

Managing the Polarities of Democracy: A Theoretical Framework for Positive Social Change

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People around the globe have embraced democracy to bring about positive social change to address our environmental, economic, and militaristic challenges. Yet, there is no agreement on a definition of democracy that can guide social change efforts. The polarities of democracy model is a unifying theory of democracy to guide healthy, sustainable, and just social change efforts. The polarities of democracy model consists of 10 elements, organized as five polarity pairs: freedom–authority, justice–due process, diversity–equality, human rights–communal obligations, and participation–representation. In this model, each element has positive and negative aspects, and the objective is to successfully manage the polarities so as to maximize the positive aspects and minimize the negative aspects.

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Introduction

From college campuses, to the Arab Spring, to Occupy Wall Street, to the streets of Athens, democracy is the rallying cry for people seeking positive social change (Conca, 2012; Greider, 2011; Wainwright, 2012). Yet, the very term democracy—particularly because it has come to represent the aspirations of so many—is also now appropriated by partisans from across the political spectrum.

From the left, Bernie Sanders (2012), the self-described democratic socialist U.S. senator from Vermont, leads the charge to end corporate personhood by calling for a constitutional amendment that can save American democracy. While on the right, Dick Armey—the former Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, the founder of FreedomWorks, and one of the leaders of the Tea Party Movement—embraces a radical individualism as the core of democracy (Armey, 2010; Sokolove, 2009).

Democracy also has been appropriated by proponents of such varied philosophical positions as capitalism, socialism, and postmodernism. For example, Fukuyama (1992) asserted that capitalist liberal democracy is the natural and ultimate endpoint for mankind; but Edwards (as cited in Apple, 1984) embraced an alternative grand narrative in claiming that it is important to develop a program that is both “democratic and thoroughly socialist” (p. 117). Yet, while postmodernism supposedly rejects grand narratives, Quinnan (1997) speculates that “postmodernism is perhaps the purest and most radical abstraction of democracy” (p. 95). Thus, there is little agreement on a definition of democracy that can be used to guide positive social change efforts.

For democracy to be an effective tool to achieve positive social change, a unifying theory that can bridge these differences must be found. This is particularly significant given that positive social change may be necessary to address the environmental, economic, and militaristic challenges that may actually threaten the survival of the human species. Among the threats to our survival are (a) global climate change and other effects of environmental destruction (Gore, 2006), (b) the swelling

individual violence and global militarization fueled by the arms merchants of the United States and the world (Maddow, 2012), and (c) the escalating poverty and economic disparity that is crushing vast numbers of people on our planet resulting in increased joblessness, homelessness, hunger, sickness, and alienation, particularly among the world's poor (Klein, 2007). This research was undertaken to explore whether a unifying theory of democracy could be developed to guide positive social-change efforts.

This theoretical research was carried out in two phases. Phase one was carried out from 2002 to 2006, as the research for my dissertation (Benet, 2006) at the University of Toronto. Phase two was carried out from 2007 to 2012 (Benet, 2012b), in my role as an adjunct professor with the Social Economy Center at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto and Executive Director of the Rochester–Toronto Community/University Partnership Project (CUPP). The CUPP provides transformative adult education services for individuals and organizations that are working to build healthy, sustainable, and just communities. Its particular emphasis is on the social economy and the use of social enterprises, entrepreneurship, and innovation to create and retain community wealth (CUPP, 2010).

The second phase of this theoretical research (Benet, 2012b) was carried out to guide the work of the CUPP's Social Economy Working Group, whose purpose was to meet the needs of historically underserved populations such as persons in poverty in urban and rural areas (Benet, 2012a). It seeks to do this by sharing information about, providing advocacy for, and collaborating on the implementation of social enterprise, social innovation, and social entrepreneurship initiatives (both nonprofit and social purpose businesses) that are designed to create and retain community wealth (Benet, 2012a).

Philosophical Perspective and Conceptual Framework

My research into a unifying theory of democracy was carried out through the philosophical perspective of critical theory. While arising out of the Marxist foundation of the Frankfurt School, critical theory has evolved to embrace a broad philosophical perspective that encompasses many versions, but that always focuses on promoting positive social change by overcoming oppression (Bohman, 2012). My interpretation of critical theory is very generic, following Bohman's description that "a theory is critical to the extent that it seeks human emancipation ... decreasing domination and increasing freedom" (para. 1).

