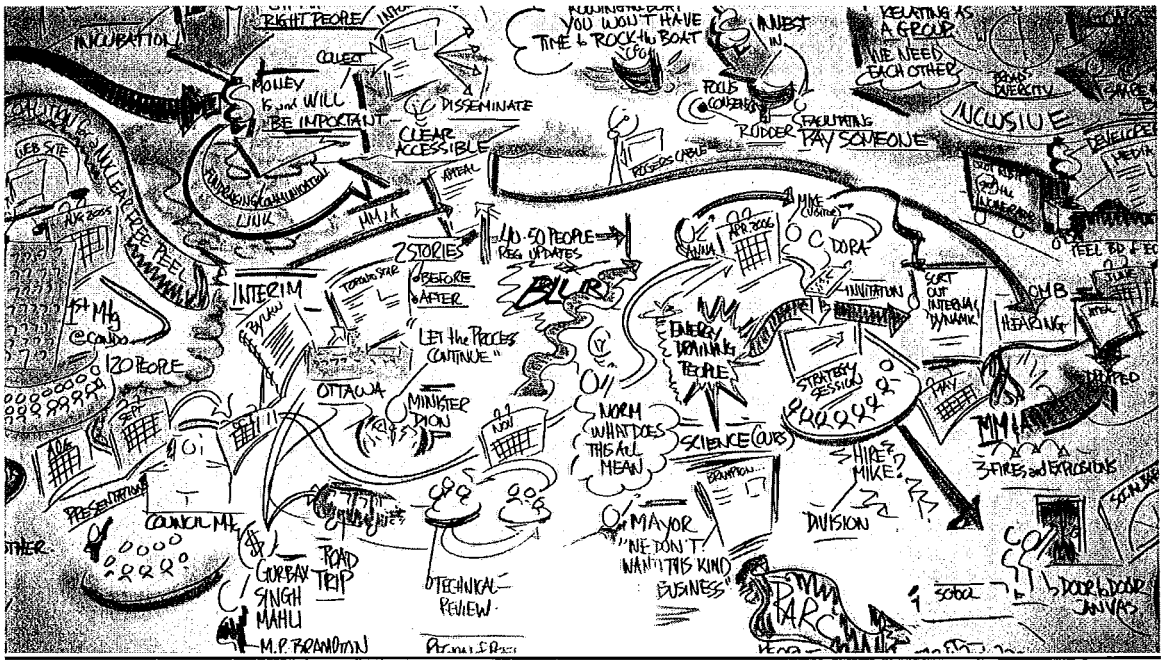
INSIDE EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: A CASE STUDY



INSIDE EXPERIENCES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: A CASE STUDY

BY SARA J. B. MCAULEY

B.S.W. (McMaster University)
B.A. (McMaster University)

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

McMaster University

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
(2007)

McMaster University
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Inside Experiences of Community Organizing: A Case Study

AUTHOR: Sara J. B. McAuley, B.A. (McMaster University), B.S.W. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Bill Lee

NUMBER OF PAGES: vi, 88

Abstract

Inside Experiences of Community Organizing: A Case Study

Sara McAuley

Master of Social Work
McMaster University
2007

This paper is an exploratory case study on the inside experiences of community organizing. A case study was conducted on a successful community campaign, People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC), consisting of 10 participants who attended a focus group to talk about their experiences in a successful campaign. This paper explores some inside experiences and issues associated with community organizing which were identified as important to the research participants. The paper examines three major themes: group building, campaigning and understanding success, and addresses how these issues are seen in other community work literature. As indicated in the paper, community practice generally is an under-researched area of social work in Canada; especially lacking in community work research is the inside experiences and human element associated with the practice. This paper provides some impetus for social work to attend better to all forms of community practice in both undergraduate and undergraduate programs.

Acknowledgements

I would first, and most importantly, like to thank the informants for this paper, the experts in the field of activism, the PARC leadership. Thank you to Mike Balkwill, Patti Chmelyk, Donna Jefferies, Anna Przychodzki, Jaipaul Massy-Singh, Sandra McCutcheon, Ed Scmeler, Marc Rediger, Jagtar Shergill and Eustice Sobers. Thank you for setting aside a valuable Sunday afternoon to talk to me about your experiences. You have enriched my understanding of organizing enormously. Also, thank you to those who could not attend the focus group, but informed the research in other ways.

I would also like to pay special thanks to Bill Lee, the research supervisor and my community work "guru". Thank you, Bill, for encouraging, supporting and pushing me all at the same time so that I could achieve this goal. I remember one day as we met you did something strange but meaningful: you recited part of a poem by T.S. Elliot from The Four Quartets. The poem goes:

> *We shall not cease from exploration*
> *And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started*
> *And know the place for the first time*

Thank you for seeing me though my exploration and for helping me to see how my struggles are OK, and that they are a part of my success.

Finally, thank you to my partner, Warren, and my parents, Brenda and Jack, my sister Karen and all my friends who have supported me in so many ways while I have been pursuing my education. They have stood by me and made countless sacrifices so that I may experience a higher standard of life through my education. I promise to you that I will turn this opportunity into something great for the world.

Photo Credits go to Sara McAuley

PARC Lifeline drawing done by David Hasbury, 2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this Research

There is a good deal of literature on the general practice of community organizing (Alinsky, 1970; Dale, 1978; Fisher, 1984; Lee, 1999, Kahn, 1982; Speeter, 1978). There is less literature however on actual cases of successful community organization campaigns, particularly in Canada. The literature that does exist tends to be written from the perspective of the professional community organizer (Alinsky, 1970; Lee and Todd, 2006 for example). I want to investigate how individuals involved in community organizing campaigns view the process of the experience. Specifically, I want to look at how participants define, view and understand successes and how they think their actions contributed to it. In addition I will examine how the participants viewed and understood the process of the campaign and how they were affected by their involvement.

