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Reinventing Citizenship The Practice of Public Work

**By the staff and partners of the
Center for Democracy and Citizenship**

**University of Minnesota
Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs
Center for Democracy and Citizenship**

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Center for Democracy and Citizenship

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Introduction

Health care, crime, teen pregnancy, racial conflict, economic development, illiteracy— or positively, creating appealing public spaces, educating our young, conserving our natural environment. Today the failure of institutions and groups from government to service agencies to communities to solve our common problems and to address our common tasks is a widespread theme of public debate. The resounding response has been to restructure or reinvent those institutions. But the first task is to reinvent citizenship.

We need to renew Abraham Lincoln's vision: democratic government is of the people, by the people, and for the people not simply an agency whose experts act on our behalf. Democracy relies on strong, active citizenship inside and outside of government.

In American history, the citizen has been not only a voter or a rights-bearing member of the nation or a consumer of services. The citizen has also been a producer, a public-spirited agent in problem solving and common work. But today, such citizenship is difficult to sustain. People see themselves in narrow roles, not as public actors. The service society that we live in service and information-based, hierarchically organized, fragmented along lines of specialization turns citizens into consumers, clients, advocates, or experts.

Yet addressing the tough challenges we face today will require people to reconceive of themselves as citizens. Professionals in and beyond government will need to see themselves as civil servants, part of the wider give and take process of problem solving not as experts with the answers. Clients, protesters, and volunteers will need to see themselves, in relationship with professionals, institutions, and many different associations, as serious actors with insight and capacity to bring to problem solving in public settings.

It will require widespread civic involvement that taps the common sense, energy, insight, and effort that comes from citizens with different talents and points of view working together, often across lines of sharp cultural, partisan, racial, and economic differences. Without active citizenship, we will continue to struggle with narrow, unfulfilling roles and ineffective institutions. With restored citizenship, we act as co-creators of history, reclaiming our birthright as democratic citizens to be full participants in shaping our common life.

Public Work

Public work is a framework for reinventing an active practice of citizenship. Public work stresses practical public effort by ordinary people in everyday environments such as neighborhoods, schools, 4-H clubs, government agencies, nursing homes, religious congregations, community groups, service organizations, and other settings in helping to create and build to “produce” the world around us.

Pilot projects in many of these settings have tested and shaped the concepts and practice of public work. Pilot projects have been an experiment in the re-definition of public roles and public work. This work takes time and flexibility. It often involves conflict and frustration. Yet it can also lead to greater meaning and effectiveness for individuals and institutions.

Our political and corporate leaders have at last set about to “reinvent government.” But it is up to us all to reinvent *citizenship*. This is our public work.

Power, dignity, moral purpose, connectedness, experimentation — these characterize democratic public life. Reinventing citizenship is a pathway to the renewal of public life.

Building on the work of pilot projects, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship has launched a long-term national campaign for the renewal of active citizenship of which *Reinventing Citizenship* is one piece. More information on this joint effort with the Walt Whitman Center at Rutgers University, the Council for the Advancement of Citizenship, the Lilly Endowment, Extension Services, David Mathews, Kettering Foundation, and others is in the appendices.

Reinventing Citizenship

Reinventing Citizenship draws upon the experience of pilot project participants to illustrate the potential of active citizenship for reinvigorating public institutions and public problem solving. These are supplemented by books, articles, and other resources listed in the appendices. Reinventing Citizenship is built on several premises:

For citizenship to be serious, it must be tied to a politics of everyday work and problem solving. The narrow conceptions of politics and public affairs held today limit the roles we can play in public life. *Politics* originally meant *of the citizen*. It refers to the methods and practices we use to decide things. All institutions, and cultures have a politics: the way they approach work, define roles and relationships, and organize their environments.

Reinventing citizenship as the productive serious practice of public work requires recognizing that politics is the everyday activity of problem solving and building our environments—not a narrowly professional or partisan activity but part of our everyday lives in our public institutions. We call our overall framework and philosophy *public work*. *Citizen politics* or civic organizing, is a method for organizing and change that puts citizens at the center. This publication further explores these concepts and practices.

Citizenship is continually developed over time. Citizenship requires practice. Our skills, concern, and understanding as citizens are constantly evolving and changing. Citizenship the ongoing contribution of citizens to solving community and public problems and creating the world around us and its skills and values are best cultivated in everyday community and institutional contexts.

Active citizenship is practiced and developed through associations and mediating institutions. Mediating institutions and associations are the spaces in which we do our public work and through which we govern our society. From schools to community groups to 4-H clubs, they connect individuals and communities to the larger public world. Yet these settings have largely lost their public missions and the active practice and development of citizenship as we have moved toward a service society.

Reinventing citizenship takes place in the context of renewing these institutions, associations, groups, and the larger relationships which tie them together. Educating individuals alone will not alter our conceptions and practice of citizenship. To reclaim public work for citizens requires changing the places in which that work is done. This publication outlines a process and some strategies based on citizen politics for using public work to restructure places where serious citizenship is learned and practiced.

William H. Hastie, the first black Federal judge, described democracy in terms that can also be applied to citizenship: “*Democracy is a process, not a static condition. It is becoming, rather than being. It can be easily lost, but is never finally won.*” In this spirit we invite participation and feedback from our readers. Citizenship is an open, contested idea. It requires discussion, debate, and practice. And, like democracy, it must be created and sustained by us all.

Chapter One

Reinventing Citizenship

In this chapter:

- ✓ *Today, our **public life** has become fragmented, polarized, and dominated by expertise to such an extent that our public work is ineffective and often trivialized. Reinventing citizenship is a means of renewing public life.*
- ✓ *We have strong **democratic traditions** to draw on in reinventing citizenship.*
- ✓ ***Citizenship**, though a contested term, connotes the greatest common denominator for diverse people to claim a common identity and basis for collaborative work at the heart of a vibrant, democratic public life.*
- ✓ ***Politics** is everywhere. To revitalize public life, we need a new conception of politics that we can use as a tool for effective public action where we live and work.*
- ✓ ***Public work** is broader than politics. It is an understanding of the world as something we constantly make and remake, and it is an understanding of ourselves as productive, creative people, who make and build things.*

A Declining Public Life

The man on the television talk show was furious. "The savings and loan crisis is a terrible thing," he said. "*Taxpayers* shouldn't have to pay for that mess. *Government* should pay for it!"

The talk show participant expressed a widespread belief: Government is over there, somewhere, doing something for us, and not very well. *Private citizens*, as innocent outsiders, are not responsible for the mess. They are just clients or consumers of the state's services. At the same time, *public officials* have become specialized experts or professionals, based on their narrow expertise and responsibilities. Indeed, experts in every arena are responsible for solving our problems, and we have increasingly come to seek their services as the solution.

The narrow roles and outsider/consumer consciousness symbolized by the taxpayer's lament have crippled our capacity to govern and to solve public problems effectively. And they have undermined sources of meaning and empowerment in our lives. We have lost both our civic muscles—our political capacity—and our instruments and tools—our institutional and social environments—for acting as citizens who are co-creators and producers of society. This is the crisis we face in America today in many settings and institutions, not simply in government.

A fundamental problem underlies the failure of our institutions and less formal groups to effectively address critical issues and to engage and fully develop the leadership capacities of all people—experts and clients, voters, and protestors alike. This is the erosion of a democratic public life and the idea and practice of productive citizenship. Our public life has become fragmented, polarized, and dominated by expertise to such an extent that our public work is ineffective and often trivialized.

Reinventing government, the community service movement, total quality management, the politics of meaning: these and other approaches to this crisis have been touted. Yet these approaches address only parts of the problem or fail to address its underlying causes.

We argue that reinventing active, participatory notions of *citizenship*, *work*, and *politics*, altering our roles and practices as individuals and institutions accordingly, is an effective way to address this crisis. Our approach, called *public work*, builds on our democratic traditions and today's practices for effective civic organizing and citizenship education. Public work is a way to renew and reclaim an active, democratic public life, inside and outside of government.

Using terms like *citizen*, *work*, *public*, and *politics* can be problematic. People rarely ever consider themselves citizens; for some the term is even oppressive. For many, politics is not fulfilling, engaging, or productive. Finally, people often think of "public" as simply government. But we believe these words are important. Moreover, they can catalyze the renewal of public life in our everyday environments. In this and the following chapters we'll explore the traditions behind citizenship and public work, what we mean by them, and why we use them.

**Civic disaffection
"is tainting public
discourse with
rancor, encircling
politicians with
criticism on all sides,
robbing people of
their confidence
in the future, and
making the nation
susceptible to
the deceptive
blandishments of
a demagogue."**

*Minneapolis Star and
Tribune Editorial, 1994*

Where everyman is participator in the government of affairs, not merely at an election one day in the year but every day, he will let the heart be torn out of his body sooner than his power be wrested from him by a Caesar or a Bonaparte.

Thomas Jefferson, 1816

Democratic Traditions

Active, participatory understanding of citizenship and public work are not new. Throughout our history, Americans from all walks of life have used voluntary associations, movements, and other institutions to solve public problems and develop public leadership, from insurgent movements like temperance and populism to ongoing institutions like the YWCA and unions.

Such experiences should not be romanticized. They were often parochial and exclusive. But through them, many people learned civic skills and developed a civic identity. People encountered an intergenerational mix of ages, interests, and points of view. They learned to argue artfully, to think strategically about their public work, and to work together across lines of difference. Public work was understood as the way to deal with public problems and do public tasks, and took place in many settings, not simply government.

The Immigrant Experience

Vibrant histories like those of the immigrant area of the West Side of St. Paul tell how people became citizens, in their view, through street corner debates, activities at the settlement house, the formation of groups like the Workmen's Circle, and the work of building schools, parks, churches, and synagogues. These stories portray not only community involvement but also people's sense of public work on the larger civic stage. For instance, people from the West Side talk about helping to create the New Deal. When asked what they mean, they say they were involved in the union or the settlement house or the local school, and that work fed the New Deal and Minnesota politics.

Through such experiences people learned a number of public skills, building on the democratic heritages they brought with them and found here: how to deal with different kinds of people, the give-and-take, messy quality of public life, the art of argument, ways to map out power relationships and the politics of particular environments, and ways to be connected to the larger world. That process created a common fund of wealth and resources in the society. It was an experience of politics and citizenship as public work that taught skills and wider understanding of civic identities which included, but was not limited to, their role and stake in the nation.

The Civil Rights Movement

In another example, an understanding of freedom as public participation and citizenship was at the heart of the civil rights movement. Charles Gomillion described efforts to bring about political equality in Tuskegee, for instance, as "civic democracy . . . a way of life in which all citizens have the opportunity to participate in societal affairs."

Public participation and citizenship were central themes in the movement, generating Citizenship Schools and Freedom Schools. These schools registered disenfranchised black voters, but also taught thousands of local leaders new approaches to citizen action. Teachers and students were peers. Lessons drew directly on participants' experiences. The formal political process was connected to problems in people's daily lives. This experience generated a transformative sense of politics. Unita Blackwell, a leader of the Mississippi

Freedom Democratic Party who was elected mayor of Mayersville, described her experience: “We found ourselves involved in working in political work. We still ain't figured all of it out yet, but it's been just wonderful.”

This sense was echoed in the movement's freedom language. Freedom meant the capacity to participate and contribute as full, independent, and powerful citizens in public affairs. Public participation made real in the movement's rallies, sit-ins, demonstrations, voter registration drives, Freedom Schools, and other activities generated the movement spirit, despite violent opposition and situations of great danger. Freedom involved self-naming, taking the definition of one's self back from others. The theme of freedom lent a new sense of collective power, the ability to act with others around expansive ends, to shape the larger public world.

It is to fulfill this democratic promise of creative, serious roles in the shaping of our common world that we argue the need to reinvent citizenship and public work.

Why Citizenship?

Citizenship is a powerful but contested theme. In this nation comprised largely of immigrants, citizenship has many layers of meaning for various communities. To some, a good citizen votes and obeys the law. Others think citizens also have the right or duty to monitor government for corruption or fairness. Some see citizenship as participation in a shared community of values. We all share certain values because we're Americans. In these terms, citizenship can be sentimentalized, or turned into a “right” way of thinking, as in the slogan, “America: love it or leave it.” Today, while more people may be defined as *citizens*, few would claim the term in a strong way. The substance and meaning of citizenship has become thin and weak. And as the term *private citizen* reflects, it has lost its connection to public life for many.

Yet as people learn the leadership skills of effective action to solve public problems and as they learn to relate their efforts to the larger well-being of communities and the nation, citizenship takes on new life and resonance. Historically, citizenship has vividly come to life in the democratic movements that fought to expand the definition of citizen to recognize African-Americans, women, the poor, and working people as citizens with full rights. Or in the settlement houses where immigrants, working class people, and the settlement house workers learned and practiced active citizenship as they built and maintained strong communities.

Citizenship raises particular questions and conflicts born of the historical, political, and legal experience of people of color in America. For the Native American, it may symbolize a status imposed on them by force. For Latino and Asian-Americans, it brings up questions of legality and documentation. For African-Americans, full citizenship became imaginable only after slavery was abolished but seemed possible only after their own self-determination and resolve turned aspirations into action through the sweeping movements of the 1950s and 1960s. As Dr. Martin Luther King stated, “This growing self-respect has inspired the [African-American] with new determination to struggle and sacrifice until first class citizenship becomes a reality.”

In a neighborhood dispute, there may be stunts, rough words, and even hot insults; but when a whole people speaks to its government, the dialogue and the action must be on a level reflecting the worth of that people and the responsibility of that government.

Martin Luther King, Jr., John Lewis, James Farmer, and others, from the March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom, 1963

The state is as real as the people who compose it. The duties of citizenship are as definite as the duties of housekeeping. Only as these self-evident facts are fully appreciated will women be able to share in those many and splendid reforms which we can see must come in our life.

*Woman Citizens Library,
1913*

For communities of color, citizenship offers either a conceptual stumbling block or entry into the American dream of promise for full participation in democratic governance. Stripped of its legal denotations, though, citizenship connotes the greatest common denominator for diverse people to claim a common identity and basis for the collaborative public work at the heart of a vibrant, democratic public life.

Active Citizenship

Active, public citizenship begins and is grounded in our everyday institutional environments—the places we live and work, go to school, volunteer, participate in communities of faith. It is public-spirited and practical; not utopian or immaculate but part of the messy, difficult, give-and-take process of problem solving. Citizenship links our daily life and interests to larger public values and arenas. Through citizenship we build and exercise our power.

Active citizenship is tied to an understanding of public life as diverse, contentious, and linked to, but distinct from, private and communal life. Thus the role of *citizen* can connect people across lines of difference for the purpose of governing and problem solving, drawing on cultural identities and other communities while remaining distinct.

Reinventing this active understanding of citizenship is important today, in our view, for at least three reasons:

- ***A birthright.*** Human beings have both *the birthright and the capacity to help create the world*, not only in their immediate environments, but also on the larger public stage. Claiming and developing that capacity has a dramatic, often transformative effect.

- ***Effective problem solving.*** It is increasingly obvious that Americans cannot *successfully address the problems we face* without the reinvention of citizenship, inside and outside government. Crime, drugs, teen pregnancy, school reform, and a host of other issues will not be dealt with in sustained, full, or effective terms without widespread civic participation or without enlisting the insights, energies, and talents of the diverse citizenry.

- ***A vision.*** Citizenship, understood as the challenging, difficult, ongoing work of creating our society together, of rebuilding the nation from the bottom up, is the avenue through which we can develop *a larger vision of America* and address the crisis in meaning widely discussed today. What we need is a concept of our nation as our common creation, our common work, our commonwealth. Through wide participation in common tasks we will be able to realize a more just and free society, as well as to clean up the mess of social problems that we threaten to leave to later generations.

Why Politics?

That is the challenge and the rationale for citizenship. But in order to reinvent citizenship as part of our everyday life and the way we effectively participate in shaping the public world, we also need to reinvent politics.