Thus, for the development of the polarities of democracy model, I started from the place of believing that there are structural forces that create conditions of oppression. As Freire (1970/1997) noted, oppression can be in the form of the economic and health disparities experienced by the oppressed, or it can be in the form of the psychological and spiritual oppression experienced by the oppressors themselves. Seeking a unifying theory of democracy is consistent with the critical theory objective of overcoming oppression and achieving human emancipation; however, critical theory also provides a democratizing framework for research itself, by allowing for, as Bohman (2012) describes it, a "focus on democracy as the location for cooperative, practical and transformative activity" (para. 4).

For my conceptual framework, I used Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts. In defining his concept of polarities, Johnson states:

Polarities to manage are sets of opposites which can't function well independently. Because the two sides of a polarity are interdependent, you cannot choose one as a "solution" and neglect the other. The objective of

polarity management perspective is to get the best of both opposites while avoiding the limits of each. (p. xviii)

Johnson (1996) begins by defining when polarities exist and when his concepts are to be used. Johnson doesn't see all situations as involving polarities; he says that polarity management comes into play when you face an unsolvable problem rather than a problem that can be solved. According to Johnson, this distinction is important: there are solutions for solvable problems, if we can find them. On the other hand, Johnson argues that there are unsolvable problems that occur because there is "a dilemma (polarity) you need to manage" (p. 14).

Johnson (1996) provides two definitive criteria for "determining whether you have a polarity to manage or a problem to solve: Is the difficulty ongoing? Are there two poles which are interdependent?" (p. 81). Johnson details three generic polarities (part-whole, self-other, and doing-being), as well as many polarities both within and outside the generic polarities (e.g., individual-team, autocratic-participatory). In terms of polarities being sets of opposites, Johnson sees two types: either polarities of opposite meanings or polarities of doing and being. When a polarity exists (as opposed to a solution to be found), Johnson constructs a visual model of polarity management that consists of four quadrants (left, right, up, and down).

On the left side of his model is one polarity (e.g., the individual) and on the right side is the other polarity (e.g., the community). In the upper quadrants, Johnson (1996) places the positive aspects of each polarity (the upside quadrants) and in the lower quadrants he places the negative aspects of the polarities (the downside quadrants). Johnson contends that "the ongoing goal in polarity management is to stay in the upper two quadrants as much as possible" (p. 81). Johnson also tells us that "the clearest opposites ... are the downside of one pole and the upside of the other" (p. 9). Thus, Johnson finds,

Whenever there is a push for a shift from one pole of a polarity to the other, it is because those pushing are (1) experiencing or anticipating the downsides of the present pole which they identify as the "problem," and, (2) they are attracted to the upsides of the other pole which they identify as the "solution." (p. 7)

Johnson (1996) contends that there is a "dynamic tension in all polarities over *whether* to shift to the opposite pole, *when*, and *how*. Within that tension there are two major forces at work: crusading and tradition-bearing" (p. 55). It is these crusader and tradition-bearing forces that are pushing for a shift from one pole to another. These crusader and tradition-bearing forces both support the positive aspects of the pole they are espousing and fear the negative aspects of the opposite pole. By using the polarity management model, Johnson believes that both crusaders and tradition-bearers can come to understand the nature of the polarities and thus work together to maximize the upsides of each pole while minimizing the downsides.

When polarities are not recognized and managed, however, Johnson (1996) maintains that there is a natural pattern of shifting from one polarity to the other. As the downsides of the present pole become stronger, crusading forces begin to push for the opposite pole (seeing only the positive aspects of that pole). The tradition-bearing forces will resist (seeing only the positive aspects of the pole they are defending and fearing the negative aspects of the pole for which the crusaders are pushing). Eventually (assuming power imbalances do not prevent it), Johnson (1996) indicates that the downsides of the present pole will prove too much, and the crusaders will be successful in shifting to the opposite pole. The process will then repeat itself, moving back and forth from one pole

to the other and moving from the positive quadrants to the negative quadrants in an infinity loop configuration.

