

Both Erlich and Silberman propose grass-roots movements as a means to end racism or ecological destruction. Both view political involvement on the local level as a primary means of attaining desired social goals and changes.

Suggest that Erlich and Silberman fail to expand upon their ideas enough to show the pitfalls that such movements my often meet, the reasons why the vast majority of such attempts are doomed to failure, for not every community can attract a Saul Alinsky.

Today I want to discuss the etiology of grass-roots movemnts, drawing mainly upon experiences of my own and of acquaintences and friends in one of the most oppressed areas of the US the reservations of the southwest united states.

Feel is an important topic not only because feel it is important for more people to know what is happening in the area, but also beacause it illustrates how one can use the tools, the ways of thinking, found in sociological inquiry and thought, in experiences that enoucneter in everyday life. Besides building upon the basis given by Erlich and Silberman we shall also touch upon the topics outlined by Domhoff, the existence of a power structure of the United States and the utter impossibility, or so it seems, of ever breaking through or touching that power structure.

Feel free to interrupt with questions and will try to leave time at end for q-a session. Will first discuss the basic social and political conditions faced by na groups in the south west (also differences with northern groups), then ~~in~~ attempts that have been made to alter this situation, ~~and finally~~ why some have failed and why others have succeeded.

In other words, what conditions or factors seem necessary for a grass-roots movement to succeed or at least ~~to~~ not to be a complete failure. You have perhaps noticed that I am mainly concentrating on the peoples of the southwest. This is partly because that is the area with which I am most familiar and because it is an arãa with distinctively different cultural factors and stages of acculturation than the northwest or the Dakotas or Montana. our position last year

The reservation itself is a vast area, the size of West Virginia, with very few roads and essentially primitive conditions. Health conditions are extremely poor, children suffering from malnutrition, and hepatitis, tuberculosis, trachoma, and pneumonia common occurences in our dormitorories.

Unemployment is extremely high and the literacy rate is very low. The way of life is still largely traditional (this point of main contrast with this area of the country), most people still living in hogans, herding the sheep and often only using a horse and wagon for transportation.

Supposedly because of the lack of roads the children are forced to attend government boarding ~~in~~ schools, large sterile looking compounds in the midst of the desert like terrain where children are herded together in large groups for nine months out of the year. The schools are terrifically under-staffed and undersupplied and usually have little or no respect for the children's heritage, culture or background, let alone any concern for or respect for the children's parents.

The entire political situation on the reservation and for the Indian population as a whole can be characterized by a lack of self-determination.

For decades they have not been allowed to be masters of their own destiny to control their own lives. The official government policy for many years was to destroy all that was left of the native culture to destroy the heritage and very being of the people. Even now the government policy, even if not officially, at least unofficially seems to be an extention of this attitude as I will later demonstrate.

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I would suggest that the problems of the na today are a result of the historical attitudes and actions of the white americans in their policies of destruction and control that have stripped the na of much of his pride and self-~~interest~~ dignity. give e.g. if time of Cherokee given in Kennedy report.

Let me point out that this process has reached much greater extremes in the northwest and midwest than in Arizona and Newmexico, for the Navajos and P_ueblos were for many years so isolated from the onslaught of the white culture that they have, unlike the Sioux who were massacred while trying to hold a religious festival, been able to maintain their religious symbols and ceremonies. The traditional way of life is still very close to the older people, and to some of the young, though we are beginning to see now the shift and changes between generations.

Let me now explain just briefly a few of the more specific problems and situations that promote the ire of the community people. I shall concentrate on the schools at this point, though similar examples could be given from other areas such as the public health services. or fiscal services on the reservation.

Bureaucratic structures within the school themselves are almost as complicated as those within the bureau as a whole. The structure is extremely topheavy so that top administrators largely outnumber the people who work directly with the children. Thus the children are greatly deprived of stimulation and attention they sorely need. Likewise the funds allotted ~~to~~ for the ~~the~~ bureau are largely absorbed by the upper echelons not only in their salaries but even in their extensive office supplied while the children have no books from which to learn to read and even no pencils or papers on which to write. Some children at our school had only a small broken crayon with which to write for many months and only small scraps of paper on which to use it. Classrooms of thirty youngsters had only one twenty year old text book. The teacher would painstakingly copy the stories onto large sheets of ~~paper~~ cardboard. Note that these gross discrepancies in supplies were the main point of contention for the anglo administrators seemed well equipped while the Navajo children had next to nothing. The living conditions and general welfare of the children and also the Navajo employees at the school, many of whom were from the community were also genuine points of contention. Though it was specifically against government regulation children were often beaten and slapped and women employees were ~~often~~ sexually abused and assaulted by the anglo administrators. Sick children were refused medical treatment or transportation to the hospital by the administrators and employees were continually threatened with dismissal if they refused to conform to demands of the administrators. ~~Some~~ Navajo employees and community people who tried to complain were told to quit lying or they would be fired or were summarily pushed out of the office and told that they knew nothing about running or school or ~~what~~ how their child should be treated. Even Anglos who saw the situation at the school and attempted to complain were dismissed, usually as being adversely affected by the isolated situation and strange culture. We managed to see the communications involving a complaint submitted by a former BIA employee who had witnessed the principal's wife throwing a rock at a young Navajo boy. He ~~had~~ soon left the bureau in complete disgust and wrote to Secretary Udall of the incident he had witnessed. Inquiries were sent down the line of command until it reached the local level where other ~~the~~ employees who had also seen the incident were threatened if they were to reveal any knowledge and the incident was then dismissed as the hallucination of a man wearied by his life on a strange and isolated reservation. Doubtless such events happen many times. Some of the most damning indictments of the BIA are to be found in public documents, yet the problems persists.

