The Challenges and Opportunities of Engaged Research

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Abstract

The use of engaged methods such as collaborative university-community research, participatory action research, popular education, and community-based research are examined as a way of strengthening traditional academic research. Particular focus is placed on a collaborative model combining university-based and community-based knowledge. The Loyola University Chicago Center for Urban Research and Learning is used as a case study. The incorporation of grassroots research into broader research initiatives promises to increase the quality of research and connections among communities at national and international levels.

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Introduction

The *culture of questioning* is at the core of academic teaching and research. In the classroom, teachers and academic researchers pose challenging questions to students to make sure they understand course material and develop the critical thinking skills needed to understand, shape, and change the world in which they live and work. Similarly, the act of questioning past research in one's discipline is at the heart of an academic researcher's work because it provides a way to fine-tune discipline-based knowledge. Additional fine-tuning is accomplished through the elaborate formal and informal research review system that exists within universities and academic disciplines. As scholars, we frame research, test hypotheses, collect and analyze data, write up results, and subject our findings to peer review, whether

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that review takes place during departmental works-in-progress seminars, at annual professional meetings, or through professional journals.

One assumption lies behind this culture of questioning: to have an effective understanding of the world around us, researchers need to look behind the familiar facades of everyday life. We cannot be satisfied with *common sense* explanations of family life, community institutions, and other social practices. As sociologist Herbert Blumer (1969) explains, "The task of scientific study is to lift the veils that cover ... group life...." Clearly, one perspective is not sufficient to satisfy teachers and researchers in this culture of questioning. For this reason, universities consist of multiple disciplines that can bring diverse perspectives to bear as we attempt to understand the complexities of our society.

Despite our attempts at multidisciplinary inquiry, a void still exists in this culture of questioning. In the quest to gather knowledge and consider different perspectives, academic researchers have locked out many members of the very communities that we purport to study. Although we go out into the community to collect census data, distribute surveys, and convene focus groups, we rarely invite the kind of direct input from community members that would inform our research designs or data analyses. In designing and completing our research, we sometimes act as if we were observing white rats in a maze, rather than working in a dynamic, vibrant, and self-aware community. We may ask questions of research subjects, but traditionally we have not asked for advice on how we should go about conducting our research. Without getting direct community input, we cannot assume that our surveys and focus groups collect all the pertinent information on a particular subject. Indeed, longtime residents of a community may have more to offer us than the information they

can provide in a 1-hour interview. Community perspectives can help us determine how we can best approach an issue that is critical to completing a rigorous research project.

In recent years the growth of various approaches to engaged research has served to strengthen both our responsiveness to community needs and the quality of our research. While many of these approaches, including participatory action research, have long intellectual histories, concerted efforts to bring these approaches into the academy have been relatively recent. The traditional separation of the academic and nonacademic worlds has discouraged more collaborative or participatory approaches to research. However, government agencies, foundations, communities, and change-oriented academic researchers have started demanding stronger links between university and community during the past two decades.

After providing an overview of different engaged research approaches, this article will discuss how these approaches are finding wider acceptance inside higher education. Tapping into the experiences of Loyola University Chicago, which established its own research center in 1996, this paper also attempts to provide guidance to researchers who are just beginning to participate in engaged research and those who are seeking to organize teams of researchers into more effective networks or collaborative research centers.

Varieties of Engaged Research

While there is no precise lexicon of engaged research methods, we often use the terms popular education, participatory action research, participatory evaluation research, and collaborative university-community research to refer to community-based research approaches. We often distinguish among these approaches according to the extent to which they do or do not involve university partners.

Popular Education and Participatory Action Research

Popular education and participatory action research models focus on building community research capacity that is independent of universities or other professional research associations. These models emphasize grassroots training that is entirely controlled by the community and research—aimed at developing economic resources, waging political battles against elected officials, or placing pressure on corporations to reduce pollution in the community—that is used for the community's self-interest. This type of research has a longstanding history, stretching back to the early 20th century, when the mapping and land-use research completed by Jane Addams and her colleagues at Hull House was used to understand and document immigrant poverty in Chicago. Although faculty members at the University of Chicago were connected to this project, it was initiated and completed by Hull House workers. This approach, in which research projects are developed by the community, was later depoliticized and used by sociologists at the University of Chicago to lay the foundation for the Chicago School of Sociology (Strand et al. 2003, 4-5; Deagan 1988; Harkavy and Puckett 1994).[1]

Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), is a key work outlining the importance of community self-sufficiency in collecting knowledge and using it to challenge more powerful forces in society, including large corporation and unresponsive government leaders. Such research is integrated with action. As Peter Park, sociologist and former president of the Center for Community Education and Action, explains, "participatory research provides a framework in which people seeking to overcome oppressive situations can come to understand the social forces in operation and gain strength through collective action." (Park et al. 1993, 3.) As Park further explains,

> The social and political significance of participatory research, however, does not lie only in the production of narrowly technical knowledge for the control of the physical and social realities. Theorists and practitioners of participatory research have used terms like *empowerment, critical consciousness, transformation, conscientization, dialogue, social action*, and similar terms, as well as participation, to characterize different aspects of participatory research. (Park et al. 1993, 4.)

Organizations and networks in low-income communities in the United States have effectively used this model to address the serious challenges they face, including poverty, environmental hazards, unemployment, and displacement. Most notable has been the work of the Tennessee-based Highlander Center, a popular education center founded in 1932 by Myles Horton. Highlander has educated generations of activists, including those involved in the labor movement of the 1930s, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and a broad range of recent community movements (Adams 1975; Glen 1988). The Highlander Center's Web site emphasizes the link between democracy and public participation in research and education:

> Highlander's work is rooted in the belief that in a truly just and democratic society the policies shaping political and economic life must be informed by equal concern for and participation by all people. Guided by this belief, we help communities that suffer from unfair government policies and big-business practices as they voice their concerns and join with others to form movements for change. (Highlander Center n.d.)

Collaborative University-Community Research

Collaborative university-community research is distinct from, but related to, popular education and participatory action research. As the name implies, collaborative research emphasizes the integration of both university knowledge and community knowledge in the research enterprise. Historically, there have been tensions between university researchers and community activists. However, this collaborative approach harnesses those tensions into an effective, creative, solutions-oriented force (Nyden and Wiewel 1992). It recognizes that exploring multiple perspectives of an issue represents a positive research strategy. This exploration of multiple perspectives is not a new research approach; researchers often use "triangulation"—measuring something from different approaches or angles—when trying to solve problems. By taking part in this collaborative approach, researchers are expanding the "culture of questioning" to include both community-based knowledge and university-based knowledge.

Community-based knowledge brings with it a detailed awareness of everyday lived experience that comes from community-based organizations, neighborhood councils, and organizations serving local communities. Community-based knowledge represents a unique way of being aware of and understanding the heart of problems, even though the solutions to those problems may remain elusive. Communities may be aware of some of the pieces of the puzzle, but they may not possess the research tools and additional data to systematically analyze all of the relevant information. For example, communities may be aware that there are high numbers of sick children in a neighborhood, but they may not know that toxic waste in ground water is affecting certain blocks in that neighborhood.[2]

University-based knowledge has been developed within various academic disciplines. Using established methodologies as well as professional standards and theoretical frameworks that help guide data analysis, these disciplines have created systematic ways to understand social problems, enhance communication among scientists, build knowledge in the field, and train new scholars. In addition, universities have substantial resources available to complete their research, from academic departments to expensive research facilities. They also have a broad view that helps researchers compare communities, cities, or nations to one another to determine what factors cause social problems to arise in one place and not in another. Such a broad comparative view can help researchers document best practices or small-scale solutions that might be effectively transferred to other locales.

The wisdom of integrating community-based and university-based knowledge and perspectives has been increasingly recognized by foundations and government funders over the past 2 decades. Funding initiatives by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation,

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and the Kellogg Foundation, among others, have emphasized linkages between these two knowledge bases. The desire to more effectively use precious local resources to address pressing social problems in the city of Chicago, for example, led the MacArthur Foundation to support a new multiuniversity, multiorganization network called the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG) in the late 1980s.[3] The U.S. Department of Education's Urban Community Service program and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program, both established in the early 1990s, also are examples of government programs that encourage the integration of university and community knowledge.

