

In Pursuit of Personal and Social Transformation: Mission, MARCC, and Returning to Cincinnati*



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Born and raised in Cincy...

- American Dream
- Single income family, stay-at-home Mom
- No trauma



Immaculate Heart of Mary, Anderson



Experiential Learning in Central America (2004)

Sustainable Development

Social Change

- Guatemala
- El Salvador
- Nicaragua



“A Broken Heart”

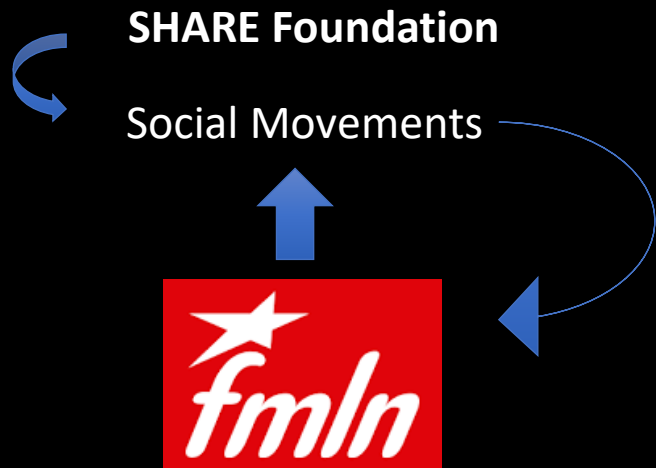
- My life was totally transformed
- I learned to see the world from the perspective of poor and marginalized
- Inspired by Liberation Theology
- Deepened by Mayan Spirituality



A Sense of Mission...

- How can I best put my skills and passions at the service of others?
 - At the service of building the Reign of God on Earth?
 - At the service of positive social change?

El Salvador:
2006-2012



2009
Salvadoran
Elections





FMLN in El
Salvador:
From Guerrillas
(1980—1992) to
Government
(2009-2019)



The Left in Power: Movement-State Collaboration?



Limits to Change in El Salvador

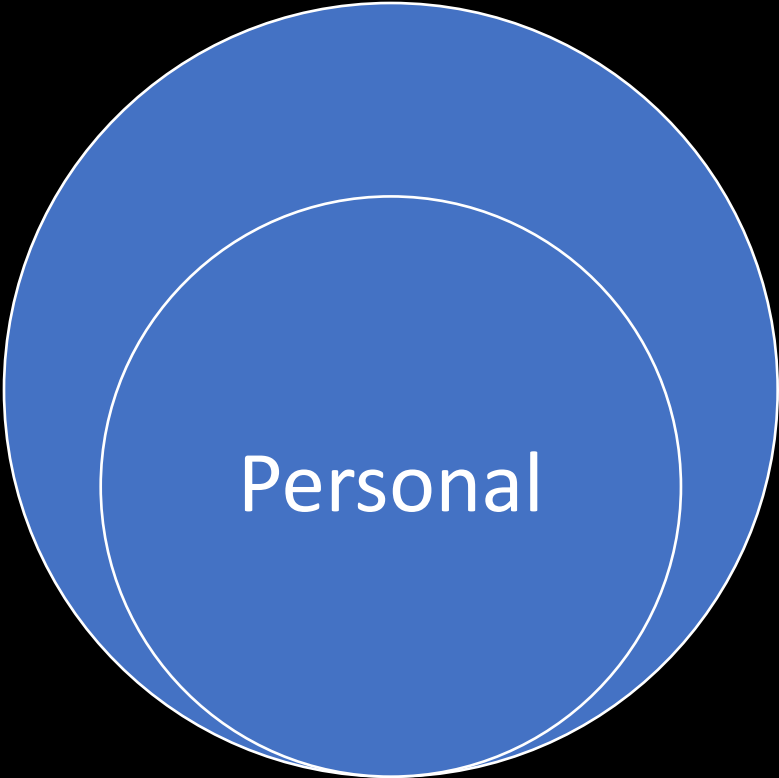
- Global Forces
- Demobilization of Movements
- Community and State Violence

