

"The time is always right
to do what is right."

MARTIN LUTHER KING



Time

Pleading for Time

Over space and time we have lost our connection with ancient wisdom. Rediscovering tradition may help us move forward sustainably.

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Persistent Inequality and 'Poverty Traps'

Why do we continue to struggle with problems of inequality and poverty? By looking back, we can find new ways to look forward.

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B.C. Communities: It's Time to Build a Social Plan

Who will solve social problems? Practice shows communities can find solutions—it just takes a little planning.

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The Time of the Welfare State

Asbjørn Wahl uses lessons from history to explore the current state of social welfare and its future.

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Time for Reflection, Time for Planning

WE USUALLY THINK ABOUT TIME, as time that has passed. My first year as President of SPARC BC has gone by in a blink and the organization continues strong in its 41st year! I can't help but think, however, that even with our significant history, SPARC BC is increasingly focused toward the future. It is an exciting time to be involved with this organization, as we continue to strengthen our financial position, achieve greater impacts, and serve more and more requests to leverage our expertise around key areas of income security, community development, and accessibility.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of SPARC BC's work is the extent to which we are taking on initiatives that serve multiple priorities and express a more holistic vision of how we support "a just and healthy society for all." Accessibility issues are social justice issues. They connect to income security issues and are often best addressed through an inclusive process of com-

munity development and evidence-based research. When we track our core work and research and consulting projects, we pay ever closer attention to how different issues interconnect and how we can further our mandate. In the process, we better serve our clients and stakeholders on multiple levels and are more effective in our work.

I appreciate spending time with my fellow Board members and thank them for their commitment to the organization. We are all proud of the top-notch staff we have here at SPARC BC, and the dedicated volunteers who work with them. We especially appreciate our supporters—members, donors, stakeholders, partners, funders, and clients, without whom we could not accomplish our work.


— DEREK GENT —
PRESIDENT, SPARC BC

NEW DIRECTORS

SPARC BC would like to welcome its two new Board members, elected to two-year terms at the June 1 AGM.

JULIE KIRKPATRICK

Julie is completing her degree in Social Work through UNBC and its distance learning site in Prince Rupert. She hopes to use her degree in promoting the interests of people with disabilities as she sees accessibility as a significant barrier, particularly in northern communities.

LORRAINE LUNDQUIST

Lorraine comes as an experienced Social Planning Council Board member, having served on the Board of the Edmonton Social Planning Council. She has recently taken a job with Legal Services Society, in which she'll be traveling to communities throughout B.C. and has an extensive work background in community development in Alberta. She also has a social work degree, as well as an MBA. Her volunteer work has focused on issues of homelessness and shelter.



OUR MISSION

The Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia works with communities in building a just and healthy society for all.

ABOUT SPARC BC

SPARC BC is a non-partisan, independent charitable organization. Since 1966, SPARC BC has conducted public education and advocacy on key social issues, focusing our efforts on the areas of:

- Income Security
- Accessibility
- Community Development



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Founded in 1966, SPARC BC is a non-partisan, independent charitable organization who draws its members from across British Columbia.

SPARC BC conducts public education and advocacy on the priority issues identified by a provincial Board of Directors and volunteer committees. SPARC BC's Research and Consulting Services, Parking Permit Program for People with Disabilities, Community Development Education Program, and other programs contribute to the goals of fostering the social and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities in BC.

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We would like to thank those volunteers who have generously shared their knowledge and expertise in this issue of *SPARC BC News*.

Leslie Stern, Project Coordinator for the Lower Mainland Network for Affordable Housing has been a housing proponent, researcher, and development consultant for more than twenty years. She was a founding member of *Entre Nous Femmes Housing Society*, creating community based housing geared to the needs of single parents in the mid-1980s, and has been active in developing housing to meet community needs ever since. Her research has focused on the links between housing, health, and community development.

Asbjørn Wahl is the national co-ordinator of the broad Campaign for the Welfare State (for *Velferdsstaten*) in Norway. Before that, he worked as a consultant for the Norwegian Union of Municipal and General Employees. Trained in history and sociology, he has many years of experience in the trade union movement, including the Norwegian Union of Railwaymen and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) in London, at whose head office he worked in the 1990s. He is currently Vice President of the ITF Road Transport Workers' Section. Asbjørn was also a founding member of *Attac Norway* and he is a member of the Co-ordinating Committees of *Forum Social Europe* as well as of the *European Network for Public Services*. He has published a number of articles on politics, social and labour questions in magazines and books both in Norway and internationally.

Someone you know interested in a SPARC BC

membership? Give them this issue of *SPARC BC News* (when you're done, of course) and direct them to the inside back cover.



A new intellectual biography of Canadian historian Harold Innis traces the development of theories about the rise and fall of civilizations. His words resonate as we face a growing crisis of sustainability. **BY JIM SANDS**

Pleading for Time

Are We Dangerously Out of Touch with the Past and Future?

IT WAS A MOMENT of epiphany. I was standing on the edge of the precipice at Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump, the UNESCO world heritage site in Southern Alberta. Every autumn for nearly 6,000 years people had gathered at this site to engage in an annual ritual that involved stampeding buffalo over the cliff and harvesting the remains for food, blankets, and other necessities that would see them through the long prairie winter.

In that moment I thought of many things: How most of what I had learned about Aboriginal cultures had been wrong and misleading; how the legacy of colonialism that haunts Canada had been carefully hidden from view as I grew up.

And I thought about Harold Innis. Harold

Innis was a Canadian historian and political economist generally regarded as the founder of Communication Studies in Canada. For most of his career Innis examined the political and economic development of the Canadian nation by investigating key staple industries such as the cod fishery and the fur trade.

In his later years Innis looked at the connections between communication media and the rise and fall of civilizations. He divided methods of communication into two different categories: those that carried informa-

tion across time and those that carried information across space. For example, oral cultures passed information across time from generation to generation through stories, legends, and myths

“Each civilization has its own unique combination of media that transmits information across both time and space. It is when these come out of balance that trouble develops.”

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to people who lived in relatively small groups. The innovation of easily transportable, lightweight paper was essential to the growth of bureaucratic structures, which gave rise to administrations and sprawling empires such as the Roman Empire.

Each civilization has its own unique combination of media that transmits information

“Modern media carry ideas over large spaces, but carried virtually no sense of time emphasizing what Innis called present mindedness. ”

across both time and space. It is when these come out of balance that trouble develops. And Harold Innis thought we are in trouble.

Writing in the years following World War II, Innis concluded that modern society, based on electronic communications such as radio, television, and telephone, had become dangerously out of balance. “As modern developments in communication have made for greater realism they have made for greater possibilities of delusion,” he said. Modern media carry ideas over large spaces, but carried virtually no sense of time emphasizing what Innis called “present mindedness”. One of his most famous essays is entitled simply “A Plea for Time.”

Most people who have read Innis’ work have

had to contend with his obtuse, cryptic and circular writing style that ranged across several theoretical categories including the development and deterioration of civilizations, the relationships of technology to cultural development, and the development and maintenance of consciousness within empires.

A newly published book attempts to clarify and outline the development of Innis’s ideas. *Marginal Man: The Dark Vision of Harold Innis* (University of Toronto Press, 2006) by Alexander John Watson examines the development of Innis’s thought into the “dark vision” described in the title.

Standing at Head Smashed In, I began to understand what Innis was talking about. The culture that had existed at that site had vanished less than two hundred years ago when early European settlers hunted the Plains buffalo almost to extinction destroying a critical foundation of the Plains culture and economy.

Archeologists have documented use of the buffalo jump over a period of nearly 10,000 years with continual use existing over 5,600 years. One realization I had at that site was that if Aboriginal civilization had lasted for nearly 6,000 years, would the North American civilization that I had grown up in last as long?

For both myself and Harold Innis the answer was no. “When Innis, as a marginal intellectual, found himself unable to complete and disseminate his new critical synthesis—his communica-

tions work—he was led to consider a radical new possibility; the final failure of Western civilization itself. [A] re-examination of Innis’s life and thought is appropriate at a time when the prospect of such a definitive return to barbarism seems less and less exotic,” says Watson.

As Watson notes, Innis died of cancer in 1952 before all aspects of his complex project could be completed. Although Innis is recognized as one of Canada’s greatest intellectuals (Innis College at the University of Toronto is named after him) his work on the relationship between communications and empire was misunderstood for years. A revival of interest in Innis began in the 1960s when the popularity of authors such as Marshall McLuhan sparked an interest in communication media. McLuhan, who studied under Innis, famously described his book, the *Gutenberg Galaxy*, as “a footnote to Innis.” There was also a revival of interest in Innis and his ideas on dependency in academic circles as questions about Canada’s role in relationship to the American empire began to surface.

