Are We Talking the Walk of Community-Based Research?

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Abstract

When we present ourselves as doing research that is participatory and action oriented, are we meeting either of those goals? An analysis of 232 concept applications sent to the [omitted] Foundation community-based research funding pool shows that most proposed research emphasized neither participation nor action. Grass roots community members, or organizations controlled by them, were rarely involved at the crucial decision stages of research, and instead limited to participation in collecting data. In addition, most research was proposed to produce papers, presentations, or websites, rather than directly support action. The paper provides a theoretical analysis of why participation and action are crucial and a set of recommendations for how to move toward research that is more participatory and more integrally connected to action.

Introduction

The popularity of participatory and action-oriented forms of research is increasing dramatically under the labels of community-based research (CBR) and community-based participatory research (CBPR). Along with those of us who regularly write about the process, an increasingly broad group of people in nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, higher education, and private consultancy are also using the label and engaging in the practice. But how are they, and we, using it? What kinds of research do people define as falling under these labels? How do they define the practice? How much do they emphasize participation? How much do they emphasize action? Answering these questions is crucial, because

participatory and action-oriented research purports to be practical, and involve those who are normally not part of the research decision-making process. Thus, there is a lot of "walk" implied in the practice. The normal question in such circumstances would be to ask whether our walk is matching our talk. In this case, however, we may not have an effective talk that can guide the walk of participatory and action-oriented research practice.

As a practitioner of the various forms of participatory and action-oriented research, and someone who studies the practice around the globe, I encounter an increasing number of participatory and action-oriented research projects that are neither participatory nor result in any action. The results of research projects, even when they are conducted by community members, too often end up collecting dust on shelves—especially asset maps and evaluations. I have become increasingly concerned that, while we have good intentions, we have not developed a coherent theoretical model of participatory and action-oriented research that can support effective practice.

It is not for a lack of literature—a stack of writing at least a meter and a quarter high between just 2001 and 2004 (Dick, 2004)—on how participatory and action-oriented forms of research should be conducted. Or maybe it is partly because of it. Not only do we have at least 31 terms to refer to the practice (Petty et al., 1995), but Chandler and Torbert (2003) distinguish 27 different kinds of such research. The increasing emphasis on constructivist action research (Hilsen 2006), which emphasizes the role of perception in knowledge production, increases the diversity of definitions and standards (Mays & Pope, 2000; Morse, 2002). Senge and Scharmer (2001) use the metaphor of a tree to describe the relationship between the theoretical roots of a practice, the branch tools, and the "fruit" or outcomes of the process. We clearly have many tools and practices. It is not clear that we can show many outcomes, however, and that may be

the result of a weak root system. This paper seeks to document how the lack of a strong root system has reduced the fruits of our efforts, and develop a root system that can support more effective practice.

Studying the Talk of Participatory and Action-Oriented Research

How can we study this practice that purports to both include the excluded and produce social change? Because of the diversity of definitions, and the lack of consistency with which any particular definition is used with any particular label, this paper will speak of *participatory and action-oriented forms of research*. I do this because, when we look at the major works on the practice (Stringer, 1999; Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Strand et al., 2003), we notice two basic common standards: participation and action.

Among those of us who write about the practice, there are a set of expectations about the level of participation in the research and the action outcomes. Some historical division exists between participatory research and action research. Participatory research emphasized grass roots participation and critical analysis, while action research focused more on action outcomes and less on participatory processes and critical stances (Brown & Tandon, 1983). In the field of community-based research, Strand et al. (2003) in particular emphasize the importance of grass roots community organizations or members being involved from the very beginning, especially in choosing the research question. Likewise, those who work in the broad area of popular education are very strong on specifying forms of participation (Horton and Freire, 1991). Those who follow the historical path of action research, derived from Lewin (1948), have focused heavily on outlining the action components that guide the research, but some also assert the importance of participation (Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

As community-based researchers and most others have melded together participatory research and action research over time, the labels have become much less useful. Today, most of the people who use one or more of the terms in circulation are intending to have both participatory inputs and action outcomes. But, as we will see, there may be a lack of emphasis on conceptualizing either participation or action.

