



Theoretical Perspectives and Models of Community Empowerment

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Learning Objectives

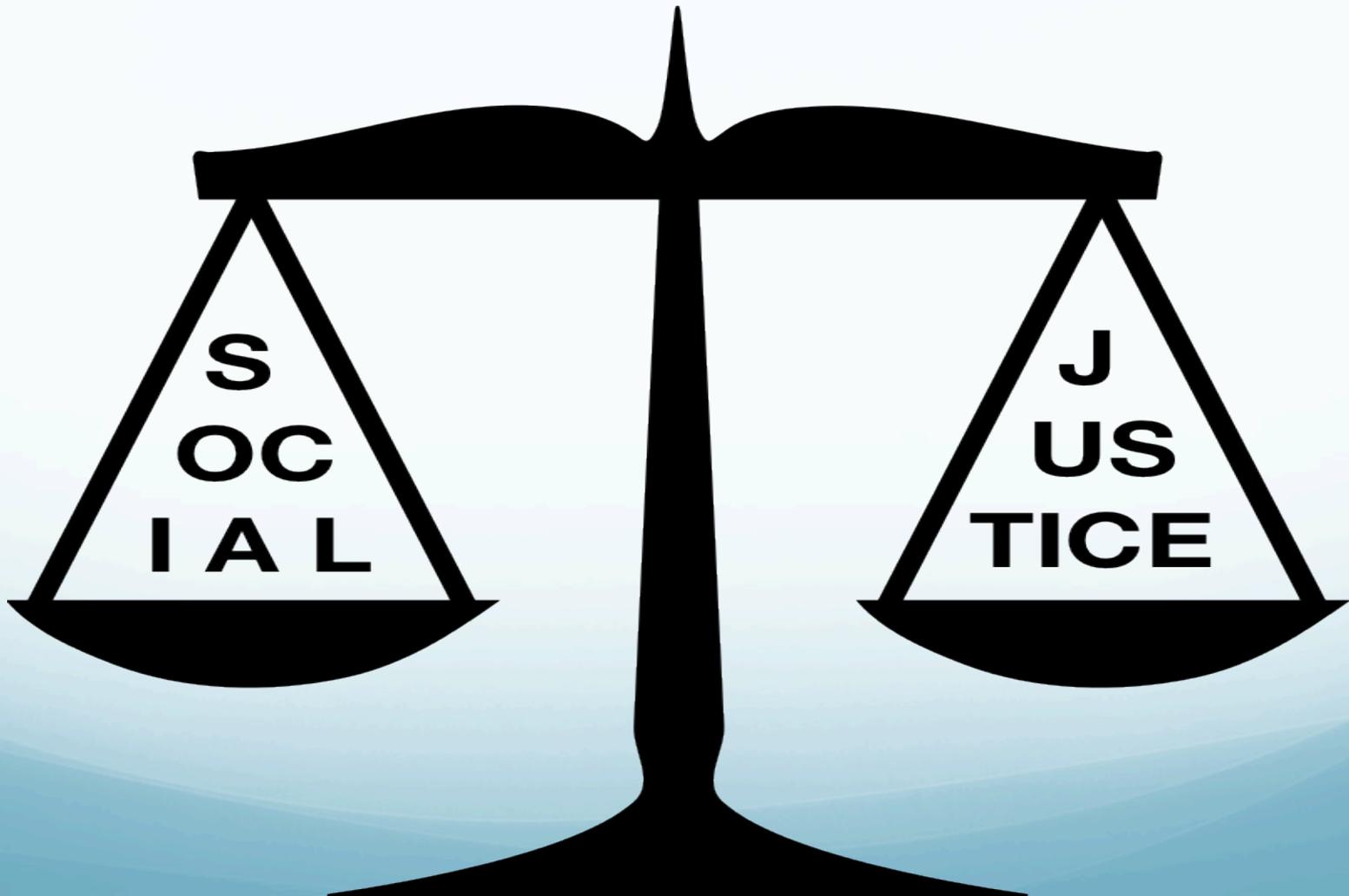
- After completing this workshop, participants will be able to:
 - Identify various models of community empowerment.
 - Increase theoretical and foundational knowledge of community empowerment in a social work practice context.
 - Articulate both professional and religious justifications for community empowerment as a means to achieve social justice.