Today, most people want to avoid politics, especially in everyday environments (i.e., office politics or school politics). They see politics as sleazy, corrupt, and cynical, and they imagine themselves as innocent

outsiders. As a result, most people also lose the middle ground of public action where the point is neither to win nor just to talk, but rather to engage in the complex work of creating the public world.

A strong sense of citizenship requires a broader understanding of politics: Politics is an aspect of the public work of problem solving and governance, full of ambiguity and practical tasks and taking place in everyday environments. This understanding allows people to recognize and develop their varied public roles and capacities. It highlights the fact that politics is everywhere: every individual, institution, community, or arena practices some kind of politics. Politics here is understood as cultural practices of power and governance, how decisions get made. It includes the customs, habits, structures of power and governance, and formal and informal rules in the environments in which we live and work.

Citizen politics starts from this understanding of politics and adds democratic goals and practices. With citizen politics, politics becomes a deeply responsible form of activity, through which people come to see themselves as accountable public actors who are able to combine their ideals with effective strategies for dealing honestly with the world as it is, full of messiness and compromise.

In Chapter 4 we further explain the conceptual foundation of public work: public, diversity, self-interest, and power. The next two chapters will explore in more depth how we currently *do* politics.

Why Public Work?

Public work is cooperative civic work that is visible and widely acknowledged as significant. Public work helps build our larger common pool of wealth and resources—our commonwealth.

Public work can be paid or voluntary. It can be done in communities. Or it can be done in institutions and across institutions as part of one's regular job. In fact, adding public dimensions to one's occupation—recognizing the larger potential significance and impact of what one does as a teacher or nurse, as a county extension educator or a computer programmer or a machinist or a college professor or anything else—often can turn an unsatisfying job into much more significant work.

American citizenship in its most expansive sense is understood as public work—visible effort on common tasks of importance to the community or nation, involving many different people. This older view of citizenship is grounded in people's everyday workplace and living environments. Public work is work that the public believes important. Thus, it is always subject to argument and interpretation. Public work makes things. It builds things. It creates social as well as material culture.

Our most common associations with the idea of public work are “public works,” in which the focus is on the products themselves. Public works include water mains and roads, sewer systems and bridges, and other parts of the infrastructure. Cities have departments of public works. Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal organized a Public Works Administration.

Politics was the theme of discussion morning, noon and night. The women talked politics over the dishwashing, and during their social calls. Politics has made them read and think more, and in new and different lines.

*Elizabeth Piper En-
sley, reported in The
Women's Era, on the
occasion of women's
first vote in Colorado
in 1894.*

Political freedom means the right to be a participator in government, or it means nothing.

Hannah Arendt, On Revolution, 1963

Public works also extend beyond function and usefulness. Public works can express the grandeur, the beauty, even the highest aspirations of a civilization. In the United States, San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge is a public work, as are the majestic figures carved from Mount Rushmore. The Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials grace the capital, conveying our democratic traditions. Though public works of a cultural and social nature may seem more difficult to identify than roads and public buildings, they are nonetheless a vital part of our environment. Music, dance, and art, like other cultural practices, can be public.

When the emphasis is simply on the product, however grand the creation or however noble the aspiration, democracy is not part of the equation. The work activity itself—those who do the work and how—remain hidden and in the background.

In fact, public work understood simply as products may convey the opposite of democracy. Public works can conjure up the image of oppressed and brutalized masses, like the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt, or “coolie labor”—the abused Chinese workers who built the American railroads. The invisibility of work in those things that are grand public creations highlights a painful contrast: while the importance of the thing itself may be recognized on the largest public stage, those who create the thing may be rendered insignificant in comparison.

When “public work” as a term first appeared in America, it had a broader range of associations than it does today. Public work was understood to create public goods, even if by private businesses and corporations, that were thus subject to public deliberation and regulation. Farmers, artisans, teachers, merchants and others often saw their work in more public terms than is now common.

In the fullest sense of the term, public work takes place not solely with an eye to public consequences. It also is work of a public, a mix of people whose interests, backgrounds, and resources can be quite different. This requires political skills such as listening, bargaining, understanding diverse self-interests, and being able to map power relations. Everyday politics (or *citizen politics*) is an important aspect of public work, but it is not the same thing.

Public work focuses attention on something that we have largely lost sight of in our age of high technology, a point larger than politics: we help to build the world through our common effort. Public work develops our core identities as citizens who are broad producers, rather than simply consumers or clients or experts or any narrower role. It liberates our talents and capacities. What we build and create we can also recreate. Thus, public work also makes clear that the world is open and fluid, not static and fixed. It helps to regenerate hope in our time.

The Citizen Politics of Health

The Lazarus Project is a four year old effort to develop an alternative to the medical and therapeutic models that typically govern decision making in nursing homes. Augustana Home is a large, nonprofit Lutheran nursing home in Minneapolis that employs an administrator, 15 managers, and 500 staff members for its 370 residents. The nursing home is associated with a larger campus of 400 apartments in four adjoining high rise buildings. Augustana is a not-for-profit organization whose revenue sources are largely Medicare and Medicaid. The effort was funded through a capital campaign in 1989 that had as one of its goals to build a more “empowering community.”

The Lazarus Project has sought to create an alternative “public community” that integrates civic concepts into the everyday work of staff and residents. The project has demonstrated that even within highly structured, hierarchical environments such as nursing homes, staff, family members, and frail elderly residents are willing to take on more substantial roles in decision making and problem solving in order to shape the environments in which they live or work. It illustrates the energy and power of public life, even where least expected.

Civic concepts

At the heart of the Lazarus strategy has been an approach to leadership development adapted from the most effective strategies in community organizing. Such an approach stresses the importance of ongoing discussion about core civic ideas, deepened and integrated as people apply them in daily work. Concepts include politics itself, public spaces and their differences from private environments, the diversity of interests, and power conceived as care interactive and relational.

This approach to leadership development is different from most organizing training, which stresses techniques and skills (how to chair meetings, write leaflets, put on public hearings, and so on). Teaching civic concepts develops competence in critical thinking, debate, and reflection. More subtly, but perhaps most important, it generates the kind of robust political self-confidence that has been lost in modern life, but which is especially critical to any process of democratizing information and service environments. Skilled conceptual thinking about politics conveys the simple but transformative message that ordinary people as well as those who are credentialed as experts can think well and seriously; it testifies that people can be theorists of their everyday experience and of the larger world.

Civic concepts are especially difficult to introduce and bring to life in a nursing home. The focus is on care, nurturance, and rehabilitation, not on solving common problems. Yet the introduction of civic concepts can also create dramatic change. However much of it goes against the grain: staff, family, and residents also desire a more open, public process of conversation that brings difficult problems to the surface, instead of suppressing them.

Public spaces

A poignant example occurred early in the project, when a chaplain intern remarked to a joint committee of residents and staff that it was hard for her to see so many people die. Augustana, like most nursing homes, avoided open discussion of death. Staff had been convinced that the subject would unduly upset residents. Yet, in this session an earlier discussion of the concept of public spaces as arenas for talking about difficult problems led to a breaking of the silence. Resi-

The Citizen Politics of Health by Nancy Kari and Harry Boyte, Excerpted from the article that appeared in *Dissent*, Spring 1994.

dents responded, “We know the topic is hard for the staff; that’s why we don’t talk about it. But to us it seems a natural part of the process of moving into a nursing home.”

A serious conversation about death developed. Some staff thought that discussion of death might threaten the image that Augustana wished to project, as a place for living. But residents talked about wishing to be in charge of the process of dying, even if this meant not complying with staff expectations or rules. In response, staff spoke of their anxiety when what they thought of as “best possible care” conflicted with resident wishes.

The committee convened a large public forum to discuss death and dying, with participation of staff, residents, and others connected to the nursing home. Many recommendations emerged for changes in community rituals related to death. Perhaps most important, the public discussions helped establish a more open process in which residents and staff alike asked questions, shared stories, and discussed struggles with dying. This greater openness has infused many staff, resident, and family interactions. “There’s more conversation now,” said Kathryn Kading, director of nursing at Augustana. Ways to develop rituals and richer conversations about death and dying are now incorporated into Augustana’s planning process.

In other instances, too, people at Augustana have experienced an enhanced sense of power in situations that otherwise render them helpless. The way residents and staff addressed a near-universal nursing home complaint slow staff response to resident “call lights” illustrated this pattern. Grievances about response times normally result simply in unanswered demands for increased staffing. Yet in this case, residents organized public forums to discuss the use of call lights to summon help, involving staff and residents alike. The forums provided space to air varying points of view and to generate solutions that neither staff nor residents alone had imagined. Most important, they dealt with deeper issues for which there are no easy solutions, such as feelings of dependency and overwhelming responsibilities. Talking about these led to more effective use of call lights by residents and more attentiveness by staff.

Institutional change

Augustana has not undergone a complete transformation as a result of the Lazarus Project, but it has seen notable changes. Departments such as nursing and therapeutic activities now have much more open negotiations about issues such as staffing patterns and hours. The therapeutic activities department has openly debated how to distribute allotments for salary increases. New staff get much more detailed explanation of the reasons for patterns of staffing, and supervisors report higher morale. Managers have sought a less personalized and cautious style of interaction, showing that one can disagree in public and still maintain respectful relationships.

Civic organizing

The process of citizen politics in health settings provides a way the different actors providers, regulators, educators, those cast as clients, family, or community members can develop more collaborative practices. Changes in roles and identities are required, as well as changes in institutional arrangements.

“If there is no struggle, there is not progress. ... Power concedes nothing without demand, it never did and never will,” Frederick Douglass once observed. Democratic change in health settings necessarily involves conflict and difficulty. Yet power relationships in health settings are different than in most environments familiar to progressives through labor or community organizing or advocacy campaigns. Authority in health resides in knowledge often assiduously acquired, which cannot quickly or simply be transferred. Confrontation alone can rarely bring about lasting change. Strategies for democratization need to include more than conflict and struggle. The importance of creating larger civic contexts in which people can rethink their actions, as is evident in the Lazarus Project, is relevant to health issues more generally.

Health care reform

The health reform debate needs to engage people far more deeply about the civic roles and responsibilities we all will have to take on as members of families, communities, and the nation. Citizenship, taken seriously, involves responsible public action. And health addresses profound questions of our lives and our society: how we deal with aging, infirmity, violence, environmental health hazards, our power over our own destinies, death itself. To create a workable health system in both the short and longer term means we will have to move from the question, “What’s in it for me?” to an understanding of what we can accomplish by collective action. Democracy, understood as the renewal of a vibrant public life that can break apart Weber’s iron cage, must come to health environments if we are to make lasting progress toward creating a genuinely healthy society.

Questions



At the end of each chapter we will pose a few questions, mainly aimed at applying the chapter's theory to your situation. They can be used by you personally, or with a group for discussion. Add questions you find helpful. Investigate the reference materials at the back if something interests you, or if you disagree with something. Evaluate the theory presented here against your own experience.



1. *How do you think about or define citizenship? Politics? Public work?*

2. *Where did you learn those ideas?*

What traditions or practices are they based on or what reinforce them?



3. *What other historical or cultural conceptions or definitions are you aware of?*

4. *What do you associate with the word public? What aspects of your daily life are public (at home, at work, elsewhere)? Private?*

Chapter Two

Citizenship in a Service Society

In this chapter:

- ✓ *In the twentieth century, institutions became **service-centered** and took on approaches that were narrow, hierarchical, and expert-defined.*

- ✓ *This service orientation led to the **detachment of problem solving and governance** from everyday environments and local sources of knowledge.*

- ✓ *This **limited and fragmented public roles**, for professionals and for those defined as clients or consumers.*

Today professionals must be able to offer the benefits of their extraordinary knowledge to other individuals to whom they can exercise authority and enjoy the autonomy to which they lay claim.... The client acts as though he agreed, in turn, to accept the professional's authority in his special field, to submit to the professional's ministrations, and to pay for services.

*Donald Schon,
The Reflective
Practitioner, 1991*

Institutions and the Service Society

A variety of institutions and groups connect people's everyday economic, political, and social lives to larger arenas of problem solving and governance. They create a context for contributing to the broader world. They range from women's groups to unions, schools, churches, and 4-H groups, from the places we volunteer to the places we work. Through these mediating networks, groups, and institutions we learn and practice citizenship based on their particular political practices. In this chapter, we'll explore the shift to what is often called a "service society" and how it has affected these settings, and thus the practice of citizenship and politics. The next chapter will look more closely at the political practices in different kinds of settings.

The Problem of Scale

Throughout the nineteenth century, small towns and the rural landscape provided the context for most people's lives from birth to death. The explosive growth in voluntary organizations contributed to a broadening definition of "citizenship" and public affairs. Democracy suggested New England town meetings, or informally, decisionmaking in business and voluntary groups.

But the developments of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries radically changed the texture of political and social experience. In enormous cities, many scarcely knew their neighbors, much less those on the other side of town. Waves of immigrants brought new customs, traditions, and languages. Mass communications technologies weakened the ties between the press and the citizenry, and shattered the boundaries of local places.

Aside from a new rising professional class, most Americans continued to identify with their locales, traditions, and cultures. But their worlds seemed increasingly shaped by distant forces over which they had little control. Corner grocers gave way to chain stores. Local decisions over education were removed to state or national bureaucracies. The weakening of citizens' power and authority in the midst of large-scale institutions was accelerated, moreover, by the growing authority of specialists and experts.

The locus of civic involvement shifted from voluntary association and community activity to government itself. In the view of many Progressive reformers, citizens would shape the "great community" of the state through various public agencies and electoral reforms—regulations, direct election of senators, referenda and initiative, and the like.

As large government agencies and corporate structures came to predominate, a new generation of managers and technical specialists developed who drew their basic metaphors and language from science. "Old functions of child welfare and training have passed over into the hands of sociologists, psychiatrists, physicians, home economists, and other scientists dealing with problems of human welfare," wrote two child guidance experts in 1934. "Through parent education the sum of their experiments and knowledge is given back to parents in response to the demands for help."

A Culture of Professionalism

Americans have since turned to expert services and information, often on a large scale, to solve our public problems and address common tasks. Even mediating groups like churches, volunteer organizations, or schools have

increasingly become professionalized, with problem solving turned over to service providers. The local union moved from the center of community life to a marketing operation around specific benefits. Teenage programs and schools emphasized building self-esteem and taught specialized knowledge as a base for careers. A culture of professionalism detached knowledge from communities and civic life in field after field, emphasizing rationality, methodical processes, and standards of “objectivity,” in place of public deliberation and active citizenship. Professionals came to see themselves as coming in to *fix* problems and meet deficiencies they found in communities.

The limited definitions of that knowledge forms the basis for the expert-driven systems that dominate institutional cultures. In order to practice knowledge, whether it be medicine, communication, parenting, or plumbing, credentialing or licensing is required. Only experts are expected to know the correct response to, or practice judgment around, the fundamental issues that impact our lives, from child raising to international trade.

But experts' effective use of their knowledge is limited. Many institutions, groups and associations have taken on a culture and governing structure based on this narrow expertise. They are hierarchical, bureaucratic, and at the same time so fragmented that resources, both information and capital, are not used effectively. Professionals and managers in isolated departments define the nature of problems, devise “solutions” packaged as programs or services, and make those services available to their clientele. Yet their relationships are sometimes thin and one-sided, leaving everyone unable to grasp the whole problem or to successfully implement a solution. The larger public is characterized as clients, consumers, or victims who access, consume, or protest for the services created by narrow expertise.

Thus professionals, narrowly trained in technique and locked into fragmenting hierarchies, have lost the broader context of relations that cross institutional lines and specialties necessary to be fully creative and effective. They often lack relationship with the knowledge, people, and related resources required to address complicated problems. Individual professionals as well as other citizens often have little room for crafting or shaping products or services as a whole. This is as true for the fast food worker as it is for the extension educator or physical therapist.