Method:

To date, there has been no comprehensive research on how practitioners talk about participatory and action-oriented forms of research.   This research draws on the first such known dataset, consisting of proposals sent to the [omitted] Foundation, where I serve as a trustee. My fellow trustees graciously allowed me access to the proposals, and reviewed earlier drafts of this report from their standpoints as university researchers. This analysis should not be read as reflecting their position nor any official position of the Foundation. I approached the data as a researcher, not a trustee.

The [omitted] Foundation is one of the few United States funders with a main mission of funding participatory and action-oriented forms of research, making it perhaps the best source of data on how people define and practice the method. Even though the foundation is named after a specific discipline, it attracts proposals across a wide range of disciplines and issue areas. This research presents the analysis of the two page concept applications sent to the Foundation in August of 2004 for the 2005 grant year. Over 280 applicants sent in concept proposals. Those indicating they were doing "basic research" were removed from the analysis pool, except for two applications whose projects actually followed most of the principles of participatory and action-oriented forms of research. Those indicating they were doing community-based research, but

who did not propose any research (14 total), were also taken out of the pool. This created a total analysis pool of 232 applicants.

Among the instructions given to applicants by the [omitted] Foundation regarding their concept proposals was the following:

"Good project abstracts highlight very specific project objectives, key activities, participant roles, and expected outcomes. They identify the relevance of the project to individuals, organizations, communities, and the field. Project abstracts also specify in a sentence how the applicant plans to use the grant funds."

Thus, the proposals were coded according to their goals, the roles of various participants, and their proposed outputs. The Foundation administrator and I independently coded 37 proposals to develop and refine the coding scheme. The specific operationalized codes are listed in the analysis section. We first coded proposals according to whether they described a project attempting to diagnose a community issue, find a solution or prescription, implement a change, or evaluate a change [omitted]. We also coded the proposed outputs—whether applicants would write a paper, conduct an advocacy campaign, etc., from the research. We then coded, inductively, who was involved at each stage of the research process: forming the question, designing the methods, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and reporting/acting on the results. After reconciling coding inconsistencies, I then coded the remainder of the applications. We did not guess or attempt to infer from the proposals, but only coded what was explicitly stated in the proposals themselves. For example, when the proposal said a college professor was involved in designing the research method, we listed a professor for the research design stage. If the proposal said that the nonprofit organization was collaborating with a consultant through the entire project, we listed a consultant for each of the five stages of the project. To the extent that

there is coding error, then, it will be in the direction of undercounting proposals that did not explicitly identify outputs or participants. This happened most frequently in attempting to code the outputs of the research, as you will see below.

It is also useful to consider what I mean by *community* and by *community-based organization* in this analysis. By community, I will mean a group of people who reside closely enough to each other that they can maintain face to face relationships, interact across multiple roles (they don't just see each other as activists, for example, but also share social events, and do favors for each other) and cooperate in trying to create social change. The easiest example of such a community is a neighborhood, but there are other examples that also emphasize identity, such as a metropolitan area lesbian community. By community-based organization (CBO), I will mean an organization that is controlled by the community members either through their majority presence on a board or other decision-making body. Thus, an organization that serves the poor people of a city but has less than a majority of poor people on its board of directors is a nonprofit organization, not a community-based organization.

These definitions have implications for the findings. The organizational sponsor of the research was coded according to whether it was a community-controlled CBO, a non-profit organization (NPO) that was not controlled by the community, a higher education institution, or an umbrella group. Umbrella groups included organizations such as United Ways, as well as coalitions that had their own identities and did not exist simply for the purposes of the proposed research.