Before continuing further, two points must be made about how I will be examining community organizing. First, organizing is a strategy regardless of social status; it isn't only employed by oppressed groups, although that is typically where we see it. Most of the literature looks at how oppressed groups organize, however I will be exploring the literature to examine a group that is not necessarily an oppressed group in the usual sense. Second I will focus on the single issue campaign; it should be noted that much of the literature is about groups are part of long-sanding organizations, however can also be applied to single issue campaigns.

I will be using a case study: a successful community action campaign in Brampton, Ontario called People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC). I will examine their experiences, their successes and their failures. I want to hear from group members about the process. As well, I hope that this will help the group celebrate their victory by honoring and documenting it. Furthermore, I am believed that in communicating a message to other activists so that others will also benefit receive encouragement and perspective from PARC's success.

The research question, *what does the inside of a community campaign look like* is important because it is exploring a way of understanding how individuals engage in meaningful democracy and attempt to exert some influence on their environment. I believe that this can assist other communities and activists by sharing the process involved in successful community campaigns. I understand that this thesis will not offer a blueprint for success but it will provide food for thought about the democratic process that is an alternative to the tradition of the voting booth.

A Note on the Organization of the Paper

Throughout this paper, community organizing is examined by pursuing meaning in three major issues: group building, campaigning and winning. These three issues will be the focus of the literature and the findings. These three issues have become the centre of the discussion because they encompass both what was meaningful to the participants and what the case study revealed to be major aspects of organizing.

This paper will begin with a brief overview of the case study. Following will be a review of the literature on community organizing and a list of terms and definitions pertaining to community organizing. The methodology section in chapter 3 outlines the use of the case study for this research, as well as the ways in which the information was gathered. Chapter 3 also examines the methods, principles and values surrounding the research. Chapter 4, 5 and 6 discuss the findings and how they help give insight into the three major issues, group building, campaigning and winning. Finally, the paper closes with a discussion on the implications for this research, and the dissemination of the findings.

The Case Study

The Way to Success

Mississauga Metals & Alloys (from now on referred to MMA) is a family owned metal recycling company in Brampton, Ontario its major focus is recycling

zirconium scrap. Zirconium is primarily used in nuclear reactors due to its resistance to corrosion and low neutron cross-section. Sometimes the zirconium tube gets damaged and cannot be used, so it is sent to be recycled. Because the metal was holding uranium, a chemical used as the fuel for nuclear reactors and the explosive material for nuclear weapons, it is now contaminated and very dangerous. Companies from both Canada and the USA send their contaminated Zirconium to MMA to have it recycled (www.mm-a.com, November 28, 2006).

In 2005 MMA proposed to increase the volume of waste processed and stored on its premise. It planned to construct a new building of 35,000 sq ft in order to expand current waste processing activities, as well as add an incinerator for low level radioactive waste (http://www.nukefreepeel.org/, Nov 2006). The incinerator would not reduce the contamination however, only its volume; it would become dust-like and which would have been even more dangerous because it is smaller so it can get into a person's body more easily. Often contamination can go out in the air, the ground, the sewage system, and the environment. In 2005 MMA applied to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) for a license to operate a nuclear waste incinerator on its premise (Balkwill, Lecture, October 27, 2006).

MMA had a legal responsibility to inform the community that it had applied for the incinerator. Thus, on July 10, 2005, a notice of a "Community Information Open House" was published in the Brampton Guardian by MMA. The meeting was held at the Monte Carlo Inn (http://www.nukefreepeel.org/, Nov 2006) on July 26th 2005. A group of people including local politicians and activists saw the

small advertisement in the newspaper and attended the information open house. According to one group member, when people walked into the room they were escorted by company employees to separate tables and not allowed to sit with one another or ask questions. Those in attendance found the information inadequate. The MMA representatives used language and science to try to persuade people that the incinerator would be safe (Balkwill, Lecture, October 27, 2006).

After the meeting was over, some people met up in the parking lot outside and discussed what had happened. They found that they shared a suspicion about what they had heard and exchanged phone numbers. As well, each contributed a small amount of money which would support the beginning of what would be their the campaign to protect their community. Finally, they planned a meeting to discuss what they had heard. (http://www.nukefreepeel.org/, Nov 2006).

From that informal parking lot meeting a small group calling itself Coalition for a Nuclear Free Peel (CNFP) was formed. It would later be re-named People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC). They had their first group meeting with 17 people on Thursday August 4, 2005, and one week later, August 11 2005, they had their first public meeting of Over 150 people. (Balkwill, Lecture, October 27, 2006).

The initial group members got together and decided to have their concerns addressed by City Council. In response City Council placed a moratorium, a one year postponement, on MMA's application, leading the

community to believe that the problem was solved, however this was not a sufficient solution for the group. PARC then started a petition campaign, informing more and more community members and getting a lot of support; however this did not create the results the group was looking for.

Throughout all of this, the group continued to meet and strategize weekly and hold large public information meetings, however they were realizing that their strategy was not achieving the changes that they wanted. By May 2006 the group was falling apart, and poor leadership along with a lack of strategy was causing people to loose hope. At this point the group had decided to meet with a local southern Ontario organizer, Mike Balkwill, and see if he could help the campaign to become successful.