More recently, various government health research agencies and institutes have embarked on a significant initiative to encourage collaborative, health-related research. This initiative grew out of a multiyear discussion of how government-funded research could more effectively tap into community knowledge and perspectives to produce more rigorous and informed research (Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality 2002, 2003). A strong force in advocating for and shaping this change was the Campus-Community Partnership for Health (CCPH), a highly visible network in the medicine and health fields. CCPH has organized a Community-Based Participatory Research initiative and listserv in its cooperative efforts with federal health agencies. This effort parallels the COPC support for university-community partnerships in urban policy and development areas.[4]

There have also been major efforts to promote collaborative research outside the United States. Most notable is the *science shop* movement in Europe. This movement, dating back to the 1970s in the Netherlands, parallels the collaborative research movement in the U.S. (European Commission 2003; Leydesdorff and Ward 2005; and Sclove et al. 1998). The movement has focused on integrating university and community knowledge in environmental, social, and economic research. Science shops—some based at universities and others established as independent research organizations—seek to provide a bridge between traditional research and the broader public. A number of European universities now have full-time university-supported faculty positions for science shop activities. In 2003 a network of 13 science shops in 10 primarily European countries created a network called "Improving Science Shop Networking" or ISSNET. In addition to facilitating international cooperation among existing science shops, this network initiated a new effort in 2005 to mentor younger faculty and community leaders who would then build new science shops in countries and regions previously lacking such collaborative centers.

At the heart of the science shop movement is the desire to ensure that scientific research is responsive to broader public needs and not just driven by disciplinary priorities. The European Commission (EC), the executive body of the European Union, explains this movement in its publication, *Science Shops: Knowledge for the Community:*

> One key element distinguishing science shops from other knowledge transfer mechanisms is their bottom-up approach. They are built around the concept of participation. Their role is to contribute
> to identifying civil society's needs for expertise and knowledge, and together find the best way to respond to them. (European Commission 2003, 5.)

Like foundations and government agencies in the United States, the EC has recognized that there is a widening separation between scientists and the public in our information society. Ranier Gerold, director of the EC's science and society directorate, describes this separation as a developing crisis in our nations:

> There are more scientists in the world today than ever before and we depend on science and its applications in almost every aspect of our lives, yet we do not always appreciate how intimately it affects each of us. Although researchers are successfully integrating their efforts at a European and even global level to address the increasing complexity of scientific inquiry, there appears to be a yawning gap between science and society at large. Many people see scientists as inhabitants of a strange parallel world that bears little resemblance to their own (European Commission 2003, 3).

In an effort to close the gap between science and society, the EC has provided increasing support to science shops and their international networks in the past decade. ISSNET held international conferences of science shops in 2001 and 2005 and plans future expanded conferences.[5]

While it has no established model, collaborative university-community research typically involves partnerships in all stages of research and dissemination of results, including:

- Conceptualization of the issue to be studied.
- Design of methodology.
- Collection of data.
- Analysis of data.
- Writing of a report or creation of some kind of outcome.

- Dissemination of research results and implementation of changes based on the research.[6]

University and community partners may have varying degrees of involvement in each stage of the research process. However, collaboration in the conceptualization and definition of the issue to be studied is a critical hallmark of effective research partnerships. Collaborative research is not a matter of a professor thinking up a research idea and then asking a community partner if it wants to join the research project. Rather, collaborative research involves a process of give-and-take between university and community partners that integrates the partners' differing perspectives, needs, and knowledge bases.

Collaborative research goes beyond traditional research boundaries that emphasize research as a way to determine *what is.* Instead, collaborative research is constructive and forward thinking; it often seeks to determine *what could be.* There is also a social-change orientation to collaborative research. Whether collaborative research involves the improvement of a social service agency program or broader communitywide change, it is typically aimed at solving problems. In their book, *Community-Based Research and Higher Education,* Strand et al. (2003) describe their model of community-based research (CBR):

- CBR is a collaborative enterprise between academic researchers (professors and students) and community members.
- CBR validates multiple sources of knowledge and promotes the use of multiple methods of discovery and dissemination of the knowledge produced.
- CBR has as its goal social action and social change for the purpose of achieving social justice.