Knowledge: Hierarchy or Democracy?

According to Project Public Life, politics in a service society tends toward a knowledge hierarchy. While useful in some instances, a knowledge hierarchy stifles creativity, limits ownership and origination of knowledge, and produces knowledge that is often too narrow to be useful. It ultimately cannot support a democracy, where widespread ownership of knowledge based on expertise and common sense contributes to active participation in public problem solving.

Think about your institution or organization. How is your institution, organization, or learning environment structured? How does it treat knowledge? How does this shape the policies of the institution, and your role? The role of others within the institution? Of clients, volunteers, or others dealt with beyond the institution?

Key Agents	Experts	Citizens
Sources	Science and academic disciplines	Includes local knowledge, expertise, public discussion, experience
Power Dynamic	Hierarchical, one-way	Relational, interactive, reciprocal
Nature of Setting	Fragmented, private, conflict discouraged, politics hidden	Connected, public, diverse interests recognized, open politics
Problem Definition	Removed from context, expert-driven, quantified	Context derived from larger public realm
Work Pattern	Specialized, hurried, few doing "theory"	Integrated, time to think and evaluate
Continuing Education	Technique, one-way, little broad ownership, informational	Defined and driven by participants, conceptual
Outcome © Project Public Life	Expertise, narrow roles, sharp boundaries between institution and rest of environment	Citizenship, judgment, sustained and ongoing institutional change, reclaimed civic mission

Citizens as Public Actors

While we have continued strong traditions of voluntary and community involvement, we have tended to give authority to professionals in all arenas of life. As a result, citizens generally have lost political confidence—confidence in ourselves as public actors with the authority and skills to be effective. Marie Klinghagen, an organizer for Communities Mobilized for Change on Alcohol, observes that “people feel very left out of government and public problem solving today. Though they may have answers and insights, no one has asked them. So the usual coffee shop talk is about the stupidity of government, school, police, courts, and so forth.”

As a result, governance came to be understood as policymaking crafted by experts and professionals and generated outside of the role and everyday environments of citizens. This vacuum between ordinary people's lives and the practice of governance has been filled by other identities and practices more private in nature, less focused on serious public work and public problem solving.

People's imagination and capacity to shape the world has been constricted, imprisoned in excessively narrow definitions of task and role. These trends have also has proven ineffective in solving the problems we face in the modern age—the problems many entered the professions to solve.

Public work is a new freedom movement. It offers a way for professionals to liberate their knowledge by helping to catalyze wide civic action around community problems.

In this chapter, we looked at a general shift to a service-based society and its impact on public life. The next chapter considers more specifically our institutions and organizations and how they make decisions and take action in this environment.

The citizen politics approach to civic education offers potential to help develop a powerful strategic alliance in higher education: combining the growing concern for renewing the civic mission of higher education with the ferment about what it means to educate “professionals” in our world.

Liberal education, especially at land grant institutions, has from its beginning gone beyond academic inquiry and narrowly conceived professional training to prepare students for responsible citizenship in a practical vein. Citizenship, in this sense, conveys the sense of civic usefulness in public problem solving and contribution that founders such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin stressed as the very rationale for higher education. Institutions of higher learning, in this view, have as their fundamental purpose the preparation of students to act as creative, innovative, and public-spirited generalists, public leaders who are, in Jefferson's terms, examples of “talent and virtue.”

Yet in recent decades, the civic mission of higher education has been honored more in ritual and rhetoric than in practice. Education for practical citizenship has been eroded by a long process that thinned out the generalist and civic dimensions of learning. Today, students regularly imagine their lives and future careers in terms that turn upside down the views of Jefferson and Franklin. An understanding of themselves as citizens is, at most, a footnote to training for careers or professions.

Today, higher education at its best may teach critical thinking, but it also tends to fragment knowledge and strip knowledge of civic application. What civic education there is tends to focus on conveying bodies of knowledge, information, and discrete skills. Further along, professional training involves the application of general principles, based frequently on scientific models, to problems of practice.

These narrow, technique- and information-based approaches to education have recently come under a powerful set of criticisms by reformers such as Donald Schon, William Whyte, and the Pew Health Professions Commission. Reformers have observed that a technical approach to training for professional practice prepares students poorly for the challenges of our complex world, where they will face environments of fluidity, uniqueness, and uncertainty. Good practice requires the skills of questioning, collaborative problem solving, strategic action, and a generalist ability to look at problems in context.

Developing a civic language and set of concepts that makes clear that these are the skills of citizenship, broadly defined, can thus reconnect changes in professional education with the larger, fundamental mission of liberal education itself.

Responsible Citizenship in a Practical Vein: Citizenship and Professional Education

*Responsible
Citizenship in a
Practical Vein:
Citizenship and
Professional
Education* by
Harry Boyte

Public Schools: Places of Public Work

***Public Schools:
Places of Public Work***
by Linda Rogers,
Anoka-Hennepin
County (MN)
Parent Involvement
Program. Excerpted
from *Public Life:
The Newsletter of
Project Public Life,*
Summer 1993.)

In the fall of 1992, for the first time, Anoka-Hennepin School District 11 funded a parent involvement program. The district, Minnesota's second largest, serves some 36,000 students in grades K-12. Its school board and administration generally agreed that a design and effort to involve parents in their children's education was needed; they did not have a specific plan in mind.

I was hired to devise and implement a plan to strengthen the education partnership of parents and teachers. The work of Joyce Epstein, the American parent involvement guru from John Hopkins University, was of great help. It provides a scientific rationale for initiating such an effort, as well as a model that defines and encourages many types of involvement. Part of the work of the new Parent Involvement Program is to help build trust between parents and education staff so that the many types of involvement will be incorporated on a daily basis into the way schools operate.

Within one of the types, parent involvement in governance and advocacy, trust building is particularly difficult because many school administrators view themselves as experts who do not need to consult with the community in making decisions. In this type of parent involvement, Project Public Life was key to success by virtue of its persuasive philosophy and its effective strategies for action.

The Project's philosophy and its accompanying language of public work have helped explain, to both parents and staff, that parents have a right to be a part of the school's decision-making process. They do not have to earn it. It is theirs because (public) schools are public work. Though professional educators are hired for their expertise in methodology and management, their contribution is relevant within a context of what the community desires for its children.

Too often, perhaps because of the complexity of community context, schools are "run" by educators in isolation, as if the context does not exist. The District 11 Parent Involvement Program seeks to help school staff honor community context in their daily work, by example, and by sharing specific, practical models of partnership.

District-wide parent groups that have formed this year include a legislative team, a parent involvement advisory council, a "supergroup" of representatives from local school parent groups, and a group of coordinators of volunteers at various schools. All these are efforts to chip away and soften our large, intractable district into an accessible and responsive one; all have been influenced by Project Public Life.

Questions

1. *How is your institution, organization, association or learning environment structured? What is the role of expertise and knowledge?*
2. *A major premise of this argument is that we have shifted from solving problems in our communities by ourselves to asking experts (in government or elsewhere) for services. Do you agree with that? What have been the benefits of a service-based society? The problems? What are the benefits and problems with other options?*



Chapter Three

Politics in a Service Society

In this chapter:

- ✓ *Every environment has a **politics**, though different kinds of institutions have different political norms and practices.*

- ✓ *The way we “do politics” in our institutions now often **limits our roles and does not lead to adequate solutions** to the problems we face.*

- ✓ *Developing more creative, public-oriented roles and **institutions** requires changing the politics of those institutions in which we do our public work.*

Modes of Problem Solving

When we lost the notion of politics as our public work, we didn't lose politics. Politics is everywhere, in all of our mediating institutions and social settings. What we lost was the full creative potential of politics. Politics means, simply, the ways we make decisions.

The service society has shaped the political culture of the arenas in which we live and work: their practices, governing structure and policies, the way their values and goals are carried out, the way their resources are allocated.

Reclaiming these places as space for civic education and public work first requires an understanding of their current political culture and practice what we call their "mode of problem solving." We use this modes chart (on the next page) to help clarify the power structure and political culture operating within these arenas generally. Just as an organizer's map of the power structure, governing practice and norms of an association, community or institution helps guide its work, the chart helps us understand the culture in which we must work to reclaim the settings of our lives.

Four approaches to problem solving include the following:



These modes are not isolated from one another. Rather each is related to the others, either as a result of, or in response to, the inadequacy of any one political practice for governing and problem solving in our common life. For example, the failings of bureaucracies and their reliance on professionals supports protest-oriented responses. Often an institution or group combines two or more modes in its practices, though one will usually predominate. For instance, a hospital or charity organization can be both bureaucratic and therapeutic. A community organization can also have service dimensions. An advocacy group can also be institutional. For a better understanding of each of these problem solving approaches, please refer to the comparison chart.

Modes of Problem-Solving in a Service Society

Institutional/Bureaucratic

Setting:

City council, schools, political parties, United Way, Health and Human Services

Purpose:

Allocation of resources on large scale

Politics:

Management (e.g., Total Quality Management)

Partisanship (e.g., Republicans, Democrats)

Strengths:

Broad-scale effect

Organizes on a large scale

Problems with the mode:

Puts people outside problem solving

Expert driven and client based

Inflexible, stagnant, ineffective

Advocacy/Protest

Setting:

MADD, Sierra Club, ACT-UP, NOW, Eagle Forum, tenant and resident rights councils

Purpose:

Justice, rights

Politics:

Ideology (e.g., Greens, Socialism, Moral Majority, identity politics)

Strengths:

Mobilizes people to make problems/issues dramatic and visible

Helps individuals negotiate bureaucracies

Raises consciousness/educates around public issues

Outlet for moral passion

Problems with the mode:

Focus on mobilization or advocating *for* rather than fuller civic capacity development

Polarizes & fragments problem, roles

Burn out/not sustainable

Therapeutic/Helping

Setting:

Soup kitchens, Big Sibling programs, hospitals, churches, schools

Purpose:

Address needs or deficiencies of individual

Politics:

Caring (e.g., The Politics of Care, Points of Light)

Strengths:

Can expose individuals to diverse experiences

Develops volunteer's sense of contribution, empathy, participation

Provides needed assistance, tangible

Outlet for service values

Problems with the mode:

Expert driven and client based

Limited by intimate, private quality, idealism, focus on individual

Disconnected from larger problem

Community

Setting:

Community organizations, neighborhood health clinics, community development, co-ops

Purpose:

Self-reliance and local problem solving

Politics:

"Small is Beautiful"

Moral community (e.g., communitarianism)

Strengths:

Develops citizen leadership, local institutions

Alters/challenges client-expert relationship

Develops sense of belonging, ownership

Problems with the mode:

Limited in scale, scope

Can be reactive rather than constructive (e.g., the not in my back yard {NIMBY} phenomenon)

Institutional/Bureaucratic Approach

The institutional/bureaucratic approach is practiced in settings like congress, universities, and other, usually large-scale institutions concerned with providing services or allocating other resources. This approach was developed to meet the needs of a large-scale society. It is useful in organizing large projects and populations, with widespread effect.

This approach, though, relies on hierarchical structures and narrow expertise. Consequently it often fragments complex problems and the institutions trying to deal with them. It sets up adversarial relations within an institution or system: parties, departments, even individuals within departments fight each other for resources and security. Problems or deficiencies (and other differences) are generally dealt with by tacking on another program or service, or passing it on to the boss, rather than through a holistic approach that uses people's talents and creates judgment around a problem through open debate, consideration of diverse perspectives, evaluation, and reflection on past practice.

Top-down management styles and expert-driven services leave little room for creativity, thoughtfulness, strategic action, or evaluation. *Public work* consists of activity or crisis management, rather than action, for most based in this approach. Solutions are often partial and ineffective. And the institutions and systems are often inflexible and stagnant, unable to adjust to changes in their field or the larger world.

Therapeutic/Helping Approach

Former president George Bush attempted to address social problems by calling for "a thousand points of light." And recently, activists like Michael Lerner have begun to call for a politics of meaning, aimed at creating a more caring and loving nation. These movements are built on a therapeutic/helping approach to problem solving.

This approach focuses on serving; it's about caring, volunteerism, meeting the deficiencies or needs of individuals, helping others. Settings which predominately use this approach range from one-on-one volunteer programs to large-scale service providers like hospitals. Service efforts reach many people in real need, easing the suffering of hunger, homelessness, sexual violence, and many other problems.

Service involvement offers individuals ways to participate in and engage the world beyond their immediate experience. They can provide contact with other cultures and backgrounds, and opportunities to make a visible difference on problems about which people are concerned.

However, this approach draws little attention to the public world stretching beyond personal lives and local communities or the ways diverse groups might work together to solve problems. Most service programs, for instance, include little learning about the policy dimensions of issues that volunteers address through one-on-one efforts. Volunteers, often upper or middle class members serving the poor or at-risk population, rarely have ways to reflect upon the complex dynamics of power, race, and class involved with the problem and their interventions. And their training often lacks attention to the rich, many-sided resources to be found within communities.

While many in the service world have questioned and challenged the expert-client model of problem solving, therapeutic/helping environments are still dominated by it. Expert intervention models structure professional education and service systems themselves. Thus service programs pay little attention to the capacities and agency of clients or volunteers, and they overlook serious education about community resources, cultures, and histories.

From the perspective of teaching a strong conception of ordinary people's capacity to act, the language and practice of this approach is limiting. The language is personalized and therapeutic. The focus is on developing self-esteem while caring for and helping the "other," and as a result the public or political nature of the work is often denied or ignored. This language can limit citizens' capacity to work effectively in public settings, where people may or may not care for you and where the point is not to bond but rather to accomplish public work.

Advocacy/Protest Approach

America has a rich history of advocacy or issue-based politics often expressed in movements from temperance to environmental activism. This approach makes problems dramatically visible and provides an outlet for moral passion. Advocates in some instances help individuals work more effectively with bureaucratic institutions, and in others challenge bureaucracies and other institutions around issues of justice. They educate the general public about important public issues.

While protest politics raises important concerns, it also tends to strip people of their problem-solving roles. Activists of all persuasions adopt a zero-sum view of power, presenting themselves as representing the powerless people against an all-powerful establishment or corrupting force. Beginning with a view of what people should believe or care about, this approach is ideological, moralized, and polarizing. Most issue organizing efforts, from affirmative action to prayer in schools, animal rights to pro-life campaigns, pose their aims in this way. Public roles are limited to the innocent victims or righteous protestors on the one hand, and the corrupt or evil power-holders, experts, professionals, or government officials on the other, leaving no room to work with people pragmatically. This approach tends to treat public problems idealistically, with uncompromising, non-negotiable demands that deny the problem's complexities.

Community Approach

The last two decades of organizing and local activism have produced a large array of community-based initiatives. The most successful community organizations have literally refashioned patterns of economic development for cities and even regions, redirecting hundreds of millions of dollars into low income and poor communities.

In large part the community movement expressed in the slogan "small is beautiful," or in the communitarian movement can be seen as the effort to reclaim local authority for problem solving in the face of large-scale institutional and service systems. Indeed, communal and cultural authority has been its main power source.

Community groups address multiple issues, from struggles for justice and gaining voice in decision making to development projects and drugs.

This range makes for a broad role for citizens, shifting from simple partisanship around issues or elections to a far more multidimensional experience of political problem solving. Reflecting this range, the most successful community groups self-consciously enlist a wide variety of political viewpoints. They see the people themselves as the main source of influence and thus consciously develop people's capacity.

Yet community politics has its limits, too. It can be parochial and very small scale. Leadership is often dependent on charisma. Community action is difficult in a time when communal settings (like the church or synagogue, family, school, or local business) have weakened and many people's lives are fragmented among a number of different arenas. Further, except in the largest groups, community politics tends to leave unaddressed larger power dynamics and issues such as trends in the larger economy, toxic wastes, the power of the media. External threats instead breed a "not in my backyard" mentality.