In 1987, thirty-five years after Innis’ death, the United Nations-sanctioned Brundtland Report initiated a discussion about the concept of sustainable development. Recently, governments have grudgingly begun to grapple with the implications of global warming and climate change. These developments can be seen as a manifestation of the ideas that Innis was warning about in his cryptic final publications.

“To do that, we would need to set aside our televisions and computers and honour the elders, the storytellers and the griots who carry deep knowledge and wisdom across generations. ”

Perhaps it is time for another revival of interest in Innis. Perhaps we need to listen to the ancestors who met at Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump and cultivate an appreciation of time.

To do that, we would need to set aside our televisions and computers and honour the elders, the storytellers, and the griots who carry deep knowledge and wisdom across generations. We would need to listen deeply to our ancestors and base our decisions not on current needs, but on the needs of the generations to come. We would need to recognize in our decision-making processes the ancient Aboriginal wisdom that our actions are influenced by the seven generations preceding our lives and that our actions have impact on the seven generations following our lives.

Harold Innis’s thought is dark, challenging, and an essential part of the modern reading library. Watson’s book provides an excellent introduction. ■



Problems of poverty and inequality in society need both social and spacial solutions. **BY BEVERLEY PITMAN**

Persistent Inequality and ‘Poverty Traps’

‘THE GROWING GAP’ is a phrase that Armine Yalnizyan uses to describe the sharp increase in the number of affluent families and the stagnation of poor ones in Canada over the past thirty years.¹ “In 2004,” she writes in a just-released study, “the richest 10% of families raising children earned 82 times more than the poorest 10%—almost triple the ratio of 1976, when they earned 31 times more.”

By focusing on income trends for all Canadian families, not just those living in poverty, Yalnizyan’s report, *The Rich and the Rest of Us*, shifts the explanatory focus to a dynamic much bigger than individual luck or success, lack of training, or effort, or motivation—namely, the redistributive mechanisms of the Canadian economic system. The study concludes that while wage earners in Canadian families have done their part as individuals, in true Horatio Alger fashion, by working longer hours over the last three decades, their country’s economic policies have disproportionately benefited a select few.²

The stubborn persistence of poverty in the world, including affluent countries like Canada, is something orthodox economists find difficult to explain. Economic competition together with liberal economic institutions is *supposed* to lead to convergence in the economic fortunes of individuals and their households, particularly during periods of economic growth. In Canada, between 1964 and 2004, the arguments of *The Rich and the Rest of Us* suggest that convergence pressures were more than offset by a strong counter pressure—the redistributive policies and practices of the state.

“In 2004, the richest 10% of families raising children earned 82 times more than the poorest 10%.”

Other economists maintain that persistent inequality—“Canada’s poorest families appear to be stuck in time,” Yalnizyan states—is more

¹ Yalnizyan, A. (2007). *The Rich and the Rest of Us: The Changing Face of Canada’s Growing Gap*. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

² Horatio Alger, as Bowles et al. (2006) remind us, was the 19th century American writer whose heroes all escaped poverty “by dint of effort, ability, and inner strength” and whose lasting effect is the idea that “an individual’s socioeconomic prospects are largely under his or her control” (what economists call ‘the achievement model of income determination’).

often the result of a combination of things, including (but not limited to) state activity. In a recent book called just that, *Poverty Traps*, Samuel Bowles, Steven Durlauf, and Karla Hoff have elaborated three broad kinds of explanations for the persistence of poverty in the world.³ All focus on the formation of a spatial concentration of poverty that locks people in and shuts them off from economic opportunity.

The first type of explanation for persistent poverty that Bowles et al. describe focuses on certain *critical thresholds*—in overall wealth or human capital—that must be reached before the forces of standard competitive theory step in.⁴ A common situation in impoverished countries is a chronically under-funded educational system, which prompts those who can afford to acquire an education elsewhere to move, leaving behind those who cannot—in a hopeless trap.

The second explanation focuses on *institutions* themselves. Historical studies of economic development show that a certain broad class of institutions has played a central mediating role in the evolution toward a market-based society with opportunities for a broad cross-section of the population. In areas of the world where such institutions (private property, for example) have been absent, underdeveloped, uncoordinated or corrupt, and where opportunities for individual

social mobility have consequently been few and far between, income disparities have tended to the extreme.

The third type of explanation for poverty's persistence originates in the research of William Julius Wilson, an American sociologist whose longitudinal studies of 'ghetto poverty' (neighbourhoods with poverty rates of 40% or more) in Chicago's black inner city have initiated a new literature on *neighbourhood effects*.⁵ Wilson has

"A common situation in impoverished countries is a chronically under-funded educational system, which prompts those who can afford to acquire an education elsewhere to move, leaving behind those who cannot—in a hopeless trap."

found that peer effects, role model influences, and other factors operating at the level of the social group help explain the persistence of poverty in small, spatially bounded areas. In seeing the ghetto as a place apart—a zone where social groups, social interactions, and socio-economic life all differ from those in mainstream

³ Bowles, S., Durlauf, S.N. and Hoff, K. (eds.) (2006). *Poverty Traps*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

⁴ See Bowles et al., *Introduction*.

⁵ Wilson, who is likely best known for his 1987 book, *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy* (University of Chicago Press), sets out his 'neighborhood effects' approach in *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor* (Vintage Books, 1997).

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society—he also sees the growth in joblessness and economic exclusion in these neighbourhoods as strongly connected to the spatial and industrial restructuring of the US economy. In fact, he believes such forces have triggered a process of ‘hyperghettoization’ in American cities.⁶

A study called *Poverty By Postal Code* has recently used Wilson’s neighbourhood-effects approach in an investigation of persistent and spatially concentrated poverty amongst families in metropolitan Toronto. Prepared by the United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, the study traces changes in the geography of family-based poverty in 1981, 1991, and 2001.⁷

The key findings of *Poverty by Postal Code* were as follows:⁸

- In 2001, almost one in five families in Toronto were living in poverty (according to Statistic Canada’s low-income cut-offs).
- Toronto’s ‘poor’ families were much more concentrated in neighbourhoods where there is a high proportion of families living in poverty in 2001 compared to twenty years ago. In 1981, just 17.8% of ‘poor’ families lived in such neighbourhoods, compared to 43.2% in 2001.
- Concentration has resulted in a dramatic rise in the number of higher poverty neighbourhoods

in the City of Toronto, approximately doubling every ten years, from 30 in 1981, to 66 in 1991, to 120 in 2001.

- In inner suburbs, the combined total of higher poverty neighbourhoods rose from 15 in 1981, to 92 in 2001.
- And lastly, there has been a profound shift in the resident profile of higher poverty neighbourhoods, with ‘poor’ visible minority and immigrant families making up a far larger percentage of the total ‘poor’ family population in those neighbourhoods today than twenty years ago.

What are the implications of the poverty-trap idea and studies like *Poverty by Postal Code*?

Above all else, they demonstrate that persistent inequality is produced not only by the forces of economic competition and the income redistribution policies of states, but also *socially*—through the interactions of individuals, families, neighbours, and other community members—and *spatially*—through urban neighbourhoods.

And because the lived experience of the growing gap between rich and poor is that of families in their neighbourhoods, measures to alleviate poverty must begin there, with them—and involve the neighbourhood and community associations, and municipal governments that support them. ■

⁶ See, e.g., Wacquant, L. and Wilson, W.J. (1989). The cost of racial and class exclusion in the inner city, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 501(1): 8-25.

⁷ United Way of Greater Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development (2004). *Poverty by Postal Code: The Geography of Neighbourhood Poverty, 1981-2001*. Toronto: UWGT and CCSD.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.



Contributions from all community perspectives are key to building a relevant and sustainable social plan. **BY NICK ISTVANFFY**

B.C. Communities: It's Time to Build a Social Plan

OVER THE PAST DECADE, social problems have become increasingly visible in B.C. communities. Homelessness has risen dramatically across the province and now is an issue that faces even smaller communities. Linked issues, such as substance abuse, petty crime, vandalism, and violence are all present and pose a challenge to communities as they seek to enhance the quality of life for residents. In order for communities to effectively and meaningfully address these issues, it is essential that they articulate their goals and priorities for the future, while identifying the priority issues and solutions for present problems.