so·cial jus·tice

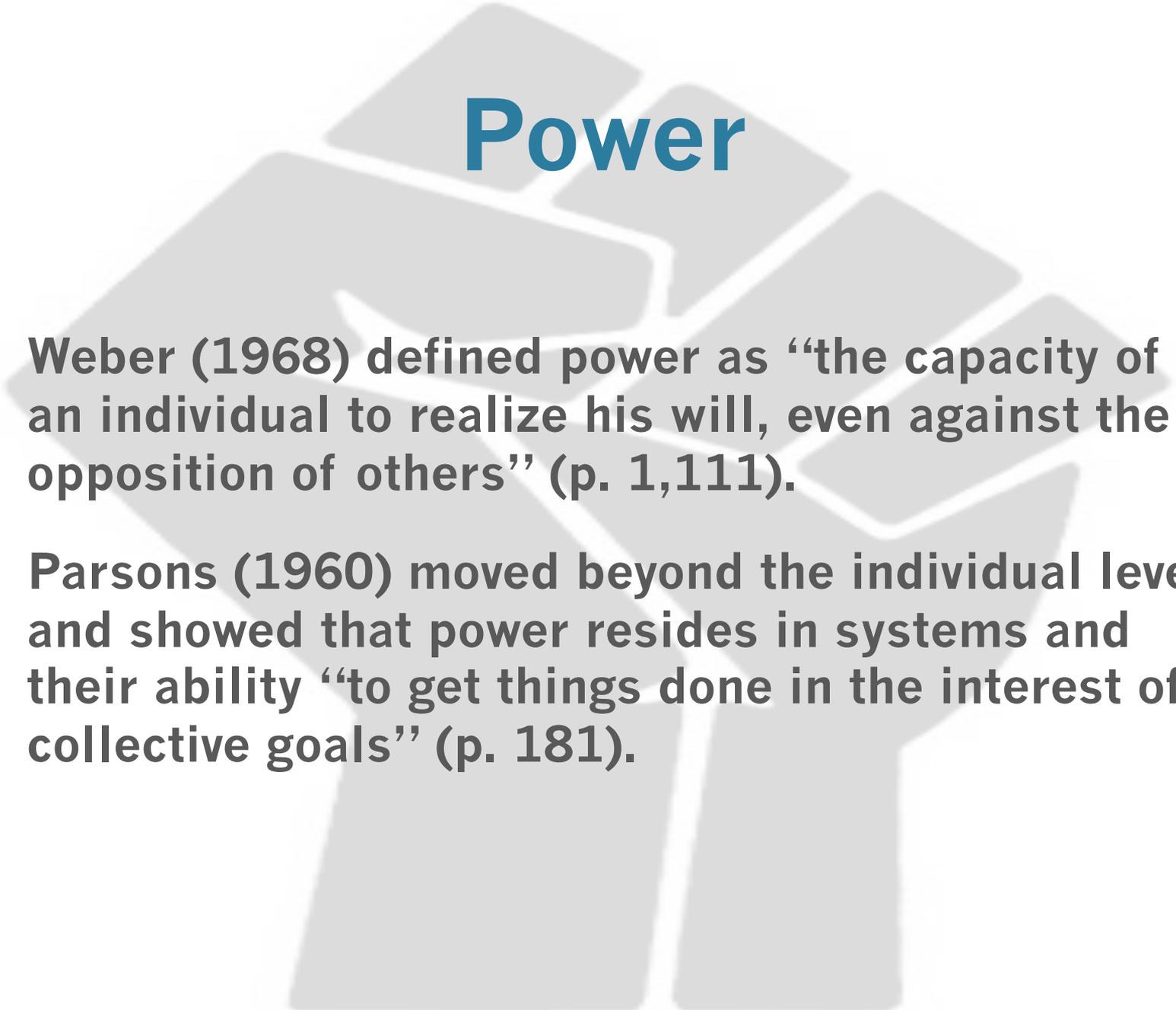
noun

noun: **social justice**

justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.
"individuality gives way to the struggle for social justice"



Power



- **Weber (1968) defined power as “the capacity of an individual to realize his will, even against the opposition of others” (p. 1,111).**
- **Parsons (1960) moved beyond the individual level and showed that power resides in systems and their ability “to get things done in the interest of collective goals” (p. 181).**