This description does not necessarily imply that researchers are ultimately engaged in implementing the social changes recommended by their research. In most cases community partners are best prepared to advocate for the changes suggested by the research and even to implement the changes within their control. Even though an actionable outcome may have shaped a research project, there are times when a division of labor between university researcher and community leader/activist is appropriate, since community organizations may have more experience conducting certain social change activities. In cases where community organizations may be pressuring elected officials or powerful institutions to enact changes, a separation between researcher and advocate may also be a more effective route. Maintaining a researcher's place as an impartial expert who has engaged in rigorous research that led to a recommendation for changes is more valuable to a collaborative project than having the researcher engage in direct action, like joining a sit-in.[7]

The Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL): A Model for Collaborative Research

Loyola University Chicago's Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) is a notable model for institutionalizing collaborative university-community research. In 2005 CURL had an $8 million endowment, an annual budget of approximately $1.5 million, and nine full-time staff. During an average year it carries out 10–15 different collaborative projects with the assistance of more than 10 graduate fellows, 15 undergraduate fellows, 40 additional undergraduates who are enrolled in a research seminar, 3 community fellows, and 3 faculty fellows.

Other institutions of higher education seeking to build a university-community partnership

from scratch might find the CURL model to be a formidable one to follow. However, CURL was established by Loyola University in 1996 after the success of an earlier network of partnerships between community activists and faculty from multiple universities. These partnerships evolved into the Policy Research Action Group (PRAG), a network of universities and community organizations that used a $20,000 grant to initiate collaborative research in the Chicago metropolitan area in 1989. In its first 7 years, this author—then a faculty member and chair of the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Loyola University—coordinated PRAG. Loyola provided a fiscal home for PRAG grants and, impressed by PRAG's success, later sought additional and more substantial funding to establish CURL as its own collaborative research center.

Funding for collaborative research projects did not come to CURL as a result of an aggressive grant-seeking campaign, but rather from the success of university researchers and community leaders in identifying important research issues, addressing community needs, and building lasting partnerships. Working with the community to define research issues has had several advantages. When community partners participate in setting the research agenda, research issues tend to be holistic and interdisciplinary. As a result, CURL's research projects have attracted faculty and students from multiple disciplines and provided community organizations with valuable information that has helped strengthen local social service programs, grassroots organizing campaigns, and advocacy efforts. As one of our community partners put it, "CURL has become our research arm."

Because the community has helped to define the issues, CURL's research outcomes have received significant media attention. This attention provides positive reinforcement for faculty and students

who recognize that a broad audience values their research work. The university's public relations offices also find this media attention attractive because it demonstrates the contribution that the university is providing to local communities. Most important, media attention has been a political resource to CURL's community partners. For example, if a report supporting a community organization's campaign for more affordable housing receives positive play in newspapers or on television, this attention can bolster that organization's advocacy work.

CURL's Structure and Organization

CURL's mission statement explains that: The Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) of Loyola University Chicago seeks to promote equality and to improve people's lives in communities throughout the Chicago metropolitan region. CURL pursues this goal by building and supporting collaborative research and education efforts. These partnerships connect Loyola faculty and students with community and nonprofit organizations, civic groups, and government agencies. Such collaborations link the skills and wisdom present within every community with the specialized knowledge and academic discipline of a vital urban university. Working together, community needs are addressed and the academic experience is enriched.

In addition to this mission, CURL employs a set of governing standards that shape all of its collaborative projects. These include:

- **Collaboration.** CURL projects should strengthen university-community partnerships.
- **Institutional change.** CURL projects will further institutionalize university and community practices that promote knowledge exchange.

- **Geographic focus.** CURL will develop a mix of projects that address issues in communities near Loyola's three campuses as well as issues in other communities throughout the city and region.
- **Communication.** CURL will disseminate project outcomes to local stakeholders and to other communities and researchers who will find value in the data, analysis, and outcomes.

Research Teams

CURL research projects typically are carried out by a research team consisting of faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, community partners, and CURL staff. Funded graduate research assistants generally serve as coordinators of particular projects, communicating with faculty and community partners on a regular basis and supervising other graduate and undergraduate researchers. Graduate research assistants work 20 hours per week during the academic year and full time during the summer months.[8] More recently, CURL has created 1-year, full-time, pre/postdoctoral fellow positions for advanced Ph.D. students or recent Ph.D. graduates.[9]

Undergraduate team members include CURL's undergraduate fellows, who receive a stipend ($1,200 per semester during the 2005–06 academic year) and work 10 hours per week. Funding for these positions either comes from CURL's endowment or is built into its research grants. Undergraduate fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis to students in all departments and schools of the university. Undergraduates enrolled in the university's 6-credit Urban Studies Seminar also participate in CURL's ongoing research projects. These students work 7 hours per week and attend a weekly seminar.

