Sociology 531
Community Organization
Community Studies
What Are Community Studies?

• "Community" refers to a population
  – defined by its geographic location
  – people who live and work together
  – see Park and Burgess, 1921, p. 163

• American Sociology has long tradition of community studies
• Community Studies
  – intensive analysis of life in a particular place: usually a neighborhood within a city
  – studies dating back to the 1920s
  – extensive within place, covering various aspects of social life
  – generally used multiple methods: archival, survey, participant observation
  – offered rich description
    • building on anthropology, Clifford Geertz
    • urban ethnography: our own Brian Kelley
• The earliest community study
  – was The Philadelphia Negro
  – W. E. B. DuBois
  – conducted the research in 1897

• Later, the Chicago School of Community Studies
  – inspired by Robert Park and his colleagues
  – at the University of Chicago
  – where Park was a professor, 1913-1934
"Natural Communities"

• Early 20th C U.S. Sociology
  – dominated by evolutionary theory (Spencer)
  – defended by William Sumner
    • conservative professor at Yale
    • taught first sociology course in 1875

• Sumner and his colleagues
  – viewed communities as natural societies
  – that evolved by developing "folkways" and "mores"
Folkways and Mores

• Folkways (Burgess and Park, pp. 100-111)
  – "habitual ways of doing things"
  – develop through trial and error
  – more adaptive selected and become "sanctioned" as "mores"
    • become obligations
    • enforced by reward and punishment

• Institutions develop to maintain these behaviors
Other Classical Theories

- Tonnies, Community and Society (1887)
  - traditional versus modern
  - personal versus impersonal, etc.

- Durkheim, Division of Labor (1893)
  - simple and complex societies
  - mechanical and organic solidarity
  - functional model of society
Functional Model

Social Similarity → + → Mechanical Solidarity

→ -

increasing social density
Chicago School

• Park and his more liberal colleagues challenged the evolutionary theory of natural communities
  – characterized as homogeneous (sameness)
  – threatened by urbanization and increasing diversity of modern cities, such as Chicago in 1920s
  – the "death of community" thesis
Urban Ecology

• Park argued that there are "natural area" in the city (Park, 1967, p. 9)
  – they develop without planning
  – they serve a function (e.g., transportation)

• various functions—populations and activities, are in competition for space

• the most adaptive and resourceful win the competition for the most valuable spaces
The Urban Mosaic

• pattern and order result from competition
  – finance and trade: dominant functions tend to occupy central location
  – factories are located on major transportation lines
  – working class neighborhoods near factories
  – more marginal (slum) areas: deteriorating buildings house newly arrived immigrants
  – nearby is bohemia: artists and radicals
Chicago in 1920

Lake Michigan

- working class
- Industry
- transportation
- warehouses
- slum
- gold coast
- River
- finance and trade
- middle class residential
- University of Chicago
- slum
- working class ethnic
- steel mills
- Gary, IN
• Natural organization of city
  – determined by geography and transportation
  – lakes and rivers
  – later, canals
  – still later, Railroads
  – finally, interstate highways

• Cities vary by when they were built
  – walking city: 18th century
  – railroad city: 19th century
  – freeway city: 20th century
How Cities Change

• Ecological Processes
  – competition: driving force
  – dominance: most powerful functions
  – invasion: new activity or population enters established community (natural area)
    • waves of immigrants
    • expansion of strip malls and fast food
  – succession: new activity becomes dominant
    • takes over community/area
Succession

• suburbanization:
  – housing moves out of city, following highways
  – commerce and industry follows

• deterioration/gentrification
  – abandoned residences, warehouses and industrial buildings deteriorate into slum
  – warehouses and industrial buildings become lofts and apartments; residences are refurbished by young urban professionals
Urban Ecology (conclusion)

• major transformation in the organization of urban/community space
  – results from new technologies
  – which decrease the time/cost of transportation
  – and reduce the value of central location
  – some claim that the post-industrial, information city of the 21st Century will be de-centered—a virtual center that exists only in cyber space
Middletown: The Canon

• Robert and Helen Lynd published
  – Middletown in 1929
  – Middletown in Transition in 1937
• These were the first wave of
  – Now four waves of Middletown Studies
  – Middletown Studies Center and archive now established in at Ball State
  – Community section of ASA offers Robert and Helen Lynd Lifetime Achievement award
Community Politics