Mike attended his first meeting and offered some strategic planning ideas and had discussions about changes that would need to happen for the group to be successful. The group decided to hire Mike as the professional organizer. That was when a major strategy change occurred. The group went from a small leadership group of 12 to a large leadership group of 30 to 40. The group also decided to focus on recruiting more and more leaders. Also, PARC stopped having meetings where they talked about the issue, and started having meetings that included action, such as canvassing. The group created a website and had pamphlets in both English and Punjabi. Finally, and most importantly, the group strategically changed their target from the company, MMA, who had proven unresponsive, to the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), the federal

governing body which has more influence on what companies can and can not do.

On August 19, 2005 a heavy rainstorm that hit Brampton overloaded the storm drains at MMA, and caused local flooding and on August 29, 2005 MMA had a fire on its premise, coincidently right before a public meeting. This made people nervous about the risk that MMA presented. MMA suspended their application. This led the community to believe that the campaign was over and that PARC had succeeded, however PARC members had to explain to people that the suspension was not a withdraw. PARC then began a letter writing campaign.

During a strategy meeting, PARC leadership decided that the campaign needed to go one step further. In August 2006 PARC decided to have an expert from CNSC come to a meeting to reframe the urgency of the issue. When the CNSC was called to book an expert for the meeting, PARC was informed that the company had withdrawn their application to expand their business. PARC had won the campaign.

Chapter 2 Terms and Definitions and Seminal and Selected Texts

This paper seeks to explore some key issues of the insider experiences of community organizing. Having a general understanding of what community organizing however means is important to this exploration. This will lead to the deeper exploration of three specific phenomenon that often occur when people organize These are: *group building*, *campaigning*, and *the outcomes of organizing* (in this case winning*)*. Obviously there are many issues of interest; the rationale for choosing these three came out of my discussions with group members; they identified these as important in their experience. This chapter will begin with a set of terms and definitions follow the discussion, which serve the purpose of clarifying the context of these terms as they will be used throughout the paper. Next is a discussion around the seminal theoretical ideas about community organizing. The paper will then progress to explore the three points of focus as mentioned above, using seminal and selected texts.

2.5 Important Terms Used in this Paper

The following are some definitions which may be helpful as they are terms that will be used throughout the paper:

Community: communities are usually defined as distinct geographic entities such as cities or towns (Holder and Giesbrecht, 1992). But community can also be based on shared interests or concerns such as anti-racism or environmental protection, or characteristics, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation or occupational

status (Hunter, 1975; Fellin, 1987); the most important determinant of a community is a shared sense of affiliation among its members.

Community Organizing: a social intervention which is used to maximize the ability of communities to have influence over their environment through the attainment of power (Lee, 1999).

Campaign: when more than one person, focused on a specific issue, engages a person in power directly responsible for that issue, for the purpose on getting a reaction (Gecan 2002, p 50-51).

Social Action: action aimed at making basic changes in major institutions or community practices (Rothman and Tropman, 1987).

Target: Especially pertaining to social action campaigns, the *target* is the entity which the community organization seeks to influence in order for change to occur (Lee, 1999). The *target* must have the ability to meet the organization's demands and be accessible to pressure from them (Staples, 2004).

Strategy: a well thought out plan to achieve a goal and specific objectives (Staples, 2004)

Tactic: specific procedures, techniques, and actions which bring a degree of pressure to the target (Staples, 2004). This is what the community organization *does* to achieve its goals.

Leader: leader(s) are indigenous members of the community (Alinsky, 1971; Staples, 2004) who encourage, coach and support group members to action. Their can be one leader, many leaders, and leadership can change throughout the campaign (Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004).

Organizer: an outside person who is invited into the community to support, coach, encourage and train the leadership so that they may achieve their goals (Staples, 2004).

2.1 Community organizing theory

Community organizing is a complex practice, as there are many venues, strategies and approaches for action (Fisher, 1984; Shragge, 2003). Some important ones will be discussed as follows. To begin, Saul Alinsky, the famous American organizer who worked out of Chicago popularized a practice of grassroots community organizing which created mass organizations to develop power to confront power-holders (Alinsky, 1971; Horwitt, 1989). Alinsky (1971) believed that problems that individuals experience are inextricably connected with the problems of others in their communities and in society. The problems that people are experiencing are a result of power imbalances between institutions (government and/or businesses) and the people; and in order for people to solve their problems, they must organize and together dismantle the existing power structures. Alinsky's approach to organizing has had an immense influence on community organizers, and community organizations across North America, for example, the Industrial areas foundation and ACORN (see below), the later organization being recently active in Ontario.

The first major theoretical analysis to encompass the complexities of community work came from Rothman and Tropman (1987) who suggested *three models of community organization practice.* The first model is termed *locality*

development (which is sometimes also called community development), and characterizes the idea that community change can be achieved through a broad spectrum of community members who choose the goals and the actions they will work toward. *Locality development* seeks to create social and economic improvements for the entire community. The second model which Rothman and Tropman (1987) speak of is *social planning* whereby major social problems are examined, and problem solving takes place by a *social planner*, with varying degrees of participation from the community being examined. The final model for community work, which aligns nicely with the community work founded by radicals like Alinsky, is named the *social action* approach, and presupposes that the community being engaged is disempowered, disadvantaged, and needs to be organized in order for community members to change power differentials so they may have a degree of power over their situations. These three models, for theoretical purposes are seen as separate from one another, however Rothman and Tropman (1987) attest that the three can be blended to a degree, and used in congruence as the organizations sees appropriate. (Rothman and Tropman, 1987)

Staples (2004) understands community organizing as having two major approaches: *community development* and *social action*. As Staples (2004) explains, *community development* entails involving community members in improving social structures and community capacities in order to increase the quality of life for the collective community as a whole (p 7). *Social action* features strategies and tactics which seek to alter the actions and attitudes of outside

groups and institutions (p 9). This understanding of community organizing has been influenced by Rothman and Tropman (1987), and also asserts that the two approaches are not static and tend to blend with one another (Staples, 2004).