Many of the roots of these problems are to be found elsewhere, outside individual communities in the policies and actions of higher levels of government, or in broad economic trends. In Canada, legislative responsibility for social issues tends to lie with the provincial governments. The federal government does, however, provide funding towards some social programs, and transfers funding to the provinces to address others. Most

municipal governments in British Columbia have little legislative responsibility for social issues and programs. Municipal governments also have a relatively limited resources with which to fulfill their responsibilities, and very little left over to address social issues or provide social programs.

Who is responsible?

Though social issues are a provincial and federal responsibility, they always happen in a community. As a result, local governments and community agencies often find themselves facing homelessness, crime, addiction, and other issues in their streets, with few of the resources needed to directly address the problems. Though municipal governments and local community agencies usually do not have the capacity to directly provide needed services, they have a very strong role to play in articulating the needs of the community. In the case of municipal governments, they have many tools available to them to facilitate the

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“The most successful social plans are solidly based on community perspectives and input, and articulate clear goals and strategies to improve the social welfare of community members.”

creation or expansion of needed social services in the community, including zoning, building permits, licensing, and of course advocacy and support for community initiatives.

The overlapping responsibilities of each level of government are further complicated by the existence of separate school boards, health authorities, regional governments, transportation authorities and others. It is almost impossible to address a given social issue without engaging some or all of these agencies and governments. Though most of them are not directly responsible for action to address a given issue, many of them will have some role in developing solutions or removing barriers.

For example, the creation of an addictions treatment centre in a community can be a cause of tension and conflict for many residents, and in many cases the planned facility is cancelled as a result. The province is primarily responsible for the creation and funding of addictions treatment and other health treatment facilities, through the health authorities or directly. Sometimes the federal government will con-

tribute funds or other supports. The municipal government has a role in facilitating the siting and planning of the facility, development permits, and working with the community to address any issues or concerns. The health authority likely has a role in monitoring the facility once it is operational, and

possibly funding the capital or operating costs. Community agencies often operate the programs and take an administrative role. All of these groups have essential roles in helping to create a needed social service, and a social plan can help to focus their efforts towards combined successes.

In recent years, SPARC BC has worked with several communities to develop action plans to address social issues. Each community is unique and faces a specific set of complex and overlapping social issues. However, the social plan development model that SPARC BC has been using can be applied or adapted to many situations, and it has been successful in the creation of action plans with clear priorities and specific goals.

Community Based Social Plans

The most successful social plans are solidly based on community perspectives and input, and articulate clear goals and strategies to improve the social welfare of community members. While there can be some benefit from

using strictly research—based planning, that approach runs a significant risk of missing key issues, or worse yet creating conflict with community members and agencies who feel excluded from the process. SPARC BC's experience with the development of social plans has demonstrated that extensive community consultations are essential.

The model that SPARC BC has developed in recent years involves extensive research combined with three rounds of public consultations, each with a specific set of goals and questions. The consultations and research combined, ensure that all previous work is recognized and not duplicated, the social plan addresses current community priorities, the community has a clear idea of the scope of need relating to each priority, and that all of the key agencies and governments have their roles clearly identified in addressing those priorities. The consultations serve primarily to inform the development of the plan, but also to build public awareness and support of the plan and process.

Preliminary Work

To ensure that consultations are not rehashing old issues, it is important to review all the existing planning and other research that has been done in a community. If possible it is also worthwhile to interview a few key community representatives to get their input on what they see as important social issues. These two approaches

provide a solid starting point for the development of a social plan.

Priorities

The first public consultation in the current model involves a full-day workshop with representatives from key government and social service agencies. The participants affirm the social issues facing the community, and identify the top priorities for the social plan to address. This consultation ensures the social plan will address the most pressing issues, and provides some focus for the later stages of the process.

“The model that SPARC BC has developed in recent years involves extensive research combined with three rounds of public consultations, each with a specific set of goals and questions.”

Inventory & Responsibility Matrices

Once the community priorities are identified, it is important to develop an inventory of the existing services in the community that relate to each priority. At the same time, a social responsibility matrix should be developed, which will outline the roles and responsibilities of the governments and agencies towards addressing each of the priority issues. A good example of a social responsibility matrix can be found on the City of Surrey website.

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Gap Analysis Consultations

The second round of consultations should be with all interested members of the public, as well as community and government agencies. These consultations use the inventories and the knowledge of participants to determine the scope of need in the community for each priority. Using the addiction treatment centre as an example, these workshops would identify existing service levels with the inventory, then work to identify how many more beds or facilities would be necessary to meet the level of need in the community.

Action Plan Consultations

Once the scope of need is identified for each of the priorities, the third round of consultations would focus on identifying the action steps needed to address those needs. Depending on the type of issue, this round of consultations could include a combination of workshops, focus groups and interviews. The goal of the consultations would be to clarify what steps need to be taken, who is responsible for taking those steps, and what can be done to ensure that those responsible assume a leadership role in addressing those issues.

A Time for Social Planning

SPARC BC's experience with developing social plans in partnership with communities in B.C. has taught us the importance of working with communities to plan for the future. By developing a comprehensive social plan, a community is able to focus the energy of many disparate agencies and groups, and achieve meaningful improvements in the quality of life of its members. The social issues that have become prominent over the past decade are not permanent, nor are they insoluble. By building community capacity and collaboration it is possible to create a social infrastructure with the ability to address current and future issues as they develop. ■

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There is much to learn from the history of the welfare state in order to carry it forward against the trends of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization. **BY ASBJØRN WAHL**

The Time of the Welfare State: Historical Origins and Contemporary Challenges to the Social Welfare State

THE DEVELOPMENT of the welfare state (or *European Social Model*¹) represented great progress, unprecedented in the history of mankind, in terms of living and working conditions for citizens of these states. Public health, life expectancy, and social security improved enormously over a short period of time due to universal, high quality social welfare provisions. In the 1970s, however, the welfare state ran into increasing problems and, spurred on by a number of international economic crises, market forces went on the offensive, and the current era of neo-liberalism—characterised by its deregulation of the economy, privatisation, and cuts to public budgets—began.

The gains won in the creation of the welfare state are valuable and should be defended and protected. To this end, in this article I will first

examine the social and historical origins of the welfare state, including the specific power relations in society that made it possible. I will then examine what went wrong, and conclude with some strategies and tactics for the creation of a new social model of a democratically organized society where environmental constraints and people's needs become our guiding principles.

The Political Economy of the Welfare State

At the last resort, welfare is a question of the distribution of resources in society. Thus, the welfare state was the result of a long period of social struggle and class confrontation, spurred in particular by the public reaction to the international economic depressions of the 1930s. A considerable shift in the balance of power in society

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¹ The *European Social Model* is often being used to describe the social welfare states that developed in Western Europe particularly after World War II, including the increased influence of labour organisations in these societies. However, while the Western European countries developed many common features, it is also important to have in mind that the European Social Model in reality was a number of different models which developed within the framework of strong nation-states, although they had many similarities regarding the historic context, global power relations and cultural relationship.

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between labour and capital took place. The power of capital was reduced in favour of politically elected bodies. Competition was dampened through political interventions in the market. Capital control was introduced and financial capital became strictly regulated. Through a strong expansion of the public sector and the welfare state, a great part of the economy was taken out of the market altogether and made subject to political decisions.

The Social Pact Policy

An important part of the history of the welfare state is the ‘social pact’ or ‘class compromise.’ During the last century, the social struggle between labour and capital in many countries turned into a stalemate in which no party was successful in advancing its position. As a result, the trade union movement gradually developed a sort of peaceful cohabitation with capitalist interests, and societies entered a phase of social peace and consensus policies. It was the balance of power within the framework of this social pact between labour and capital that formed the basis on which the welfare state was developed.

The fact that the welfare state was the result of this specific historic compromise between labour and capital is reflected in the mixed characteristics of the welfare state. On one hand, parts of it represent the seeds of a vision of another and better society (social insurance, child benefit, redistribution, welfare services, universal rights). On the other hand, other parts of the welfare state function more like a repair workshop of a brutal and dehumanised econom-

ic system, where deficiencies are compensated (unemployment benefits, work-related disabilities, occupational health problems, labour market exclusions etc.).

It became the historic role of the social democratic parties to administer the policy of class compromise. Their aim was to increase democratic control of the economy through gradual reforms. The dominant belief was that society had reached a higher level of civilization. The crisis-free capitalism had become a reality! In the real world, however, this development led to the depolitization and deradicalization of the labour movement. Today we can conclude that the welfare state was a short-term achievement in a very specific historic context.