Charge involved

Essentially there were two ways in which problems of oppression within such a system may be solved: from the top or from the bottom of the structure. On the surface both ways seem equally impenetrable. As you can guess from the last example new legislation and attempts to alter the structure from the top are often or usually confounded somewhere on the trip ~~through~~ the bureaucratic structure. As the people put it, all the good seems to be taken out somewhere inbetween Washington and here. Likewise movements to change the structure ~~if~~ from the bottom, if they must move up the bureaucratic ladder, are ~~also~~ doomed to destruction before they get beyond the first step.

As you gathered from reading Erlich, Silberman, and Domhoff, the question of social change is largely related to the question of allocation of power, of resources. In the case under discussion the question of allocation of power is complicated even further by the problems of bureaucracy. In attempts to change things from the top ~~if~~ any good is taken out by those inbetween, those with vested interests in the power structure and in the status quo. I would suggest then that grass-roots movements, those which begin at the bottom of the structure can succeed only when they can muster enough power and resources to overcome the bureaucracy and out-manuever and out-power those imbedded in the bureaucracy with their vested interests.

who thought they may hold less power than those on top - hold the administrative reins & channels

To illustrate this point further I will give two examples of cases where an attempted grass-roots movement failed and then an example of a case which achieved partial success.

1. Roslyn- accosted by an Anglo supervisor one night while watching the children in the dormitory. There were several material witnesses to support the girl's story and there was no reason to doubt here veracity. Also the Anglo supervisor had previously been involved in suspicious activity, including a rumor that he had been moved from his last school for ~~sex~~ assaulting children. The girl reported the incident to the school ~~and~~ principal who tried to make light of it and called in the supervisor who completely denied the story and threatened the girl with law suits and loss of her job. The girl, still feeling that she was right and that redress was deserved bravely went on up the ~~ladder~~ bureaucratic ladder and with her uncle and mother saw the agency superintendent who again minimized her story and made light of it. She had the backing and support of the community and they finally forced the school principal to call a meeting at which the supervisor again denied the story, threatened to sue all or any employees who dared testify against him and with the support of the principal and higher-ups so intimidated the employees and community people that the matter was dropped and no note of the incident was ever made in his record. (note though that incidents of such assaults did not ~~and~~ cease and occurred repeatedly though the next years.) Note that the community people and the employees had no knowledge of their legal rights, they had no legal aid or support and no access to regulations (another violation of regulations) Also they faced the very real threat of loss of economic support which is extremely hard to come by on the reservation and they knew of many cases of people who had been fired for their courage to stand up for their rights.

+ Com. support persistence

Local admin system here no legal help - real economic threat

or 3

2. The second case involves a school ~~then~~ located in an extremely isolated and traditional area of the reservation. Dennehotso is approximately 200 hundred miles from Farmington and 200 miles from Flagstaff the closest towns of any size. Few of the people speak English or have had any experience or knowledge of off-reservation life. The administration at this school is even more tyrannical than the one at which we lived, the case which I just mentioned. The children, ~~very~~ almost none of whom speak English when they come to school are ~~forbidden to speak Navajo~~ not permitted to speak Navajo and are punished when they do so, though this is also against regulations. Supplies again are almost non-existent and ~~few~~ activities for children at the school are rarely allowed. Teachers are not allowed to visit the children in their dormitories, to play with them in off-choll hours, or to have them visit in their homes. Remember that there are virtually no toys or distractions for the children in the dorms and any kind of diversion is a sorely needed stimulant for the child. Mail leaving the ~~school~~ ^{area} goes through the school office and is censored there. Letters of complaint, or even those asking for transfers are routinely removed from the sack and personal letters are also confiscated. The entire atmosphere and regime is one of tight control and rigid restrictions unbelievable to those of us in this relatively free atmosphere.