Community organizing can be defined as process by which people are brought together to act in common self-interest (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004) to gain social power (Shragge, 2003). Members of communities often organize to seek accountability from people in power positions, such as elected officials, corporations and institutions (Staples, 2004). Staples (2004) defines grassroots community organizing as "collective action by community members drawing on the strength of numbers, participatory processes, and indigenous leadership to decrease power disparities and achieve shared goals for social change" (Staples, p 1-2). In other words, people join together so as to have the collective power to make positive changes in their lives and their communities.

Community organizing is usually focused on resolving specific issues. Staples (2004) takes the position that, "Organizing is a bottom-up philosophical approach to social change, not simply a method to achieve it" (p 2). Lee (1999) also holds this position and makes the point that as an empowering process for the community, it should involve the maximum numbers of people. Thus, ideally, organizing can be seen as empowering for the majority of community members, often with the end goal of distributing power equally throughout the community.

It must be noted that community organizing can either be a long term and sustainable endeavor, such as exemplified in the efforts of Alinsky's (1971) Industrial Areas Foundation (Horwitt, 1989) and mass community organizations, nation-wide organizations like ACORN[1]. However community organizing can also be for the purpose of short-term responses to crises in neighborhoods such as what Staples (2004) refers to as *single issue mobilizations,* which end when the crisis is solved. Either way, many of the issues, challenges and strategies are present in both long-term and short-term organizations, to varying degrees.

It is clear that community organizing has many forms. It is important at this point to acknowledge the complexity of "community". A community is a group of people (Lee, 1999). For Lee (1999) community is seen as interface whereby there is a complexity that exists within the organization of relationships at various levels of society (p 15). The lives that people live in their community represent a "middle ground or interface between the personal areas of life... and the institutional level..." (Lee, 1999: 16). Practically speaking, there can be essentially three types of communities: geographic, function or attribute, and interest (Lee, 1999, p 17). The community will also have boundaries and will have some consciousness of itself as a community (Lee, 1999).

Something that is very important to community organizing, especially social action approaches (Alinsky, 1971; Lee; 1999; Shragge, 2003; Staples, 2004), is the idea of *power.* Alinsky (1971) talks about the importance of power in attaining social justice. He states that power is too commonly seen in a negative sense whereby it is corrupt and unjust. Alinsky encourages the organizer and

[1] Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)

activist to redefine power as a necessity for social change. "Justice without power is impotent; power without justice is tyranny" (Alinsky, 1971: 52) Alinsky states that "to know power and not fear it is essential to its constructive use and control" (Alinsky, 1971: 52-53).

Lee (1999) takes the position that there are five elements of power: money, information, numbers, status, and belief or conviction (p 23). Money, according to Lee (1999), is as a way to access power; governments listen to the rich more than to the working class people (Lee, 1999, p 24). Information as a path to power is another element which Lee (1999) talks about, as does Alinsky (1971). Numbers give people power and are the "life blood of a genuine living democracy" (Lee, 1999, p 26). Alinsky (1971), Gecan (2002) and Staples (2004) agree that power exists in the number of people who are organized together. Status allots power as a person or group's formal or informal right to act in particular areas on particular issues (Lee, 1999, p 26). Finally, belief or conviction in the effectiveness of organizing is a powerful thing (Lee, 1999, p 27). In this breakdown of power, Lee (1999) is saying that power is complex, and being able to understand where and how it can be attained is essential for creating a successful community organization. No author suggests that all these elements must exist at one time but all of them appear to be identified as important in different situations.

Essentially, power attainment is important for a community organization in order to have a sense of efficacy (Lee, 1999). As Alinsky (1971) says, "If people feel that they don't have the power to change a bad situation, then they don't

think about it". He is suggesting that citizens will not try to change their circumstances unless the have a sense that they can access power. This suggests why the power which is achieved through organizing can be so effective in creating change for people; political involvement, such as issue groups, service groups, and lobby or pressure organizations "potentially allows for people's power to result in empowerment and social justice" (Lee, 1999, p 26), which is the rationale behind organizing.

2.2 Building a Group

Community organization, by definition, suggests the importance of a group united in action (Lamoureux and Mayer, 1989; Plant, 1974). Thus it is important to explore the process whereby communities and neighborhoods become organized. Regardless of the approach that is taken (locality (or community) development, social action, etc) the literature articulates group building as a complex process, but as essential in order for an organization to exist (Kaplan, 2002; Lee, 1999; Lakey and Lakey, 1995). Gecan (2002) maintains that effective organization does not begin with logos, office supplies or meeting spaces but with the dedication of a number of hard working, skilled people who care about social justice (p 142). Recruitment, group cohesion, formation of strong leadership positions and identification of community allies are all explored in the following section.

Community groups can have varying types of membership; an organization of organizations (or coalition), congregational organizations, direct

membership and so on (Staples, p 48). Staples (2004) states that "who" is involved in the organization has to do with who is taking action and who is involved in the process. Direct membership organizations (Staples, 2004) recruit individuals in the community who would otherwise not have a connection. Recruiting for this kind of membership organization might look like "cold door knocking, targeted home visits, one-on-ones, house meetings, networking, and presentations" (Staples, p 48). However the group manifests, recruitment strategies are important.