Finally, even at its best, community politics is defined by the cultural, geographic and organizational boundaries of community. Community politics alone cannot be translated into a different view of citizen agency, adaptable to many environments, making visible the linkages between locales and the larger world. Community is often based on sameness and belonging, making it difficult to work with diverse people and issues. Community politics itself does not expand the role of community member to an enlarged understanding of citizen.

Public Work

The challenge in reinventing a politics for more active citizenship involves learning how to integrate our passionate ideals and interests with practical strategies for working with others with whom we may disagree. This involves looking at the public world as a space of different ideologies and approaches. It requires finding a larger common goal that most can agree on; and recognizing that for significant public work on most issues today, the insights and participation of many different people are often essential. In this way, citizens can become actors, definers, and solvers, rather than limiting themselves to a life of specializing, serving, litigating, or protesting.

We've looked at four modes of politics —four general ways our institutions get public work done. Public work builds on insights from each of these modes. Based on a more expansive understanding of citizenship, it opens up or democratizes these approaches and the settings in which it is used. Public work also emphasizes the need to create productive relationships *across* different modes.

The next chapters introduce the concepts and practice of public work. Public work is conceptually based, and draws on lessons from history and our own work. At its core is *civic education*, the development of ordinary people's capacities for public leadership. This requires paying attention to our roles, capacities, and identities so that we can become agents for problem solving in the multiple arenas of our public work. These capacities are developed best, we believe, through practice coupled with tough, self-conscious reflection on practice.

While strong democracy requires active citizens, active citizens require public spaces in which to work with others from a mix of backgrounds. The practice of public work *civic organizing* while often messy and time-consuming, is also effective in reviving the public missions and practices of the places where we live and work.

Civic Organizing in Public Health

Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) is “founded on the belief that communities and teens themselves have immense potential creativity and common sense” with which to address problems associated with underage alcohol use. Based at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and working with Project Public Life, CMCA is a model for an alternative public health approach that emphasizes community capacity rather than expert intervention.

CMCA is monitoring fifteen communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin, seven of which were randomly chosen for “active intervention.” A part-time community organizer is working in each of those seven communities to impact the policies and practices of the community. Quantitative data is being collected from all of the communities through surveys of 9th and 12th graders, 18-20 year olds, and alcohol merchants; content analyses of print media; and monitoring of policies and practices of government and other organizations, as well as records from the police, hospitals and other sources of statistics on alcohol-related health and social problems.

Public Health alcohol prevention programs have traditionally focused on the individual. These models, heavily reliant on expertise and quantitative outcomes, have had limited success given the millions of dollars spent on them. A Youth and Alcohol fact sheet used by CMCA states that “traditional school-based educational programs have shown little long-term effects in reducing youth drinking” and “focusing enforcement on youth violations has not been effective in reducing youth drinking.” Jan Cherry, community organizer for Faribault, Minnesota, explained, “While the message is out there it works but as soon as the message is gone, so is the action. It’s never internalized or made part of everyday life.”

Public Health professionals have experimented with community-based approaches, especially around issues of smoking. These approaches focus on providing a coordinated array of services and education. However, these expert-driven services are laid on top of the community, rather than integrated into community institutions and daily practices. They have no mechanisms for developing the community’s capacities to solve problems like underage alcohol use. As a result, they often do not have long-term effects.

Alexander Wagenaar, Principle Investigator for CMCA explained that CMCA “returns to the roots of public health, recognizing that health problems are embedded in the social fabric of communities. CMCA will address what it means to organize communities for the whole field of public health. We cannot abstract disease and health problems from the community, trying to solve them separately from the whole social system.” Such solutions require broad social change, rather than quick technical fixes. “That’s where our interest in citizen politics comes in,” Wagenaar noted.

Wagenaar recruited Harry Boyte and Peg Michels of Project Public Life to provide training for the community organizers. The work has required a difficult but rewarding integration of the public health and citizen politics approaches to problem solving.

The organizer training has been “the biggest challenge, figuring out what it means practically and conceptually as we create a new model,” Paul Martinez, Intervention Coordinator for CMCA, said. “We all originally thought of the training as technique: organizers would be trained, christened, and then sent out to do it. The organizers at first kept asking for techniques and skills. But they’re not asking for those anymore. With citizen politics, it’s a process of understanding conceptually what organizing means.” Carla Peterson, CMCA organizer, said she was “real confused at first about how to fit the concepts of citizen politics into the prevention framework. Then finally I said, oh, all the stuff about alcohol is important, but more important is the network of relationships and the balance of power” in the community.

Civic Organizing in Public Health by Kathryn Stoff Hogg. Excerpted from **CMCA: A New Public Health Approach in Public Life**, Summer 1993.

Effective Adults in a Changing World: Public Achievement

Effective Adults in a Changing World: Public Achievement by Gregory Markus. Excerpted from *An Evaluation of Project Public Life* by Gregory Markus.

Public Achievement is a youth and politics initiative. Through Public Achievement, teams of young people learn public skills and concepts through problem-solving projects they design and implement. Young people in private and public schools, churches, social service agencies, and cultural centers have participated.

Public Achievement at St. Bernard's School began in 1991 as an after-school activity, but over the course of the year it became apparent that what was being taught and learned by both students and teachers fit directly into the school's new emphasis on creating more space for students to learn how to function effectively as adults in a changing world.

Teachers learned a new respect for their students as they saw the students work out and "take ownership" of projects they developed largely on their own, with their "coaches" providing minimal direction. Students learned political concepts and ways of thinking as well as practical skills and techniques, such as parliamentary procedure or how to run a meeting. They also learned how to evaluate what they accomplished (or failed to accomplish), and what it means to be "held accountable" by their peers, by students in grades other than their own, and by adults.

Students have used these skills in a variety of settings outside the boundaries of Public Achievement both in the classroom, where they are now more willing to ask questions, challenge ideas, and "think through things," and within the school more generally, where students are now assuming responsibilities relating to school dances and harassment of students by other students. As Principal Dennis Donovan put it, "There's a transformation taking place in our school as a result of what Public Achievement started."

Questions

1. *Think about the places and spaces in which you do your public work. How do the institutions operate? What are their politics?*
2. *What do you learn about your public role and the role of others about citizenship from those practices?*
3. *What are the strengths and limitations of these practices for effective problem solving and the development of people's public capacities (staff, clients, or others)?*



Chapter Four

Citizen Politics

In this chapter:

- ✓ *Conceptual approaches to public work are effective because they feed our imagination and engagement with the world, and because they are adaptable to many different environments. They provide tools, not just techniques.*
- ✓ *Concepts that form the base of **public work** include public, diversity, self-interest, and power.*

Thus in public life we are linked not necessarily by common values, histories, cultures, or interests, but rather by common problems.

A Conceptual Approach to Civic Education

To realign institutions, groups, and less formal networks with democratic principles and to more effectively solve problems and address common tasks, leaders have to go beyond the identity of client or expert to claim the identity of citizen. *Citizenship* becomes relevant through practical civic education.

Public work has proven to be a powerful framework for reinventing such active citizenship. Public work develops our capacity by teaching public skills and political concepts based on practice and experience. It draws upon the power of broadly held concepts and values tied to serious governance. A conceptual approach, public work is flexible and dynamic. It provides a map, not a blueprint, for achieving these goals.

Techniques, quick fixes, narrow expertise, and crisis management dominate our society. Few people have time to think deeply about what they do. Some even believe thinking wastes time or is a luxury. Concepts are the purview of live white men in ivory towers, or other experts. They seem bloodless, abstract, not applicable to real life. In many ways, the service society has done to concepts what it has done to public life: made them narrow, fragmented, ineffective.

But concepts also are the foundation for imagination, flexibility, transformation, and engagement with the world. The ability to generalize or conceptualize from particular experience gives all people, not just an educated elite, the power to link their specific work to broader categories, issues, and goals and to conceive of a serious role for themselves and others within that larger world. Without this ability, we are stuck in our immediate experience and knowledge. Furthermore, in an information age, civic renewal depends upon changing the patterns in which ideas are generated, engaged, and transmitted. Thus, conceptual and reflective thinking is not a luxury but fundamental to creative lives and effective public work.

That is why conceptual approaches to political work have been very effective. At Project Public Life, we have used the lessons of two particular experiences—the Citizenship Schools of the civil rights movement and community organizing as practiced and developed by Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation—in our own work. They further illustrate the power of a conceptual approach.

The Idea of Citizenship: The Citizenship Schools

Dorothy Cotton, the former co-director of Citizenship Schools for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference during the civil rights movement, tells powerful stories of the transformation evident in this program, catalyzed by ideas.

Wrestling with questions such as *What is a citizen?* participants in the civil rights movement moved from seeing themselves as powerless victims to claiming their right to be first-class citizens. As they would discuss and debate what a citizen is, someone would remember that there is a major law relating to citizenship. As Cotton explains, “I’d jump at this opportunity to introduce or pull from the group some sense of the Constitution of the United States. What is this constitution? The supreme law of the land we’d

eventually come to. It has amendments. What's that? Here we'd get into the fourteenth amendment as establishing our citizenship rights; the first as the right to petition the government for redress, and on and on until, as one woman said, "The cobwebs come just a-moving from my brain."

The "cobwebs" in this woman's brain were removed by the powerful idea of citizenship, tied directly to her own interests and experiences. She and other participants discovered in such sessions a middle ground between government and private life in which ordinary people could claim the right to be involved in addressing the problems of their lives and communities. They redefined themselves and their role in the public world. They discovered that democracy is not something that *is*, but something you *do*.

Concepts Map Out the Public World: The IAF

Community organizing has acted upon Saul Alinsky's insights linking people's communal base to the daily practice of power and to the role of ideas in people's development. Alinsky's organizing theory encouraged people to conceptualize or use ideas that map out the world in order to create strategies that consider their interests, cultural identities, and values in the context of the larger world.

Much activism today, though, is tied to narrow, technique-based methods that demand or offer little in the way of critical and flexible thinking. Canvassing and direct mail are striking examples. Conventional organizing training emphasizes useful but limited techniques such as how to chair meetings, do a leaflet, or organize a hearing.

Alternatively, groups which use a *conceptual* approach have most significantly impacted local politics and successfully taught public leadership skills and identities. For example, the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) founded by Alinsky and now a network of more than 40 large, low-income community organizations across the country teaches a repertoire of concepts that are useful in helping people map out and negotiate their political and social environments. These include the idea of a public world different from private life, and dynamic, relational understandings of power and self-interest. Learning to apply such concepts in the process of problem solving and policy formation creates unique experiences for ordinary people, often relatively uneducated in a formal sense, to develop skills and confidence in critical, conceptual thinking and action.

Public-spirited, concept-centered training experiences like those in the Citizenship Schools and community organizing are potentially as powerful today for addressing our widespread political disengagement and strengthening our civic skills.

Concepts of Public Work

Several concepts are important parts of the public work framework. We've talked about citizenship, understood as many-sided public contribution, and politics, understood as a part of our everyday public work. We also stress the concept of public work as action and space as well as a dimension of individual and communal life, diversity understood in the context of problem solving, and power and self-interest as dynamic and many-sided.

**Three traditions
of public action:**

✓ **the deliberative
public**

✓ **the problem-
solving public**

✓ **the insurgent
public**

Public

The conceptual framework of citizen politics is deeply grounded in the concept of *public*. Concepts of self-interest, diversity, and power come out of an understanding of public life as a space in which we act on diverse self-interests to solve common problems and address common tasks using our collective power.

The Public in Action

In American history, the idea of the public as an actor referred to the citizenry as a whole, not just the government. Three traditions of public action stand out: the deliberative public, the problem-solving public, and the insurgent public.

In 1776 in a letter to his wife, Abigail, John Adams expressed confidence that the citizenry of the newly emerging nation would be able to act wisely on the great challenges before them. "Time has been given for the whole People, maturely to consider the great Question of Independence and to ripen their Judgments, dissipate their Fears, and allure their Hopes, by discussing it in News Papers and Pamphlets, by debating it, in Assemblies, Conventions, Committees of Safety and Inspection, in Town and Country Meetings, as well as in private Conversations."

Adams's view captured one basic meaning of public—the concept of the body of people created through a process of discussion, debate, and dialogue about current affairs. Such a sense of public took shape through the press, libraries, clubs, education groups, coffee houses, electoral debates, and other associations that created awareness of a larger thinking world beyond family, friends, and narrow interests. American educational and media institutions have their roots in this understanding of the public as deliberator about political issues of the day. Similarly, public libraries were created through citizen efforts, and justified as arsenals of democracy.

Problem Solving

The public was, secondly, a direct actor in problem solving. This understanding of public was reflected in direct democracy, like the New England town meeting, which combined deliberation and action on public affairs. More informally, it appeared in our rich traditions of voluntary efforts born in the nineteenth century.

Immigrants from every corner of the world brought with them strong practices of community action. In English history, for example, problem solving by villagers about access to and maintenance of common lands, footpaths, foodlands, and fishing areas, as well as common buildings like the village church, gave to middle level peasantry a constant, daily schooling in democracy. Such traditions flourished in a vast array of American voluntary activities: religious congregations that combined worship with community effort, barn raisings, quilting bees, immigrant mutual aid societies, and voluntary fire departments. They also generated organizations like the National Council of Negro Women, 4-H, the Red Cross, the YMCA, the YWCA, and Rotary. Americans looked to their own initiative, rather than large governmental or business organizations, to address public problems. Indeed, most programs later run by government were first designed and developed in community associations.

Struggle for Reform

Beyond deliberation and problem solving, a civic-minded, reform-oriented citizenry has combined struggles for power and reform with the assumption of responsibility for public affairs. In the most dramatic instances, such groups were the seedbeds for large social movements which advocated expanding the citizenry itself by including groups that were left out of formal definitions. Thus, abolition, women's suffrage, the Farmers Alliances and Knights of Labor during the nineteenth century, and the civil rights movement of the twentieth, all sought to make political society more inclusive.

Traditions of Public Action	
Deliberative Public: Debate, discussion to arrive at public judgment	
• Chautauquas	• Street-corner debates
• Study circles	• Elders
Problem -Solving Public: Hands-on efforts to solve problems, meet needs	
• Barnraisings	•YWCA
• Churches	• Settlement houses
Insurgent Public: Movements for justice, fair policies, or to reform institutions	
• Workmen's Party	• Temperance Movement
• Populism	• Civil Rights Movement

The Public World

The public world is an arena of creative public work, of discovery, of power, of freedom. It connects one's own individual life in a particular environment with larger settings and goals. The public world is open and fluid. Beyond the world of family and close friends, it is characterized by diversity of outlook, interest, and perspective. Our relationships and actions in the public world are more strategic and guarded. The public world is a place for debate, developing public judgment, wrestling with other points of view, as we work together to solve common problems. Ambiguity is inevitable in the public world, and people can and will change their minds, interests, and perspectives. Public is a pragmatic concept, recognizing the complexities of public life, and it is also guided by democratic values. Public work puts *public* back into environments and behaviors; in public environments, citizens can claim authority, take ownership around public processes and create their world with others.

Building on these traditions, our concept of the public world reclaims the middle ground where diverse citizens work with each other to solve public problems and create a common public world. It recognizes that every person has public, as well as private, dimensions. Those public dimensions include the capacity to participate effectively in the public world, and the human need to participate in the shaping of that world. Public life grows out of, and is connected to, private and community life. But it is helpful to distinguish between these dimensions of social life.