Under these circumstances, Johnson (1996) points out that we will never experience the upsides of both poles simultaneously and that, in fact, the more time we spend focused on one pole, the more time we will spend in the downside quadrant of that pole. Johnson spends a good deal of attention on the variations to this infinity loop, showing that the failure to manage a polarity may manifest itself in many ways (e.g., spending equal amounts of time in each quadrant or spending vastly unequal amounts of time in particular quadrants) but that in each case, the constant struggle will continue and there will be inordinate amounts of time spent in the downside, or negative, quadrants.

In the case where an organization or society concentrates on only one pole (such as the case where there is an overwhelming power imbalance in favor of either the crusaders or tradition-bearers), Johnson (1996) contends that you get the worst of both poles. Eventually, you lose the upsides of the pole being focused on and the negative aspects of that pole will become stronger (i.e., more time will be spent in the downside quadrant of that pole). Further, he contends that if you continue to focus on this one pole, you eventually will “get the downside of both poles. You also tend to lose the benefits [upper quadrants] of both the overemphasized pole and the neglected pole” (p. 156).

For Johnson (1996), the value of recognizing that a polarity exists—and managing that polarity through collaborative efforts between crusaders and tradition-bearers—is that it breaks the infinity loop and allows the participants to spend as much time as possible simultaneously in the upsides of both quadrants. To accomplish this, it is necessary that both crusaders and tradition-bearers recognize that a polarity exists and understand (and are sensitive to) the upsides and downsides of both poles. Further, if they are experiencing too much of the downsides of the pole they are championing, both crusaders and tradition-bearers need to be prepared to concentrate on the upsides of the pole they fear.

Johnson (1996) uses polarity maps as a tool to enable crusaders and tradition-bearers to see the upsides and downsides of both poles. These polarity maps can be used to help crusaders and tradition-bearers recognize that the polarities exist, determine and understand the upsides and downsides of each pole, and manage those polarities so that organizations (and society) experience more of the upsides and less of the downsides of both poles.

The Research Design

A grounded theory design was used to examine five broad and deep categories of the literature: (1) the vast body of general literature related to democratic theories and concepts; (2) workplace democracy literature specifically related to occupational stress; (3) workplace democracy literature specifically related to participation; (4) organization development literature that, while not using the term workplace democracy, focuses on worker control and empowerment; and (5) workplace democracy literature specifically related to concepts of economics and ownership. From each of these five categories, a seminal model of democracy (Bernstein, 1976; Blake & Mouton, 1985; Butts, 1980; Ellerman, 1990; Karasek & Theorell, 1990) was identified to serve as a final comparative test of the utility of a unifying model.

This grounded theory analysis of the literature used an eclectic coding process as identified by Quarter (2001), which includes open and taxonomic coding conducted using a constant comparison approach until saturation is reached. Through this analysis, 10 overarching elements were identified as consistently associated with workplace and societal democracy (Benet, 2006, 2012b, 2012c). The

10 overarching elements were freedom, authority, justice, due process, diversity, equality, human rights, communal obligations, participation, and representation. While there were numerous additional elements that appeared less frequently in the literature, they could all be grouped as subelements of one of the 10 overarching elements.

While hundreds of authors and texts were included in the analysis and coding of the literature (Benet, 2006, 2012b, 2012c), among the key sources from which the 10 overarching elements of the polarities of democracy model emerged were Bernstein (1976), Blake and Mouton (1985), Butts (1980), Dewey (1938/1997), Eisler (1987), Ellerman (1990), Freire (1970/1997), Fromm (1941/1965), Gardell (1991), Grinde and Johansen (1991), Hall (1975), Hartmann (2002), Karasek and Theorell (1990), Kelly (2001), O'Manique (2003), Pateman (1970), Rawls, (1971/1999), Saul (1995), Schumpeter (1943), Schwartz (1977/2002), Shapiro (1999), Somit and Peterson (1997), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), West (2004), and Young (2002).

Following the analysis and coding of the literature, Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts were then used as the conceptual framework to generate a tentative structure for the 10 elements of the unifying model (Benet, 2006, 2012b). The 10 identified elements were placed in what appeared to be five pairs of polarity relationships (consistent with what was often suggested in the literature) and then examined to see if they conformed to the polarity concepts presented by Johnson (Benet, 2006, 2012b). That examination confirmed the consistency of the five polarity pairs with Johnson's concepts, wherein each element has positive and negative aspects, and neither element functions well without the other (Benet, 2006, 2012b). Further, each of the pairs conformed to one of Johnson's categories of polarities: either polarities of opposite meanings or polarities of doing and being (Benet, 2006, 2012b). Finally the tentative unifying model was compared with the five seminal models (none of which contained every element of the unifying model) and the unifying model was found to encompass every element contained within each of the seminal models (Benet, 2006, 2012b).