Staples (2004) and Lee (1999) address the span of the membership, as well as the depth; how many members does the group have, and how much involvement do the members have? As Staples (2004) states, some groups have a large number of participants, however may not be representative of the diversity of the community (race, ethnicity, linguistic groups, religion, age, gender, social class etc) (Rivera and Erlich, 1995). Also, some in an organization are very actively involved, while others commitment does not go further than signing up (Staples, 2004). Individuals in the group also have different kinds of membership. There are leaders, organizers, allies and those who occasionally participate in meetings or rallies. Lee (1999) describes four levels of membership: leadership, committed members, active members and peripheral members (p 130).

Community organizations are dynamic, always changing (Staples, 2004), with people dropping out and joining all the time. Lee (1999) suggests that membership might be low at points, but often it is important to ensure that as

many people who need to be involved are involved, especially during an action phase. Staples (2004), echoing Lamoureux, Mayer and Panet-Raymond (1995), states that creating and maintaining a deeper level of membership involvement requires a commitment to a bottom-up community driven approach where community members feel that they are needed in the group, and that they can create a change. Also, it is suggested that the group will be the strongest when the issues speak personally to the memberships (Alinsky, 1971; Staples, 2004), therefore maintaining the issue as a community or neighborhood issue is important.

The leadership that makes up a community organization is seen as important to its success (Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004). The Leadership consists of those people in the group who the community or group looks up to as leaders (Alinsky, 1969). Leadership forms can range from an individual in charge of group affairs to several people sharing leadership roles to collective leadership where all members have leadership roles. Much of the literature suggests that organizational leadership should be indigenous (Alinsky, 1969; 1971; Staples, 2004), meaning that they are from the neighborhood or community where the organizing is taking place. This is congruent with the belief among organizers that communities must have control over the changes that occur for them (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004); having an indigenous leadership it is believed, helps to create a sense of locality in the organization.

A common assertion in the literature is that a community group or social action group will be stronger by the employment an organizer to join the action

group. Alinsky (1971), as well as Lee (1999) and Staples (2004) suggests that the organizer should be invited by a significant sector of the local population (p. 101) to join the community organization, usually because the group sees the need for help and will not succeed without filling this position. Sometimes this is a paid position, but often it is not due to the lack of funds that many grassroots community organizations experience; however the role of the paid organizer and the volunteer organizers are the same (Lee, 2004). Also, Lee (1999) adds that the organizer may or may not have formal training as an organizer. Although the organizer may take leadership in certain situations, Lee (1999) and Staples (2004) argue that the organizer should be not the same as the group leader. Rather, the organizer's role is to encourage others to take lead (Lee, 2004; Staples, 2004). The roles of an organizer can be to act as "recruiter, motivator, agitator, leader, consolidator, facilitator, trainer, strategist and tactician" (Lee, 1999: p 27). The community or group must believe in the capacity of the organizer to assist them in there struggle (Alinsky, 1971: 99).

2.3 Building a Campaign

The campaign, or the action component of organizing (Lamoreux, Mayer and Panet-Raymond, 1989) which attempts to achieve the intended outcome, seems to be influenced by the type of organization, and the strength of the membership (Staples, 2004). Gecan (2002) suggests that the strategy and subsequent tactics are a reflection of the type of campaign that has been cultivated. A campaign is about action. Gecan (2002) describes action as, "when

more than one person, focused on a specific issue, engages a person in power directly responsible for that issue, for the purpose of getting a reaction" (Gecan, p 50-51). He argues that action is not talking about issues, information gathering, or joining advocacy groups; action requires a certain resistance against power and those in power (Gecan, 2002). The campaign goes beyond building the group, to acting as a group.

The action group performs tasks in order to achieve its objectives. Objectives, as stated by Staples (2004), are "measurable outcomes within a specified time period" (p 54). Action plans lay out a series of steps to carry a campaigns strategies and tactics (Staples, 2004: p 54). Tactics are specific procedures, techniques, and actions which bring a degree of pressure to the target (Staples, 2004). This is what the community organization *does* to achieve its goals. The target is the entity which the community organization seeks to influence in order for change to occur (Lee, 1999). The *target* must have the ability to meet the organization's demands and be accessible to pressure from them (Staples, 2004).

Staples (2004) outlines 10 tools for action. They include doing it yourself; developing persuasive arguments; raising awareness and consciousness; using existing laws, policies and processes; creating or changing laws, policies and processes; generating publicity; exercising electoral power; affecting appointments; exercising consumer power and; disrupting "business as usual" (p 14-19). These tools for (or approaches to) action are examples of tactics that action groups employ to achieve their objectives. As mentioned above, and

consistent in community organizing literature, the tactic must be directed toward the appropriate target (Alinsky, 1999; Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004). The target must be able to institute the changes that the group wants (Gecan, 2002)

Campaigning is hard work, and requires a time and dedication. Lee (1999) shows that, in striving to overcome a 'social wrong' or in building a 'social right' a great deal of stress will be felt by the participants, as well as by the organizer. "The establishment of positive human relationships (a major aspect of a sense of community) will alleviate the negative effects of stress" (Lee, 1999, p 37). This is why group building, as mentioned before, is so important to organizers; it diffuses the hard work and stress that comes with the campaign.