Since the Foundation is able to fund only about five percent of the proposals it receives, it is useful to ask whether this is a valid data set. First, these proposals provide a window into how all the applicants use the phrase *community-based research*. It is possible that some applicants

were not planning to do any research, and only wrote a proposal in hopes of funding their service work. But even if that is the case, those "faked" definitions still show how they define the practice. It is also unclear how much these proposals reflect actual practice, since we do not know how many of the rejected projects went ahead anyway. Many of the projects already had partial funding from other sources, Andy my experience is that much CBR work also occurs without any funding, pointing to the probability that many of the proposed projects, or similar ones, occurred without funding. The Foundation website and guidelines also encourages applicants to carefully present the participatory and action aspects of their proposals, so there may be less actual participation and action than the proposals state because applicants were "writing to the guidelines." Ultimately, we cannot know how representative this pool is. But it is, to my knowledge, the only large dataset of its kind, and gives us some understanding of the discourse around the participation and action components of CBR.

Findings: How do Applicants Define Action?

How do the applicants define the research-action nexus in their proposals? The literature has not provided clear statements on how to link research and action. Recently, a model of *project-based research* has linked a four-stage community change process to the research tasks that occur at each stage. A community change process begins with diagnosing some condition, prescribing an intervention, implementing that intervention, and evaluating its effectiveness. There are, at each stage, potential research tasks. A diagnostic project often proposes a needs assessment or a causal analysis (such as what is causing homelessness in a particular locale). A prescriptive project conducting best practices research or policy research to solve an identified problem (such as the best type of housing to serve a specific homeless population). An implementation project uses research to accomplish program goals through a data collection

process (such as having youth conduct videotape interviews with elders in order to build stronger youth-elder relationships). An evaluation assesses the impacts of a group's program [omitted].

We coded each proposal according to whether it specified a diagnostic, prescriptive, implementation, or evaluation research project, using the operationalizations above. In the case where groups proposed evaluating someone else's (such as a government agency) program in order to critique it and/or propose an alternative, however, the project was coded as either a diagnostic or prescriptive project. A few projects proposed research at multiple stages, such as diagnostic research and prescriptive research, and thus were counted in multiple categories.

A majority of the projects were diagnostic, attempting to understand the scope or causes of a problem or issue (see Table 1). Given a concern among funders that groups are not doing careful research to support grant proposals [omitted], the large number of diagnostic projects provides evidence that many organizations are responding to that concern and looking for resources to fill that need. Only a minority of groups proposed prescriptive research projects, ranging from one-third of the umbrella groups to about one fifth of the others. Doing research to inform an intervention is still not integrated into general community change practice, and organizations instead rely on repeating popular practices. Also, as would be expected, very few applicants proposed implementation stage research projects. The other potentially funder-driven trend we are seeing, particularly for NPOs, is evaluation. As funders require more evaluation from grant recipients, often without providing the needed funding, groups seek out extra funds. A number of the higher ed applicants proposing evaluation research were partnering with NPOs, and may have been looking for support to fill such funder evaluation requirements.

Table 1 about here

Another way to assess the action component of the proposals is to look at what outputs they proposed. We developed the action coding scheme inductively, developing categories as we compared the proposals. Here is where we begin to see the disjuncture between the talk of community-based research and the walk. For every organization type, the majority either proposed no action at all or some form of report (see Table 2). That means, in most cases, there is no explicit link being made between research and action. Even when we look at the other action categories, what is defined by applicants as action is often just another form of reporting. A meeting is simply where the research results are presented orally. A website, in most cases, presents the research results digitally. A plan involves using the research to outline some proposed program or intervention. Education involves using the research to inform the target clientele. Only the categories of organizing and advocacy, where the research is used to organize the constituency to press for specific changes from a target, connect research directly to action. About one fifth of the NPOs, one third of the CBOs, one sixth of the higher ed applicants, and one third of the umbrella groups proposed projects that could be categorized as having advocacy or organizing outputs.

Table 2 about here

Importantly, nearly a third of the applicants proposed no clear outputs at all, even though the Foundation guidelines explicitly directed applicants to state their intended outcomes. Of the 71 total cases not listing any explicit outcomes, 31 were diagnostic projects, 10 involved a combination of diagnostic and prescriptive or prescriptive projects, and 30 involved evaluation projects. The high number of diagnostic projects not proposing any action parallels anecdotal

evidence that many diagnostic methods such as asset assessments are conducted but not put into use. The large proportion of evaluation projects not indicating a clear outcome may suggest a number of organizations attempting to secure funding for evaluations demanded by their existing funders, and consequently not considering how to make the evaluation useful.