Findings

The 10 elements of the unifying model, in their polarity relationships, are freedom–authority, justice–due process, diversity–equality, human rights–communal obligations, and participation–representation (Benet, 2012b). The 10 elements of the polarities of democracy model are presented in Figure 1 in their polarity relationships. These elements were drawn from an extensive review and analysis of the literature (Benet, 2006, 2012b, 2012c). Consistent with Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts, each element of the model has positive and negative aspects, and the purpose of using the model as a theoretical framework is to plan, guide, and assess social change efforts in terms of their effectiveness in maximizing as many of the positive aspects of each element as possible while minimizing as many of the negative aspects of each element as possible. The research findings suggest that this unifying model embraces all of the major elements associated with democracy and can serve as a guide for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of social change efforts (Benet, 2006, 2012a, 2012b).

The Polarities of Democracy Model

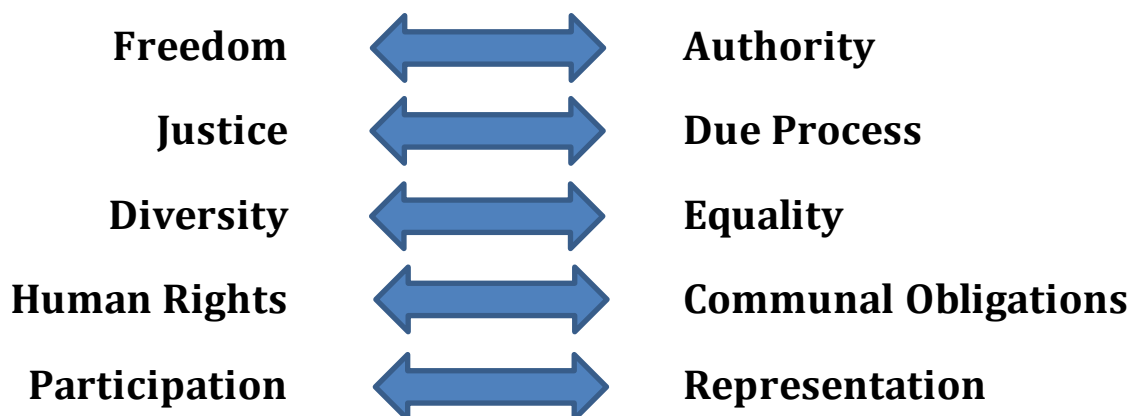


Figure 1: *The Polarities of Democracy Model With the Elements Arranged in Their Polarity Relationships*

The research findings also suggest that democracy, as an overall concept for the workplace or society, is a solution to the problem of oppression that people have experienced throughout history (Benet, 2006, 2012b); however, while the overall concept of democracy serves as a solution for oppression (rather than a polarity to be managed), to advance democracy or democratization requires that the 10 elements must be successfully managed as five sets of interrelated polarities (Benet, 2006, 2012b). Using Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts to develop the structure of the polarities of democracy model provided the ability to define the polarity relationships of the 10 elements that make up the model. Through that analysis, I identified both the positive aspects of each element that we must seek to maximize and the negative aspects that we must seek to minimize if we are to effectively work towards democratic workplaces and societies (Benet, 2006, 2012a, 2012b).

While it was found that democracy itself is not a polarity—not one pole (with downsides and upsides) juxtaposed against an equally valid opposite pole, the polarity relationships of the 10 elements were confirmed because Johnson's (1996) two tests for using the polarity management concepts do exist (Benet, 2006, 2012b). First, there is an ongoing dilemma: although there have been great advancements throughout the millennia, democracy has yet to be fully achieved in either society or the workplace (Benet, 2006, 2012b). This dilemma, the failure to fully attain democracy, has occurred because the second test for the use of the polarity management concept also exists: while there are 10 elements that are essential components of workplace and societal democracy, they exist as five sets of polarities with each set consistent with Johnson's concepts as either polarities of opposite meanings or polarities of doing and being, with positive and negative aspects associated with each element (Benet 2006, 2012b).