2.4 Outcomes of Organizing

Community organizing is a practice that attempts to produce outcomes for people. Much of the literature argues that the process of organizing is just as important as the outcome (Ross, 1972; Alinsky, 1971; Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999). There are a number of benefits that organizers see as the outcome of action. These benefits can be seen as resulting from the actual process (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999) regardless of the final outcome of a campaign or action.

As suggested above, the initial purpose of organizing is to create positive change (Lee, 1999; Rothman and Tropman, 1987; Alinsky, 1971). However another, more general process outcome of community organizing is seen to be personal and collective empowerment (Alinsky, 1971; Cary, 1970; Lee, 1999).

Empowerment refers to the ability of individuals and communities to assume reasonable influence within their own environment (Rappaport, 1984; Ristock and Pennell 1996; Wallerstein, 1992). Lee (1999) says that empowerment occurs when people feel that they have the real ability to influence their environment so that they may have physical, spiritual and psychological needs met. This clearly requires that some form of power is created or acquired. Power, being the degree to which we are able to act to influence our environment (Lee, 1999), is not only achieved at the end of the campaign, as stated earlier in the discussion, but is also a result of taking action.

Staples (2004) states that the advantage to attaining power is that this allows community members to do so individually as well. Participatory, "bottom up" approaches to community mobilization, where community members take a lead role in identifying priority issues and implementing appropriate solutions, can be an effective means of facilitating empowerment. Lee suggests that empowerment is both a process than an outcome (Lee 1999) and should not necessarily be seen as the same as possessing power (Lee 1999). Empowerment in his terms means that people have the feeling within themselves that they can act on their own behalf to have needs met (Lee, 1999, p 43).

Along with experiencing empowerment, creating a sense of community is another major objective of community organizing (Lee, 1999: 45). Lee (1999) suggests that a sense of community can help people to feel less powerless in their circumstances and is necessary for social change to happen. This sense of being valued in a community has the potential to reduce the feeling of

powerlessness (Lee, 1999; 46) that is often present in the struggle to achieve success in a campaign.

Another objective of community organizing is seen to be *citizen involvement or* participation (Lee, 1999). "Participation means that we make decisions and act on them in an attempt to do something about the problems that are important to us- 'to help others while being helped [our]selves' (Lee, 1999: 44; Rice, 1990:9). "To be able to act... people must see themselves as citizens; with rights and abilities to express opinions and to acquire the resources they need" (Lee, 1999: 44). A major point made by Alinsky (1971; 1989) and affirmed by Lee (1999) is that this is a major focus of community practice, assisting people to gain a sense of their ability to influence their context. Alinsky (1971) suggests, self respect comes from people solving their own problems (p123), and he states that the process is the purpose (122). The achievement of one success has the potential to lead to the confidence that other successes can be achieved as well (Lee, 1999; p 47).

Chapter 3 Methodology

The following chapter consists of a discussion around methodology; the methods, principles and values surrounding the research. I will explore how and why I came to use the qualitative method that I use to explain the phenomenon of how people experience three aspects of community organizing; group building, campaigning and evaluating success. I will also look at why I chose not to use other research methods to explore these inside experiences. I will also explain how I got my data, and how it was analyzed. Finally, I will explain why I chose to borrow practices from Participatory Research methodology, and how it impacts the research findings.

Case Study

This research was undertaken through a qualitative method, a case study approach, specifically an instrumental case study. For an instrumental case study "a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or refinement of theory" (Denzin & Lincoln, p 88). The case study itself is secondary to the research; it facilitates the understanding of something else. (Denzin & Lincoln, p 88) For this case study, by examining a specific case of community organizing and highlighting some specific issues, I hope to facilitate a better understanding of how community organizing is experienced by those who demonstrate leadership roles in the organizing process.

I will be using a specific group of people and their story for this exploratory case study. In 2005/2006 a community action campaign was undertaken in Brampton, Ontario. The group, called People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC) successfully prevented a local industry with multi-national ties from expanding a local toxic waste disposal centre. My goal is to examine some inside expeiences relating to three major organizing themes: group building, campaigning and managing success. I want to know how local leaders see those three occurrences, and then transfer the findings into a better understanding of community organizing for the reader.

Data Gathering

There were a number of data gathering techniques employed throughout this research. PARC members were given three possibilities for involvement in this project. First, I organized a focus group and asked all PARC leaders and key informants to attend. A letter was written up and given to the campaign organizer to distribute among his PARC contacts (Appendix A). The purpose of the focus group was (a) to hear from participants about their experience of being involved with the PARC campaign; (b) to encourage participants provide any information which they think would be relevant to the case study and (c) to discuss ways in which this case study might materialize in a way that would benefit PARC and the larger society.

Second, I offered to conduct brief follow-up phone interviews or e-mail exchanges. The purpose of these interviews was to fill out what might have been

said at the focus group discussion or to provide additional details about the campaign. Those who wanted to participate in the follow-up interviews were asked to provide contact information for themselves at the focus group discussion, or to the organizer to give to me. I made it clear that if participants prefer not to participate in the follow-up interviews, they are still free to participate in the focus group discussion and do not need to provide me with their contact information. Two follow up interviews were conducted.

Lastly, I practiceed member checking with the research participants whereby focus group and interview participants were given a copy of transcripts from the focus group, and where applicable a transcript/summary of the individual follow-up interview. Members then had the opportunity to add/delete/correct the data before the analysis begins. Two participants chose to participate in this way.