The Turning Point—The Neo-Liberal Offensive

As the reconstruction of the economy after WWII came to an end, economic and profit crises became prevalent, putting great pressure on the politics of the social pact. The capitalist forces started to change their strategy, introducing more confrontational policies against labour, and were successful in gaining political and ideological domination. Today most of the complex regulatory systems, used in the past to tame the market forces and create the preconditions for the development of the welfare state, have simply been removed. This policy of deregulation has led to the development of an overly speculative economy in which more than 90% of international economic transactions are speculative (mainly currency speculation), and to an unprecedented redistribution of wealth—from

public to private, from labour to capital, and from the poor to the rich. The redistribution model of the welfare state has, in other words, been turned upside down.

An important part of the strategy of capital has been the restructuring of capitalist production at the global level. Global production chains, lean production, outsourcing, offshoring, and relocation of assembly lines and support services are central features of this development. New Public Management has introduced private sector models also in the public sector. Market freedom and the ability to compete on increasingly deregulated international markets have been the guiding principles behind the actual policies. As a result, competition is increasing in the labour market and a rapid growth of precarious work is undermining trade union and workers rights. A widespread *brutalisation of work*² is one of the more serious adverse effects of this neo-liberal offensive.

What Went Wrong?

Why then is the welfare state, which, in spite of its weaknesses, is widely recognized as one of the most successful social models ever, now being attacked and undermined? Let me summarise the most important reasons here:

- The social pact was not a stable situation. It was a compromise in a particular historic situation, and the main economic and social

characteristics of the capitalist system were still intact. In particular the strong concentration of the ownership of capital provided a strong power basis from which an attack, which we continue to witness today, on the more equal distribution of goods and services in welfare societies could be launched.

- Rather than regarded as a short-term tactical compromise towards a more fundamental social emancipation from capitalist exploitation, the class compromise, and its offspring, the welfare state, gradually became the final strategic goal.
- Linked to the previous point, the ideology of the social pact proved wrong. Rather than to be the result of social dialogue and tripartite co-operation, the achievements of the welfare state represented a harvesting period of the hard class struggle during the first part of the 20th century. Democratic control of the economy, however, was not achieved, and crises-free capitalism has proved to be an illusion.
- The labour movement was taken by surprise by the capitalist offensive. Rather than to mobilize socially to defend the achievements which were won through the welfare state,

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² The author of this article introduced the notion *brutalisation of work* in Norway some years ago to describe the rapidly increasing exclusion from the labour market under neo-liberalism. 11% of the Norwegian labour force are currently excluded from the labour market and transferred to disability pension schemes, compared to 6% 25 years ago. The notion is now in common use.

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and to take the social struggle forward, many leaders of the labour movement became defensive, held to the social peace and social dialogue model, negotiated concessions, and adopted a surprisingly big portion of the neo-liberal ideology themselves.

How to Move Forward

The most important learning from the history of the welfare state is that it did not go far enough in taking democratic control of the economy. A new social model will therefore have to go beyond the welfare state as we know it, to a more fundamental shift in the balance of power in society. It is not a question of good intentions, good will (or corporate social responsibility, as it has come to be known). We have to understand and focus more strongly on the balance of power between labour and capital, between market forces and civil society.

The main aim of social movements today must therefore be to limit the power of capital and to make the economy subject to democratic control. This will not be achieved through social dialogue and tripartite co-operation, but through mobilisation and social confrontation. Structural reforms that increase democracy, like a currency exchange tax, capital control, increased taxation of multinational companies, and local control of natural resources, should therefore be the starting point and the direction of the coming engagements.

One important, immediate task that I will leave you with is to democratize and further

develop our social services/institutions in a user/producer alliance. Although popular support of public services is broad and comprehensive, there is also widespread discontent with many aspects of them, such as limited accessibility, bureaucratic structures, lower than expected quality, *et cetera*. Under-financing in order to weaken and discredit public services to pave the way for future privatisation is a well-known strategy from neo-liberal politicians. It is important not to deny or explain away these deficiencies, but to acknowledge them, to correct them, and to develop a policy for further improvement in terms of quality, user influence, and accessibility. The development of social and political alliances between the users of the actual public services and those who produce them will be of great strategic importance.

Finally, in Norway over the last few years, we have been pretty successful in organizing the Campaign for the Welfare State³ that includes trade unions and a wide variety of community organizations. It is not yet a real popular movement, but we have established the political, social, and organisational infrastructure based on the broad alliance that is necessary if we are going to stop the policy of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization—and make another world possible. ■

³ See <www.velferdsstaten.no/english>

Gaps and Changes in Affordable Housing Policy in B.C.

Housing policies across in B.C. have changed dramatically over the last fifteen years. **Leslie Stern** describes these changes and puts current policies in context.

DURING THE LAST QUARTER of 2006, as part of the Action Research Exchange Program in partnership with the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group, SFU political science student Jessica Numminen worked with the Lower Mainland Network for Affordable Housing to track changes in provincial housing policy over the past fifteen years. Her personal experience related to housing was a key motivator for her interest in this research. Born in Vancouver in 1982 and raised by her single mother, Jessica experienced first hand, the failure of policy in regards to social housing in Canada and British Columbia. This article is based on her report and begins with her preface providing a small glimpse into life growing up on the waiting list for social housing in B.C.

“My earliest memories were of constantly moving. There were multiple reasons such as the home not being livable or safe, unaffordable rent, rent increases, bad neighborhood, awful

neighbors, having to relocate to an affordable region, and the list goes on. My mother was not being picky, but rather she was trying to raise a safe and happy family. I remember my mother applying and reapplying for social housing with the dream of clean, safe, and affordable housing.

“There were times when we were in the position of having no place to move and ended up living temporarily in a women’s shelter or hostel.”

This would mean the removal of a constant state of uncertainty and stress, but this day never came. Looking back I can count over 26 times that we moved in my first 18 years of life excluding when I was under the age of five. Some years were better than others. My record was moving four times in one year. There were times when we were in the position of

having no place to move and ended up living temporarily in a women’s shelter or hostel. There were many implications associated with not having stable housing, such as having to switch schools constantly. I switched schools eleven times, primarily in my elementary years, and I lacked playmates because a lot of apart-

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ment buildings housed a majority of adults and seniors. I never felt like I had true roots in a community.”

While today Canada and British Columbia are both economically stable and thriving, 12.2% of the population lives in poverty and the income gap is growing. Increasingly, significant segments of society are marginalized when it comes to affordable housing. In 2001, 223,700 persons or 15.8% of households in B.C. lived in core housing need (having to pay more than 30% of income or in poor or crowded conditions). The majority were renters and those worst off were senior women living alone, single parent families headed by women, and aboriginals and new immigrants. In B.C. in December 2006, there were close to 15,000 households on the waiting list for subsidized housing.

From the end of WWII until the early 1990s the Government of Canada played a key role in policy and funding for the supply and production of affordable housing, including rental, cooperative, and non-profit options and programs. By the late 1980s, approximately 1,800 units of social housing for families, seniors, singles, and persons with disabilities were constructed in British Columbia each year through federal-provincial partnerships. In 1993, however, the withdrawal of the federal government from any further housing supply programs meant the burden of creating new social housing fell almost entirely to the province and its municipalities.

The BC NDP government was one of only two governments in Canada that continued funding

for housing, announcing its new program, Homes BC, in 1994. This program provided approximately 600 new housing units per year to be operated by non-profit housing societies and cooperatives, built by the private sector. Program guidelines stipulated a mix of core-need (60%) and market rent (40%) be accommodated in family-oriented developments, with fully subsidized projects for youth and people at risk of homelessness. The approach was broad-based while focusing on low-income families and “at risk” households. The Province also amended the Municipal Act to enable municipalities to undertake affordable housing initiatives, requiring planning for affordability and providing strategic tools such as civic grants, land leases below market value, density bonuses, and housing agreements with developers in return for affordable housing. Although funding was not provided and action not required, most municipalities have now taken some steps, even if limited to one or two strategies.

In response to growing homelessness and political pressure from communities across the country, the federal government introduced the National Homelessness Initiative in December 1999. It provides funding for shelters and supportive programs identified in community plans. Under further pressure, in 2001 an Affordable Housing Initiative was also introduced to enable funding for housing programs with matching provincial dollars. Under extreme pressure, these federal programs have been extended with minor changes under the current minority Conservative government.

