



Building Power to Transform

Introduction To Organizing



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Goals for Today

- Introduction to the Concept of Power
- Fundamental Principles of Organizing
- Open Discussion about being a Community Organizing, and the challenges

- What is your name?
- Who do you love, who do you what to protect?

What is your definition of power?

- Take 2 minutes and write down a definition.
- Webster definition: The ability to act.
- MLK: The ability to achieve purpose.

Where does power come from?

- Organized People
- Organized Money
- Every organization – churches, political parties, non-profits, businesses, etc. need one or the other (usually a combination of the two) to wield power

What is power for? To animate our values.

Faith (or Belief System)

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Human Dignity

(In Christianity – All people created in the image of God)

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Values

(How people should be treated if all people have human dignity)

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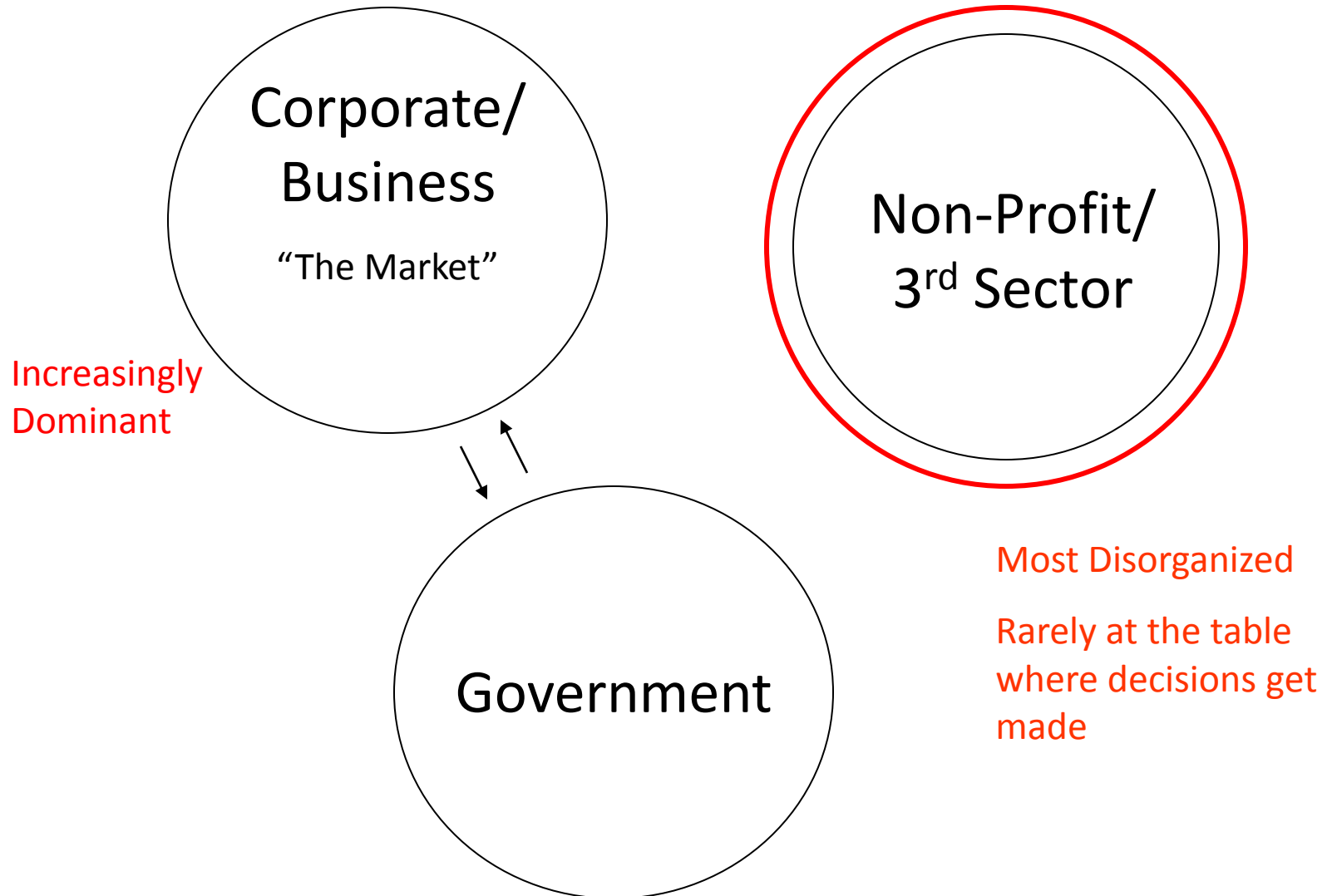
Power (organized people and money)

(Necessary to make values real. A value is meaningless if you cannot act on it.)

