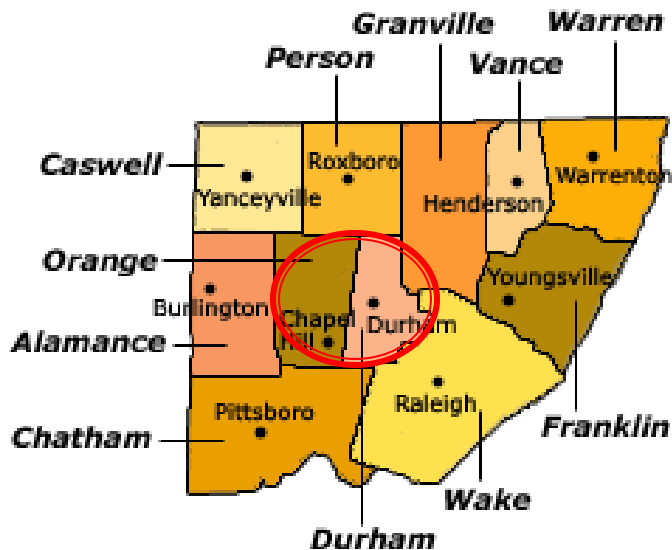


Theory and Teaching civic organizing and civic engagement

The IAF Organizing Model: Praxis for Learning
Collaborative Governance for Social Workers

Background

Raleigh Durham



- Two Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) affiliates in the community:
 - Durham Congregations, Associations and Neighborhoods (Durham CAN)
 - Justice United

Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) Model

- Group members, many faith communities
- Non-ideological civic participation focus
- Identify *issues* (not problems) via self-interest
- Careful power analyses
- Relationship building w/key decision makers
- “Polite pressure”: well orchestrated public assemblies (“dramas”) to secure commitments



My Interactions with IAF

- **As a volunteer:** action on a health care action team in Durham focused on increasing access to health care for the uninsured
- **As a teacher:** organize & facilitate service learning opportunities for MSW students



Strengths as a Collaborative Governance Model

- Facilitates a way for residents to **independently** have a voice in public affairs
- Eschews protest in favor of “winnable issues” that encourages **compromise**
- Concern for relationship building sustains **bridging capital** for residents, gives local officials a trusted source for resident voice



Limitations as a Collaborative Governance Model

- **Limited representation** of community interests
- “Winnable issue” focus encourages **short-range** thinking
- **Conflict-theory** based worldview can lead to imputation of malintent



Lessons from Teaching MSW Students

- Students understand social justice issues, but not how local government works
- “People power” is energizing & inspiring
- Art of compromise on display in a public setting
- Some students uncomfortable with:
 - Faith community focus
 - Lack of participation by marginalized groups
 - No attention to racism, sexism, etc.

Relevance to Social Work Theory & Practice

- **Ecosystems theory:** individuals interact w/systems within larger social environments
- **Social & ecological risks:** adverse outcomes may result from risk factors in social environments (e.g. neighborhood crime)
- **Community level interventions** seek to mitigate these risk factors and/or build resilience factors (social capital, collective competence)

Kirst-Ashman (2008)

Questions?

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