Findings: How do Applicants Define Participation?

In looking at who participates in community-based research, the CBR model says the most crucial participants are community organizations or community members. The Foundation's proposal guidelines also emphasized that applicants should state who was to be involved in the research project. We first looked, then, for explicit statements that community residents or community organizations would be involved. It was difficult, in about ten percent of the cases, to determine whether a proposed partner organization was a CBO or NPO. In some cases, however, applicants made a point of promoting that their partner was a true CBO so we coded partner organizations as a CBO only when the applicant described them as such or their name (such as "The XY Neighborhood Association") indicated they were likely a CBO.

Applicants listed many others who would be involved in the research at various stages, and we developed category codes for those inductively. One of the more difficult distinctions to make was between consultants and higher education institution partners. Many of the consultants were from colleges and universities, but were involved in the proposed project outside of their regular institutional duties (doing it as a summer project, for example). We listed those academics as consultants unless it was clear that they were involved in the project as part of their institutional duties, such as supervising students collecting data, working through their home department, or being bought out of institutional duties in the proposed budget.

The emphasis in CBR on having community members involved throughout the research project also required coding the proposals according to who would be involved at each of the five steps of any research project: defining the question, developing the research method, gathering the data, analyzing the data, and reporting or acting on the research results. For each stage, we coded whether there was actual involvement at the question and method stages--and whether there was proposed involvement at the subsequent stages--for an NPO, CBO, higher ed institution, a coalition group, community residents or grass roots constituency members (such as transgendered people), or students. It was sometimes difficult to code involvement at each stage, as many proposals did not distinguish participation by research project stage. In those cases we coded the listed participants as involved throughout the entire project, potentially overcounting involvement.

While there are many interesting findings regarding who participates at each stage of the research process, the involvement of community organizations and community residents/constituencies is most important. Tables 3a-d show that community residents/constituents are rarely involved in helping to define the research question or design the methods. Nonprofit organizations (see Table 3a) involved community residents/constituents or their organizations in defining the research question in only about eleven percent of the cases, and in designing the research methods in only about sixteen percent of the cases. CBOs do somewhat better (see Table 3b), involving community members in choosing the question eighteen percent of the time, and in designing the research methods thirty one percent of the time. We must remember that CBOs are already led by community members, so in some ways they present a case of community involvement throughout the research. However, CBOs are not always fully inclusive of community residents either, so it is still important to maintain the

distinction between the organization and its broader constituency. Higher education-sponsored projects involved community residents/constituents or their organizations in defining the research question about one quarter of the time, and in designing the research methods about one third of the time (Table 3c). Nearly half of the Umbrella groups (Table 3d) involve community residents/constituents or their organizations in defining the question and designing the methods. But none of the non-community controlled applicants involve either community members or their organizations at the crucial early stages of the research project a majority of the time.

Pressure to get the concept proposal out on deadline may cause applicants to neglect CBO and community member participation. But it is also likely that most applicants are simply not considering including community members or their organizations from the very beginning, and are instead practicing what Arnstein (1969) called tokenism. This is particularly the case for NPOs, which relied heavily on consultants to inform their research processes.

We see the greatest involvement of community members at the data collection stage. In some cases community members were provided small stipends to do data collection, but in most cases they were involved as volunteers. We can only infer what the reasons for this might be, but it is worrisome that community members are involved much more often in data gathering than in making decisions about the research itself. NPOs used community residents or their organizations about thirty percent of the time for data gathering (Table 3a). CBOs used community members in data gathering in forty three percent of the proposals—more than twice as often as they involved them in choosing the research question (Table 3b). Forty three percent of the higher ed applicants listed CBOs or community members as data gatherers (Table 3c) and seventy one percent of the umbrella groups proposed CBOs or community members as data gatherers (Table 3d).