Shortly after taking office in 2001 the new BC Liberal government cancelled the Homes BC program and began to shift its focus to those deemed most “vulnerable.” The new provincial strategy, *Housing Matters*, announced in October 2006, continues this focus on “vulnerable citizens.” Currently, with both federal and provincial funding, the majority of affordable housing being constructed is supportive housing for frail seniors or people with disabilities and/or health-related needs and emergency shelters for homeless people or women fleeing abuse. While these services are required, the current focus is too limited in scope and leaves major gaps in accommodation. Need and demand for affordable housing by low to middle-income families and working individuals has continued to grow.

The only recognition of those whose needs are primarily financial are two rental assistance programs: the continuation of the Shelter Aid For Elderly Renters and the introduction of the Rental Assistance Program for families. The new program, based on a formulation that considers family size, income, and rent, enables a limited cash supplement to families, but not individuals, whose annual income is less than \$28,000 (provided they are not on income assistance and have at least one child under 19). The Rental Assistance Program makes up the difference between 30% of income and a maximum monthly rent up to \$875 in the GVRD and \$730 elsewhere in B.C. Given that the average rent for

a two-bedroom residence in Greater Vancouver is \$1045, the issues of affordability and potential overcrowding remain. One glimmer of hope is the Community Partnership Initiative providing grants to encourage innovation.

“Canada has a rich history of social housing policy. Success from the past can be used as a basis for new approaches, but the future is in the hands of our government.”

Increasing homelessness in our communities and on city streets is a reflection of failure of government policy. People who need housing are often caught in the crossfire of federal, provincial, and municipal governments. Canada has a rich history of social housing policy. Success from the past can be used as a basis for new approaches, but the future is in the hands of our government and its ability to cooperate between levels and commit to realistic affordable housing policies. Government policy makers must recognize the urgency of the housing problem and the potential for harm in long waitlists and inadequate housing options. Good housing is at the heart of every individual and family’s wellbeing. Comprehensive policy that fosters partnerships between governments, private enterprise, and the non-profit sector, and serves all in need of affordable housing, is key to the health of our communities. ■

For details of current housing programs in BC see www.bchousing.org/programs

Canadians Have a Choice:

The Decisions Behind the Votes in the Next Federal Election

Pressing social issues have the attention of many Canadians, writes **Nick Istvanffy**. How will the next election make an impact on our society's well-being? SPARC BC plans to keep you informed.

CANADA'S GOVERNING POLITICAL PARTY currently holds a minority of the seats in the House of Commons, which means that it a non-confidence vote could result in an election on very short notice. Of course, it could also be months or even years before an election occurs. But historically, minority governments in Canada have been short-lived and it is likely that Canadians will return to the polls sometime in 2007—potentially very soon.

In previous elections, SPARC BC has produced a series of papers on social issues, *Canada Votes*, as a way to build awareness and support for policies. Previous editions of *Canada Votes* have explored topics such as accessibility, housing, social transfers, child poverty, cities and infrastructure, population health, and taxation. The *Canada Votes* papers were used as a reference tool to help citizens learn more about particular issues and engage in the deliberative processes of democracy. Each paper also included suggestions for more information and questions that individuals could ask their candidates in order to make more informed voting choices.

Every election is important, as each determines the overall direction of the country for as

many as five years into the future. A majority government is under no obligation to return to the polls, and can effect major changes in social policies and programming over that time. Though minority governments are usually short-lived, and tend to compromise with other parties, the relative balance of power in a minority situation can have a significant impact on policies and social outcomes for citizens.

Currently, Canadians in most ridings have a choice between four major parties, as well as a number of smaller parties who are striving to have an impact. Each of the parties takes a significantly different view on the best options for the future of Canada, and it is essential for citizens to make the most informed choices possible when selecting a representative. The coming election will be a crucial decision point for many of the problems facing Canadians, and it will be important to work hard to ensure that voting decisions are informed and careful.

To prepare for the coming election, SPARC BC is building connections to a number of other provincial and national organizations. The partnerships will help to expand the impact and relevance of the *Canada Votes* papers, and will help

ensure that important issues are explored in the course of the campaign. SPARC BC is also planning to develop a model for an 'all-candidates forum', in which candidates would engage with community members to explore some of the key issues. The forum will be presented in partnership with partner organizations, and the format will be made available to any interested community agencies or groups.

Although new issues continually arise, and others become less important over time, in recent years some of the most pressing social problems have not been addressed in any meaningful way, and in fact have become worse. SPARC BC has selected a range of topics for the coming *Canada Votes* papers, and these will reflect some of the issues that have arisen, but will also include many of the urgent social issues that have not yet been addressed.

Issues that will be explored in the next version of the *Canada Votes* papers include:

- Housing and affordable housing
- The widening gap between high and low incomes
- Immigration and social challenges facing immigrants
- Issues facing Aboriginal communities, and recent cuts to funding
- The growing need for child care, and rising child poverty
- The social determinants of health and population health

- Women and labour force participation, and recent cuts to support women's advocacy
- Cuts to research and advocacy at the federal level
- Youth issues
- Challenges facing the voluntary sector
- Disability issues and cuts to the national advocacy budget

"SPARC BC has selected a range of topics for the coming Canada Votes papers, and these will reflect some of the new issues that have arisen, but also include many of the urgent social issues that have not yet been addressed. "

Each of the papers will include descriptions and background information about the issues, suggested questions that concerned citizens can ask their candidates, and a list of places people can look for more information. The papers will be available electronically, as well as printed copies.

Provincial and national partners will write many of these papers, and all of the papers will be circulated as widely as possible once an election begins. It will be important for citizens across the country to have the opportunity to determine the positions of the various parties on these issues, and therefore to make the most informed choices possible when voting. ■

Watch our website for updates. <www.sparc.bc.ca>

Shopping for Some Change

Stores may be able to match prices, but they don't match accessible design. Here are some ideas on how to make some change.

SHOPPING MAY SEEM LIKE a leisurely task to most, however some people find it is a monumental struggle every time they go to a store. Although we are more conscious of accessibility issues these days than ever before, many businesses are still unaware of the difficulties presented to people with mobility issues or other impairments. Fortunately, the city is focused on making Vancouver the most accessible place to visit for 2010, and now is the perfect time to encourage your favourite local businesses to get up to par. Here are a few tips on how:

1. Prepare your message

Business owners may not have considered that improving access to their store will improve their revenues in the long-run, far beyond the costs of making small changes in the short-run.

Explain that they are losing a valuable customer because you choose to go elsewhere where it is accessible for you.

Tell them they are potentially losing many customers because with an increasing aging population, many people are looking for stores that are accessible. In addition, over 1,000 para-athletes and many more spectators will visit Vancouver in 2010 for the Paralympic games and will choose to make their purchases where they are welcomed.

2. Contact the store manager or owner

Contact the store manager/owner directly by speaking with them, writing a letter, or writing an e-mail. Direct contact allows the store manager/owner to understand their customer base more personally, which could encourage them to make the necessary changes.

3. Contact your local MLA and City Council

City Councils and the Government of British Columbia have the power to establish by-laws that could require businesses to provide standardized levels of accessibility. Writing to your MLA and City Council about your concerns will help them to understand the importance of an accessible city. The City of Vancouver has an advisory committee on Disability Issues, and other regions may have similar committees you can contact directly.

4. Alert the larger public

The more people who come to understand accessibility issues the more this will help put pressure on businesses and governments to make cities accessible for everyone. One way to communicate with the larger public is through the news. CBC News has a monthly column called Disability Matters. Try contacting your local paper by writing letters to the editor or pitching a story idea on a news tip line. ■

Exploring Pathways and Forms of Social Change in a Multi-level Interactive Theoretical Framework

In our efforts to tackle social issues, we often focus on one thing: results. We can improve our efforts, however, argues **Scott Graham**, by taking some time to understand some of the theories of change inherent in our work.

IN OUR DAY TO DAY interactions with social problems and programs, we usually focus our attention on the practical side and are only peripherally aware of the theoretical frameworks that inform our understandings of such problems. In this article, I explore some of the major features of one of the most popular theoretical frameworks in the field of social development.

Generally speaking, a theoretical framework is a set of concepts that attempt to systematically explain the relationships between individual human qualities and behavior, human interaction, organizational behavior, as well as structural and environmental factors. Since social problems can be very complex and will often relate to several levels of the human experience and the many interconnected layers within each level, many scholars and practitioners have found value in the practice of developing preventative or corrective strategies according to what is sometimes called a *multi-level interactive theoretical framework*. There are three general levels to consider and several layers within each, all of which are united through a complex web of direct, indirect, and reciprocal connections:

Intrapersonal Level: Personal qualities that influence why and how people act in the world: beliefs, intentions, attitudes, behaviors, etc.