• Pluralism: dominant perspective, 1950-70
  – competing leaders
  – logrolling/helping out
  – greatest good for greatest number
  – protection of minority interests

• Multiple interests
  – multi-faceted
  – issue specific
  – cross-cutting
Cross-cutting solidarities

race: black

gender: female

class: employers

bme

wme

wfe

bfw

bfe

bmw

bfw

wfw
Robert Dahl

  – New Haven, CN (Yale)
  – Variety of methods to study political influence
    • Social class or status of local officials
    • Participation of “notables” (New Haven Lawn Club members)
Who Governs? (continued)

- Multiple methods (continued)
  Type of people involved in “decisions” in different “issue areas”
  - public education
  - urban redevelopment
  - Party nominations

Random samples of participants in each area—survey for social characteristics
Analyze election returns by social class of precincts
Random sample of voters: participation
Findings

Very few (Leaders) have direct influence—can initiate or veto policies

a. leaders have assistants and sub-leaders
b. leaders appeal to and shape interests of voters

c. most people have indirect influence

Leaders and sub-leaders are highly specialized in issue areas
Highly specialized (continued)

Fifty actors initiated/vetoed policies (p. 182)
- 27: (54%): only one success
- 17: (34%) 2-3 in single issue area
- 3: (06%) 4 or more successes, single area
- 3: (06%) 4 or more, multiple areas

Fifty successful leaders succeeded in
- nomination decisions (13 leaders)
- public education decisions (16 leaders)
- urban redevelopment decisions (26 leaders)

Only Mayor was influential in all three areas
## Duplication in Counting Leaders

Leaders (Actors) by Number of Successes Initiating or Vetoing by Issue Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Successes</th>
<th>Re-development</th>
<th>Party Nomination</th>
<th>Public Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>73% (19)</td>
<td>31% (04)</td>
<td>44% (07)</td>
<td>54% (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>35% (05)</td>
<td>31% (04)</td>
<td>50% (08)</td>
<td>31% (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 or more</td>
<td>08% (02)</td>
<td>38% (05)</td>
<td>06% (01)</td>
<td>15% (08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% (26)</td>
<td>100% (13)</td>
<td>100% (16)</td>
<td>100% (55*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* There are five duplications due to three actors successful in multiple areas
Leaders: Diverse Backgrounds

- 27 (54%) were public officials
- 13 (26%) were notables or corporations
- 12 (24%) were others (general public)

- N=52 (two public officials were notables)
Four Patterns of Leadership

1: Executive centered grand coalition of coalitions
2: Coalition of chieftains
3: Independent sovereigns with separate spheres of influence
4: Rival sovereigns fighting it out

Covert integration by economic notables—networks of ruling elites, did not occur
Diverse Resources Available

• Almost all were unequally distributed
• Wealthy in one were poor in another
• No resources universally applicable
• Nobody with all or none (pp. 226-228).

• Resources include: time, money, jobs, information, status, popularity, legal rights, authority, legitimacy, votes, educ., IQ, etc.
Major Changes in Governing

• Biggest change: rise of professionals and importance of skill and art of pyramiding
  – notables declining in influence
  – executives increasingly important
  – coalition building is now critical

• Executive centered coalition of coalition is becoming dominant form

• Institutionalized in city manager, professional government in modern cities
Challenge to Pluralism: Ruling Elite Studies

- Floyd Hunter’s study of Atlanta, *Community Power Structure* (1953) is the classic study of elite networks and elite domination of public policy.
- Dorothy Nehil’s study of Boston indicates elite domination through networks of business and political elites.
- Bachrach and Baratz (1962) classic on “nondecisions” promoted by elites.
Ruling Elite Studies (continued)

- Matthew Crenson, Unpolitics of Air Pollution (1971): pollution remained a “non-issue” in the most polluted cities.

