

**Portfolio #3: Chapter 3 of CHANGE! And Reader**

3.1. Explain materialistic factors, and then explore how materialist factors have affected your issue.

- A materialist perspective believes that economic production and technology influence social organization and the values and norms of society (Myers-Lipton 2017: 32). This means that a shift in economic production and technology shifts the values of society. Our campaign is about College Awareness Network (CAN) and our goal is to provide insight on higher education to students (primarily low-income, first-generation within San Jose) in elementary school. This is because exposure to higher education is important for young students because it may influence their decisions and their future. I would argue that materialistic factors that have affected our issue are the rise of STEM companies within the downtown, San Jose area. I would argue that this rise in STEM companies has displaced families and instilled this belief that not only is college necessary in order to succeed but it is hard as well. Many people are starting to believe that even if you go to college then your major may not be helpful unless it is within the STEM area. Additionally, these companies have made the cost of living more expensive which means people's priorities have been on working to maintain their living situation rather than immediately going to college and risking debt. This means that our issue is important now more than ever because we need to encourage, motivate, and display not only that college is possible, the importance of it, and how it can benefit them.

3.2. Explain idealistic factors, and then explore how idealistic factors have affected your issue. In addition, what value, belief, or ideology provides the best frame for your issue?

- An idealistic perspective would say that there are three ways to promote social change: (1) ideas point out the contradictions, discrepancies, and problems within a society; (2) ideas provide legitimacy to a preferred course of action; (3) ideas offer the necessary social solidarity to bring about change (Myers-Lipton 2017: 33). An idealist would argue that human ideas such as beliefs and values shape society. This is the opposite of a materialistic perspective because their order is reversed. Values, beliefs, and ideologies that provide the best frame for our issue are opportunity, education, and hope. Opportunity because everyone deserves the right to free education. Education is not easily accessible due to a variety of factors and I believe that it should be and it should be fairly simple for everyone to transition to college. Education because it is important for us to learn, stay informed, and grow. College provides us with the opportunity to network, grow, and develop as we learn more complex subjects. Hope because we have hope for the future and we are depending on them. The future is the younger students

who will be taking over once we are old or dead. They are the ones who will change and shape the future.

### 3.3. How might this knowledge of materialistic and idealistic factors help your social action group with your campaign?

- This knowledge of materialistic and idealistic factors helps my social action group with my campaign because it provides me with a better understanding of my own campaign and some potential root reasons as to why my issue occurred or strengthened as well as what values will motivate us to overcome this issue. A combination of both provides me with a bigger picture of what this issue entails and allows me to wonder what our group should focus on and work on. I'm aware of how society and its values are connected with my issue. Both materialistic and idealistic provided me with insight as to how we may overcome or discuss this issue. I can tell my group about how when working with students we should emphasize the importance of all careers, majors, and benefits that come from attending college as a way to encourage and motivate them to attend. I will tell my group that we should highlight and repeat our values to everyone so that they are aware and motivated to overcome this issue in their own way whether it be through informing others, volunteering with us, or applying it to their own life.

### 3.4. Explain the difference between the women-centered and Alinsky models of community organizing. Are there any similarities between the two models?

- There are multiple differences between the women-centered and Alinsky models of community organizing. For starters, the women-centered model uses a power known as "power with" while Alinsky's model uses a power known as "power over." Power, used by the women-centered model, focuses on sharing power with each other. Power overused by the Alinsky model focuses on the assertion of power that matches or overcomes the power of the economic and political elite and wins the demands (Myers-Lipton 2017: 52). Another difference between the women-centered model and the Alinsky model is that the women-centered model emphasizes the ability to provide a safe space whereas the Alinsky model is based on an aggressive and confrontation stance in the public in order to achieve their needs through direct action (Myers-Lipton 2017: 35-39). The women-centered model focuses on the betterment of others and themselves rather than initially focusing on changing policies or institutional structures whereas the Alinsky model focuses on winning victories by being in conflict with the target. A slight similarity is that both models choose to focus on something else, whether it be themselves (women-centered model) or the target (Alinsky's model), rather than focusing on an institution (Myers-Lipton 2017: 35-39). Another similarity would be that both models focus on social change and focus on it at the community or local level. Another similarity would be that both models bring about this social change by individuals forming groups and working to change the social system (Myers-Lipton 2017: 34).

### 3.5. What updates have been made to the Alinsky model, and what organizations have made them?

- Updates that have been made to the Alinsky model include an individual-membership model and a faith-based model of community organizing. The Community Service Organization (CSO), moved away from finding leaders in existing organizations and instead recruited their leaders and participants through house meetings. The CSO developed an individual-membership model with the goal of organizing Mexican Americans to become full participants in American democracy (Myers-Lipton 2017: 41). The other organization that made the update to the Alinsky model was PICO which moved to a faith-based model of community organizing focusing on values rather than just issues (Myers-Lipton 2017: 42). There are other organizations that use the Alinsky model such as ACORN, SECO, MACO, COPS, and FIGHT (Myers-Lipton 2017: 40). ACORN sent someone to organize the poor in Little Rock, Arkansas whereas Salinsky was known to be invited because he does not want to be seen as an outsider (Myers-Lipton 2017: 41).

### 3.6. What did you learn from the women-centered and Alinsky models of community organizing that you can directly apply to your campaign?