After the data is gathered, and the research needs to be analyzed, community member and CBO participation again drops. While thirty percent of NPO proposals involved community members or CBOs in data gathering, only twenty percent of those proposals involved them in data analysis and only twenty two percent involved them in the final stage of reporting or acting on the results (Table 3a). Forty three percent of CBO proposals involved community members in data gathering, and they tended to maintain their involvement in the analysis and reporting/action stages (Table 3b). Higher ed applicants also mostly kept their CBOs and community members in the loop for the analysis and reporting/action stages (Table 3c). Umbrella groups kept CBOs involved in the analysis and reporting stages, but fewer than half of the proposals that used community members in the data gathering stage kept them involved in the analysis and reporting/action stage. If we remember that only a small proportion of the applicants proposed organizing or advocacy, it hardly makes sense that CBOs or community members would want to be involved at the final stage. But their relative absence at the analysis stage again points to the suspicion that the community is not seen as competent or valued when it comes to making informed decisions about the research and data.

Tables 3a-d about here

Discussion

In a surprising number of cases these applicants, who self define as community-based researchers, don't emphasize *either* of the two crucial aspects—participation and action—of participatory and action oriented forms of research such as CBR. And the findings of this research are not unique. Westfall et al. (2006) studied 46 practice-based research networks.

Barely half had any kind of participation of patients in their networks and none used a fully participatory method.

Perhaps one reason we are not talking the walk of participation and action is that we have not adequately theorized their importance. Developing the talk stands on two intertwined concepts: the social relations of knowledge production; and power/knowledge.

The concept of the social relations of knowledge production was one of the original foundations for participatory and action-oriented forms of research (Rahman, 1991; Gaventa, 1993), but it has not been incorporated into most talk about the practice and needs further development. Understanding the social relations of knowledge production begins with distinguishing use value knowledge and exchange value knowledge. The concepts of use value and exchange value originally distinguished between material things people produced for their own *use* and those things they produced for money or other market-based *exchange* (Marx 1999[1867]), We can also adapt the concepts to distinguish between the local use value knowledge produced by people in their daily lives—often referred to as common sense or folk wisdom—and exchange value knowledge produced for mass consumption through schools, media, governments, and corporations. Because of its public ubiquity, exchange value knowledge exerts tremendous authority over what we are able to do and even what we are able to imagine. Only in rare circumstances, perhaps most notably the Foxfire Magazine and books that placed Appalachian folk wisdom in the broader marketplace (The Foxfire Fund, 2002), has folk wisdom become exchange knowledge.

It is important to understand that, in contrast to material production, where actual production is conducted by a proletarianized working class, exchange knowledge is generally produced by only a small group of researchers, educators, and other credentialed professionals

who exert substantial control over the production process and often even control their own means of production in the form of computer technology. Low wage workers may package and distribute information in the form of books, DVDs, and the like, but at that stage they are in fact engaged only in material production. We maintain the exclusive control of professionals over exchange knowledge production in the educational system, where we provide students with the outputs of the exchange knowledge production system but rarely engage them in the process of knowledge production itself. In addition, the social distance between those who produce exchange knowledge and those who consume it is almost total. In material production, the people who produce material goods also make up the bulk of the people who consume them. In exchange knowledge production, only a miniscule percentage of the consumers are also producers.

When people consume, or are force fed, exchange knowledge whose production process they do not understand, they are relatively unable to judge the quality of that knowledge, adapt it, and apply it. And while many people do produce their own functional knowledge underground in response to being shut out from publicly exchanged knowledge production, most see the objects of exchange knowledge as unchangeable, and do not know how they would challenge or change such knowledge even if they wanted (Gaventa, 1980; Simon, 1994). Self-destructive religious and cultural assertions then take the place of self-reflective knowledge construction practices (Frank, 2004).

Ironically, however, it is much easier for most people to access the means of knowledge production than to access the means of physical production. In most physical production, the means of production involves machines and factories, and ownership and control over such means is consequently limited to heavily-resourced capitalists. In knowledge production, the

affordability of a computer, an internet connection, and a website means that ownership of the means of knowledge production can be widespread. And since the restriction of knowledge production to a very small proportion of the population cannot be attributed to control over the means of production, the opportunities for changing the social relations of knowledge production are immense.