Public and Private: Linked but Distinct

Public	Self	Private
<p>We each have public and private dimensions of ourselves. What do we lose when our public selfcapacities and interests are not developed? Our private self?</p>		
Public World	Community	Private World
<p>Our public, communal, and private worlds are linked but distinct: we look for different outcomes and behave differently in each. While few environments are either/or, there is more or less of private and public. Part of the art of acting effectively is being able to figure out what kind of situation you are in.</p>		
<p>© <i>Project Public Life</i></p>		

Dimensions of Public and Private Life

	Public	Private
Context	Work, associations, meetings	Families, friends, self
Purpose	Problem solving, public work	Place, personal identity
Quality of Space	Diverse, fluid	Homogeneous, stable, contained
Motivation	Self-interest	Selflessness, selfishness
Condition of Relationship	Accountable, strategic, guarded	Loyal, intimate
Outcome	Public creation, agency/power, citizenship	Love, belonging, friendship
<p>© <i>Project Public Life</i></p>		

In private life, we look for belonging, trust, nurturance, and intimacy. In public, principles such as recognition, strategic thought and action, negotiation, and accountability are essential bases for action. Today, the lines between public and private life have become blurred. Public encounters have become radically personalized and intimate. In schools and other public settings we stress personal development, self-esteem, expression of feelings, and learning how to care about others, especially on an individual basis. Although these things are important, an excessively personal language disarms people when dealing with diverse, difficult public settings where others may or may not care about you in personal terms. And while working with others can often create strong ties and new relationships, the purpose in public settings is not self-expression, nurturance, or getting support but rather accomplishing significant public work around tough problems.

Community comes from the Latin word *communitas*, meaning common, or unity, and suggests strong commonality and face-to-face, enduring relationships. Communities, like private relationships, are important settings where people learn trust, belonging, a sense of dependability, and basic aspects of one's identity. Communities, if they are strong and vital, develop their own rituals, customs, and memories that help structure daily life.

To romanticize community or to collapse it into public life leads people to expect this kind of commonality in the public world. But the public world includes people from many different communities. Thus in public life we are linked not necessarily by common values, histories, cultures, or interests, but rather by common problems and opportunities.

Slighting the public dimensions of community or the need to work with other communities narrows our capacity for creative action. Community members have less opportunity to develop political skills like bargaining, listening, and the demanding, challenging practices of accountability that are essential for taking on many difficult issues. Most of the problems we face today have origins or impacts beyond any one community. By not developing political skills and not seeing the linkages between the community and the larger world, the community is unable to effectively address those problems.

Diversity

In the context of public work, *diversity* including different skills, knowledge, and interests as well as ethnic, racial, religious or class backgrounds is neither simply celebrated nor denigrated. These diversities are used as sources of knowledge and resources for solving problems.

Public problems, often a product of multiple, interrelated forces, are too big for any one perspective or power base to effectively solve. Problem-solving initiatives need to create environments that seek diverse interests and engage those interests in ongoing work if effective, multidimensional strategies are to be generated and implemented. Conflict and debate are inherent in such situations and, moreover, are useful tools in defining problems, identifying resources and strategically directing actions toward solutions. The concept of diversity is important, then, not just for recognizing and understanding difference. It is a way to create stakeholding and effective solutions around public problems.

Problem-solving initiatives need to create environments that seek diverse interests and engage those interests in ongoing work if effective, multi-dimensional strategies are to be generated and implemented.

The limits of liberal democracy are the limits of the self-preoccupied imagination.

Benjamin Barber,
Strong Democracy,
1984

Self-interest

The concept of *self-interest* grows out of the diversity and fluidity of public life. Self-interest is what brings people to the public world. Self-interest is one's motivations, background, hopes—it's what matters to someone. Self-interest locates individuals within their histories, families, beliefs, and practices. The word *interest* comes from the Latin roots *inter esse*, meaning to be among or between others. Self-interest is who you are in relationship to others. In a particular problem-solving context, it is your connection to the problem and your reason for working with diverse others to solve it. As you work with others and on a range of problems, your interests and concerns can broaden and take on more dimensions.

The concept of everyone having an interest sounds simple, but it's difficult to practice because it means coming to recognize that others don't have your self-interest as their first concern, that their self-interest is probably different from yours, and that their and your self-interests will change over time.

Self-interest is a critical concept in changing the expert-client relationship. The language of expertise reflects the idea that experts who come in from the outside are objective, disinterested, and neutral. They supposedly have no personal stake in what they're doing. Experts are only here to help put themselves outside the interactive give-and-take of public work. Identifying the fact that everyone has interests begins to alter this narrow relationship.

Understanding diverse self-interests can open up the world, as we discover that many situations are dynamic, fluid, and full of potential for change and creative action. For example, Project Public Life has worked with the Division of Epidemiology at the University of Minnesota on a project around teen alcohol use, called Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol. As the organizers from different communities in Minnesota and Wisconsin have applied the concept of self-interest through one-on-one interviews with members of their communities, their stereotypes and sense of the areas were transformed. People they interviewed had far more complexity, creativity, and imagination than the organizers had ever considered.

Power

The final key concept is *power*, understood as dynamic, interactive, and relational. Like self-interest or politics, people's first associations with "power" tend to be static and narrow. People tend to think of power as something a few people have and most (including themselves) don't. People feel victimized and abused because they feel they don't have power, and this tends to lead to righteous indignation—but not necessarily to effective action or creative roles. In fact, it often feeds into the expert-client pattern of relationships dominant in the ways we do work today.

Yet power is a far more dynamic and complex concept. It comes from the Latin word *poder*, meaning "to be able." Literally, power is the capacity to act.

For public power, such capacity has to be well-organized and directed in a thoughtful, strategic fashion. The more diverse resources that can be brought to bear on a problem can be organized—the greater the chance for rich, effective solutions.

If one learns to think carefully and strategically about the relationships one needs to build power, as well as the interactive nature of power, the world begins to look far different. For instance, we find in our work with teenagers that when young people learn that schools are not simply run by dictatorial individuals, but involve an interplay of complex relationships, their sense of possibility changes notably. For the first time they realize, as one young woman put it, “there are many ways to do things,” and that they have, or can tap into, the power needed to act effectively.

Power doesn't just come from control over capital or financial resources. It comes from a variety of sources. Moral appeal can be a mighty source of power; think of the power of Martin Luther King's “I Have a Dream” speech in the civil rights movement. Power can come from the communal authority accorded someone or something through the living traditions, habits, rituals, and practices that people believe in and participate in. Power can also come from information and expertise: the American Medical Association, for example, is an organized form of power on a massive scale, based on knowledge.

Knowledge power takes many forms. As we've described elsewhere, institutions based on information often have power structures that are hierarchical and bureaucratic, based on the model of organization around scarce resources. But knowledge, unlike a scarce resource, is not used up when it is shared; rather, its power often increases. It lends itself to democratic access and can be used to create. Knowledge reframes problems and situations, so that all kinds of resources—people, capital, expertise—can be directed strategically toward a common goal. Learning to pool and develop in public spaces the knowledge-power that comes from diverse points of view and diverse interests is the way that publics (or communities) move from narrow, polarized opinions to public judgment, or common sense.

In this chapter we introduced the concepts of public, power, diversity, and self-interest, the building blocks of citizen politics. Because public work is a conceptual approach, it is adaptable to many different environments and situations. Next we look at civic organizing—some strategies, based on these concepts, for reclaiming our roles and institutions for public work.

Contributing Citizens in the College Classroom

Contributing Citizens in the College Classroom by Jennifer Neubeck, senior, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN. Reprinted from "Creating Creators: The Key to Higher Education" in *Public Life*, Spring 1993.

In my seventeen years of schooling, I have always been a compliant student. I have followed the rules of the classroom and have done my work without much questioning. However, in my last semester of college, I have experienced a classroom environment that has caused me to question the way I have been taught all my life.

In today's society, which focuses on one's individual success and expertise, citizenship and the concepts of public work—making one's work more meaningful by connecting it to a broader public mission—are unnatural and foreign to most. However, somewhere along the line, people need to be taught these concepts since without them, societal change will not take place. I now believe that higher education can play an enormous role in teaching students these concepts so as they enter a public, diverse and powerful world, they will feel that they can make a difference by using their abilities to be effective contributors: citizens. The first step, though, is to have teachers model these concepts of citizenship in the classroom.

In higher education today, students gain knowledge about a particular discipline, and their focus is on getting a good grade so that they can get a good job. There is little, if any, mention of public work and how students can affect the public world beyond their classroom or their future job. Furthermore, diverse interests are not always acknowledged or cultivated in college classrooms. One teacher lecturing to forty pairs of ears does not facilitate the introduction and consideration of diverse interests. Classrooms need more discussions and debates so that students can voice their perspectives and find their deep interests and their passions. This will motivate and drive them to learn. Finally, classrooms are structured in hierarchies rather than having reciprocal relationships between teachers and students. By definition, power means "to be able." By creating environments in which the teacher is the expert with the knowledge and the power to assign a grade, and students are passive recipients, students are deprived of the chance to show their abilities.

The class, which I previously mentioned, has proven to me that students can be much more than listening ears. We can be effective creators. In this class on aging, we students stated our interests around the topic, and the teacher created a syllabus from them. We negotiated how we wanted to be evaluated, were accountable for what we had agreed upon, and were always encouraged to voice and own our opinions. As students, we shaped our learning experience and successfully maintained a more equal partnership with our teacher. My experiences from this class will definitely assist me in my future work. I will have had experience in speaking up to substantiate my opinions and in feeling confident in my abilities to create change.

If changes are going to be made in our world, people are going to have to become more effective citizens. The best way to facilitate citizenship is to provide education in colleges and universities about the concepts it involves. College classrooms are ideal places to practice these skills. However, the concepts of citizenship and the skills needed to create change can best be learned if they are practiced and modeled by the educators. Higher education has the privileged opportunity to shape students into becoming effective citizens, creators of change. After experiencing a classroom in which I was a contributing citizen, and in which I learned skills that helped me recognize my abilities to create change, I begin to wonder what contributions I could have made to the world around me if I'd had seventeen years of this type of education.

The Citizenship Schools

The Citizenship School program grew out of the work of Esau Jenkins and Septima Clark on the islands off South Carolina. Their goal was to teach blacks, often illiterate, to read and write in order to pass arduous literacy tests that authorities used to disenfranchise poorer citizens of both races. It was adopted by the Highlander Folk School, a training center for organizers and activists, and later by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as the civil rights movement expanded.

From its beginnings the strategy of Citizenship Schools stressed the importance of connecting voting and literacy to a dynamic conception of citizenship itself. To that end, organizers of the schools avoided normal academic approaches and treated “students” as adults who could come and go as they pleased, bring sewing to classes, or chew tobacco. They used as their basic primers documents like the Constitution of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, and Biblical scripture.

SCLC developed a training program for local “teachers” at Dorchester, Georgia, where the curriculum included much more than the mechanics of registering and voting. Students learned how to conduct voter registration campaigns, combat illiteracy, win government benefits for the poor, and talk about the meaning of American citizenship in ways that would inspire ordinary citizens. As Dorothy Cotton put it, they taught “a whole new way of life and functioning.” Civil rights activists saw the movement as designed, in Martin Luther King’s words, “to make real the promise of democracy.” By democracy, moreover, they meant not simply formal rights but active citizenship. “The more important participation was to be not just at the moment when the ballot was cast but in all the moments that led up to that moment.”

IAF Training: Power Then and Now

**IAF Training:
Power Then and
Now by Harry
Boyte. Adapted
from Common-
wealth: A Return to
Citizen Politics
(New York: Free
Press, 1989).**

In the sixteenth year of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides recounted, Athens sent an armada of thirty-eight ships and several thousand warriors to the island of Melos, in the Aegean Sea. Unlike most of the islands, Melos had allied with Athens's chief enemy, Sparta, because, said Thucydides, ancient though distant ancestral ties existed between the two. The Athenians had a simple demand: the Melians must switch sides.

As the Greek historian depicted the encounter which took place in the fifth century B.C., the Athenians were unswerving. From the beginning, they spoke a language of power. "We on our side will use no fine phrases," said their envoys. "We recommend that you should try to get what it is possible for you to get, taking into consideration what we both really do think; since you know as well as we do that, when these matters are discussed by practical people, the standard of justice depends on the equality of power to compel and that in fact the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept."

Thucydides's vivid account sets up an encounter between abstract ideals and power politics that resonates across time and space. The Melians repeatedly argued on the basis of their hopes, appealing to the Athenians' own ideals: a long-range understanding of Athenian concerns for honor and stability in its empire; the possibility of last-minute help from Sparta or from the gods; the integrity of their 700-year history.

The Athenians referred to the concrete realities of the situation: "Do not be like those who, as so commonly happens, miss the chance of saving themselves in a human and practical way." Not eager to destroy or even humiliate the Melians, they suggested that their rule of power politics was to "stand up to one's equals, to behave with deference toward one's superiors, and to treat one's inferiors with moderation." They proposed that alliance with their cause need not mean abject surrender: "There is nothing disgraceful in giving way to the greatest city in Hellas when she is offering you such reasonable terms alliance on a tribute-paying basis and liberty to enjoy your own property." But they were immovable in their demands. The Melians were "true to their ideals" and blind to other realities. The Athenians laid siege. The Melians resisted for a time. Then, recounted Thucydides, "the Melians surrendered unconditionally to the Athenians, who put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos they took for themselves, sending out later a colony of five hundred men."

Saul Alinsky, dean of the American community organizing tradition, used this account by Thucydides as a basic training document. The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), which he and his associates formalized out of a loose network of groups in 1969, developed from the story a drama to begin every training institute for organizers.

Their use of Thucydides was a dramatic device to have students (who came from many settings civil rights, religious activism, student involvement, and other causes) refocus from what Alinsky called "the world-as-we-would-like-it-to-be" to the "world-as-it-is." Alinsky-style organizers drew from Thucydides's story the lesson that the Melians' "all or nothing" approach failed to understand the process of conflict, power, self-change, self-interest, and negotiation that always is the medium for the expression of ideals in politics. At the end of the 1960s, the IAF was speaking about the interactive nature of power in a way that had been largely forgotten in a protest politics that counterposed "power elite" to "power to the people," with little understanding of the dynamic interaction. Today the IAF is a network of leaders organizing around the nation, working with diverse populations to rebuild communities from New York to Los Angeles.

Questions

1. *We argue that a conceptual approach is more useful and powerful because people can adapt concepts to different settings. Concepts are tools, rather than techniques. Do you have (or take) the time to think about your work? To understand the concepts and purposes that frame it? To evaluate your efforts and practices? Would taking that time change your work? How?*
2. *What concepts underlie the techniques you use?*
3. *How do you think about these words: public, diversity, self-interest, power? Do the conceptualizations above make sense or seem useful? Why or why not? And how so?*



Chapter Five

Civic Organizing* :

Practicing Citizen Politics

In this chapter:

- ✓ *Reclaiming institutions and associations as places for public work is a key strategy in addressing the larger problem of a narrow and fragmented public life. This is an organizing problem.*

- ✓ *Civic organizing, or citizen politics, is an organizing framework that integrates citizenship into everyday environments for the purpose of developing leadership and the broad base necessary to govern in a democratic society. Civic organizing has three components: **civic training, developing public leadership, and organizing.***

This chapter provides **a map, not a blueprint**, of some of the strategies, processes, and practices useful in civic organizing.

**Peg Michels and Tony Massengale made particularly helpful contributions to this approach.*

Problem-solving is the vehicle for developing the power of the citizen to govern.

The Challenge

Learning new concepts abstractly will not alter our practice of citizenship. To become effective public actors we have to develop the arts and skills of public life through our public work. To reclaim public work for citizens requires restructuring the settings and mediating institutions in which that work is done, making more *public* their behaviors, practices, and policies. This chapter looks at civic organizing and some particular strategies we can use to reinvent citizenship for ourselves and our everyday environments.

Information packaged as services dominates the national imagination around public problem solving. Yet it determines narrow roles for citizens who are outside service systems, and limits the capacity of those within (professionals or experts) to identify and provide useful leadership in tackling the large problems we face. This has created an enormous crisis, especially if, as we believe, a democratic society depends upon an engaged, capable citizenry.