- Robert Perrucci and Marc Pillisuk (ASR 1970): inter-organizational leaders, served on multiple corporate boards, linked these orgs.
  - Had a reputation for local power
  - Had similar attitudes and interests in local politics.
Pluralist Versus Ruling Elite and Functional versus Conflict Models

• Methodological distinctions
  – Pluralist focus on public policy decisions and public meetings
  – Ruling elite focus on inter-organizational networks and reputation for power/influence
Debate (continued)

• Theoretical arguments
  – Liberals argue that poor people or non-elites have to fight their way into the polity
  – Elites promote non-decisions/status quo
  – Political challenges predicted by
    • Interests
    • Organization
    • opportunity
  – Political challenges produce social change
Pluralist vs. Elite Theory


– Two faces of power: public and private
  • Pluralists study public face: city council meetings
  • Conflict/ruling elite theorists study private face: elite networks
  • Each finds what he looks for, because both exist
Hogan (1982, 1990)

- My dissertation (U of M 1982) expanded on two faces of power
  - Typology of frontier communities
    - Carnival of public government
    - Caucus of private government
  - Difference rooted in economic organization and political culture
  - Carnival towns: Denver and Central City
    - Economic independence of artisans/miners
    - Tradition of political organization and contention
My dissertation (continued)

• Caucus towns: Golden and Pueblo (home of Adolph Coors, Rockefeller, Railroads, Guggenheim Brothers, Bessemer Coal, Oil & Iron Mfg)
  – tradition of corporate economic control
  – and government by caucus of business elites

Carnival/Caucus frontier character continues to shape local political economy
Hogan (2003)

  - Acknowledges public and private faces of government in all communities
  - Maintains variation across communities
  - Rooted in economic organization and political experience/culture
Growth Machine

• John Logan and Harvey Molotch (1987), *Urban Fortunes*

• Modern city is a growth machine
  – Developers and industrialists hold city hostage
  – Cities must promote growth or become ghost towns
Failure of Planning (2003)

• Recently I have been arguing (in print) with John Logan on extent to which
  – Cities always support growth
  – Citizen growth control initiatives inevitably fail

• My argument: growth initiatives emerge
  – in cities experiencing overbuilding: hh/pop growth
  – In South CA in 1980s
Southern CA in 1980s (cont.)

- Following early risers: Petaluma and Rockland Counties in 1970s
- Taking advantage of boom years of speculative frenzy (Reagan years, just before savings and loan crash of 1989)
- Most challenged suburban cities
  - Faced organized citizens: initiative on ballot
  - Substantial state demands for new housing and for affordable housing
Castleton (made up name of real San Diego suburb)

• Particularly challenged but managed to pre-empt the citizens
  – Developers came up with alternative plan
    • New housing permitted in planned developments
    • Developer/new residents would pay for public services: water, power, even schools and parks
    • All provided (including planning experts) by the developer
Castleton Miracle

• How was this possible?
  – City had lots of vacant land
  – That was becoming increasingly valuable
  – Including coastal view estate lots, looking out to ocean from above the edge of a lagoon
  – Developers were anxious to build
  – Before the bottom fell out of the real estate market
What Happened?

• Local facilities planning districts were developed by eager developers in 1986-1989
• After 1989 all building stopped—savings and loan crashed
• Lots of meetings and plans, 1990-1995
  – Citizen advisory committees
  – Negotiating with developers
Planning 1990-1995 (continued)

• Two faces of power were much evident
  – citizen advisory committees and workshops
  – Private meetings with developers

• Managing popular participation
  – Co-opt the organized
  – Pre-empt the disorganized (but potentially powerful/threatening)
Planning 1990-1995 (continued)

• Follow cycles
  – Pre-empt during boom
  – Co-opt during bust
The Failure of Planning (cont.)

- The benefits of over-regulation
- The contradictory interests in community
  - life: exclusionary
  - work: inclusionary
- The interest of local government is managing inclusionary and exclusionary interests
- The irony of popular participation
The Failure of Planning (concl.)

• Local government
  – Manages public opinion and voters
  – Co-opts organized
  – Pre-empt opposition organizing
  – Co-opts during bust
  – Pre-empt opposition during boom

• Developers: building rights during boom
  – Cooperate with government
  – Pre-empt opposition
Aldon Morris and Community Studies

• My goal is to locate Morris’ analysis of the Civil Rights Movement
  – In community studies
  – In political sociology

• How does Morris’ “indigenous approach” explain how the black community succeeded in challenging Jim Crow?
Morris on community

• How does Morris inform our analysis of community?
  – the death of community?
  – Urban ecology?
  – Community politics
    • Pluralism
    • Conflict/ruling elite theory
    • Historical/comparative
    • Growth machine

• How does this inform political sociology?
Morris on community (cont.)