Without an understanding of the polarity nature of these elements, Johnson's (1996) polarity management concepts suggest that the polarities will not be managed well. Further, in the absence of a polarity structure, neither crusaders nor tradition-bearers will have the language to maximize the positive aspects of both poles while minimizing the negative aspects of both poles (Johnson,

1996). By using the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework for assessing the effectiveness of social change movements, both crusaders and tradition-bearers can become democratic participants in the research project (Benet, 2006, 2012b). As noted above, this is consistent with the critical theory perspective (which guided development of the model) that seeks to democratize the research process itself (Bohman, 2012).

Along with the 10 elements identified for the polarities of democracy model, additional key findings suggested by the research of the literature include (a) the concepts of democracy arose from our emerging consciousness as part of our evolutionary development, (b) the fundamental purpose of these emerging concepts of democracy was to overcome oppression, (c) the principles of democracy have universal applicability to all cultures and time periods, (d) the predominant Western philosophy of utility ignores the role that human altruism plays in our evolutionary (and democratic) development, (e) our societal origins provided a more democratic relationship between men and women than the patriarchal societies that have dominated modern history, (f) these patriarchal societies have prevented us from attaining a full expression of democracy on a national or global level, and (g) if true democracy is to be attained, then these 10 polarity elements must be managed effectively in order to maximize the positive aspects of each element while minimizing the negative aspects of each element (Benet, 2006, 2012b).

Implications for Social Change

The research findings suggest that the polarities of democracy model can be used as a unifying model to plan, guide, and evaluate democratic social change efforts designed to build healthy, sustainable, and just communities. Because the findings section of my original research (Benet, 2006) extended to over 100 pages (in which I explored the positive and negative aspects of each of the 10 elements in the model), in this section, I provide only a few examples of the ways in which managing the polarities of democracy can be used as a theoretical framework for social change. The examples provided show how managing the polarities of democracy can be applied to practice at the macro, mezzo, and micro levels.

Macro Level

For macro examples of how managing the polarities of democracy can be applied to positive social change, I draw on the economic analyses of Chang (2011), Ellerman (1990), Hartmann (2002), and Kelly (2001). Together, their works argue against several concepts supported by such economists as those associated with the Chicago School (Klein, 2007). Among the concepts that Chang, Ellerman, Hartmann, and Kelly challenge are shareholder primacy, shareholder value maximization, the wage/labor contract, and corporate personhood. For each of these concepts, their arguments fall within, and are strengthened by, one or more of the polarity pairs as described next.

For each of the concepts previously identified (shareholder primacy, shareholder value maximization, the wage/labor contract, and corporate personhood), their (Chang, 2011; Ellerman, 1990; Hartmann, 2002; Kelly, 2001) arguments are supported by the freedom–authority polarity. An analysis based on effectively managing the polarities of democracy demonstrates how the conference of illegitimate authority on corporate shareholders leads to their ability to exercise their freedom at the expense of the legitimate freedom and/or authority of workers, consumers, and the government (Benet, 2006, 2012b). In addition, these examples show a failure of effective management of the human rights–communal obligations polarity, which also demonstrates the interrelationship of the model's polarity pairs (Benet 2006, 2012b).

To look at some specific macro examples, Chang (2011) demonstrates how maximizing shareholder value (thus providing illegitimate authority to shareholders at the expense of workers and communities) has led to a decline in overall economic investment as a share of national output in the United States. This is in direct contradiction to the predicted increase in economic investment promulgated by supporters of the Chicago School (Klein, 2007). Thus, the inability to effectively manage the freedom–authority polarity has negatively impacted both the diversity–equality polarity as well as contributed to negative social change for the American economy.

Ellerman (1990) shows how the arguments supporting the wage/labor contract concept (again providing illegitimate authority to shareholders at the expense of workers) are the same arguments that supported slavery. Ellerman further demonstrates that the arguments in support of shareholder primacy are contradictory to the way the law is applied in all other instances and that applying the law consistently would confer a claim to ownership on workers that is at least equal to the claim of ownership conferred on shareholders. While I agree with and support Ellerman’s analysis, I take his argument further. By applying the freedom–authority and human rights–community obligations polarity pairs, I demonstrate the legitimate claim of the community (through government) to some of the fruits of a corporation, either through taxation or partial direct ownership (Benet, 2006, 2012b). This is based on the role that the government plays (through its roads, educational system, market-creating laws and regulations, etc.) in making the activities of the corporation possible (Benet, 2006, 2012b).