Power over v. Power together

Table 18.1

Matrix of Power Relations

	Power over	Power together
Productive modes of power	<i>Protective power</i> Deploying power in order to safeguard vulnerable people and their possibilities for advancement	<i>Co-operative power</i> Collective action, sharing, mutual support and challenge – through valuing commonality <i>and</i> difference
Limiting modes of power	<i>Oppressive power</i> Exploiting differences to enhance own position and resources at the expense of others	<i>Collusive power</i> Banding together to exclude or suppress 'otherness' whether internal or external

(Tew, 2006, p.39)

Community Empowerment

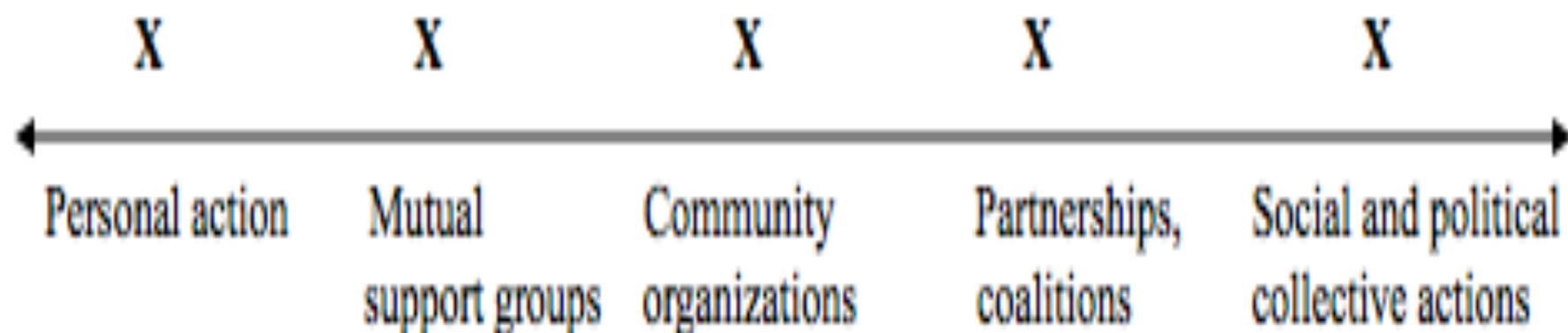
An intentional **ongoing process** centered in the local community, involving **mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation**, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources **gain greater access to and control** over those resources (Cornell Empowerment Group, 1989) or simply a process by which people gain control over their lives, **democratic participation in the life of their community** (Rappaport, 1987), and a critical understanding of their environment (Zimmerman, Israel, Schulz, Checkoway, 1992).
Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 570

Community Empowerment in Judeo-Christian Tradition

- Matthew 25
- “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:32 NLT)
- Mentorship/Leadership Development (Paul – Timothy – Titus)
- Diakonia – Service among others
 - Service that makes the other more autonomous

Figure 18.1

Stages of community empowerment (Jackson et al., 1989, Labonte, 1989).



Models of Community Empowerment

The background of the slide features a collection of colorful, semi-transparent silhouettes of people in various poses and activities. Some are walking, some are sitting, and some are in dynamic, active poses. The colors range from soft pinks and purples to bright yellows and oranges, creating a vibrant and inclusive atmosphere.

- **Rothman's (1968) three models of community intervention**
 - **Table 18.3**
- **Weil & Gamble's (1995) eight models of community practice**
 - **Table 18.4**
- **Boehm & Cnaan's (2012) practice based model for community practice**
 - **Table 18.5**

Table 18.3

Three Community Intervention Approaches According to Selected Practice Variables

	Mode A (Locality Development)	Mode B (Social Planning/Policy)	Mode C (Social Action)
12. Use of empowerment	Building the capacity of a community to make collaborative and informed decisions; promoting feeling of personal mastery by residents	Finding out from consumers about their needs for service; informing consumers of their service choices	Achieving objective power for beneficiary system-the right and means to impact community decisions; promoting a feeling of mastery by participants

(Rothman, 2001, p.45-46)