Interpersonal Level: Relations between one's self and other people, including: family, friends, peers and colleagues.

Community Level: Relations between one's self and the structural features of the human experience: (a) formal institutional rules and the behavior-shaping techniques of institutions; (b) social group norms, neighborhood culture and related informal and non-formal learning processes; as well as, (c) public policy and the bureaucratic practices that extend from public policies.¹

Each level and its related layers are conceivably distinct; however, changes at one level may have an affect on another level. As such, a multi-level interactive framework emphasizes the interaction of and interdependence of different layers or factors on each level, all of which are, of course, locat-

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¹ Barbara K. Rimer and Karen Glanz, *Theory at a Glance: A Guide for Health Promotion Practice* (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005), 4.

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ed in particular natural environments and larger socio-economic conditions. In the following pages, I will briefly review each level and some of the constituting layers of each.

Layers of the Intrapersonal Level: Beliefs, Attitudes, Intentions and Behavior

One useful way of making sense of the intrapersonal aspects of a person is to consider the behavioural theory of psychologists Icek Azjen and Martin Fishbein.² Azjen and Fishbein propose that beliefs, attitudes and intentions make up the internal aspects of human life that influence how a person behaves. They argue that beliefs are a mental state that forms in a person's mind through a process of "direct observation or information received from outside sources or by way of various inference processes."³ The totality of a person's beliefs serves as "the informational base that ultimately determines his [her] attitudes, intentions, and behaviours."⁴ Beliefs, as an informational base, underlie the formation of attitudes insofar as an individual's attitude toward an object is based on her/his salient beliefs about *that* object.

Since beliefs can only be learned through observations, experiences or inference practices, then attitudes are not innate but rather must also be learned. As a learned mental construct that operates in conjunction with intentions and beliefs to shape various patterns of human behaviour, an attitude exerts a directive and dynamic influence upon multiple aspects of human activity.⁵ For this reason, many program designers create initiatives that aim to cultivate new beliefs in

people about healthy living and social justice with a view to change attitudes and encourage intentions that lead to healthier behaviour in relation to oneself (ie. life skills) and in relation to others (ie. healthy sense of belonging). Educators and counsellors in schools, in the workplace, and in non-formal workshop settings are therefore important in addressing those issues that are tightly rooted in the behaviour and motivations of individuals.

Layers of the Interpersonal Level: Contexts, Personal Difference and Socialization

At the interpersonal level, a person encounters other people in several different contexts. The most common contexts include family, peer groups, work and public spaces, each of which are shaped by a set of unique group norms and each of which host certain interpersonal practices for influencing individuals to conform their behavior

² Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen, *Belief, Attitude, Intention and Behavior* (London: Addison—Wesley Publishing Company, 1975), 332.

³ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ There are often several attitudes that work in conjunction with one another within a person's mind to habitualize a pattern of behaviour. Recent studies in social psychology suggest that multiple attitudes can and often do function at the same time toward a given object. See the following texts for related discussions: Christopher Armitage, "Beyond Attitudinal Ambivalence: Effects of Belief Homogeneity on Attitude—Intention—Behavior Relations," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 33 (2003): 551—563; and Richard J. Eiser, *Attitudes, Chaos and the Connectionist Mind* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 159—160.

to group norms. Across these contexts, a person will actively socialize others through subtle and overt methods of influence, such as the act of persuasion, emotional responses, silence or direct instruction. Just as we are socialized by others, our responses also influence others and we thereby reciprocate any socialization practice.

As such, the interpersonal level is replete with interactions that have a powerful effect on the basic elements of who we are as people. Although we are all related in our common subjugation to the socialization practices enacted by others, the ways that we influence one another vary according to our personal differences. We often share our personal differences in common with others and, in our shared differences, make up what are called social groups. There are several different types of social groups that cluster around particular social markers and ways of being, such as: gender, ethnicity, age, class, sexuality, ability, etc. These differences are critically important to consider when thinking about social problems and corrective strategies since they have profound implications for whether or not a given issue is adequately conceived and whether or not the related change strategy will be effective and culturally appropriate.⁶

Given the foregoing overview of the contexts, and the differences that cut across these contexts, it is clear that there is no simple way of accounting for all of the factors at play at the interpersonal level. However, despite the differences and complex exchanges of actions in interpersonal relations, the powerful effects of interpersonal relations are not impossible to account for and

ought to be considered in any effort to name a social problem and create a solution. If we take our cue from philosopher Michel Foucault, we can enrich our understanding of the interpersonal level by giving attention to the small ways that people interact and how these interactions serve as the primary spatial location where social problems live and reproduce. This means that looking at interpersonal interactions from a Foucaultian perspective will facilitate analyses that are context specific because the unit of analysis is local exercises of power, which is “something that functions in the form of a chain. It is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power.”⁷ In looking to and listening for the small exercises of power in local interpersonal relations, much can be revealed about the root causes of social problems and the reasons why so many good intentioned programs and projects have made so little change or, in some cases, have produced effects that are opposite to stated project objectives. In collecting the small stories about how localized exercises of power contribute to creating and maintaining social problems, we can become and remain focused on the details that ought to be addressed through corrective and preventative strategies.

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⁶ Ledwith, Margeret. “Community Work as Critical Pedagogy: Re—envisioning Gramsci and Friere.” *Community Development Journal* 33, no.3 (2001): 174.

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Change across the Community Level: Capacity Building, Social Action, Diffusion of Innovations and Using the Media

The community level is comprised of the total of locally defined institutions (which can be global in focus), social groups and individuals, the relationships between these separate parts of a community, the rules that govern these relationships and the social learning and planning processes that engage people in collective efforts to resist or effect local change. Although this short article does not provide the space to review the different levels of social, cultural and economic development of communities,⁸ there is room to consider some of the major methods or pathways that communities use to create change across the aforementioned layers of their community.

A few examples of the different and often inter-related pathways for community change are: community capacity building, social action, diffusion of innovation, and using the media.⁹

Community Capacity Building (CCB) is a collective process to identify and address social problems. Problem selection entails pulling apart a web of interrelated problems into distinct, immediate, solvable pieces that can be acted on through

collaborative projects.¹⁰

Social Action is grassroots-based, conflict oriented, and geared to mobilizing disadvantaged people to act on their own behalf. The objectives of a social action vary, but typically include policy changes that participants have identified as important.¹¹ Largely based on the work of activist Saul Alinsky, this approach employs direct—action strategies as the primary means of effecting change. It focuses on empowering community members to claim their human rights in the face(s) of oppression.

Diffusion of Innovations is a process through which ideas, products, and social practices that are perceived as ‘new’ are adopted throughout a society or from one society to another. E.M. Rogers described the process of adoption as a ‘bell curve’, with five categories of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority adopters, late majority adopters, and laggards. When an innovation is introduced, the majority of people will either be early majority adopters or late majority adopters; fewer will be early adopters or laggards, and very few will be innovators.¹²

Using the Media involves packaging and deploying messages, images and stories about the

⁷ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* (New York, Pantheon, 1980), 89.

⁸ For a useful overview of the different phases of community development, see the *Communities Life Cycle Matrix* by the BC based Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership <www.theciel.org>.

⁹ Rothman J. “Approaches to Community Intervention,” in *Strategies of Community Intervention*, eds. J. Rothman and J.L. Erlich (Itasca, Ill.: Peacock Publishers, 2001).

¹⁰ Frankish, Jim, Kwan, Brenda, Quantz, Darryl and Flores, Julieta (eds.) *A Synthesis Paper on the Conceptualization and Measurement of Community Capacity* (UBC Institute of Health Promotion Research, 2003).

¹¹ Alinsky, S.D. 1989. *Rules for Radicals*. New York, N.Y.: Vintage Books.

community *en masse* for the purpose of framing issues, raising awareness, and shaping opinions about local issues. Because consumers of media information are active seekers and users of media stories, the content transmitted through the media can also reflect their needs and interests.¹³ As such, using the media can not only be used to shape community development processes and opinions about such processes; it can also be shaped by the people engaged in the community development process.