The crisis is commonly perceived as the failure to address social and economic problems effectively from the federal government to communities. In the debate over what to do about it, citizens see themselves outside of the institutions that impact their daily lives. (Recall the taxpayer's lament in Chapter 2.) Even as members of work places, schools, churches, or professions, people increasingly place themselves outside the system of governance. Rather than taking on serious roles in the restructuring of our environments, we have separated ourselves from the power bases, those very settings needed to govern as serious participants.

Consequently, organizations support narrow strategies like down-sizing as the main way to restructure. Such strategies do not solve the larger problem of ineffectiveness. This situation provides an organizing opportunity to engage leaders, tied to organizations and groups yet aware of the narrowness of meaning and ineffectiveness of expertise, in the work of civic renewal.

A Question of Organizing

Restructuring the very fabric of our social and institutional life from the business sector to health, education, government, and community, is an organizing problem:

- What is our plan of action?
- How do we garner the resources and motivation to accomplish it?
- What capacities need to be developed, and which practices need to be changed?
- For what purpose(s) are we doing this?
- What are realistic goals and expectations to have?

Thus it is imperative that we understand the work of organizing in a modern information society. This will require learning the lessons from organizing traditions and applying those lessons to information-based systems. In a complex, information-rich society, questions of power and the need to develop capacity go well beyond the formula of the people versus a corporate elite. They also involve more than advocacy groups pressuring on narrow issues.

To organize means *to develop*. Its root word, *organ*, means “a tool or instrument” and in some definitions is directly linked to the concept of numbers and practice (“many at work”). The great contribution of organizing has been to unabashedly link the aspirations and practical work of “the people” to power. This linkage has allowed ordinary people to aspire to and claim serious roles in democratic governance without romanticizing the nature of that work. To do this in a world where power is tangible, yet unequally experienced, requires people to be prepared conceptually for the messy public world, and to develop their public capacities and skills to act with effect in that world. Organizing, then, is a practical concept tied to the work of developing people's capacity to structure and influence a broader world.

Organizing practice this century has given us important lessons to build on. Lessons we draw from organizing practice since World War II include:

Organizing needs to link people's lives, identities, and aspirations to commonly held public values such as citizenship. These values or concepts need to have a history, language, and institutional context that is or can be broadly shared and owned by diverse peoples.

The development of people's practical capacity to influence (to practice power) is central to the purpose of organizing. Power is not an abstraction but is embodied in people's ability to build and influence diverse and practical relationships.

Serious organizing recognizes the need to teach practical concepts that develop people's capacity and confidence to map out, analyze, and act within the various environments connected to their daily lives.

Leadership is developed within and across the groups and institutions that shape people' identities and value systems. Leaders need to own the work done within those institutions and link that work to a larger public world.

However, power based on knowledge has different dynamics from power based on scarce resources. The organizing model for today thus needs to reflect those differences, going beyond confrontation as the principal tool. The vehicle for gaining authority and civic capacity today is the public work of the institution as it engages with constituencies, in relationship to other citizens and broader public goals stretching across institutional and group boundaries. Professionals have to expand their identities in order to create a political link with the broader citizenry. Together, through organized efforts and the incentive of internal and external pressure, citizens inside different groups and outside the particular institution can restructure them to more effectively function.

A crucial distinction between civic organizing and traditional organizing is the placing of professionals within this birthright of the people. At a time when many people position themselves economically and socially through information and call themselves *professional*, it is crucial that they not be defined simply as the problem but that they rather are brought inside the work of organizing. The development and training of professionals as public actors, beyond the narrow category of expertise, is central to the work not only to create greater meaning in their lives but for the greater public purpose of

rebuilding the institutional fabric of a democratic society. What would such an organizing framework look like in practice? Let's look at health care.

The role of health care professionals would be redefined around a broader and more meaningful definition of work that would recognize that professionals have a responsibility and stake in creating and maintaining groups and institutions that reflect and meet the expectations of the greater public. Nurse's aides, for example, would still be educated to perform therapeutic duties, but in this larger context. So they would also learn the public skills of governance and would be expected to be strategic around the larger social and political questions of health care: they would be educated as citizen professionals and everyday philosophers. (Recall the story in Chapter 3 about the health care class guided by larger public values.)

The questions of restructuring health care settings would not simply be answered by traditional policy makers. They would also be engaged by members of those groups, related professions, and the larger public.

Health care clients and consumers would be expected to play serious roles with health professionals in work around health-related problems, through associations or community-based organizations. This includes designing strategies that address the interrelated nature of health, accepting roles in those strategies, and being accountable for effective solutions. It would also require that communal groups (churches, associations, community-based organizations, for example) be restructured to provide the experience and learning needed for citizens to take on this larger civic role.

The same assumptions of expanded roles and functions around problem solving can be applied to diverse institutional settings, from community organizations and churches to professional associations and large-scale systems, to address the need for more effective organization of resources and problem solving.

Civic Organizing

The civic organizing model for public action and problem solving is based on the concepts of public work. What follows is an outline, not a definitive step-by-step guide, to the principles and practice of taking action to reclaim citizenship and public work in our mediating institutions.

Citizen politics is not like a program that can be added on to existing work without effect. It is an organizing framework. Citizen politics is a means to help reinvent democratic practices of citizenship and politics to more effectively govern and solve public problems. This requires changing how we do work.

Such change requires flexibility and time. Strategies will change in mid-stream. New leaders will emerge and old ones will fade. The environment you work in might be more engaged by the concept of public than the concept of citizenship. People including you will need time and space to practice public arts and develop strategic judgment. And changing any group requires time even years to develop leadership, educate, organize, and finally maintain the new practices. But along the way you will see a new language emerge, practices change, resources shift to support new approaches. It is hard, challenging work, but results in more effective work based on democratic values and creative, active citizenship.

Civic organizing includes multiple functions, which can't always be found in one person. It requires developing a leadership base that can carry out those functions and tap diverse resources: educators, organizers, people with access to different arenas, knowledge, and people. No one person can do it all, and each leaders' skills and resources will vary. We outline below three key areas of civic organizing:

- **civic training**
- **developing public leadership**
- **organizing**

Civic organizing brings leaders into working relationships around a commonly held problem or task or opportunity. Civic organizing is an ongoing process guided by these three general goals, each having more or less emphasis as the work progresses. Consider the following example:

Civic Training

Civic organizing recognizes the need to teach everyday political or civic concepts that develop and sustain people's public capacity and confidence. Civic training is practical conceptual education explicitly aimed at taking action. It takes place formally and informally in settings specifically designated for such teaching as well as through example and practice.

Every person has the capacity to think and act effectively. That capacity is developed and expanded through education and practice. Civic training draws upon an individual's experience and knowledge, and links it to the practice of problem solving, in order to develop that capacity. Like the Citizenship Schools and the most successful community organizing, civic training teaches concepts and skills that help map out the political nature of all environments so that people can experience agency or develop capacity within them.

Teaching civic concepts formally and informally can affect the whole institution. Introduce them at conferences, in-service training, or other programs. In public spaces created for debate and discussion, you can practice and model democratic citizenship. Demonstrate these concepts through your work. Shape the institutional practices and programs you have control over around these concepts: meetings, performance reviews, the way you go about your work and deal with others inside and outside the institution. Pay particular attention to shaping staff development programs, a crucial source of leadership and institutional development.

All settings teach, through their practices if not through formal training. Civic training asks us to be conscious of those concepts, and to strategically shape learning environments and practices around *civic* concepts. Below are some questions to think about as you plan and do civic training.

What conceptions of public life are taught by the culture of your environment? By you? For example, are people encouraged to participate? Do they? How is power organized and is it acknowledged? Are your relationships more public or more private?

What types of in-service, continuing education, staff development or other educational processes exist in your institutional environment? How would you describe the nature of the learning in those settings, for example, conceptual, technical, quick fix? (see *Knowledge* chart in Chapter 2)

Key Areas of Civic Organizing:

- 1. Civic training**
- 2. Developing leadership**
- 3. Organizing**

How can you strategically incorporate more conceptual, democratic, civic education into your work setting? Into formal training sessions?

Developing Public Leadership

Civic organizing, like serious community organizing, sees problem solving as the way to develop public leadership. The value of mentoring or developing people's public spirit and capacity is founded on a fierce commitment to people's right to be serious creators in the world. It is only through public creation and usefulness that we reach our full human potential. But for that capacity to be fully realized we need to be challenged and taught throughout our whole lifetime to claim public positions in the world *as it is* with all its imperfections and inequities. Taking on problems that directly affect you becomes the vehicle for developing that capacity and authorship. In this way, developing public leadership is strongly tied to civic training.

Civic organizing needs a leadership base that can carry out multiple functions: for example, educating, strategic thinking, recruiting other leadership, translating civic concepts into the language and practice of the institution, seeing the big picture, and getting the little things done.

In recruiting and developing leadership, and in carrying out your work, keep in mind two things.

1. In the strategic work of reclaiming environments, it is important to involve positional leadership—those within the hierarchical system who control resources, or direct your work, or have influence throughout the group or institution. Acknowledging their self-interest in the work protects the work; establishing such relationships may also directly affect how the organization runs, as the individual develops a stake in the work and the larger mission of developing public capacities and reclaiming the group for public work. The kind of relationship you develop with positional leaders will depend on their skills and interests, especially their interest in the problem and their interest in the larger mission.
2. It is also important to create relationships that cross internal and external boundaries: to work across departments or disciplines, and to engage leaders linked to, but outside, the group (e.g., clients, volunteers, funders, people in related professions or institutions). This builds strong support for the work, develops a broad leadership base, and provides a larger stage for civic training and actually changing practices.

Key political concepts that can be taught in the development of public leadership include: figuring out “diverse interests,” realizing that not all interests are shared but can still be engaged around common problems, accepting the need to work with people without liking them or personalizing the situation, analyzing the power relations surrounding any endeavor, learning to be strategic in everyday work.

Use public spaces to learn and practice these concepts and skills. Public spaces might include meetings within your institution or with the leaders you are working with, conferences, one-on-one interviews, informal and formal spaces in which you do your work. Learning to draw the greatest insight from experience takes time. Experience enriches intellectual capacity and, in turn,

conceptual categories more effectively direct the work. Time and space to think, reflect, and evaluate is the foundation of democratic governance and effective public work, and is absolutely necessary for developing leadership and acting strategically.

The key to successfully developing leadership is the practice of public relationships. Important principles of public relationships include keeping focused on the problem, being accountable, and evaluating your work together.

Developing Public Relationships

Public relationships develop capacities for leadership of all involved. They make the messy, contentious work of public problem solving more effective and meaningful.

- The **public work** to be accomplished is the reason for the relationship and is the larger goal to keep in mind as the work gets tough.
- Pay attention to **self-interests**: yours and the leader's. They will develop and change over time.
- Take time for **conceptual development**. Link civic concepts to practice. Wrestle together with the different meanings words have when they come out of a civic culture versus the particular institution's culture.
- Be **accountable**. If they cannot count on you, they will not be accountable to the work either. Accountability is the foundation for building the trust required to do the hard work of problem solving.
- Develop a **public** relationship. Have clear boundaries. Respect their work and interests.
- **Evaluate**. Reflect on your work together. Evaluation provides time to learn from and correct mistakes. It leads to accountability. It is a public process: it is not about laying blame, but about doing more effective work.

Public Spaces

Leaders need to intentionally create public spaces where citizens gain the political skills necessary to govern. Such spaces are used for conceptual learning as well as strategic planning and learning skills, because conceptual understanding increases the ability to create and thus must be part of the everyday work of citizens.

These spaces are centered on problem solving that is recognized as important to a broader public. They are pragmatic, political, and diverse places for debate, conflict, and strategic thinking.

We bring democratic understanding of public work, self-interest, and power to public spaces. Everyone is seen as a stakeholder, as having a self-interest in the work that may differ from yours. Everyone is expected to contribute, to make crucial decisions, to be held accountable, to be recognized. Power in public spaces is understood relationally; while everyone does not have equal power, their authority based on experience, position, knowledge, or skills is recognized and used.

**It's all about people.
Get to know them.
Find out what they think. Be interested.
If you don't develop relationships, all you've got is assumptions. It's easy to dismiss people when you don't know them.
When there's a relationship, there's a chance for accountability.**

*Anthony Massengale,
CAN•DO/Public
Strategies, 1994*

Examples of public spaces include staff meetings, conferences, a place and time set aside for debate or strategic planning. They occur on different levels, and vary in how public they are. A strategy team operates in a public space, although it may be less guarded a public space than a conference and may be more consciously framed by democratic principles.

Organizing

Organizing is central to public problem solving. Thus it is also a vehicle for developing leadership and teaching civic concepts, as well as the means of restructuring mediating institutions.

The charts on *The Practice of Organizing* that follow show different dimensions of organizing. Listed vertically are ongoing, regularly revisited elements of organizing:

- defining the problem from diverse perspectives;
- doing political analysis and political mapping;
- developing strategies that engage diverse players; and
- evaluating

The horizontal axis lays out steps for developing an institutional base with a civic purpose for taking action:

- assessing your base;
- building your base;
- designing and implementing strategies; and
- institutionalizing those policies and practices that solve the problem

All of this work is done keeping in mind the larger goal of reclaiming the setting as a *civic* institution.

Throughout your public work, it is important to regularly revisit and evaluate your problem definition and analysis, and strategies you develop and implement. You will define and redefine the problem as you assess self-interests, analyze the politics of the environment, engage other diverse citizens, develop strategies, and take action. Analyze and consider the changing politics of the environment and the self-interest of leaders, stakeholders and others along the way. Engage the broadest range of self-interests and link them to the largest possible problem or arena through your problem definition and strategies. Evaluate and re-evaluate the problem, strategies, players, goals, roles, and practices of yourself and your leadership team. Doing these things throughout your work will make your solutions more effective; but as importantly it will provide opportunities to develop critical public capacities and to practice democratic citizenship.

Taking action over time, keeping in mind the above elements of organizing and the larger goal of institutional change, involves four general steps briefly outlined as follows.

The Practice of Organizing

Ongoing Elements (To be revisited often)

- **Define Problem**

In relationship to larger civic issues

Requires diverse perspectives to better understand and address problem's complexity

Is an ongoing process as work is done (work done with diverse peoples alters our definition of a problem)

Determines players and resources required in a broad institutional base to solve the problem.

- **Do Political Analysis and Political Mapping**

Of the interests that surround a problem, the power relations between interests, and the politics of the environments in which the problem exists and through which it can be solved.

- **Engage Diverse Players**

In defining the problem, developing and implementing strategies. This leads to a strong leadership base, a broader problem definition, more effective strategies and greater power base for taking action.

Power is related to our ability to influence the diverse interests around a problem.

- **Evaluate**

Keeps the work directed

Develops public leaders and accountable public relationships

Provides an opportunity to think strategically and conceptually

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The Practice of Organizing

Developing an Institutional Base with a Civic Purpose

Assess Base	Build Base	Design/Implement Strategies	Institutionalize
<p>Organize yourself</p> <p>Map out the environment, interests and leadership</p> <p>Define the problem as broadly as possible, linked to larger public arenas/issues</p>	<p>Develop leadership that reflects the base of diverse power sources</p> <p>Engage a wide range of leaders as you develop broad strategic initiatives</p>	<p>Break problem down into manageable and practical parts</p> <p>Develop leadership</p> <p>Organize work so particular steps lead toward larger purpose, institutional change</p>	<p>Use civic framework to integrate mission with allocation of resources, staffing, program development, the policies and practices of the institution</p>

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Assess the base

You have an idea of the problem. You want to take action. So you need to do some groundwork: to find out what other people think the problem is; what resources are available to address the problem; where leadership might come from; and what the patterns of power surrounding the problem are. Get clear about your self-interest, why you want to be at the table. Determine the self-interests of others (how they define the problem, what role they might play in solving the problem) through one-on-one interviews.