The first feature of the social relations of knowledge production we must attend to is how we teach, or do not teach, knowledge construction. If we look at the critiques of mainstream education practices, what they have in common is the insight that the student, in all cases, is treated as, and trained as, a passive recipient of knowledge rather than as an active creator of knowledge (Illich, 1971, Freire, 1970). In particular class-structured settings, in fact, what is mostly taught is how to obey, or at least appear to obey, authority (Willis, 1977). Even adult education, supposedly an antidote to the bad schooling that people received as children, appears to suffer from the same problem (Wilson, 1999). And now, it appears, so does community-based research. Bringing equality to the social relations of knowledge requires supporting people from all walks of life to become producers of publicly exchanged knowledge.

Here we must move to a better understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power. For Foucault (1975), power is not accidental but requires knowledge of how to maintain power. Likewise, the exercise of power, or action, creates the very knowledge needed to maintain power. Foucault slips dangerously close to the tautological slogan that "knowledge is power" (Townley, 1993), and dangerously expands the definition of "knowledge" to include any information used anywhere. But if we interpret his position narrowly, we can draw from it the notion that the relationship between power and knowledge, or what Foucault calls power-knowledge, is a kind of self-contained loop where the acting out of power becomes the best way

of creating knowledge, which in turn reinforces power. This is similar to Senge and Scharmer's (2001) tree of knowledge production. Like a tree, knowledge, action, and power are part of a single intra-dependent system. Preventing others from accessing the power-knowledge loop, by preventing them from having the power to act on their own interests and the knowledge skills that would inform their action, prevents them from accessing either of its knowledge and power components. For example, a group drinking contaminated drinking water will find it difficult to locate and understand the relevant laws and technical information needed to act on the issue. The lack of knowledge will hinder their action, and the resulting unsuccessful action will hinder the creation of knowledge on how to win on the issue.

Enter participatory and action-oriented forms of research. If we can train community members and organizations in the skills of knowledge production, and supply the relatively inexpensive means, we can support their access to the power-knowledge loop. Participatory and action-oriented forms of research seem to be the perfect strategy for this. When people engage in designing, carrying out, and using research, they enter Foucault's power-knowledge loop. By participating they learn the process of knowledge production. By acting on knowledge they produce power that in turns informs their knowledge production. And this process transforms the existing oppressive social relations of knowledge production.

On the other hand, if the way we practice such forms of research does not support people to control the research in a way that allows them to do their own future research, and to use research to inform their own action, we maintain the exclusion of people from the power-knowledge loop and perpetuate the existing oppressive social relations of knowledge production. The research method then becomes part of the problem rather than part of the solution. We must even rethink the argument that vulnerable populations (Busza 2004; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1993),

such as undocumented workers, should not be asked to risk retribution by authorities by participating in community-based research. The recent immigrant rights movement across the United States has shown just how willing such people are to not only become publicly involved, but to lead. In such circumstances, if they do not have skilled access to the means of knowledge production, their public involvement could increase their risk rather than their power. When they are engaged in participatory action research, they can become part of a progressive social change process that decreases their risks overall (Calderon, 2006).

Recommendations toward More Effective Practice

The power-knowledge model argues that it is not enough to simply have participation in knowledge production without an equally sophisticated emphasis on action, as both participation and action are necessary to complete Foucault's power-knowledge loop. There are a few examples among the projects funded out of this group of applicants to the [omitted] Foundation that moved toward achieving power-knowledge for various groups. These included day laborer groups trying to understand and combat exploitation from employers and harassment from their neighbors, community based parent groups fighting discriminatory school policies, immigrant groups struggling to establish translation services in hospitals and clinics, and many others. These cases had in common strong constituency involvement from the very beginning of the project, and clear action objectives. In the most successful cases, they enhanced the group's power-knowledge capacity, winning concrete policy changes and building constituency members' skills. But examples of projects that win on issues and build power-knowledge are too few and far between.