Forms of Change across the Continuum

Given these different and interconnected ways of understanding the social world, it is helpful to inquire into the different forms of change that cut across each layer in this continuum. Program evaluators John Grove, Kibel Barry and Taylor Hass have identified three forms of change that can be observed and measured across multiple levels: episodic change, developmental change and transformative change.¹⁴ Episodic change is defined as the cause and effect form of change. Typically, episodic changes are time-bound results that are stimulated by actions of a given program and/or its participants. Developmental change, on the other hand, occurs across time and is inclusive of advances, moments of inactivity and set backs, which are all part of a rhythm of activity that changes according to a wide range of local conditions. Results of developmental changes are open-ended and less predictable than results of episodic changes and can be inclusive of new projects or inter-organizational plans for working together. Finally, transformative changes repre-

sent fundamental shifts in individual, organizational or community values and perspectives that seed the emergence of fundamental shifts in personal, organizational or population behavior.

Given the limited and abstract nature of my overview of the central features of the multi—level interactive theoretical framework, its useful to sum up by asking a couple of critical questions in an effort to prompt ongoing dialogue about our theories and assumptions about the social world: What other aspects of the social world are not accounted for by a multi—level interactive theoretical framework as presented in this article? What issues are inherent to conceptualizing the social world and change methods in a pluralistic manner? Are other ways of making sense of the social world marginalized through the practice of using a multi—level interactive theoretical framework to name social problems? What social policy and development practices are best suited to facilitate the inclusion of other perspectives about the common problems we face and the ways we plan to address them? ■

¹² Rogers, E.M. 1995. *Diffusion of Innovations* (4th Edition). New York, N.Y.: Free Press.

¹³ Couldry, N. Couldry, Nick, Markham, T. “Public connection through media consumption: Between oversocialization and de—socialization?” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 608: (2006).

¹⁴ John T. Grove, Barry M. Kibel and Taylor Hass. *EVAL-ULEAD: A Guide for Shaping and Evaluating Leadership Development Programs*, (Oakland, California, The Public Health Institute)

Accessible and Inclusive Communities

We are at a unique point in history where a growing aging population is stimulating new ways of conceptualizing accessibility and inclusiveness. **By Beverley Pitman.**

THE ISSUES OF ACCESSIBILITY and social inclusion¹ have finally made it to the top of the municipal agenda in B.C.² Last year, the resort municipality of Whistler started developing a strategy to become a more accessible and inclusive community following a recommendation from its Whistler 2020 Health and Social Task Force. And just this month, the City of Langley has embarked on an accessibility and inclusiveness study—in fact, the tasks of engaging the public in dialogue, conducting a access audit, and developing an accessibility/inclusiveness plan are to be carried out by SPARC BC.

As readers of *SPARC BC News* will know, SPARC BC has worked to advance the disability agenda and improve the lives of people with disabilities in B.C. for over 35 years. Even Access Awareness Day has been a SPARC BC undertaking since 1998.³

But while the disability community in BC has lobbied long and hard to raise awareness about the barriers people with disabilities face in their everyday lives, it has taken the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games to galvanize a group of politicians and organizations to propel the accessible/inclusive cities and communities initiative forward. 2010 Legacies Now, one of the principal groups to spring from this initiative, tries to assist communities with inclusive social and economic opportunities leading up to, during, and beyond the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Vancouver Agreement has also played an important role, promoting partnerships between the three levels of government, community organizations, and business in order to make Vancouver a healthy, safe, and sustainable place for everyone—including the disabled—to live, work, and visit.

It is how accessibility and inclusiveness have been incorporated into the goal of sustainable economic and social development that makes this initiative different—and likely heightens its chances for success. In particular, early indications that “business considerations are a key motivator in building accessible and inclusive communities” have been taken seriously (*The Accessible/Inclusive Cities and Communities Project, Draft Report*, 2005, p. 5).

This is evident in Langley’s approach, where the City’s Economic Development Strategy Plan recently singled out tourism as an economic sector with considerable potential for acting “as a catalyst for creating new partnerships and business activity throughout the community” (p. 4). The Strategy also notes the growing market of seniors: “In Canada, by the year 2011, the age group of 44–64 year olds will number 10.2 million, up from 6.4 million today. Significant potential during the next decade will be with the 75+ age group” (p. 97). Langley City’s vision of an accessible and inclusive community recognizes both the potential of developing the new

market niche of ‘accessible tourism’ and the importance of creating a community that is completely inclusive—a community where everyone is able to live life more independently and participate more fully.

It is easy to see accessible tourism as a form of sustainable social and economic development economic—and one that makes sense on several levels. It is known, for example, that the market of disabled persons, which is conservatively estimated at 14% of the B.C. population at the present time, is both largely untapped and projected to grow at a rapid rate, as the overall population ages. Our aging population means that more Canadians find themselves with a ‘disability’ of one sort or another. In 2001, the population aged 65 and over had a disability rate of more than 40%, while more than half the national popula-

tion over 75 had some form of disability (*Participation and Activity Limitation Survey*, 2001; see also, for a definition of disability).

This has put a new spin on ‘disability’ that has doubtless played a role, too, in bringing accessibility and social inclusion issues to municipal governments’ attention, and into the everyday discourse of governance and policy. It is captured in part by the sentiments expressed by Uzma Shakir at the IFS Conference in Toronto in 2004:

“Inclusion is messy. It is about constant vigilance, constant negotiation, learning to deal with diversity, questioning things we take for granted... It is not about bringing outsiders into the existing mainstream culture—it is about creating a new and negotiated culture together.” ■

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- 1 Distinguishing between ‘accessibility’ and ‘inclusion’ serves to draw out two dimensions of active participation in a community. Accessibility is about removing physical or structural barriers to participation—it’s what gets you in the room. Inclusion goes further—it’s knowing that once you are in the room, your presence, participation, and contributions are recognized.
 - 2 See, for e.g., A. Orloff (2005) *Measuring Up: A 2020 Vision for Inclusive Cities*, *Abilities*, No. 64, p. 32; SPARC BC (1996) *Making Space for Everyone: A Guide to Creating Accessible Cities*; Inclusive Cities Canada (2004) *Background Paper and Project Overview, Phase 1*; SPARC BC (2006) *Everybody’s Welcome: A Social Inclusion Approach to Program Planning and Development for Recreation and Park Services*; and P. Pratt and J. Ross (2005) *The Accessible/Inclusive Cities and Communities Project (Draft Report)*.
 - 3 In the early 1970s, SPARC BC’s Architectural Barriers Committee lobbied for and got accessible design standards included in the City of Vancouver’s Building By-Law. In the 1980s, SPARC BC convinced the provincial government that disabled parking was not an option but a necessity. SPARC BC then set up an agency to issue parking permits. This operation distributes easily permits to those with a legitimate need and right to use the designated parking spots. The result is that 94,000 people across B.C. arrive safely at their destinations with the help of designated parking zones.

In 1996, SPARC BC published a guidebook called *Making Space for Everyone* that became something of a bible in B.C.’s disabled community. In 2004, SPARC BC participated in the widely influential Inclusive Cities Canada project and in 2006, based on this, published *Everybody’s Welcome*.

SPARC BC has also sponsored Access Awareness Day every year since 1998, published *Access Links*, a community accessibility contacts initiative, and convened a number of community dialogues on accessibility.

SPARC BC in 2006/07

A Year of Growth and Accomplishment

As time goes by SPARC BC is growing and changing in positive ways. We reflect on what made 2006/07 another memorable year.

SPARC BC MARKED A MILESTONE year in 2006/07. It was the 40th year of the organization's operation and another extremely successful year in terms of growth, challenges met, service provision, research, and advocacy. The organization brought on more staff, including a Manager of Research and Consulting to head our thriving social enterprise, embraced a renewed, holistic vision of a just and healthy society, and successfully undertook a greater number and variety of projects than ever before. SPARC BC continues to focus on the interconnectedness in our income security, accessibility, and community development related projects and services, as well as any opportunities to leverage influence and create positive outcomes for our activities in communities across B.C.

In the area of accessibility, we continued to embrace our roles in advocacy, research, and community leadership with high profile events like our World Urban Forum workshop on accessible urban space and our Parking Permit Program for People with Disabilities, which now serves over 94,000 people across the province.

The Community Development Education Program grew to deliver fifteen workshops in

communities across the province. We enjoyed positive feedback, as well as new insights into how the program can be improved with more focus on collaboration between aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations.

Leading research continued to take place at SPARC BC with a project funded by the Canadian Council of Learning that explored the ways in which Aboriginal culture is communicated within schools in the Lillooet area. An equally engaging project looked at the different ways social development planning is taking place in a diversity of municipalities across the province.