- Something I learned from the women-centered model of community organizing that I can directly apply to my campaign is that we should all share power with one another, meaning agreeing on decision-making and group-centered leadership. In addition, we should all be able to provide a safe space for everyone to be able to work on the improvement of themselves and others, however, I do believe that we should equally focus on that as we do on changing policies. I believe that a way that we have already directly applied the women-centered model of community organizing was by realizing the issue that happened in our homes and families (since this issue was personal to us) and how it relates to the public. I believe that a way that we can directly apply this model to our campaign is by improving honest communication and compromising.
- Something I learned from the Alinsky model of community organizing that I can directly apply to my campaign is that we should be in conflict with and isolate one specific target rather than targeting an institution. I believe that a way that we have already directly applied the Alinsky model of community organizing was by selecting this campaign through self-interest. Although we are already in college, some of us could be doing this for self-interest whether it be for our siblings, future children, etc because the establishment of this campaign may benefit us in the future. Another way that we could directly apply the Alinsky model of community organizing to our campaign is by teaching the students how to gain power, how to make decisions, or how to start voicing their opinions. It may start out minimal but exposure for them at this young age may significantly help them in the future when they are learning to advocate.

3.7. Explain functionalism and conflict theory, with a focus on how each examines the role of education in society. Do you agree with the functionalist or conflict theory perspective? Explain your reasoning.

- Functionalism is the idea that schools provide equal education to all and the students that achieve better grades and higher test scores are more deserving because they are naturally smarter, more talented, or work harder. Therefore, schools are a sorting process of providing access to positions of power and status (Myers-Lipton 2017: 45). Functionalism argues that college is a gate that only allows the most qualified to pass through the gates while holding back those who are unqualified. To go further, college selects young adults for their future work and roles. Once on a college campus, functionalists argue that students should be socialized to a set of values that will allow graduates to fit in with the middle or upper class. The value best aligned with functionalism is meritocracy (Myers-Lipton 2017: 44).
- Conflict theory focuses on how the 1% uses its wealth and power to maintain and control its dominant position, which perpetuates racial, social class, and gender inequality (Myers-Lipton 2017: 45). This means that your future role in society will be dependent on your social status. This is because those who are upper class are provided with more opportunities, wealth, and resources to be more successful in life whereas those who are of the lower class have challenges with maintaining financial stability and are taught to be submissive. This relates to education in society because if you are upper class then you are most likely to be taught strategies such as leadership, analytical thinking, and creativity which are extremely beneficial for future careers. On the contrary, if you are lower class then you are most likely to be taught how to be submissive and listen to authority. These beliefs are internalized discreetly through learning curriculums and are likely to vary based on the neighborhood that you live in.
- I do not support either the functionalist or conflict theory but I have experienced both of them as I talk about in the last question in this portfolio. However, I do believe that both of them exist within our society currently and have existed in the past. I am hopeful that society will begin to adapt the critical education theory which would influence the functionalist theory. It is very easy to see that functionalism and conflict theory exist within our society whether you are upper class or lower class.

3.8. How is critical education theory similar to, but different from, conflict theory? What assumptions are shared by both critical education theory and service learning? How is critical education theory a way out of the cave and towards the light?

- Critical education theory is similar to conflict theory because it focuses on how the 1% uses its wealth and power to maintain and control its dominant position (Myers-Lipton 2017: 45). However, critical education theory is different from conflict theory because it has an overemphasis on human resistance, transformation, and repairing of the world (Myers-Lipton 2017: 46). Assumptions shared by both critical education theory and service-learning are that they are agencies of change where students have human agency

and are involved in challenging unjust structures (Myers-Lipton 2017: 46). Critical education theory is a way out of the cave and towards the light because it argues that students should be actively questioning how power and inequality operate in society and in the classroom. It teaches students how to become “transformative intellectuals” as well as active, critical, and engaged learners (Myers-Lipton 46). This is related to Plato’s cave because it is a way for students to break free from those chains of obedience and challenge the fire displays being shown by society by questioning society directly. This allows for the student to go into the light as they are being liberated from the restrictions that school imposes on them.

3.9. What theory (ex: functionalism, conflict theory, or critical education theory) best explains your collegiate educational experience?

- The theory that best explains my collegiate educational experience the best is conflict theory. I remember realizing this my freshman year of college and I did a project on it for one of my classes. I read a book titled “Is Everyone Really Equal” which discussed the inequalities between those within the 1% and the rest. I grew up low-income so I did not know much about school, did not have resources, and did not have a role model. School has always been hard for me despite my good GPA because completing higher education has been drilled into my head as the only form of being successful. However, I began to notice that there were people who went to exceptional schools with amazing and easily accessible opportunities, great counselors, better resources, and support. Additionally, I remember reading something that mentioned the little things such as class size differences, learning topics, and teaching strategies. As you mentioned, the conflict theory and the social and political institutions mirror the economic institutions. Students are socialized to adopt different attitudes, values, class identifications, and self-images for their future jobs depending on the social class of their neighborhood. This is because those who are low-income are more likely to learn how to be submissive, hard-working, and a follower rather than learning about leadership, creativity, and authority (Myers-Lipton 2017: 45). However, attending college has made me realize that my educational experience can, and has been, different which allows me to grow and develop into a stronger and better individual who can advocate.
- Additionally, functionalism can also explain my collegiate educational experience since it has forced me to prioritize my education in order to be successful and lift my family out of low-income status. I have maintained above-average grades ever since I was in elementary school and have had multiple breakdowns in order to try to get an A in class. I feel that I am always trying to prove myself to society as a way of saying that I am successful because I do work extremely hard. However, I started realizing that there are other people who do not have to work hard as a result of their privileges and yet they are still middle or upper class. It is the rich that are getting wealthier and the poor are getting poorer. As I previously mentioned, it is easier for those who were born rich to attend college due to their resources and it does not necessarily have to do with their hard work.