The team approach has been quite effective and has benefited partners and students. The teams help to maintain quality collaborative research by promoting involvement and regular communication between university and community partners. These partners, who typically have other significant work obligations, would not be able to engage in CURL research projects without the support of the research team. Involvement with CURL often represents the first time that many undergraduate and graduate students have been involved in hands-on research projects. CURL staff and more seasoned members of CURL research teams provide the support these students need to build their research skills and self-confidence. Students learn that their contributions to a larger research project can have a visible impact on communities and local policy. In some cases, students get to see their projects covered in the *Chicago Tribune* or *Chicago Sun-Times,* an accomplishment that is difficult for students or even faculty to achieve on their own.

Finally, the CURL experience teaches students how to ask questions and how to learn. This is a most valuable skill to take away from college as one enters the complex and rapidly changing world around us. Students learn this skill, in part, by watching faculty members explore research issues, an exercise that quickly dispels the misleading stereotype that faculty know everything and replaces it with a more useful understanding that there are knowledgeable people in all areas of our workplaces and communities.

Developing CURL Projects[10]

CURL develops projects in a number of different ways. The center may hold community breakfasts with grassroots organizations to discuss possible collaborative research projects. Sometimes Loyola faculty members will approach CURL staff with their own research ideas and ask to be introduced to potential community partners. In some instances, community organizations will approach CURL to request research on a specific topic.

Occasionally, CURL holds community-organization discussions about possible new research projects around a particular issue. Because community stakeholders often adopt stereotypes about what research is, CURL staff holds an initial conversation with prospective partners to describe collaborative research and the kinds of resources that CURL can bring to the table. CURL staff and faculty quickly disabuse community leaders of any notions that research is esoteric, defined by academics looking through their disciplinary lens, and bound for the library shelf where it will gather dust. Staff and faculty discuss the connections between rigorous research and outcomes that can improve the quality of services being provided by a social service agency, can be used as credible policy research *ammunition* in community organization advocacy efforts with government agencies, or can guide community organization strategies in bringing about local changes.

Depending on the requirements of a particular research project, CURL can assign undergraduates, graduate students, staff, and faculty to the research team. Often one or two individuals work on developing a project and completing initial work, and research teams grow in size as the project proceeds. Since comprehensive community research usually cannot be completed in one semester, CURL manages most projects beyond the limits of a 14-week semester. Although CURL staff typically remain with a particular project from start to finish, the center may recruit different undergraduates and graduate students to work on a team over the life of a project.

Interaction with partners does not end when a project is completed. Community-based

organizations may request information from CURL, such as reports, local data, and mapping data created by graduate students with GIS skills. CURL posts data and research information on its Web site or a community partner's Web site so residents can access reports and local data quickly. In some cases, CURL will find faculty members with the expertise to answer specific questions or will facilitate a partnership between the faculty member and community organization. In cases where there has been broad-based community interest in particular policy issues or research skills, CURL has organized 1- and 2-day workshops, led by Loyola faculty or outside experts, for community members and Loyola students.

In some respects CURL is a knowledge *match-making* service. Among its resources are more than 1,100 Loyola University faculty, all of whom could potentially be involved in a collaborative university-community project. CURL offers faculty fellowships, which typically offer course reductions that can be used to develop a project or complete some phases of research. Local partners can also receive fellowship grants of up to $12,000 to support community-based organizations or support staff that an organization commits to a project. In working with community partners, CURL can provide its own staff to facilitate the grant application process or oversee grant funding after it is awarded. This helps to take the project management burden off of faculty and community partners.

As CURL has matured, it has gained significant credibility among community organizations, many of which approach CURL when they receive funding or while they complete research projects. A few years after CURL was formed, a large nonprofit organization serving a low-income, African American community on Chicago's west side offered the center one-

half of a $100,000 participatory evaluation research project grant it had just received. In a community vote of confidence, the executive director stated that "CURL is the only university research that I trust to do the research." This trust and credibility has helped CURL locate new community partners and continue working with past partners.