Build a base for taking action

Develop a leadership base that can accomplish the challenging work of strategic planning and organizing action. Leaders will have different skills and resources, and will be connected to different institutional settings and departments. Building a base requires developing the capacities of individual leaders, pushing their commitment, advising on strategy as they work with their own power bases. The principles of public relationships apply here.

The base for taking action will require different levels of leadership, from key strategic planners to those you'll keep informed and draw upon for particular purposes. Not every interest needs to be part of strategic planning; that particular leadership base needs to be able to get things done, yet stay in relationship with interests not represented.

Develop/implement strategies

Break a problem or task down into manageable and practical parts, while keeping in mind the larger issues and values connected to it. Organize the work so particular steps lead toward the larger purpose. Engaging diverse players in developing and implementing strategies will make them more effective, just as it makes the definition of the problem more complete. Never lose sight of the larger purpose of the work, developing citizenship and reclaiming your group or institution as a place for public work. Implementing strategies will require another level of organizing, beyond your leadership base, that will use the same principles and practices but involve a broader public.

Institutionalize

To really solve the problem, and to reclaim your institution or group, you need to have an impact on the institutional settings in which the problem takes place and/or can be solved by altering practices, policies, and resource allocation (like time, staff development, or money). This final step rests on all the previous work you have done: the leadership and base for action that's been developed and strategically positioned; the power and authority gained by effective problem definition and the organizing and implementation of solutions; the teaching of civic concepts through your practice and other formal and informal means; the firm understanding of the politics of the group.

It is most likely that this step will happen gradually, as people learn new behaviors, policies are changed to reflect public goals and the work convinces leaders that the approach is worth resources. And with repeated practice and conscious efforts to impact the environment as a whole these changes incrementally add up to affect policies and practices throughout the organization, not just around a particular issue or problem. Through this work you create a civic culture which can shape the development and implementation of the work, and guide the allocation of resources and policies and practices, from hiring procedures to evaluation processes.

Evaluation

Public evaluation is a key, multipurpose tool to use throughout civic organizing. It provides space for learning, strategic thinking, developing accountability. It is a public process; not for placing blame but for increasing the effectiveness of the work and deepening the civic learning process. It is useful for clarifying roles, avoiding misunderstandings, giving a sense of accomplishment, providing a clear direction for the work, and developing a public chronicle, or history, of what was accomplished and learned.

**Self-interest
grows out of
the diversity
and fluidity of
public life.**

What is public evaluation?

The ability to pose a problem and assess how effective you have been in addressing it. It requires a conscious application of ideas to practice, and is a learned art. Public evaluation is intended to develop the civic confidence and capacities of citizens.

Why is the concept and practice of public evaluation important in a democratic society?

Public evaluation is an important part of making our public work, and the places associated with our work, schools for self-governance, or citizenship.

Evaluation usually means someone from the outside coming in to tell you what you did wrong! The evaluator is seen as being objective, or not having a stake in the outcome. Although outside assessments are often useful, evaluation is even more important as an art we learn to do ourselves in our work on a continuing basis.

Evaluation brings seriousness to public work. It directs our work toward larger goals or a mission. Without evaluation our work too often becomes a series of unrelated activities leading to failure or burnout.

Public evaluation is also a way of creating more democratic ownership of knowledge. In an age of information, what one knows, or the categories of knowledge with which one frames action, forms the basis of authority and validity in the larger world. Too often the framing of public work and the naming of lessons from it is left to experts at the top of the information hierarchy. Through a more democratic practice of evaluation, this knowledge can become a resource more broadly used. Public evaluation is one way citizens and citizen-professionals can work together to consciously create and name the categories or concepts that drive effective work.

When should we evaluate and who should be involved in evaluation?

What format should evaluation take?

Evaluation is about consciously knowing what is happening, what has happened, and what should happen. Evaluation, then, should take place whenever you (as an individual or group) need to learn from your actions, or to redirect work to better accomplish a collective mission. In-depth evaluation is especially important for those most closely associated with the planning of an action or strategy, and those whose leadership is being developed. Evaluation can be used:

At the end of meetings. Did we accomplish our goals? What tasks were assigned to whom? What else needs to be done? What do we need to talk about next time?

After larger public meetings. Did we accomplish our goals? How well did we play our roles? What did we gain or lose in the event? What were the power dynamics? The self-interests? Did the event meet the self-interests of staff, key players? What needs to be done to followup?

To evaluate specific strategies (see questions, above) or **To evaluate the work as a whole at different stages.** What were our purposes and goals? Did we meet them? Were they realistic? Did others become more important? What roles were we playing and how well have we played them? What could we do to improve our individual and collective work? What have we learned from the work?

Public actions involving significant individual or group energy, resources, or credibility, usually generate strong emotions as well. Emotions should be named because they are an important part of public work. But they should be separated from the analysis during evaluation.

What about evaluating individuals?

We need to recognize that many people seek or avoid public life as a reaction to their own personal history. Therefore public critique can be very emotionally jarring if it is not artfully done. In particular, the work, problem, event, or goals need to be the focus of critique, not the character of the person being evaluated. It can be enormously freeing for the individual to have *public* discussion of their actions so that unstated opinion does not become the operating mode of the group. Most importantly evaluation allows for public capacity development.

The *Lazarus Project*, an initiative of Project Public Life, has developed a set of rules for public evaluation of individuals:

- **Make I statements.** Always claim your thought/ critique by saying, "I think/feel ...".
- **State your critique within the framework of the larger outcome of the action.** This keeps the focus upon public outcome rather than personal issues. The purpose of public evaluation is to be more effective in attaining your collective goals or mission. Personal critique is not the ' purpose of public evaluation.
- **Be accountable for posing another option if you disagree with the one taken.** This clarifies that your concern is the public outcome, and you are not responding from personal opinion. It also signals that you are accountable to the collective, public mission or goals of the organization/ group.
- **The person critiqued must acknowledge that he or she has heard.**
- **Remember that the purpose of evaluation is to learn from experience. It is not to affix blame.**

Minnesota Extension Service Practices Politics

*Minnesota Extension
Service Practices
Politics*
by Peg Michels and
Kathryn Stoff

Citizen politics is being integrated into the restructuring of the Minnesota Extension Service, a very large-scale institution that provides educational services to local communities. Professionals within the institution are redefining their role to include, along with their particular expertise, the ability to work with citizens outside of their organization in such a way that those citizens are challenged to contribute talent and other resources to the problems they face. In this way their work as citizens for both the professionals and the volunteers and community members takes on meaning and problems are addressed much more effectively.

Asked to adapt to new demands in a changing world, extension staff applied political skills to reposition themselves in the system. Professionals at all levels of the hierarchy were expected to guard their interests while negotiating new roles. But it was clear that their interests included a civic outcome building on the original, public mission of extension. Connecting their work to the concept of citizenship not only repositioned them within the mission of the organization but also linked them to the larger public.

As professionals within extension changed their own roles, they also challenged the organizations' patterns of governance. Leaders learned to map in political terms the power within their organization. These leaders were all using the same concepts of power, politics, and citizenship. Because their efforts led to effective programming with public constituencies, their own internal work was seen as less self-serving. The shift in national mood from a focus on individuals and their rights for services to one in which citizens are challenged to contribute and participate in solving problems helped create the larger political tone necessary to move this work.

"The historic approach has been to have all the answers," one extension educator commented. "Now we draw on community leaders and youth to define their needs. We work with people instead of for them."

"The concepts of citizen politics are totally integrated into the organization," a program leader said. "How we conduct ourselves, develop plans for work in communities, involve citizens, the language used. When we run into difficulties we go back to citizen politics to identify the problem, bring people to the table, and evaluate." The program leader continued, "Learning the concepts is facilitated by practice. You don't attend a conference or Institute and get all the concepts. It's a process of growth and development. It's more depth than skill."

The Storytelling Craft

“Stories are important resources throughout the process of civic organizing. In civic training and evaluation, stories can clarify and transmit lessons. In public meetings, a well-crafted story can bring to life the subject matter. In the problem definition process, storytelling allows individuals to name their own self-interest and how they perceive the problem, rather than having that assumed by others.

When you use or elicit stories, make them clear and to the point. While many stories draw on personal information, the purpose of storytelling in public settings is to transmit information for public use. Create an outline of the information you want reflected in the stories, so all of the storytellers have a similar framework to use.

For example, in defining a problem, you might ask the group to craft their stories including the following information:

- statement of the problem, as the individual sees it;
- her or his personal experience of the problem;
- personal benefits and public benefits of working on the problem with others.

On newsprint or a chalkboard, make a public record of the stories (or at least their main points). Use the record to begin constructing a map of the interests, relationships, and power around the problem.

Storytelling can be useful in evaluating public work experience, for example, at the beginning of a civic training workshop. Participants can pair up to answer the following questions, and then share them with the group; or if it's a smaller group, each person can address the whole. Each person could name which mode their public work falls into (see “Modes of Problem Solving in a Service Society,” Chapter 3).

Think of an important public event or activity you have participated in.

What happened? What made you get involved?

What were the barriers to your/your group's success? How did you (or would you) overcome them?

What were your/your group's strengths?

Who did you work with? Who might you have worked with?

What did you learn from this?

Civic Training in Community Settings:

The Korean Youth and Community Center of Los Angeles

*Civic Organizing in
Community Settings*
by
Anthony Massengale
and Jai Lee Wong.
Adapted from KYCC
Leadership
Development Project
Report and Curricu-
lum Guide, 1994.

The April 29, 1992, rebellion had a profound impact on Los Angeles's 64,000-member Korean community. The Korean Youth and Community Center (KYCC) found itself in a pivotal position as a major social service provider based in Korea Town. KYCC became a lead agency in assisting Korean families whose businesses were targeted in the riot. Crisis counseling, victim assistance, information clearinghouse, language translation, and other tasks were added to an already full plate. A large donation from Korea and numerous foundation grants helped to get the job done, but Bong Hwan Kim, KYCC's executive director, was worried that too few capable leaders in the Korean-American community had surfaced from this tragedy.

Leadership development—Kim decided to invest in a long-term leadership development strategy to train the teenagers and young adults who had been looking for ways to direct their energy and interest in community betterment since the riot. Kim called on African-American organizer and educator Tony Massengale, founder of Community CAN•DO Center for Civic Capacity Building. Massengale was teamed with Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission Consultant, Jai Lee Wong, an architect of the Black-Korean Alliance.

They were assigned the task of developing a youth leadership program that might also introduce skills in organizing. An early conclusion reached by Massengale and Wong was that it would be nearly impossible for KYCC's staff to empower a new generation of youth until they had empowered themselves. They set out to design a comprehensive leadership development initiative not for young people, but for the managers and staff of KYCC.

The trainers—Massengale and Wong drew on their collective knowledge and affiliation with effective leadership development programs, including Coro Foundation, Industrial Areas Foundation, Public Allies, and YouthBuild. They framed their experience with citizen politics, conceptualized by Project Public Life, directed by Harry Boyte. They also introduced civic organizing, co-conceptualized by Massengale and Peg Michels, former co-director of Project Public Life.

The trainers were organizers first, an approach that always placed them into the power equation of what was going on rather than at a clinical distance. They were hands-on, not just facilitators; they were political and self-interested, not neutral. They aimed to agitate rather than rushing to find synthesis. Their approach was strategically aimed to generate the most intense personal and group responses and provide the opportunity for a cultural shift rather than merely an educative **process of transferring information and insights**.

They used their own style of leadership to model and identify the leadership style of the managers. To those who were defensive, timid, or clinging to comfort zones, the trainers seemed to be destabilizing, disruptive, and difficult to avoid. To those ready to learn, they were teachers, trainers, mentors, and guides.

Civic organizing—Drawing on Project Public Life's citizen politics themes, civic organizing focuses on revitalizing the civic mission and mediating role of public institutions and reclaiming the public work of the dedicated professionals and community leaders who work in those institutions. Civic organizing offers a conceptual framework for training and action that incorporates the lessons of good community organizing, but moves beyond the limits of issue-based direct action organizing and advocacy. It also avoids the traps of traditional organizational development consulting that seldom questions whether an institution's public work develops the capacity of its staff and the people receiving its services. An organizing approach is intentionally developmental and capacity building.

Civic organizing features a cutting-edge analysis of our knowledge and information-based society and implications for hierarchical, service-based institutions and their

Civic Training in Community Settings:

The Korean Youth and Community Center of Los Angeles

professional staffs. It conceives of citizenship as doing politics inside and outside of those institutions more than voting, or rights, or protest. It is the public work and responsibility of the citizen, not just politicians, to engage in practical public problem solving and democratic governance carried out in everyday settings where we live and work. Therefore civic organizing:

1. Views citizenship not in legal terms but as the public contribution of members of a democratic society.
2. Assesses the strengths and weaknesses of ethnic and cultural contexts, not romanticizing their significance.
3. Examines the structural dimension of communities and service systems to focus on their institutional character.
4. Maps institutional power, its rules, roles, and relationships.
5. Surveys and identifies the self-interest of institutional stakeholders to establish a diverse public leadership base.
6. Creates the public space to deliberate on and determine shared problem definitions and plans of action.
7. Strategically leverages relational power to achieve institutional transformation and the potential for societal change.

Civic training—The training intentionally challenged and developed leaders to become social change agents. It emphasized conceptual rather than technical skills and it approached leadership development as a political question to be answered with active citizenship and organizing. They argued against a narrowly defined grassroots activism based on issues, and called for a new civic organizing that links, balances, and integrates the paradoxes of modern public and private life.

The new organizing builds on the legacy and learning of the best models of community organizing, exemplified by the Industrial Areas Foundation's balanced emphasis on direct action campaigns as a vehicle for developing leaders through intellectual and conceptual work. Civic organizing employs an organizing approach to the work of service providers, educators, community builders, and social change agents. It focuses on the institutional structure of society, and offers tools with which to map the political rules, roles, and relationships of institutions. It conceives of community not as a romantic, sentimental and amorphous entity, but as also constituted of institutions which have structure, values, and both a private and a public dimension. Community institutions, and the original mission of many public institutions, had a mediating role which helped families and individuals to stand, survive, develop, and ultimately make a contribution to the whole.

Training topics included *Citizenship, Citizen Politics, Cultural/Inter-cultural Context, Public Leadership, Personal Development, Self-Interest, Diversity, Relational Power, Power Mapping, Individual Meetings, Strategic Planning, Action Campaigns, Disciplined Reflection, Public Evaluation, and Accountability.*

The response—Critical individual changes took place as a result of the training and mentoring. The leadership concepts challenged certain basic assumptions and helped to position KYCC to participate in developing the next generation of Korean-American leadership in Los Angeles. Comments from the participants included:

"I like the language, like power now. I use it all the time."

"It was an incredible process. I received a lot of powerful tools. It taught me to think."

"I realize I need to change. I was busy for doing's sake."

"It challenged my work ... [and I realized the] limitation of the service delivery model."

"I ... realized that in order to work in the Korean community, we need to work with [first generation leaders]."

"I ... realize the importance of having a mentor."

"I see myself as a coach now. I try not to manage all the time."

Discovering Self-Interest: One-on-One Interviews

Self-interest grows out of the diversity and fluidity of public life. It brings people to the public world. Self-interest is one's motivations, background, hopes; it's what matters to someone. Self-interest locates the individual within their histories, families, beliefs, and practices. In a particular problem-solving context, it is your connection to the problem and your reason for working with diverse others to solve it.

The concept of everyone having an interest sounds simple, but it's difficult to practice because it means coming to recognize that others don't have your self-interest as their first concern, that their self-interest is probably different from yours, and that their and your self-interests will change over time.

You can discover other people's self-interests by informally listening to and watching them. Think about what they say and how they say it; what their body language says; what they are willing to do; what engages or bores them.

Discovering other people's interests happens in stages. You may watch a person first to gauge her or his interests, or you may be referred by someone else who knows the individual's interests well. Once you have decided that person might be useful to the problem-solving work you are doing, you will want to find out more about them and to engage them in the work.