+ motive -
 - lack of com.
 - isolation
 - lack of com. between school & com.
 - lack of appeal
 - local gov. support
 - harassment

Naturally enough discontents are liable to mount in such an atmosphere and reportedly last fall a group of community people, (I believe members of a school board, a token groups required by the law but which in actuality is allowed no real voice in how their children may be treated.) were organizing with a few employees to complain about the situation and reach a change in administration. Unfortunately at this point in the case our friend's mail was censored quite heavily and he was under fairly dire threats of dismissal and we are unsure of the actual dynamics of the case except that the people were complaining to the local ~~na office~~ ~~and the~~ agency office and the administrations were so tightly interwoven that the complaint was effectively squelched at this low level.

3. A similar even happened with a group of teachers at Many Farms School who submitted their complaint to agency officials. At that time the complaint obtained some publicity and it was announced that a decision would be reached in six weeks. When the six weeks were up the agency office announced that it had really received no formal complaint at all so it really did not have to make any type of decision.

+ legal +
 natl. support

Such situations abound. Note the problem the last two cases had of going to local officials, they simply got entangled in the local bureaucracy and were unable to extricate their case before it was suffocated by the piles of red tape. They also apparently did not have legal aid and in the case of Dennehotso were not allowed to see regulations. The teachers at Many Farms were supported by a teachers organization and perhaps were able to see regulations in that way, but also became deeply entangled in the local bureaucracy. Note also that ~~in~~ all three cases mentioned the individuals involved were continually harassed and intimidated by administrators, threatened with lawsuits and dismissal if any complaint were made. (All of these threats are grossly illegal and contrary to regulations, which the people of course were unable to know.

- low local level harassment

To review then, the main problems which I am suggesting these movements faced were : lack of legal help, isolation and lack of knowledge of ones rights (especially at Dennehotso), going through the local administrative changes, dependence upon the structure to which they were complainant for the economic subsistence.

The final example that I want to present was a partial success, largely I shall suggest because of the factors it had that the other cases did not have: we had legal assistance of a high caliber, there were several people at the school who were aware of legal rights, these people were not afraid or unwilling to lose or sacrifice their jobs with the BIA, and thus were not ~~impeded~~ economically dependent upon the structure to which and about whom they were complaining, and finally, through the legal assistance were able to bypass the local bureaucracy and send the complaint directly to Washington. Without

"ithoug going into an involved explanation of the situation I will just say that the complaint involved a coalition of the community people and employees at the school. The complaint was first begun by those of us at the school and ~~they~~ we were then joined by persons in the community. Fortunately the lines of communication between the employees involved and the community were open because ~~wne~~ of the employees was a member of the community and active in community organizations. There was also a legal aid group in the agency town which was able to provide the much needed counsel and advice. The legal people were well trusted in the community and so the problem of forming an alliance was fairly easily solved. The problems of harassment were still strongly present and led to many employees becoming fearful of losing their jobs and dropping out of the case. The community people however stuck withit to the end. The complaint was phrased as an EEOP violation, a civil rights offense, and was thus sent directly to the Department of Interior in Washington. Note the dramatic effect this had on turing the tables for now instead of complaining from the bottom we were starting on the top, for the DI is above the BIA. ~~and~~ This was the first time any such complaint had come from the Navajo reservation. An investigator came to the school and after interviewing many people submitted his report that most of the allegations (which included child beating, sexual assaults, lack of promotions, improper use of government funds and property, . . .) were substantiated.

It would seem then at this point, which was much further then any on-reservation complaint had ever progressed before, that the problems were well on their way to solution. (which we naively accepted.) We should have realized though how wrong we were. During the course of the investigation we had been promised, as was stated in law, that if any individual was harrassed by administrators during the investigation or ~~ix~~ any time the suit was being processed that the administrators would be removed. This happened numerous times, to the point that even lives were threatened, not to mention jobs. However the admihistorators remained. To top it all off, after the investigator's report was submitted stating the allegations were proven, the really badd ass was promoted to principal, the aging princiapl having wisely retired. and one of the complainants was fired.

By this time many many employees were quite understandably discouraged. The complainants were being presurred still to drop the case, even after all the allegations had been proven. They managed to hold out and eventually the main administrators were transferred, a Navajo principal was moved in, and the school board was given more power and control over their children's lives. Note though that the bad asses were only transferred, not removed, they only shift the bad apples through the barrel.

