BASIC CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND WHY COMMUNITIES RESIST CHANGE

Traditional Perspectives on why Communities Resist Change:

Traditional Euro-Centric Values:
- Hierarchical Order
- Capital Gain
- Conformity
- Nuclear Family
- Christianity
- Independence
- Competition
- Protestant Work Ethic

Characters of Traditional Community:
- Within a set geographic area;
- Consists of people with similar values and cultures;
- Shares a common history;
- Has common or shared goals;
- Has a clear set of rules/expectations;
- Has a clear hierarchy;
- Consists of people within same socioeconomic class;
- Consists of people with similar educational backgrounds;
- Members have similar family structure.

Why Communities Resist Change:

Hierarchical Order:
If the hierarchical order of a community is upset or challenged, the community who values this standard will resist change to it. Sense of hierarchy in a community reinforces security and order within a traditional community.

Capital Gain:
Resources are valuable to the productive functioning of many traditional communities. If capital gain is disrupted, traditional communities will fight to sustain or improve their capital gain. Many times, available resources will define the core functioning capacity of communities; it will determine the level of education, social recreation, and economic gain of many traditional communities.

Conformity:
Traditional communities rely on conformity to reinforce their set values systems. Deviance in conformity may cause change in traditional communities; this change is resisted to maintain status quo. Members who are unable to conform for reasons of race,
ethnicity, or sexual orientation are unwelcomed in many traditional communities.

**Nuclear Family:**

The nuclear family is the primary family structure for traditional communities. This family structure maintains the population and limits the amount of extended influence in the community. It also limits the ability of diverse family systems or same-sex families to join the traditional community. Traditional communities resist this type of change because it challenges their core belief system.

**Christianity:**

For traditional, Euro-Centric communities, Christianity is the established religion. It reinforces core values. Any change to this institution is resisted because it would cause a shift in paradigm or core thought/philosophy.

**Independence:**

That the traditional community values independence; that it is subject to only itself and its core values. That members function independently and do not depend on outside systems for support. Change to this is resisted because it would subsequently influence the resource allocation and power hierarchy of the community.

**Competition:**

Traditional communities have a history of competition both with each other and with members within the community. This is directly related to the capital gain and independence valued by the traditional community. Members are taught to be competitive and to gain as much as they can throughout the course of their lives. Prosperity is greatly valued in traditional communities; change to prosperity is greatly resisted.

**Protestant Work Ethic:**

In traditional communities, members are expected to be productive and to sustain themselves and their family through independent means. They are encouraged to value work and to increase their earnings and subsequent place in the established hierarchy. The work ethic maintains order and control; core values of the traditional community are reinforced. The work ethic is vital to the sustainability of the traditional community and their socioeconomic class. Any change is greatly resisted.
Alternative Perspectives on why Communities Resist Change:

Alternative Values:
• Diversity
• Interdependence
• Cyclical Power/Influence
• Resource Allocation
• Extended Families
• Environmental Concerns

Characteristics of Alternative Communities:
• No set geographic location;
• Sharing of power or leadership (strengths perspective);
• Large family groups / support groups;
• Diversity among members (sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic)
• Multitude of goals that are productive and socially conscience;
• Multitude of educational experience, languages, cultures, and religious practice.

Why Alternative Communities Resist Change:

Diversity:
That diversity produces productive change within the community. Diversity is valued and protected. Resistance to this value is based on need to be an inclusive, not exclusive, community.

Interdependence:
That alternative community members are interdependent. That challenges are shared, and people rely on each other for subsistence. Change to this value is resisted because community relationships would break down and become segregated.

Cyclical Power/Influence:
Power is distributed evenly throughout the community. Many alternative communities will rely on different leaders at different times, based on their skills and knowledge and how it relates to challenges. Change to this type of power relationship could potentially lead to despotism and negative control.

Resource Allocation:
By this, alternative communities share resources and promote an equal balance among members. Each member is guaranteed basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, health care, childcare, education, and respite. Any change to this allocation would result in a shifting of power and influence; the society would no longer be as productive.
Extended Families:
That extended family members are welcomed into the home and community. That the family is able to be either very small or very large, depending on customs. Change would influence the level of diversity in the alternative community.

Environmental Concerns:
The alternative community is concerned for the environment and systems within its circle of influence. Decisions made by the alternative community would be weighed based on these concerns. Changes to this would result in a less holistic approach.

Note:
Alternative communities are not uniform. In some cases, the above examples would not apply. Information about alternative communities are not all-inclusive –may be subject to change.

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