Research Questions

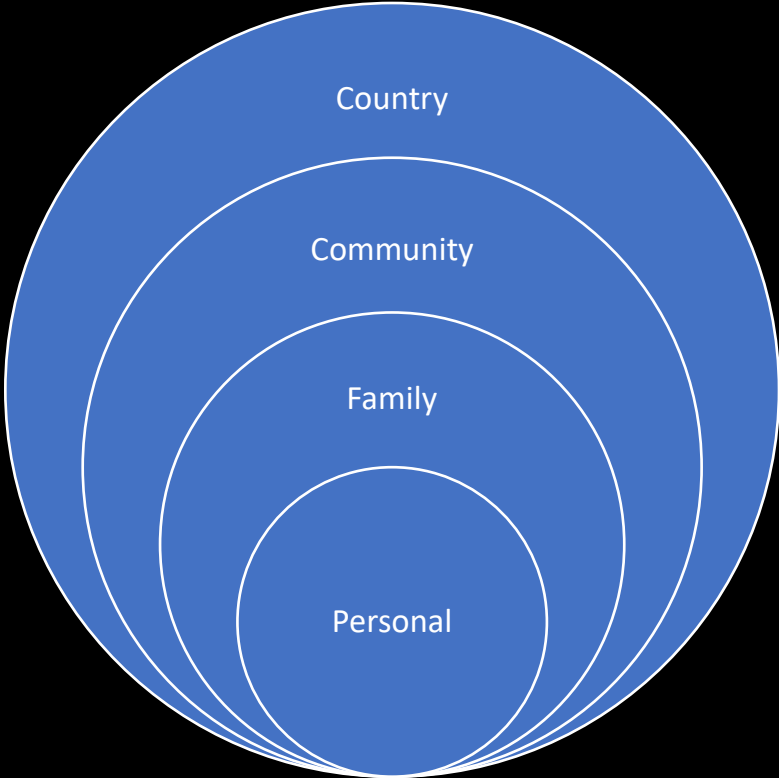
- How can movements best pursue social change under allied (or any) government?
- What sorts of state-society relations produce social justice?

Relational Transformation

Social



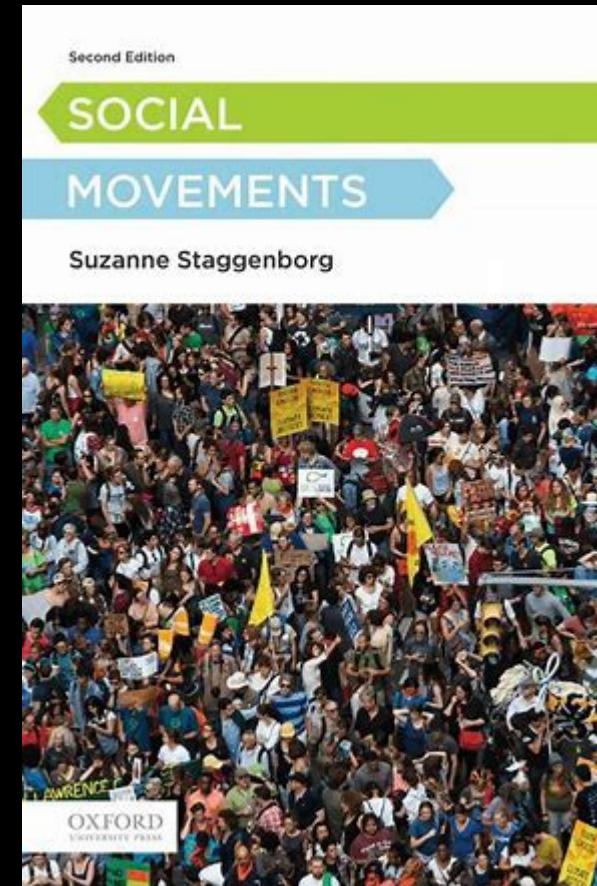
Structural/Macro/Global



Back to Cincy: From Rejection to Newport (2012-2013)



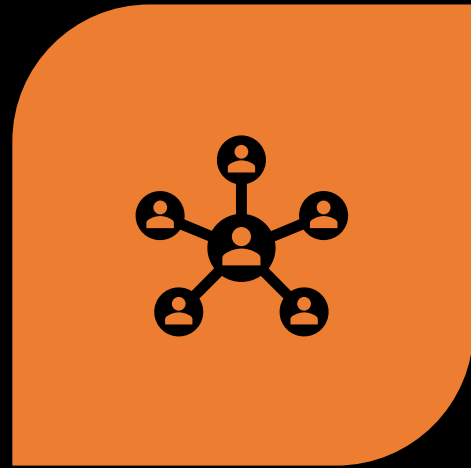
Pittsburgh (2013-2017)