• Unlike case studies of 1920s-1950s
  – Multiple communities
  – Focused on blacks
  – Focused on organizational level of analysis
    • Members of community organizations
    • Philosophy of organizations/leaders
    • Tactics of organizations
Morris on community (cont.)

• Methodology: Oral history
  – Insider approach
  – Extensive, open-ended interviews with leaders of various organizations
  – “value free”? 
  – “objective”? 
  – Generalize-able?
Morris on community (cont.)

- Literature on community
  - Morris describes “tripartite system of domination”
    - Economic political, and personal domination
    - In rural and urban South (p. 1)
  - Urbanization did not mark the death of community, but it did affect the tripartite system
Morris on community (cont.)

– Segregation facilitated institution building in the urban South (p. 3)

– Black community was physically segregated
  • Not really in competition with whites, given Jim Crow system
  • In many ways the black community was like what conservatives viewed as the natural community
    – Homogeneous racially
    – Rooted in cultural institutions
      - Church
      - Family
      - School
Morris on community (cont.)

– But Morris argues that segregation actually fostered the development of these cultural institutions

– Urbanization and Segregation actually facilitated opposition to Jim Crow law
  - Provided the networks
  - Provided the resources
  - Provided the leadership
  - Provided the organization
Morris and Community Politics

- Tripartite system: a network of political, economic, and cultural elites
  - But there were divisions within the white community (pp. 255, 270: Birmingham)
  - There were divisions within the black community (p. 42)
  - Cross-cutting solidarities?
Civil Rights Movement

• “Routine” legal challenge of NAACP, both local and national (chapter 2)
• “local movement centers” mobilized direct action campaigns
  – Organization of organizations (pp. 44-5)
  – Used newcomers to avoid disunity (pp. 43-4)
• Local centers provided base for regional organization of SCLC (chapter 4)
Civil Rights Movement

- SCLC and black churches (chapter 4)
- Collective action building organization (chapter 5): movement centers (p. 100)
- National organization: competition and cooperation (chapter 6, p. 122, 128)
- Movement halfway houses (p. 139): resource centers for leadership training
Direct Action

• Direct action in 1950s: sit-ins (pp. 188-94
  – Connected
  – Personal and organizational ties
  – Planned by local leaders
  – Using local resources

• These provided local bases for 1960s Mass Disruption
Mass Disruption

• No mass uprising in 50s
  – CORE and NAACP Youth lacked mass base
  – SCLC had mass base but not well developed
  – Direct action not yet established strategy (see Tilly on repertoires)

• Student sit-ins of 1960s
  – Strengthened Civil Rights Movement
  – Created SNCC
  – Inspired white student movement
SNCC vs. SCLC

- Black schools base for sit-ins and SNCC (paralleled churches and SCLC)
- Differences in organization and leadership
  - Ella Baker vs. Martin Luther King (pp. 102-4)
  - Sexism, ageism, homophobia (pp. 114-5)
  - Decentralized, local leadership, less formal organization (pp. 218-9) in SNCC
  - SNCC was model for SDS
Failure in Albany, GA

- SNCC vs. SCLC rivalry (pp. 243, 248)
- MLK’s conservative position: unwilling to defy federal judge (p. 247)
- Poor planning, diffuse goals and vague tactics (pp. 248-9)
- Unity and tactics of “white power structure” (pp. 249-50)
Success in Birmingham

• Black unity: co-opt SNCC leadership (p. 254)
• Careful planning (pp. 257-262)
• Mass meetings at churches (pp. 256-7)
• Economic boycott and demonstrations
  – Disrupt business as usual
  – Divide and conquer business and political elites
  – Generate powerful media images
Lessons for Political Sociology

- Not irrational/collective behavior (Smelser)
- Not dependent on Northern resources and conscience constituents (McCarthy and Zald)
- Organizations not necessarily undermining protest (Piven and Cloward)
- Indigenous organizations and resources
- Base for regional/national organization
- Organizational division of labor
Lessons for Community Studies

• Creation of black community
  – local
  – national

• creation of protest community
  – nested within black community
  – nested within labor movement

• effects of urbanization

• change in southern communities