The primary data gathering technique I utilized was the focus group. Typically, focus groups consist of six to fifteen individuals who are asked to discuss topics suggested by the facilitetor and "the transcript from the focus group becomes the data for the research" (Jackson, 1999: 134). The focus group does not statistically represent the population. The utilization of the focus group is to allow for exploration of an issue rather than to than explaining a phenomenon (Babbie, 2001: 294). The focus group for this case study consisted of 10 people who were purposively invited because they held leadership roles in the campaign, and because they had the closest relationshp to the campaign[2].

[2] It should be noted that there were other individuals who took on leadership roles in the campaign but were not able to attend the focus group due to scheduling.

The date and location of the focus group was arranged by a PARC member who had access to other PARC members' contact information. One participant offered a meeting space in his home, so the focus group was conducted there. The focus group lasted three hours with a thirty minute break. The focus group was recorded with the permission of all members. With the permission of individual group members I asked for follow-up contact information (telephone number and e-mail address) in order to conduct informal telephone interviews (which were not recorded) in order to clarify points that were made in the focus group. I explained to focus group participants that the follow up telephone interviews would last from 15 to 30 minutes, or as needed.

Conducting a focus group was the most appropriate data collecting method for this particular piece of research for two reasons. First, the campaign occured approximately six months prior to my research, from 2005 to 2006, and there was a possibility that members might have forgotten some details and events, as well as some of the feelings they experienced throughout the campaign. Conducting a focus group where all participants are in one group together might have allowed group members to encourage other group members' memories, and allow them to somewhat relive the process (Babbie, 2001). The rationale behind a focus group is that it will "provide a dynamic in which participants learn from one another and develop ideas together" (Babbie, 2001; Jackson,1999: p 134). The choice to use a focus group was partially based on this idea that Jackson (1999) raises about where participants in a focus group

help one another develop ideas and come up with rich information for the research.

Second it was time efficient and convenient for PARC members. Also, because of geographical limitations (traveling between Hamilton and Brampton, Ontatio), and a lack of funding, holding one focus group was the most reasonable option. Focus groups tend to be economical in terms of time and cost, and are flexible (Babbie, 2001) which made this technique useful for this study. Had I had more resources, perhaps having more focus groups and holding invididual face-to-face interviews might have strengthened the data, however I was able to utilize phone and e-mail contacts to stregnthen the data.

The focus group was conducted with a flexible schedule which was prepared with the intention of having topics be guided by participants. A general topic "*Your experiences in PARC*" as well as some open ended questions were brought to the focus group in order to get people thinking about what they thought was significant. (Appendix B) The questions were merely guidelines for the group. They were presented in order to allow participants to have an understanding of the purpose of the focus group, and about what kind of information I was interested in. The group was urged that if there were things which I had not asked but they thought I should include in the case study, they were encouraged to talk about them.

Finally, I also attended and recorded two presentations to social work students; one presentation was made by the professional organizer at McMaster University, and another made by two PARC leaders and the professional

organizer at York University. These presentations provided unique information because they were geared towards social work students and took place in Community Work classes. Attending these presentations were beneficial to my analysis of the research because they allowed me to get to know the data from a more academic lens, providing me with some insight into how the data might be analyzed in a way that is significant to the field.

Another data gathering technique I might have used would be individual interviews. The individual interview, or the qualitative interview (Babbie, 2001) is a conversation between the interviewer and the participant in which the interviewer asks general questions which have been decided in advance (Babbie, 2001). Having individual interviews might have allowed participants to bring up issues, such as conflict or challenges that they did not feel comfortable voicing in the large group. However, conducting individual interviews would have been far too time consuming, would have required resources (like time and transportation funds) that I did not have, and would have lacked the effects of having the group together, reminding each other about issue, and refreshing one another's memories.

I might have also used a survey to acquire the data, which would have been very economical and wouldn't have needed to be transcribed. Surveys are used for descriptive, exploratory and explanatory purposes (Babbie, 2001). They are useful for the researcher who wants to get the opinions and experiences of many people (Babbie, 2001). The questions are pre-determined and often very open-ended so that people can give rich, in depth answers (Babbie, 2001). Using

a survey would not have been as effective as the focus group because the data would not be as rich; as already mentioned, using the focus group allowed me to find out issues and ask questions I would have never thought to ask, because the topic were led by the participants, the "experts". They knew what I needed to know. I would have not known the right questions to ask in a survey had I not had the group together in one room engaging in dialogue.

Sample

Purposive sampling was used for this case study. Purposive sampling means choosing a sample based on the knowledge of a population being studied, and the purpose of the study (Babbie, 2001: 179). I chose the participants based on the knowledge that they were involved in the community organization that I want to examine. This means that the core members and leadership of PARC were involved in the case study. Their were approximately 30 participants contacted, with 10 participants in total. This sample represents the core leadership of PARC. The sample consisted of men and women, all members being over 18, and were of different ethnicities and races. In order for me to obtain contact for participants, the group organizer, who I previously had contact with, contacted key PARC members and presented my information and the details of the research project. Group members were then given the opportunity to contact me or the organizer through e-mail.

The sample consists of ten participants. It might be argued that the data could have been stronger had their been at least fifteen to twenty participants.

However due to time and resource restraints, ten participants was about the maximum number of people I could access. Also, it is likely that the people who involved themselves in the research were more committed to the process/campaign than others. This has the strength of assuring the most passionate and "involved" perspective. It also has the potential to bias the material collected; i.e., it was collected from the most enthusiastic and positive members. The material presented should thus be read with this dynamic in mind.