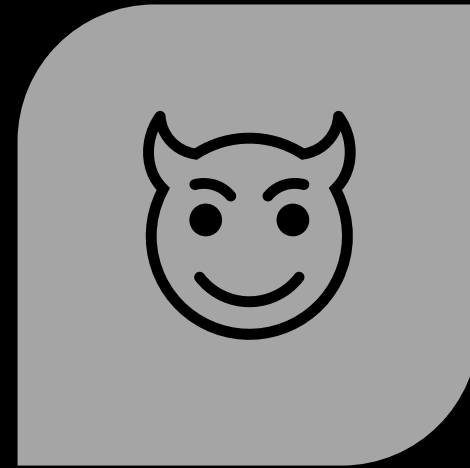
Provocations from Pitt

- How can knowledge can be used to build power from below, to make positive social change in Latin America, US, and Globally?
 - Feminist theory
 - Critical Race Theory
 - Social Change Theory
 - Global Epistemology

What is Social Change?



HOW DO WE MAKE SOCIAL
CHANGE?



IS SOCIAL CHANGE GOOD
OR BAD?

3 Strategies for Social Change (Wright 2011)



Ruptural: violent revolution to take state power by force



Symbiotic: peaceful protest, advocacy, social movement organizations to work for change within the state structure



Interstitial: transforming culture and social relations without engaging the state



El Salvador

Nicaragua

Map data ©2020 Google, INEGI

Fieldwork: 2014-2019

- Yearly month-long visits
- Ethnographic Methods
 - 97 Interviews across El Salvador and Nicaragua
 - Thousands of hours of informal observation
- Participatory Action Research
 - Research questions guided by participants
 - Conclusions of use to efforts for social change

Back to Cincy: 2018- 2023

- Kids
- Pandemic
- Academic Dreams Dashed
- Pivot to Price Hill and Santa Maria



Santa Maria Community Services (Lower Price Hill: 2021-2023)

Preventing Violence through:

- Youth Empowerment
- Social Emotional Skills
- Academic support



Reinventing the Left(s) in El Salvador and Nicaragua:

Revolutionary Legacies, Movement-State Negotiations, and Competing Projects of Governance

Daniel P. Burridge, Ph.D. (April 2023)



Reinventing Social Change
in El Salvador and
Nicaragua

Daniel P. Burridge

Critical Collaboration (Burridge 2020)

- A social movement strategy in which local government and social movement organizations “co-govern” together
- Pioneered by feminists in Suchitoto, El Salvador to co-govern “gender politics” (violence against women, community development etc.)
- *“Support what is good and critique what is bad...”*
- Movements maintain independence and objectives regardless of party in power

Office of Specialized Attention to Women Victims of Violence (Suchitoto, El Salvador)



UNC Greensboro: Research Scientist

Research Industrial Complex

- Research as a profit motive
- Pre-determined conclusions
- Little community engagement
- Little real-world application
- Mainly administration

Status and Beauty



Why MARCC?

- For Personal and Social Transformation
- To be the person I truly was meant to be
 - A Researcher and a Practitioner
 - A Leader and a Humble Servant
 - An Intellectual and a Believer
 - Not beholden to any interests except those here in this room

Visions for the Future

- Community-Based Research/ Participatory Action Research
- Renewed Action on Collaborative Agreement
- Strengthened Partnerships across Jurisdictions and outside organizations and government entities
- Strategic Plan?
- Community-Centric Fundraising?
- Critical Collaboration?

Critical Collaboration at MARCC?

- Safety and Reform Committee at University of Cincinnati
- Formed after 2015 UCPD shooting of Sam DuBose
- Ensures accountability and transparency of UCPD
- MARCC has served as community representative for 9 years
- Chief Issac Elliot: *“We appreciate your support and your critique”*

Structure and Agency

- What ordinary people do on a daily basis does matter
- The agency (actions) of individuals and organizations makes up structures!
- Personal Change: occurs in relationship with social change
- We multiply social change when we organized collectively
 - Power in Numbers
 - MARCC, allies, partners



Gracias!

Thank you!



Questions? Comments? Ideas?

The Sociological Imagination

- (C. Wright Mills, 1956):
 - Reveals the dialogic relationship between individuals and larger social structures
 - Spurs research to understand the intersection of biography and history, of structure and agency