Hartmann (2002) presents a compelling argument in opposition to the concept of corporate personhood. I have also shown (Benet, 2006, 2012b) that the polarities of democracy model supports Hartmann’s argument both by (a) showing the illegitimate authority attributed to corporations at the expense of the freedom of workers, communities, and government and (b) showing how the diversity–equality polarity is violated, leading to negative social change in terms of economic disparities, particularly on the basis of race.

In the *Divine Right of Capital*, Kelly (2001) demonstrates the origins of shareholder primacy in the feudal system and shows how our current economic model harkens back to the usurpation of individual freedom through the exercise of illegitimate authority. Her work is supported not only by the freedom–authority polarity pair, but also by the application of the diversity–equality polarity pair (Benet, 2006, 2012b). This suggests that the effective management of the freedom–authority and diversity–equality polarity pairs could help reverse the growing health and economic disparities associated with our current economic policies (Benet, 2006, 2012b).

Mezzo Level

As a mezzo example of how managing the polarities of democracy can be applied as a theoretical framework for guiding social change efforts, Figure 2 can be used as a tool for assessing one of the challenges facing the Occupy Wall Street movement by identifying the positive and negative aspects of each element of the participation–representation polarity. The positive aspects of participation are placed in the upper left quadrant and the negative aspects of participation are placed in the lower left quadrant. The positive aspects of representation are placed in the upper right quadrant and the negative aspects of representation are placed in the lower right quadrant. In this case, the participation–representation elements of the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2006, 2012a, 2012b) can be used to explore the extent to which the positive aspects of both participation and representation are required for achieving the highest level of democratization and movement effectiveness.

Example of Polarity Map for Participation–Representation

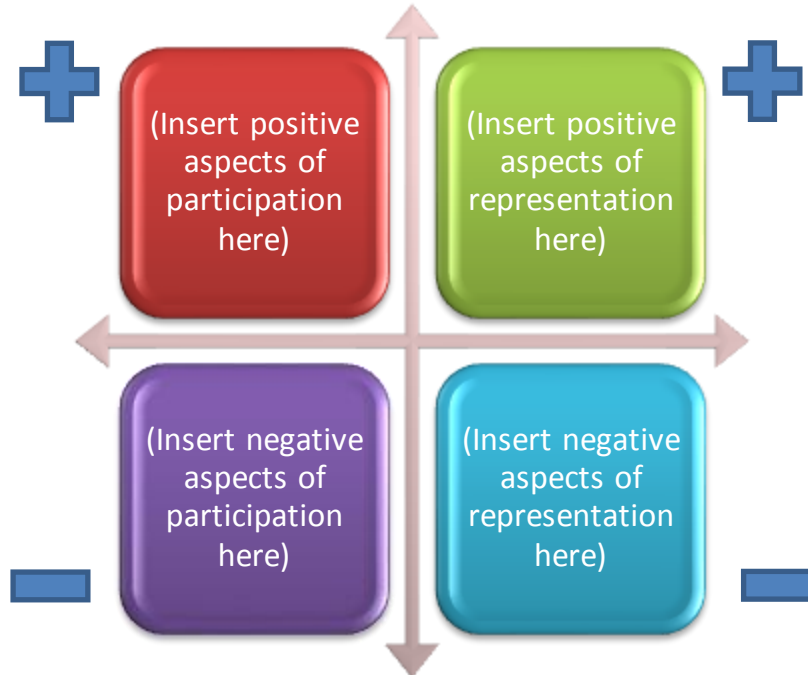


Figure 2: *An Example of a Polarity Map That Can Be Used for the Identification of the Positive and Negative Aspects of the Participation and Representation Elements*

For society as a whole, many have fallen into the trap of relying primarily on only one pole (representation), while vast numbers of people have abandoned their responsibility as citizens for the meaningful and deep participation required for democracy as suggested by the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2012a, 2012b). One of the most inspiring aspects of Occupy Wall Street has been the recognition that meaningful participation in all critical decision making is an essential element of true democracy; yet, the Occupy Wall Street movement also is demonstrating the need to incorporate the positive aspects of representation within their processes (Maharawal, 2011) in order to make meaningful participation possible without becoming bogged down in endless debate over noncritical issues. Thus, the successful management of the participation–representation polarity could be a continuing challenge for Occupy Wall Street.