Interviewing

Interviewing, or doing a one-on-one is another, more formal way of finding out their interests. One-on-ones happen in the context of problem solving: the problem is the reason for your interest in the other person, and you want to find out her or his interests in relationship to that problem. The interview is guided by that larger purpose, it is not haphazard.

Interviewing is a way to gain information about the problem (problem definition), about the culture and power surrounding the problem (power mapping), and about potential leaders and strategies for addressing the problem. With some people you may only do one interview. Others like potential leaders might require several meetings to engage their interests in the work.

The key to interviewing is to listen. You are there to find out what that person knows about the problem, how much, and why they care about it, whether they would be useful to or interested in providing leadership around a problem-solving effort. While you want to be clear about your interest in the problem, you do not want to dominate the conversation. You may not be able to find all this out in one interview. And your meetings should not be marathon sessions, but rather begin with 20 to 30 minutes. Set up another time if you need to.

Using information from interviews and other sources, assess the power relationships and the political cultures of the environments you will be working in through political mapping. The self-interests, the power map, and the definition of the problem will change over time and need to be evaluated regularly.

Power Mapping

Mapping the power relations and interests surrounding your problem:

- provides a broader understanding of the problem by connecting it to the arenas and communities affecting and affected by it;
- provides a good foundation for strategizing because it clarifies the possible allies, problem sources, and other players, and their interests and relationships; and
- should be done early on and reviewed regularly as the work progresses, because your understanding of the problem, power relationships, and interests change over time.

A map of the interests around a problem becomes a power map when simple categories become people with names, interests, responsibilities, and relationships to others. Start by naming interest categories around the problem, as we've done here. Then, to the best of your ability, name them and their interests in relationship to the problem, if they have a direct effect on the problem, and whether they are an ally, problem source, opponent, etc.. Think about who you need to meet with to discover or enlist their self-interest.

Mark who the key players are in your strategy, and who they affect and are affected by. For example, the principal might think his energy is better spent on other problems, but he has influence with other school staff, teachers, students, and parents; parents in the neighborhood could influence him. The scope of your strategy will determine who you want to work with or target.

Interests will change, as will positions as allies and opponents. Review the map regularly as your strategies are designed, implemented, and changed.

“I ask you to remember that as we move toward the 21st Century, the success of our great voyage, of this, the longest experiment in free society in human history ... it is at the grass roots, in the heart of every citizen that we will succeed or fail.”

President Bill Clinton, 1993

Endnotes

Reinventing citizenship and reclaiming mediating institutions will require a difficult reconceptualization of roles, practices, and beliefs about politics and public life. It will take time and concerted effort. What we have briefly outlined here is not a step-by-step process. Citizen politics requires testing and experimentation, trial and error, conflict and negotiation to be integrated into different environments and situations. It is learned through practice. It is not a blueprint, but a map to help guide your work on a daily basis as well as in larger efforts to restructure your public institutions.

Finally, it is about renewing democracy and developing the full capacity of citizens. As Thomas Jefferson noted long ago, there is no safe depository of the ultimate powers of the society but the people themselves.

A Glossary of Terms

Citizenship

The ongoing public work of citizens to build our common fund of resources; our commonwealth.

Active, public citizenship begins and is grounded in our everyday institutional environments—the places we live and work, go to school, volunteer, participate in communities of faith. It is public-spirited and practical: not utopian or immaculate but part of the messy, difficult, give-and-take process of problem solving. Citizenship links our daily life and interests to larger public values and arenas. Through citizenship we build and exercise our power.

Active citizenship is tied to an understanding of public life as diverse, contentious, and linked to, but distinct from, private and communal life. Thus the role of *citizen* can connect people across lines of difference for the purpose of governing and problem solving, drawing on distinct cultural identities and other communities.

Public Work

Public work is cooperative civic work that is visible and whose significance is widely acknowledged. Public work helps build our larger common pool of wealth and resources—our commonwealth.

Public work can be paid or voluntary. It can be done in communities. Or it can be done in institutions and across institutions as part of one's regular job. In fact, adding public dimensions to one's occupation—recognizing the large potential significance and impact of what one does as a teacher or nurse, as a county extension agent or a computer programmer or a machinist or a college professor or anything else—often can turn an unsatisfying job into much more significant work.

In the fullest sense of the term, public work takes place not solely with an eye to public consequences. It also is work of a public; a mix of people whose interests, backgrounds, and resources can be quite different. This requires political skills such as listening, bargaining, understanding diverse self-interests, and being able to map power relations. Everyday politics (or citizen politics) is an important aspect of public work, but not the same thing.

Public work focuses attention on something that we have largely lost sight of in our age of high technology, a point larger than politics: we help to build the world through our common effort. Public work develops our core identities as citizens who are broad producers, rather than simply consumers or clients or experts or any narrower role. What we build and create we can also re-create. Thus, public work also makes clear that the world is open and fluid, not static and fixed.

Politics

(From the Greek word *politikos*, meaning the work of citizens.) Politics is a key aspect of the public work of problem solving and governance, full of ambiguity and practical tasks, and takes place in everyday environments. This understanding allows people to recognize and develop their public roles and capacities. It

highlights the fact that politics is everywhere; every individual, institution, community, or arena practices some kind of politics. Politics here is understood as a cultural practice: the customs, habits, structures of power and governance, formal and informal rules in the environments in which we live and work.

Citizen Politics

Citizen politics (civic organizing) is a method of organizing that locates the practice of politics with citizens in everyday environments as they solve public problems and do other public work. A conceptual framework, citizen politics is not limited to government but is adaptable to many different environments. It provides tools, not techniques.

At its core is civic education the development of ordinary people's capacities for public leadership. This requires paying attention to our roles, capacities, and identities so that we can become agents for problem solving in the multiple arenas of our public work. These capacities are developed best, we believe, through practice coupled with tough, self-conscious reflection.

The core concepts of citizen politics include: public; diversity; self-interest; and power.

Public

(From the Latin, *publicus*, from the people, and *pubes*, meaning maturity.)

1. A body of individuals acting together around common issues.
2. Linked to, but distinct from, private.
3. The public world is open and fluid. Beyond the world of family and close friends, it is characterized by diversity of outlook, interest, and perspective. Thus in public life we are linked not necessarily by common values, histories, and cultures but rather by common problems. When working in the public world, we connect our own individual life in a particular environment with larger settings and goals. The public world is a place for debate, developing public judgment, wrestling with other points of view, as we work together to solve common problems. Our relationships and actions in the public world are strategic. Concepts of self-interest, diversity, and power come out of an understanding of public life as a space in which we act on diverse self-interests to solve common problems, using our collective power.

Diversity

In the context of public work, diversity including different skills, knowledge, and interests as well as ethnic, racial, religious, or class backgrounds is used as a source of knowledge and resources for solving problems.

Self-interest

(From the Latin words *inter esse*, meaning to be among or between others.)

Self-interest is a product of our history, motivation, and experience. It is complex, multidimensional, and changes over time. In a particular problem solving context, it is your connection or stake in the problem, and your reason for working with diverse others to solve it.

Power

(From the Latin word, *poder*, meaning to be able.)

The capacity to act in and influence the world. Power is dynamic, relational, and interactive. To achieve a broad base of support, it actively seeks out diverse interests.

Appendices

A. The Center for Democracy and Citizenship

The Center for Democracy and Citizenship, established in 1993, is located at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Directed by Harry C. Boyte, Senior Fellow at the Humphrey Institute, and Edwin Fogelman, Chair of the Department of Political Science, the Center serves the University and, through various outreach programs, local communities and the larger public.

The Center grew out of the work of Project Public Life, a five-year experiment in grassroots civic leadership that developed the framework of citizen politics and a number of pilot projects using that theory.

Purpose

Through the development, discussion, and dissemination of applied research and experience in diverse communities, the Center aims to support the civic development of all citizens. To accomplish this, the Center provides national, state, and local leaders with:

- a conceptual framework and pedagogical approaches for developing civic competence among citizens;
- help in creating public leadership programs, aimed at developing civic competencies;
- mechanisms for reflection and lesson-building on best-practice examples of citizen problem solving, civic education, and civic leadership development;
- and practical strategies for facilitating community/institutional assessment and change.

Practice

In most cases the Center's work is in transition from successful pilot projects to larger demonstration and dissemination projects, building on the work of Project Public Life. Efforts generally combine aspects of different activities including technical assistance, training, staff development, and action research though one activity may predominate. For example:

1. Technical Assistance:

The Center provides ongoing technical assistance to federal, state, and local governments, community-based groups, and national organizations interested in enriching their civic development efforts. For example, the Center provides technical assistance, training, and staff development for organizations that are part of the Public Achievement Partnership, an action-research project aimed at developing youth service with a strong civic orientation. In collaboration with schools, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Saint Paul Ecumenical Action Council and Minnesota 4-H, the Center is currently institutionalizing and disseminating this approach to youth service locally.

2. Training and Networking:

The Center trains staff, volunteers, and other citizens in a variety of service, educational, and community-based organizations in civic concepts and skills through a network of regional partners. The Center has provided civic training for a variety of community service programs across the country, including all participants in the Summer of Service. Building on such experience, the Center's network will be enriching the civic dimensions of local and Ameri-Corps service projects, and will help to create mechanisms for sharing lessons between and beyond those projects.

3. Staff Development:

The Center strengthens the civic capacity of institutions through staff and board development projects tied to the institution's larger public missions. Currently, we are working with Cooperative Extension Services to renew and strengthen their civic mission. Minnesota Extension Services (MES) and other states are incorporating basic public leadership competencies and civic skills into staff and volunteer development and a range of program areas. MES, for example, is basing the development of the Youth and Family Initiative, for families in stress, on the citizen politics framework.

4. Action Research:

The Center undertakes participatory action research projects aimed at community and institutional change and at deepening knowledge about how such change takes place. Working with the Department of Epidemiology at the University of Minnesota, the Center has recast the typical research design of public health intervention projects through Communities Mobilized for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), a seven county intervention in Minnesota and Wisconsin to address problems associated with underage drinking. Normally, outside experts determine the problem, and they design, in advance, the preferred policy solutions. In CMCA, the Center provided training for local organizers, and it also reworked the theoretical framework of alcohol intervention approaches to emphasize civic capacity building as well as policy change.

5. Civic Educators:

The Center also develops and sustains a nationwide network of civic educators and learners dedicated to reflecting on best-practice examples of citizen problem solving and education, providing consultation, advice, and training resources for the Center, and helping to develop strategies for dissemination, continuation, and replication.

The New Citizenship

The Center has launched a multiyear initiative, The New Citizenship, to develop a national network for citizenship development. *The White Paper on the New Citizenship*, published in 1993, calls for a renewed partnership between the government and the citizenry that includes rebuilding our civic institutions. Since then, the Center has completed a six-month project to develop strategies for the incorporation of key civic lessons into programming and training in several federal agencies, and has begun another joint project building on civic renewal efforts in a variety of contexts (organizing, the media, and so forth).

Publications from the Center for Democracy and Citizenship

If you would like more information on technical assistance and training opportunities, please contact the Center. We have a number of publications that might be useful.

Boyte, Harry C. and Nancy N. Kari, *Building America: The Democratic Promise of Public Work*. (Philadelphia: Temple, 1996) \$16.95

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Markus, Gregory B., *An Evaluation of Project Public Life* (Minneapolis: Project Public Life, 1992). \$4.00.

Peters, Scott J., *Renewing Civic Education in the Minnesota Extension Service*. A Field Project Report, 1994. \$1.00.

Peters, Scott J., *Towards a Civic Professionalism: Reshaping Our Understanding of Work and Citizenship*. A Field Project Report, January 1995. \$1.00.

We hold a fall training session in Minneapolis and sponsor several conferences a year, usually in Minneapolis or Washington, D.C. Our national network of civic educators provides further support in other regions. For more information, write to:

The Center for Democracy and Citizenship
The Humphrey Institute
301-19th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55455
612/625-9505

B. Bibliography

This bibliography is arranged by core concepts and themes in *Reinventing Citizenship*. These include: citizenship/civic education, public, power, self-interest, politics/democracy, freedom, civil rights tradition/Citizenship Schools, professional life, populism/community organizing traditions. It is a partial bibliography, designed to point in some directions that might be of interest.

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Politics/Democracy

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C. Other Resources

Organizing Training Centers, Projects and Networks

Organizing training can be a useful resource, especially when used in the context of citizen politics. This is a partial listing of organizing training centers and projects in the United States. A few are leadership development centers which provide an introduction to organizing but do not themselves organize. The list was compiled from several sources, including *Organizing* (the quarterly magazine of the Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations), *Organizing for Social Change*, a membership list from the inaugural meeting of the National Organizers Alliance, New York, November 1992, and the research of Anthony Massengale. The chart focuses on organizations emphasize developing indigenous leadership to build power organizations for social justice and change based upon democratic values.

ACORN, Brooklyn, NY

Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development

Alternatives (AGENDA), Los Angeles, CA

Advocacy Institute, Washington, DC

Applied Research Center, Oakland, CA

ASPIRA (Focuses on Hispanic community), Washington, DC

Center for Community Action, Roxbury, MA

Center for Community Change, Washington, DC

Center for Organizational and Community Development, Amherst, MA

Center for Third World Organizing, Oakland, CA

Central American Labor Defense Network, Oakland, CA

Citizen Action, Chicago, IL

Commonweal, New Haven, CT

Concerned Citizens of South Central, Los Angeles, CA

Direct Action for Rights and Equality, Greenville, SC

Direct Action Training Center, Miami, FL (4 organizations/1 state and Puerto Rico)

Diverse Strategies for Organizing, Los Angeles, CA

Eastern Communities Training Institute, Philadelphia, PA (2 organizations)

Education Center for Community Organizing, New York, NY

The Empowerment Network, Washington, DC

FOCAL, Montgomery, AL

Gamaleiel Foundation, Chicago, IL (6 organizations/5 states)

Grassroots Leadership, Inc., Durham/Charlotte, NC

Great Lakes Institute, Toledo, OH

Highlander Research and Education Center, New Market, TN

Industrial Areas Foundation, New York, NY (network)
Institute for Contemporary Studies, San Francisco, CA
Institute for Nonviolence/Ella Baker Academy, Albany, NY
Institute for Social Justice, Little Rock, AR
Institute on the Church in Urban Industrial Society
Jobs with Peace, Los Angeles, CA, Milwaukee, WI, elsewhere
Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Louisville, KY
Maine Leadership Development, Portland, ME
Mid-America Institute, Chicago, IL
Midwest Academy (Citizen Action Network), Chicago, IL
National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, Washington, DC
National Organizers Alliance, New York, NY
National Training and Information Center/National Peoples Action, Chicago, IL
(40 state network)
Native Action, Lame Deer, MT
North Austin Neighborhoods, Chicago, IL
Northern Rockies Action Group, Helena, MT
Northwest Austin Council, Chicago, IL
Organize Training Center, San Francisco, CA (5 organizations/3 states)
The Organizing Institute, Pacific Grove, CA
Organizing and Leadership Training Center, Boston, MA
Pacific Institute for Community Organizing (PICO), Oakland, CA (7 organiza-
tions, 5 states)
Portland Organizing Project (POP), Portland, OR
Regional Council of Neighborhood Organizations, Philadelphia, PA
South Austin Coalition, Chicago, IL
Southern Community Partners, Nashville, TN
Southern Empowerment Project, Seymour, TN
Southwest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, NM
Teens A Community Resource (TACS), Portland, OR
Traditional Values Coalition, Anaheim, CA
United Connecticut Action for Neighborhoods, Hartford, CT
Urban Training Institute, San Antonio, TX (2 organizations)
Washington Area Training Center, Washington, DC
Western Organization of Resource Councils, Billings, MT
Western States Center, Portland, OR
Working in Neighborhoods, Cincinnati, OH