Financially, SPARC BC surpassed expectations with a recorded surplus of \$105,826. Strong total revenues 5% above budget forecasts were credited for this achievement, due partly to the performance of contracted research, which exceeded budgeted expectations by 10%. SPARC BC continues to expand the number of accomplished staff working towards the goals of a just and healthy society for all. A new collective agreement was ratified in March creating a more stable environment for staff in terms of salary and advancement protocol. SPARC BC has

demonstrated steady financial and organizational growth over the last few years, reinforcing our confidence that we can expect to see more excellent results in the future.

Looking ahead, SPARC BC will continue to grow and build on our reputation as a vibrant and active organization by focusing on core work in community development issues. The Community Development Education program will be expanded in parallel with an ambitious project called the Learning Library, which aims to make our research more accessible to communities. Our priority projects in the areas of

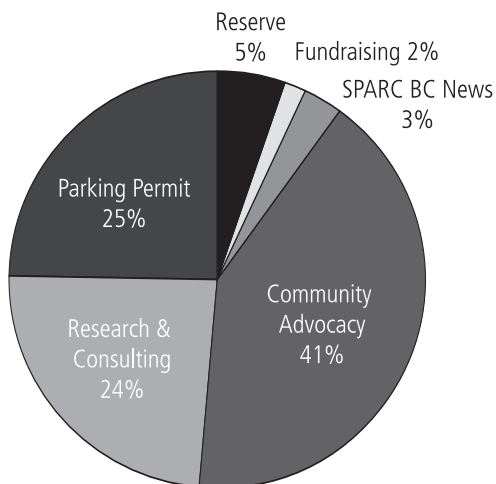
accessibility and income security are focused on drawing attention to multiple social needs and challenges. A study of municipal supports for accessibility will be used to develop recommendations for local governments' best practices in legislative support. Reporting on child poverty and Campaign 2000 will involve extensive research on data and the preparation of provincial and national child poverty report cards.

Finally, with a federal election on the horizon we plan to collaborate with other social planning councils in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and New Brunswick to bring a national perspective to our

Canada Chooses papers. We will distribute the Votes papers widely and work to stimulate voter engagement on social issues across the country.

Thank you to all SPARC BC staff, members, and donors for an impressive year of growth, change, and activism. We look forward to another year of accomplishment in building a just and healthy society for all. ■

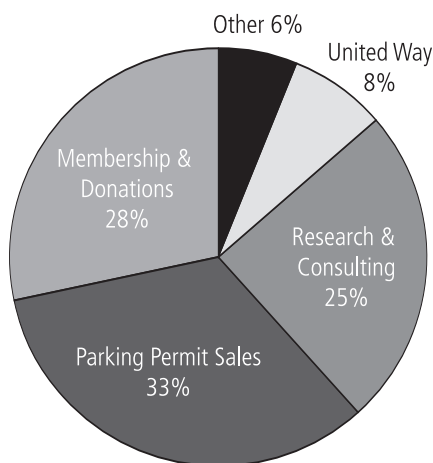
**SPARC BC Expenditures and Reserve
2006/07: \$1.95 million**



EXPENDITURES \$ (in thousands)

Parking Permit	481
Research & Consulting	465
Community Advocacy	807
SPARC BC News	60
Fundraising	30
Reserve	106
TOTAL	1,950

**SPARC BC Revenues 2006/07:
\$1.95 million**



REVENUES \$ (in thousands)

Membership & Donations	550
Parking Permit Sales	652
Research & Consulting	479
United Way	147
Other	122
TOTAL	1,950

You can request a copy of the 2006/07 Annual Report by calling (604) 718-7733 or sending an email to info@sparc.bc.ca. You can also download the report from our website at www.sparc.bc.ca/annual_report_06-07.

The Timely Stitchwork of Community Development

By Nancy Henderson

“A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE.” It’s another one of those sayings about time that seems to have lost its currency. None of us do much mending or sewing anymore—but as I was thinking about time for community development, I was struck at how appropriate the saying is for our sector.

The complaint we most often make and hear from colleagues is that there’s never enough time, and that time is passing by far too quickly. Our work seems to be moving at an ever increasing pace, pushed forward by the technology that has made some things so much easier, but which makes its own insistent demands on our time.

So what, if anything, can we do to slow down time? Perhaps we can take some lessons from the stitching theme.

Conceive your design: Planning is one of the best tools to help use time effectively. This starts with annual cycles of planning and review—as incorporating lessons learned in activities makes for better plans—and includes the more detailed action plans made on a quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily bases. Reviewing plans as they go along allows for taking advantage of emerging opportunities, revisiting priorities and adjusting to available capacity.

Make use of patterns: Original designs are great, but they take time. The more you can create templates of reports, communications tools, applications, *et cetera*, the more time you will save in preparing them. Getting into patterns of activity means you’re less likely to miss deadlines, or accidentally omit something important.

Cut away the excess: Focus your efforts on what’s most important. Ruthless prioritizing, whether by the critical nature of the task or merely the pressing of the deadline, helps to make sure that you’re working on the most important thing at the time. If that means putting other things aside for a bit, it has to be—nobody can juggle everything!

Sew up the details: Do a thorough job on the things you’ve prioritized. See the job through all the way to completion and filin it right off your desk. It might take a bit longer to complete the task, but leaving that last stitch means running the risk of it all unraveling. That’s the stitch that saves nine more!

Our work in community development is important, and when something is worth making, it is worth doing it well. ■

Please join us in building a just and healthy society for all!

ADDRESS _____

FIRST NAME _____

LAST NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (optional) _____

CITY _____

POSTAL CODE _____

1 Join

I will renew my SPARC BC Annual Membership

\$25 Individual \$60 Organization

Low income membership available — contact us for more information.

2 Make a donation

I will further support SPARC BC's programs and services

\$75 \$50 \$35 \$ _____

Payment

I would like to pay by:

- Cheque
 VISA
 MASTERCARD

\$ _____
 TOTAL AMOUNT

 CREDIT CARD NUMBER

_____/_____
 EXPIRY DATE

 SIGNATURE

 DATE

3 Become a sustaining member

I would like to show my commitment to the work of SPARC BC by becoming a sustaining member and making a **monthly pre-authorized donation in the amount of**

\$20 \$15 \$10 \$ _____

I understand I will receive one tax receipt for my entire donation within a calendar year, and that I may change my donation any time by sending written notice to SPARC BC of my new donation amount.

I prefer to pay by cheque.

I authorize SPARC BC to withdraw from my chequing account on the ____ day of each month, beginning _____, 20____, for the amount indicated above. (I have included a cheque marked void).

 SIGNATURE

 DATE

I prefer to pay by credit card.

I authorize SPARC BC to charge my: (check one) VISA MASTERCARD

on the ____ day of each month, beginning _____, 20____, for the amount indicated above.

_____-_____-_____-_____-_____
 ACCOUNT NUMBER

_____/_____
 EXPIRY DATE

 SIGNATURE

 DATE

SPARC BC collects certain personal information from our members and donors during the course of your financial support of the organization in order to manage our relationship with you. For example, as a federally registered charity we collect your name, telephone number and address in order to issue you a tax receipt. Additionally, SPARC BC uses that information to contact you for future donations to support our programs, renew membership, and issue copies of SPARC BC News. The submission of this form constitutes your consent to the collection and use of information for the purposes described above. You may withdraw or change your consent at any time, in respect of your personal information and in respect of any of the purposes described above, by contacting SPARC BC by email info@sparc.bc.ca or phone at (604) 718-7734.

Additionally, on approval of SPARC BC's Board of Directors, SPARC BC may periodically share your contact information with other charitable organizations within BC, so that they may contact you about their local programs. In all cases these organizations would have goals and charitable purposes similar to SPARC BC. No financial information will ever be shared. If you do not wish to have your information used in this manner please contact us by email

- **Parking permit holders: membership in SPARC BC does not affect your permit status.**
- **To update your contact information please: print corrections on the letter address label, call 604-718-7733 or email info@sparc.bc.ca**
- **Please return this form with payment to:**

SPARC BC
201-221 East 10th Ave.
Vancouver, BC V5T 4V3





ANNUAL REPORT

2006/07

The SPARC BC 2006/07 Annual Report is available online at
<www.sparc.bc.ca/annual_report_06-07>. You can also request a copy by getting
in touch with us at info@sparc.bc.ca or (604) 718-7733.