If the commitment to totally embrace the positive aspects of participation is weakened or lost in the process of institutionalizing the necessary positive aspects of representation, then the ultimate success of these efforts will be placed in jeopardy. On the other hand, if the positive aspects of representation are rejected, then it is unlikely that the Occupy movement will be able to achieve significant change toward a healthy, sustainable, and just social economy.

By applying Johnson’s (1996) polarity management concepts to the participation–representation elements of the polarities of democracy model (Benet, 2006, 2012a, 2012b), Occupy Wall Street has a social change theoretical framework that can allow them to maximize as many of the positive aspects of both participation and representation as possible, while minimizing as many of the negative aspects as possible.

Micro Level

For a micro example of the implications for how the polarities of democracy model can be used for social change, I turn to a project pursuing positive social change regarding the generation and retention of community wealth. In American cities, one of the problems we face is the abandonment of poor communities by stores that provide fresh fruits and vegetables (Benet, 2012a). Instead, we have so-called convenience stores that make their money through the sale of alcohol, cigarettes, and lottery tickets (Benet, 2012a). In addition, they generally extract wealth from the community and fail to provide jobs for community residents (Benet, 2012a).

To counter this problem, the North East Area Development (NEAD) Corporation in Rochester, New York, has purchased and is managing a local convenience store (Benet, 2012a). It is bringing in fresh fruits and vegetables that its customers would not otherwise have access to (Benet, 2012a). They have to wrestle with the freedom–authority polarity, however. If they were to use their authority to run their business in the way they want, they would eliminate the negative factors (alcohol, cigarettes, and lottery tickets) that harm the community; but if they were to do that, their customers could use their freedom to patron a store that provides those elements. If that were to happen, the NEAD operation, which is keeping wealth in the community by hiring community residents, might go out of business, and all of the positive elements of its operation would be lost. This is an ongoing dilemma with which NEAD will have to wrestle as it pursues positive social change. Through the application of the polarities of democracy model to guide and evaluate this social change effort, NEAD may be able to successfully manage the freedom–authority polarity in ways that allow it to both profitably operate its business while also addressing the health threatening behaviors of its customers (Benet, 2012a).

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research using the polarities of democracy model as a theoretical framework for social change might serve both to guide the development of strategies and actions designed to create healthy, sustainable, and just communities as well as to generate data that indicate the effectiveness of social change efforts. The model might be particularly useful for participatory research efforts. For example, throughout a participatory social change effort, researchers and participants can answer such questions as the following:

- Do the problems being addressed by the social change effort generate oppressive conditions that threaten our survival as a species?
- If so, does democracy represent the solution for these problems of oppression?
- If so, are these 10 elements (freedom, authority, justice, due process, diversity, equality, human rights, communal obligations, participation, and representation) all essential elements of bringing about positive social change with none sufficient in and of itself?
- If so, are there other essential elements that have been left out?
- In either case, do these 10 elements consist of five pairs that exist in the polarity relationships as identified in the polarities of democracy model?
- If so, consistent with Johnson's (1996) view of polarities, does each of these elements have positive aspects and negative aspects?

- If so, in order to attain true democracy and bring about positive social change, must we manage these polarities in ways that maximize the positive aspects of each while minimizing the negative aspects of each?
- If so, in addition to their polarity relationships, are these 10 elements interrelated in ways that compound the necessity of our successful management of the polarities to achieve positive social change?
- Can the successful management of these polarities solve the serious oppressive problems and threats that we face as the human species, particularly our ability to address the unmet needs of historically underserved populations, such as persons in poverty in urban and rural areas?
- Can the successful management of the polarities of democracy be used as a theoretical framework for positive social change efforts that help us to build healthy, sustainable, and just communities?

Conclusion

The findings of this research strongly suggest that the polarities of democracy model can provide a unifying theoretical framework that can be used to plan, guide, and evaluate social change efforts. As such, it offers hope that we can address the threats to our human survival and that we can build healthy, sustainable, and just communities. By successfully managing the polarities of democracy (i.e., maximizing the positive aspects of each polarity element, while minimizing the negative aspects), we may be able to provide qualitative and even quantitative measurements of the effectiveness of social change efforts.

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