society, 9e. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

[7] Morrow, Paula C. 1978. Functionalism, Conflict Theory and the Synthesis Syndrome in Sociology. *International Review of Modern Sociology*. 8, 209-225. Eitzen, Stanley, and Maxine Baca Zinn. 2000. In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society, 9e. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

[8] see for example Munson, Carlton E. 1978. Applied Sociology and Social Work: A Micro Analysis. *California Sociologist*, 1, 89-104.

[9] Lewin, K. (1948) *Resolving social conflicts; selected papers on group dynamics*. Gertrude W. Lewin (ed.). New York: Harper & Row, 1948.

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