This paper attempts to develop theoretical supports for the practice of participatory and action oriented forms of research that can provide a clearer talk, and inform a more effective

walk so that such successful projects are the norm rather than the exception. Considering participation in relation to the five stages of a research project can help us see the difference between participation as decision-maker (at the question, method design, and analysis stages) and labor (at the data collection stage). Shifting our thinking even further to look at the stages of a social change process--diagnosis, prescription, implementation, and evaluation--helps us to start with what our intended action outcomes are and then design the research, rather than doing research and then hoping some action comes out of it [omitted].

The next challenge, for those who accept the talk of participatory and action-oriented research, is moving toward practice. There are two sets of questions that practitioners can address with their partner community members in order to implement the model:

1. What is the social change goal that the research is supporting? How does the research support the social change goal? If we can not quickly and clearly articulate the social change goal, then the community or organization probably has some basic strategy work to do. This is a sign that thinking about research is premature and that the focus should instead be on a social change plan. If there is a clear social change goal, but it is not clear how the research will further it, then the researcher and community/organization leaders need to talk further until everyone does see a clear connection. Sometimes the connection between the research and the social change goal is not clear because the overall social change strategy is underdeveloped. Here, also, the group may need to do overall strategic planning before it can fully articulate how the research will support their work.

2. How powerful is this community/organization in creating and presenting exchange knowledge? How does the research process impact the community/organization's power-knowledge? Judging how much power-knowledge a group has, of course, is a difficult task. At

one end, a group whose character or issues are portrayed negatively in the exchange knowledge "marketplace" (by the media, government, schools, churches), lacks power-knowledge. Conversely, if the community/organization regularly gets good press and wins victories, they may already have significant power-knowledge. In such cases, it may be most beneficial for the professional researcher to act as a consultant who can add capacity, rather than to ask organization members to take time away from their other activities to engage directly in the research process, which may actually reduce their power-knowledge by reducing their capacity to act. Answering these questions may also involve assessing the extent to which the organization/community has the needed skill base—leaders, organizers, and specialist support—necessary to accomplish its goals [omitted].

It is important to understand that the emphasis is on conceptualizing the social change strategy, not the research strategy. If we conceptualize the social change strategy first, we can then design research to support that social change strategy. The community organizing model is one way for low-resourced groups to develop their strategy. In community organizing, standards for choosing an issue, defining a target, planning strategy, and negotiating an agreement, are highly developed. It is, consequently, easy to see where and how research can provide support throughout the process [omitted.]

This is a difficult transition for many academy-trained researchers to make. There are important differences between the ways that practitioners and academics work in the world, with academics tending toward more theoretical thinking and practitioners tending toward more concrete thinking (Nyden and Wiewal, 1992; Senge and Scharmer, 2001; Bacon, 2002). However, this research shows that it is not only academics who have difficulty conceptualizing and implementing the participation and action components of CBR. Nonprofit organizations,

perhaps because of their charity (as opposed to social change) culture (Kivel, 2007) may have the most difficulty doing participatory and action oriented research.

There are then, finally, implications for training participatory and action-oriented researchers. Those who would engage in this practice must understand social change processes and strategies as well as they understand research methods. Such training could include the study of the charity versus social change approaches, theories of social change at both the macro level of society and closer to the grass roots in settings such as neighborhoods, strategies of social movements and community organizing groups, the constraints imposed by political opportunity structure contexts, and of course the social relations of knowledge production (including the power-knowledge loop).

We also need to better document those cases where the power-knowledge loop is being accessed, and social change is occurring. An initial model for such a documentation project was formed by the PAR Outcomes Project (2007) in Paris in 2007. The model emphasizes that, ideally, the process should impact individuals, organizations, communities, and social systems through a continuous research-action-aftereffect wave of interventions. Documenting projects against such a model will show us better how to implement both the participation and action components of the practice. This paper is taking the initial step toward diagnosing the problem and developing a theory-based prescription. As we develop a more unified talk informing participatory and action-oriented research, we can move toward a walk that can show visible results in transforming the social relations of knowledge production to a more informed, democratic, just society.