Review main points

Wed. Discussion Group

2635 EMERALD

343-4723

I. Intro -

A. Gross roots movements - emphasized by Ertlich + Silberman
- ~~not~~ object to ease w/ wh. E + S suggest can be done -

B. Today discuss gr. moves - why some fail + some succeed -
Why? "not well - public topic

2. illustrate way uses tools of soc. inquiry in
every-day life

C. Will not explicitly always refer to readers
1. am building on basic ideas given by E + S.
2. the entire underlying theme of D -
that of the power str. - in Amer. pol. -

D. What will say

~~Mainly involving~~

re - various attributes - necessary for a successful
movement -

After giving background info will give exp
of factors + then of partial successes -

They will be from Ind. res. in SW -
a semantically oppressed area - & isolated -
with geographically + pol. -

Also area w/ which are fam. - pos. last year -

II. Description of the reservation - area

A. Physically -

1. size -

2. illness

3. Unemployment + lit.

B. Cult. -

traditional

C. Pol. -

1. little or no self-det.

largely a gov. pol.

are deather native cult.

perched in boarding schools -
parent + com. w/ almost no say over schools -

April 27, 1971

TO: Graduate Students

From: Don Van Houten

Subject: LAST CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL AWARDS FOR 1971-72.

We have extended the deadline for turning in applications for financial awards until this Friday, April 30. If we have not heard from you by then, we must assume you are not interested in financial support from this department for next year. This would apply even to those who now hold NDEA, NINH OR NSF Fellowships. There is a lot of demand on diminishing resources and we cannot guess as to your intentions for next year.

The following is a list of those who have returned the forms. If you know people who intend to be here next year, but whose names do not appear below, please contact them. If you think you turned in an application, but your name does not appear below, you should get in touch with Mrs. Ingram or me.

Anderson, P.
Bull, N.
Chastain, M
Conway, F.
Dearman, M.
Dunlap, R.
Dunn, M
Elder, R.
Ely, J.
Engbretson, P.
Harris, J
Heimer, D.
Hengst, A.
Kelly, J.
Klein, G.
Ring, P.
Kolodij, B.
Manning, J.
Mazzeo, P
Mukasa, L.

Noblit, G.
Olexa, C.
Peterson, L.
Pierce, B.
Poelzer, D.
Santee, R.
Schoenfeld, J.
Skold, K.
Solomon, M.
Steiger, B
Sutherland, J.
Tesson, G.
Thompson, L.
Wong, K.
Wood, J.

If your name is not listed, please see Mrs. Ingram or me!!
Extra blanks are available if you have misplaced yours.

Forbes E/77/F36

Steiner E/77/583

Forbes E/77/F68 (Held. in Amer. Post)

milewide
promises
to remove
harmful officials
that were
broken

I. Will discuss museum just by - theoretical res-
solving mainly on peer exp - ideas - of how tools learned
in soc. help to get better grasp on reality -
review major things will cover

II. Basic sit. on reservation (confine mainly to Nav.)

- large - spread out - few roads - elect -
general poor conditions - poor health - speak Nav.
Boasting School low lit.

BI A - top heavy administration
large - impersonal structure
little contact w/ parents
note how reforms
at top never make
into the bottom
(Wahen)

chil. sep. from -
School Boards - token
poor treatment of employees, students
firing people - assaults - abuse -
threats - beating children - forcing to
leave school - refusing to take to top
making fun of traditions - poor and
supplies

III. Attempts to remedy
A. Obviously all of above is grossly illegal -
Why not change? - Are - largely involve
of allocation of power - resources.

B. Previous attempts to gain redress -
People - entire series - no prom. or transfer
Dennehotso -

C. Sarootie -

A. What happened - Alignment w, CAC - brought
in school bd. - + w, DNA - presented suit to
EEOP officials in Wa. -

B. Why succeeded
encouragement - Eddie Mike, DNA - cont.
wonder

note there still 7 71 fear threats -
massive com. involvement -

visits by off-res. gps. who had compl. + not been filed
by-passing local bureaucrats -

D. Other attempts - sit. now -

1. Wh. happened

~~press~~ cont. pressured even after invest.
upheld ch. to drop compl. (note pressures come from
local level) - finally ch. came - (note again put
pressure on top -

IV. - Questions Recrim. did occur - one man filed

also had one not filed - just refiled -
another aspect of bu. struct.

Recapitulate major pts

1. Deploable sit. on res -
2. In large part a result of U.S. Govt - BIA -
3. Bure. - nature of - compound problems
4. Attempt to solve the prob - relate to alloc. of power - ^{complicated} _{by nature of}
 (a) moves from top down work - (stopped by middle people)
 (b) grass-roots movement - _{also have little voting pow. rel. to right}
 only seem to be successful when can
 * muster sufficient power to overcome bure.
 (1) legal help
 (2) enthusiasm + involvement of people
 (3) publicity - wide-spread
 public concern -
 [Note absent at San. for most part -