Table 18.4 Current Models of Community Practice for Social Work

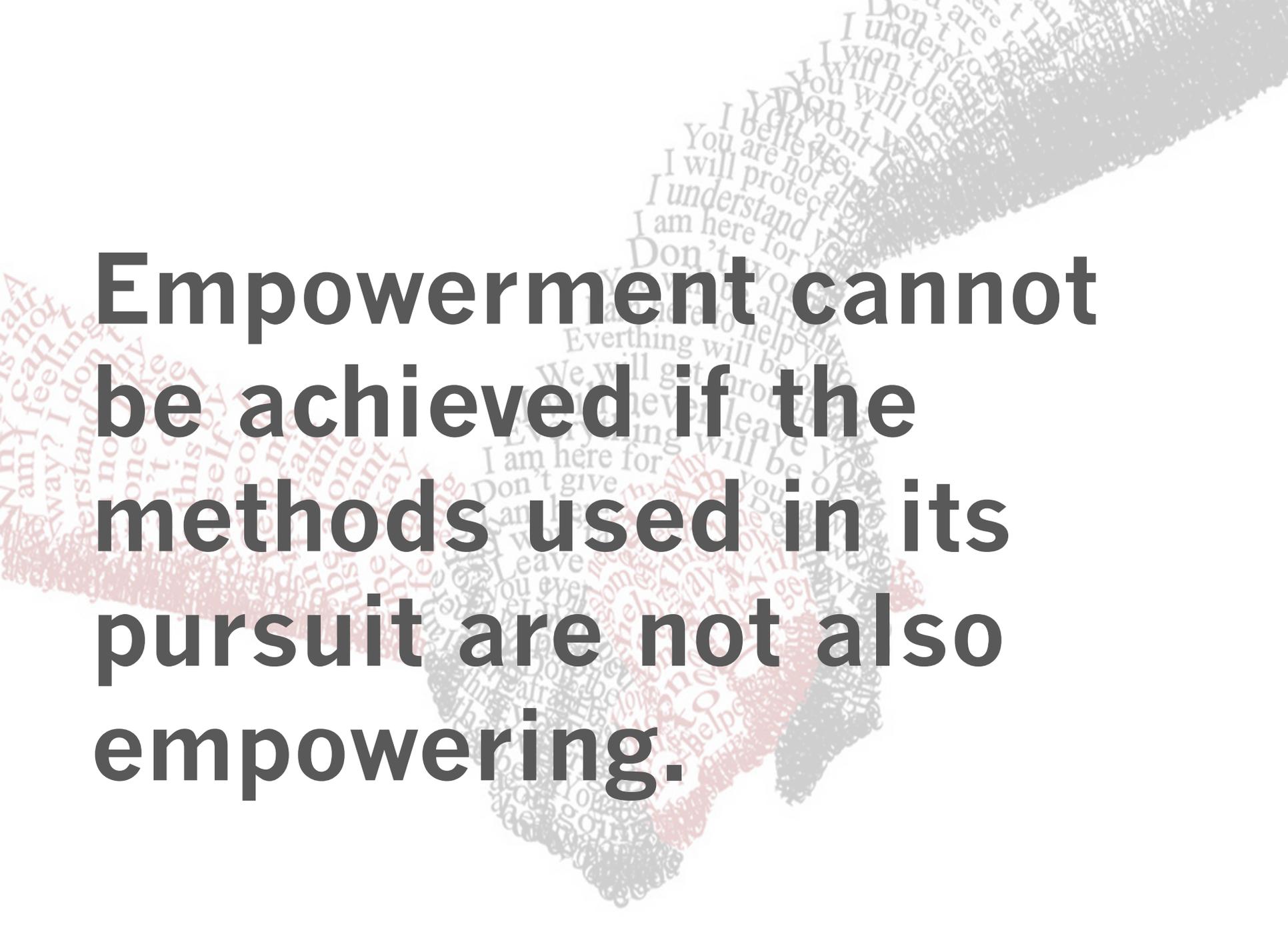
Comparative Characteristics	Neighborhood and Community Organizing	Organizing Functional Communities	Community Social and Economic Development	Social Planning	Program Development	Political and Social Action	Coalitions	Social Movements
Desired Outcome	Develop capacity of members to organize; change the impact of citywide planning and external development	Action for social justice focused on advocacy and on changing behaviors and attitudes; may also provide service	Initiate development plans from a grassroots perspective; prepare citizens to make use of social and economic investments	Citywide or regional proposals for action by elected body or human services planning councils	Expansion or redirection of agency program to improve community service effectiveness; organize new service	Action for social justice focused on changing policy or policy makers	Build a multi-organizational power base large enough to influence program direction or draw down resources	Action for social justice that provides a new paradigm for a particular population group or issue
System targeted for change	Municipal government; external developers; community members	General public; governmental institutions	Banks; foundations; external developers; community citizens	Perspectives of community leaders; perspectives of human service leaders	Funders of agency programs; beneficiaries of agency services	Voting public; elected officials; inactive/potential participants	Elected officials; foundations; government institutions	General public; political systems
Primary constituency	Residents of neighborhood, parish, or rural county	Like-minded people in a community, region, nation, or across the globe	Low-income marginalized, or oppressed population groups in a city or region	Elected officials; social agencies and interagency organizations	Agency board or administrators; community representatives	Citizens in a particular political jurisdiction	Organizations that have a stake in the particular issue	Leaders and organizations able to create new visions and images
Scope of concern	Quality of life in the geographic area	Advocacy for particular issue or population	Income, resource, and social support development; improved basic education and leadership skills	Integration of social needs into geographic planning in public arena; human services network consideration	Service development for a specific population	Building political power; institutional change	Specified issue related to social need or concern	Social justice within society
Social Work Roles	Organizer Teacher Coach Facilitator	Organizer Advocate Writer Communicator Facilitator	Negotiator Promoter Teacher Planner Manager	Researcher Proposal writer Communicator Manager	Spokesperson Planner Manager Proposal writer	Advocate Organizer Researcher Candidate	Mediator Negotiator Spokesperson	Advocate Facilitator