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Table 1: Research Purpose Proposed by Applicants

	NPO (n=110)*	CBO (n=49)	Higher ed (n=58)	Umbrella groups (n=24)
diagnose	56%	69%	59%	67%
prescribe	22%	18%	22%	33%
implement	4%	4%	5%	8%
evaluate	28%	14%	22%	13%

*Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with research in multiple categories.

Table 2: Outputs Proposed by Applicants

	NPO (n=110)*	CBO (n=49)	Higher ed (n=58)	Umbrella groups (n=24)
report	40%	29%	38%	33%
organizing	4%	14%	12%	17%
meeting	8%	10%	5%	13%
website	3%	6%	3%	4%
advocacy	17%	22%	3%	17%
program	15%	10%	12%	13%
plan	5%	8%	3%	8%
education	6%	20%	12%	8%
Other**	8%	16%	14%	21%
Unknown***	31%	27%	29%	29%

*Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with research in multiple categories.
**databases, videos, and trainings show up in the other category
***a report is implied in a number of cases, but not explicitly stated.

Table 3a: Nonprofit Applicants' Proposed Participants by Research Stage (n=110)*

	Question	Method	Data Gathering	Data Analysis	Reporting/ Acting

NPO	96%	96%	91%	93%	95%
CBO**	3% (1)	5% (1)	5% (2)	5% (2)	7% (3)
Higher Ed.	15%	15%	14%	16%	14%
Government	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%
Coalition	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Consultant	18%	23%	22%	22%	19%
Community	8%	11%	25%	15%	15%
Student	1%	5%	11%	8%	4%
Other***	8%	9%	12%	10%	9%

* Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with multiple participants.
** numbers in parentheses represent cases that overlap with community category
*** youth are regularly represented in the "other" column

Table 3b: Community Based Organization Applicants' Proposed Participants by Research Stage (n=49)*

	Question	Method	Data Gathering	Data Analysis	Reporting/ Acting
NPO	2%	4%	4%	2%	4%
CBO	98%	98%	96%	96%	100%
Higher Ed.	16%	18%	18%	20%	18%
Government	0%	2%	2%	0%	0%
Coalition	10%	10%	4%	6%	8%
Consultant	12%	14%	14%	14%	14%
Community	18%	31%	43%	43%	35%
Student	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other**	8%	10%	12%	10%	8%

* Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with multiple participants.
** youth are regularly represented in the "other" column

Table 3c: Higher Ed Applicants' Proposed Participants by Research Stage (n=58)*

	Question	Method	Data Gathering	Data Analysis	Reporting/ Acting
NPO	21%	21%	17%	17%	24%
CBO**	16% (2)	19% (4)	19% (3)	17% (4)	19% (4)
Higher Ed.	93%	93%	86%	95%	93%
Government	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Coalition	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Consultant	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Community	10%	14%	24%	24%	19%
Student	0%	2%	19%	14%	5%
Other***	5%	2%	7%	9%	9%

* Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with multiple participants.
** numbers in parentheses represent cases that overlap with community category
*** youth are regularly represented in the "other" column

Table 3d: Umbrella/Coalition Applicants' Proposed Participants by Research Stage (n=24)*

	Question	Method	Data Gathering	Data Analysis	Reporting/ Acting
NPO	17%	17%	13%	17%	17%
CBO**	33% (2)	33% (2)	33% (3)	33% (2)	33% (2)
Higher Ed.	17%	17%	17%	17%	17%
Government	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Coalition	79%	75%	71%	75%	79%
Consultant	13%	17%	17%	17%	13%
Community	13%	13%	38%	17%	13%
Student	4%	4%	8%	4%	4%
Other***	8%	8%	8%	13%	13%

* Column totals do not equal 100% because some applicants proposed projects with multiple participants.
** numbers in parentheses represent cases that overlap with community category
*** youth are regularly represented in the "other" column