Examples of CURL Projects

In the late 1990s CURL worked with an Alinsky-style activist organization and a traditional social service organization to research the impact of the new welfare reform legislation on the 180,000 residents of three stable, racially and ethnically diverse Chicago communities. Both organizations had separately identified concerns regarding how welfare reform might destabilize their neighborhoods. CURL's COPC grant from HUD funded part of the research. Over the next 3 years, CURL produced three reports that received significant media attention. Local and state organizations used the first report to successfully advocate for state legislation protecting the financial stability of legal, elderly immigrants living in the communities. The other reports addressed childcare and access to jobs.

Another project came to CURL after a past community partner had requested that an Illinois State Representative fund research that would study changes in the affordable housing base of a rapidly gentrifying community on Chicago's north side. Affordable housing advocates were alarmed at what they saw as the loss of hundreds of housing units on a monthly basis, while developers and some members of the chamber of commerce felt there were too many affordable housing units and too few market-rate housing developments in the community. Over an 18-month period, CURL faculty and staff worked with an advisory committee representing all sectors of the local community. CURL collected data from an array

of local, state, and federal agencies, none of which had accurate numbers for subsidized housing units in Chicago. The advisory committee poured over data and maps that the research team provided at regular meetings. The end result was a report that provided a more accurate picture of housing in the community of 60,000 residents. This report has been used as a planning document in subsequent work in the community.

Making Connections at National and International Levels

Traditional academic-based researchers often criticize community-engaged research as being parochial and having a limited vantage point. This is not true. When searching for effective community-level models and solutions, grassroots activists are increasingly seeking information from colleagues in other cities, regions, and countries. These activists are taking better advantage of newer, more accessible communications systems, particularly the Internet, and are using national and international linkages that universities bring to the table. These linkages exist because of universities' decades-old visibility in regional, national, and international circles, as well as the regular involvement of their faculty in national and international conferences. While local community organizations typically are not part of such networks, collaborative university-based research organizations can use these networks to connect grassroots projects in one city or country directly with projects in other cities or countries.

With new accessible and inexpensive computer-based communication systems, it is now possible to facilitate these *local-to-local* connections without the help of large international agencies. The ability of local projects to share lessons learned and questions with other local projects represents an underdeveloped source of new knowledge. In an era of very tight local resources, the possibility of

gaining new knowledge, new program ideas, and proven community outreach strategies represents a major new global resource that can affect local communities.

Following the example set by ISSNET, CURL has expanded its cooperative research relationships to include community-based projects in other cities and countries. This has been largely driven by CURL's need to seek additional information from researchers outside Chicago and the United States about effective, proven, and community-based solutions to pressing problems. CURL has facilitated university-community partnership connections with projects in Sydney and Brisbane, Australia; Birmingham and Liverpool in the United Kingdom; and El Salvador. It has also been the primary U.S. center participating in ISSNET. The center is currently working on a four-city equitable development curriculum project involving universities and community partners in the United Kingdom, Spain, and Washington, D.C. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the European Commission, the project aims to create a change-oriented, participatory research-oriented educational package that can be used both in university and community settings.[11]

Challenges and Opportunities

Engaged research has made enormous contributions to local communities and has assisted policymakers over many decades of work. The recent growth of university-community research partnerships is a very encouraging sign (Nyden et al. 1997; Maurrasse 2001; Strand et al. 2003). Yet this form of research still faces challenges as it struggles for acceptance and recognition within the academy. Professional or applied fields such as nursing, public health, urban planning, education, social work, law, and business have always integrated community

engagement into research, curriculum, and practicum experiences. Although applied research has been a part of activities within psychology, anthropology, sociology, and political science, it has not always been as valued as *pure* research by many departments or universities. Yet leaders within the social science disciplines have recently started to recognize the importance of better connecting research to communities, organizations, and agencies outside of their fields.

Initiatives in *public social science* are now present in many of the disciplines. Craig Calhoun (2004, 13), president of the Social Science Research Council, has called for a stronger public social science, stating that:

> Many academic projects are driven by neither deep intellectual curiosity nor pressing public agendas but simply by the internal arguments of academic subfields or theoretically aimless attempts at cumulative knowledge that mostly accumulates lines on CVs. To justify these by an ideology of pure science is disingenuous. To let these displace the attention of researchers from major public issues is to act with contempt towards the public that pays the bills. …. we have to produce better social science.