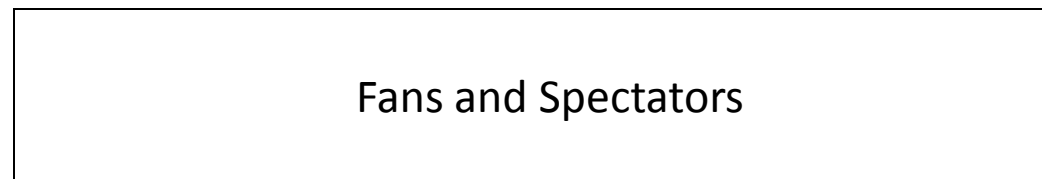
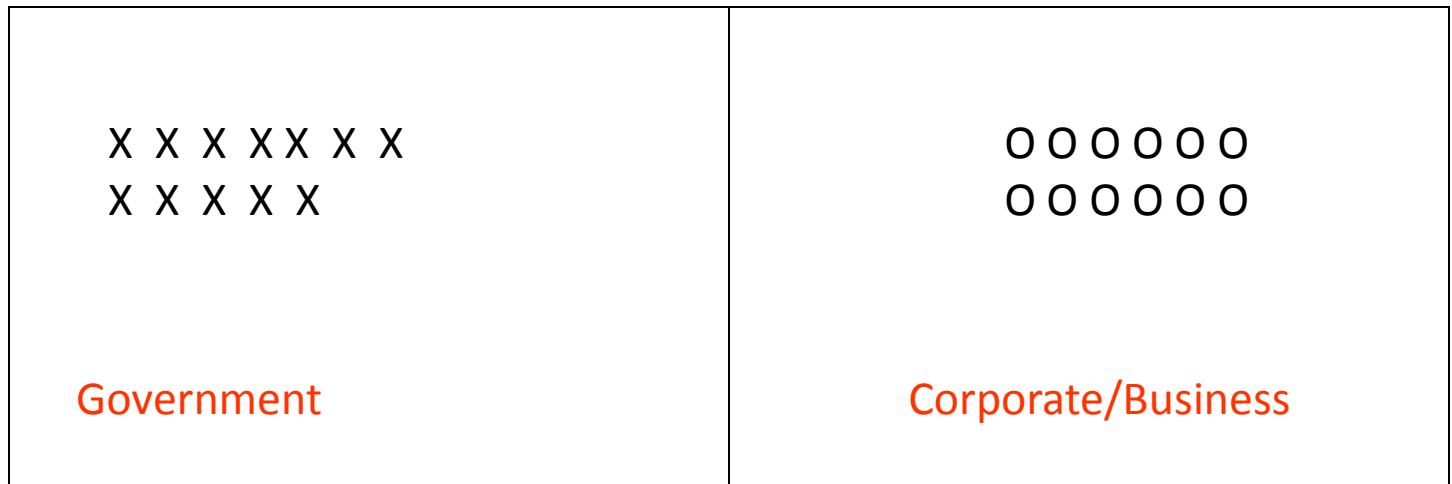
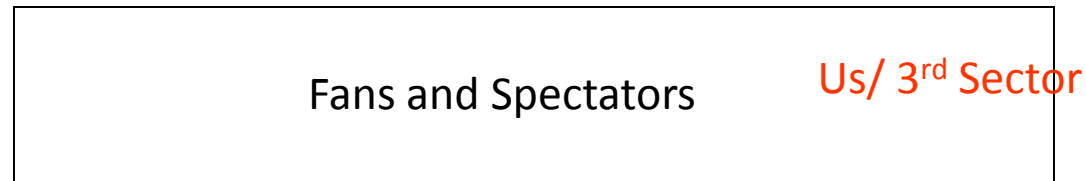
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Organization

3 Sectors of Civil Society



The playing field of public life



The First Fundamental Principle of Organizing

- People who are directly affected by the problems are the ones leading the organizing.
- PEOPLE are more important than issues. The process is primary.
- We are organizing so that the have-nots have power, not so that they are "taken care of" or "ministered to".
- “The people with the problem organize.” – Midwest Academy

The Second Fundamental Principle of Organizing.

- It is about creating systemic change.
- It is about building relational power – in order to change policy, systems. It is not social service, advocacy, or community development.
- “We have moved into an era where we are called upon to raise certain basic questions about the whole society. We are still called upon to give aid to the beggar who finds himself in misery and agony on life's highway. But one day, we must ask the question of whether an edifice which produces beggars must not be restructured and refurbished.” MLK 1968
- It is radical by the basic definition of the term. “relating to or affecting the basic nature or most important features of something”

Organizing is about creating systemic social change.



The Third Fundamental Principle of Organizing.

- Organizing is a radical commitment to relationships.
- 121s are a part of the daily diet of not just organizers, but leaders. Relational activity is constant.
- Leaders have followings. If you have no following, you are just someone out for a walk.
- We teach and train the art of building public relationships, based on self-interest, for the purpose of collective action. This is the most radical thing that we do.

Being a Community Organizer

- What do we do
- Experiences
- The Challenges

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found out the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress."

- Frederick Douglas