(Weil & Gamble, 1995)

Table 18.5

Model for Community Practice: Key Issues for Real Life Practice

Geographic community: Defined by interests and identities of people based on their geographic location. Developing responsibility and spirit of a local community.	↔	Community of Interest: Defined by interests and identities of groups and populations that cross geographic boundaries. Developing inter-local networks.
Enhancing community integration: Focus on mixing groups that are distinct in terms of culture, identity, and interests.	↔	Maintaining group identity: Preserving and fostering the unique identity and character of each group.
Focusing primarily on activists: Informing and explaining tactics.	↔	Appealing to indifferent community members: Persuasion tactics.
Integral/comprehensive change: Attempting to tackle a host of problems at the same time as a means to eradicate the root problem.	↔	Targeted focused intervention: Attempting to tackle one, often most pressing, problem.
Intra-community-focused change: Focusing on change within the community. Cultivating self-help, building strengths and assets within.	↔	External change: Focusing on change outside the community, such as legislation, and importing outside resources.
Collaboration with government: Change and programs are based on government support.	↔	Collaboration with nonprofit organizations: Including informal, non-profit, and private organizations.
Technical-rational approach: Change managed by means of systematic planning and activities. Each phase is based on the previous phase.	↔	Organizational-political approach: Change is managed by negotiation with interest groups. Activities conducted to support social justice.
Incremental process: Change involves a constant, continuous process. The process of change occurs in phases over a long period of time.	↔	Breakpoint change: Process of change dramatic and immediate. Shift is fundamental in nature.
Mass mobilization: Change achieved through mobilization of a mass of people who advocate a specific change, assuming that the mass creates power.	↔	Small action system Change achieved through coordinated/joint activity of a relatively small, defined group, of professionals as well as community leaders.
Collaborative strategy: Concern for all groups that may be of relevance. Change achieved through mutuality, understanding, and agreements.	↔	Confrontational strategy: Concern only for the interests of the client and/or action system; aspires to win.
Directive approach of professionals: Professionals are the focus of the action and decision-making process.	↔	Non-directive approach of professionals: The clients are the focus of the action and decision-making process.
Routine Activity: Focus on central services; linear planning; solutions for varied needs; long-term processes and treatments.	↔	Activity in crisis: Focus on "reaching out"; immediacy; short-term thought and action; spontaneous and intuitive action; activity directed at meeting human basic needs; authoritative activity



Empowerment cannot be achieved if the methods used in its pursuit are not also empowering.

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