The American Sociological Association recently established a Task Force on Institutionalizing Public Sociology. A key focus of the Task Force's 2005 Interim Report was on designing tenure and promotion policies aimed at more effectively rewarding faculty who are engaged in the research discussed in this publication. Universities such as Portland State have already adopted tenure and promotion guidelines that expand the definition of scholarship to go beyond traditional boundaries and include *discovery, integration, interpretation,* and *application* as legitimate faculty activities. The Task Force is emphatic in stating that:

> Given both the public sources of our knowledge and the potential for sociological research to address a broad array of social problems, we have an obligation to the public around us. As a discipline we need to communicate our findings beyond the walls of academia. We need to make sure that valuable knowledge does not remain locked up in academic journals read by a few hundred scholars, but rather we need to make sure that valuable knowledge gets distributed to a broad audience so it has maximum impact. (American Sociological Association Task Force 2005, 28)

In this *information age* we cannot ignore the substantial potential of better linking knowledge in all sectors of our society, especially the knowledge that exists inside the university and in local communities. There is now a strong network of engaged scholars who work with a broad array of community partners and who also provide support for younger, up-and-coming engaged researchers and their community partners. Collaborative research centers, community-based participatory networks, and community-university partnership centers that were once labeled as *new* have grown into established, permanent resources for universities and communities. We are truly moving into a new era of vibrant, engaged, and change-oriented scholarship.

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Author

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has also completed extensive research on stable, racially, ethnically, and economically diverse communities.

Notes

1. Excellent examples of the research and social indicator maps that were developed by Hull House researchers are available at the Hull House Museum's Web site: www.uic.edu/jaddams/hull/urbanexp/contents.htm#.

2. The sequence of events in the Love Canal neighborhood near Buffalo, New York, is a good illustration of the process of interaction among *community knowledge* and *researcher knowledge* in understanding and addressing the impact of toxic wastes on that community. See Levine, 1982.

3. See Nyden et al., 1997 for a detailed description of PRAG. PRAG's Web site, www.luc.edu/curl/prag and past issues of the journal, *PRAGmatics,* contain more information. The Loyola University Center for Urban Research and Learning currently houses and supports PRAG activities.

4. More information on CCPH is available on its Web site: http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/index.html. The network also coordinates a Community-Engaged Scholarship listserv (http://mailman1.u.washington.edu/mailman/listinfo/comm-engagedscholarship) particularly focused on the academic review and reward system in the health fields.

5. More information on ISSNET, science shop journals, and continuing science shop networking in Europe can be obtained at the LivingKnowledge Web site: www.scienceshops.org.

6. The research approach taken by the Center for Urban Research and Learning (CURL) at Loyola University Chicago involves discussion with and involvement of community partners at each stage. For example, CURL has worked closely with community organizations to design surveys, train community members, and increase community capacity to shape and complete research activities. It has established bodies of literature and support organizations to help guide other specific collaborative methodological approaches such as participatory evaluation research. For example, the online resources of the Community Tool Box project (http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp) at the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas provides substantial guidance on participatory evaluation research and other engaged methods.

7. The notion of academic researcher as *scientific expert* will always be debated. Regarding the *scientific* descriptor, collaborative research assumes that there is always rigorous research taking place that follows established standards of scientific research. This does not mean that defining the research question is not a political decision. The choice of a research project topic is always a political decision. Deciding to engage in research that might challenge the status quo, rather than research that might support the status quo, is a political process. Regarding the *expert* part of the descriptor, a researcher may advertise his educational and research experience credentials to establish credibility. This should not be construed to mean that community partners do not also have expertise in understanding community issues.

8. Graduate fellows generally receive a full tuition scholarship and (in the 2005–06 academic year) a stipend of $12,000–$16,000, depending on whether they work during the summer months.

9. The pre/postdoctoral fellows are treated as full-time university staff and receive full salary and benefits. These fellows acquire excellent collaborative research experience that distinguishes them from other job candidates when they seek teaching or research positions.

10. Over the years CURL has worked on issues such as affordable housing, racial and ethnic diversity in local communities, improvement of early childhood education, impact of welfare reform on economically diverse communities, community safety, lead poisoning prevention, housing low-income individuals with disabilities, use of new computer technologies in serving low-income communities, impact of gentrification and displacement on communities of color, community economic development, health needs of Native Americans in Chicago, homelessness, and youth civic engagement. More information about CURL is available at www.luc.edu/curl.

11. More information on CURL's four-city equitable development curriculum project is available at www.luc.edu/curl/escd.

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