Organizing Alternatives: Examining Normative and Alternative Nonprofit Organizing Practices

Peter R. Jensen

Advisor: Dr. Rebecca Meisenbach

This project examines and critiques that organizing practices of two homeless shelters that serve women and women with children. Based on ethnographic observations, interviews, and textual analysis, I argue that alternative and normative organizing practices emerge from the use of the organizing Discourses of neoliberalism, anarchism, feminism, and paternalism. These Discourses are translated into the institutional logics that serve as the basis for the creation and maintenance of organizing practices. By drawing on institutional logics and the communicative constitution of organization, I propose a theoretical framework that traces macro-level cultural Discourses to meso-level organizational policy, and finally to the manifestation of everyday communicative practice. I argue that the way organizations talk about social problems shapes policies and procedures that impact how we organize in response to these problems.