Consent

Ethical research practice requires participants to give informed consent to the researcher(s) in order to participate (Appendix C). Informed consent means that participants base their participation on a full understanding of the research being conducted, and the full risks invovlved (Babbie, 2001: 471). An informed consent form was privided to all potential focus group members prior to them choosing to participate in the case study so that they had the opportunity review the details associated with the study before they decided if they wanted to participate. Consent forms were also be brought to the partipants on the day of the focus group to be reviewed and signed. Signed copies were also given to the group members on the day of the focus group for their records. Their were no research participants who did not attend the focus group and sign a consent form in person. All participants were given the option of having their names used in this study or having their identity remain confidential. If they had requested their

identity protected[3], I would not use their names in any report(s) or presentations, nor would I use any information that would allow the participants to be identified.

Participatory Characteristics

Although Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a methodology was not used in this research, the practices that were used were influenced by many of the characteristics associated with PAR. PAR is a way for researchers and oppressed people to join in solidarity to take collective action for social change. It attempts to present people as researchers, breaking down the distinction between researchers and researched. Research is seen as, not only a process of creating knowledge, but as education and development of consciousness, and of mobilization for action (Lee, 1999). PAR is based on a set of assumptions about the nature of society and about social science research that are directly opposed to the assumptions of the dominant positivist-informed, social science research (Maguire, 1987). The principle of shared power is central to PAR (ibid). PAR combines three activities: research, education and action. The research piece involves an investigation of problems and it involves the participation of all people involved. Finally, action is taken, both for the short term and the long term, for radical social change (Maguire, 1987). As stated by Brown and Strega (2002), "changes in people and ideas may be short-lived unless action is taken to embody the changes in practice, policies, laws and institutions" (p 79). This is what makes PAR so important to emancipatory research and to the social work field.

[3] All participants requested that their name be included in the case study.

Although the idea of PAR fits really well with my personal research style, PAR was not an appropriate fit with this project. I conducted an exploration of a community action campaign that had already occurred before the research began. It seems as though I was late for PAR; I had missed out on the action piece. Also, PAR research talks of collectively creating tools for the emancipation of disempowered people, but PARC is not a particularly disempowered group as a whole; they are generally middle class people, and mostly white.

Although I did not use PAR, I used many Participatory Research practices. For example, the focus group and other personal conversations were guided by the participants. I asked people what they though I should write about. I also asked participants how they thought the research should be disseminated. As the "researcher" I did not take on an expert position. I merely encouraged people to express their feelings and I listened. I also gave people the opportunity to read the transcripts of the focus group, and to make changes, alterations, additions and suggestions.

Data Analysis

The analysis which will materialize from the data will began with a detailed description of the case and its setting[4]. Categorical aggregation was also used, which involved the collection of instances from the data (the transcripts from the focus group and other notes taken) in which a relevant meaning emerged (Creswell, 1998). Also, I established patterns and correspondence between themes (Creswell, 1998). Lastly, I employed naturalistic generalizations, which

[4] The detailed description of the case and its setting can be found in Chapter 1, the Introduction.

materialized as generalizations that people can learn from the case (Creswell, 1998).

The data was analyzed in terms of participant's experiences with three major themes in community organizing: group building, campaigning and evaluating success. Those three themes surfaced from what participants thought were significant aspects of the campaign. The themes are then analyzed in terms of how they reflect the wider phenomenon of organizing and how they can be supported by the literature.

Ethical Issues

Ethical researchers pay close attention to conforming to standards of conduct of their profession (Babbie, 2001: 470). For social work, this means not conducting research that might be harmful to the participants, or to the greater community. In designing this research project, I have made all efforts to ensure that only ethical research practices were used. I received ethical clearance from the McMaster University Research Ethics Board prior to conducting the research. Also, a full information sheet was provided to potential participants before they agreed to participate in the case study. All of the information that they might have needed in order to make an informed decision about participating in the case study were provided. No information was left out, and no participant was faslely informed. Also, upon agreeing to participate in the case study, participants read and signed consent forms, with all research information outlined on the form. Participants were also given a copy of the consent form to keep for their records.

Lastly, participants were informed in writing and in person about their rights to be anonomous, their right to confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the case study at any time without consequence.

Because of the nature of the research subject matter, it is not likely that there will be any harms or discomforts associated with participating in the case study; however their was the potential that participants might feel uncomfortable with discussing points of discomfort, conflicts or struggle. Participants might have also worried about how others would react to what they said. To safeguard from this, participants were advised that they did not need to answer questions that made them uncomfortable or that they did not want to answer. Participants were advised that if at any time a participant preferred not to participate in the discussion, he or she had the right to pass, or even to withdraw, without consequence.

Interpretive Methodology

This research was conducted with an interpretive methodology which has a number of characteristics which coincide with my thesis area. First, interpretative research seeks to understand and describe meaningful social action (not just observable social action). It believes that there is no one definition of a situation and definitions are fluid. Interpretative methodology wants to know how meaning is generated and sustained by society. It also honors the values of the group being looked at, and believes that no values are wrong (Neuman, p 83).

The research is methodologically interpretative because my research is interested in knowing about the experiences and understandings of a group of people who have engaged in a community action campaign. Part of what I wanted to know is how each member experienced the process. Also, the methodology for this research reflects an interpretative standpoint in the fact that I want to honor the experiences of all members of the group. I am of the opinion that each group member's role is unique, but equally important, and I want to recognize all members' contributions to the success.

Interpretative research places the researcher outside of a group. The researcher should observe, listen, and talk, however not necessarily locate themselves or state their opinions and views on the research topic (Neuman, 1997). As I engage in the PARC evaluation I see this as being a beneficial role for me as a researcher. I made a point to listen to the "experts" (the participants) and take from them what they felt were the important aspects of their experiences.

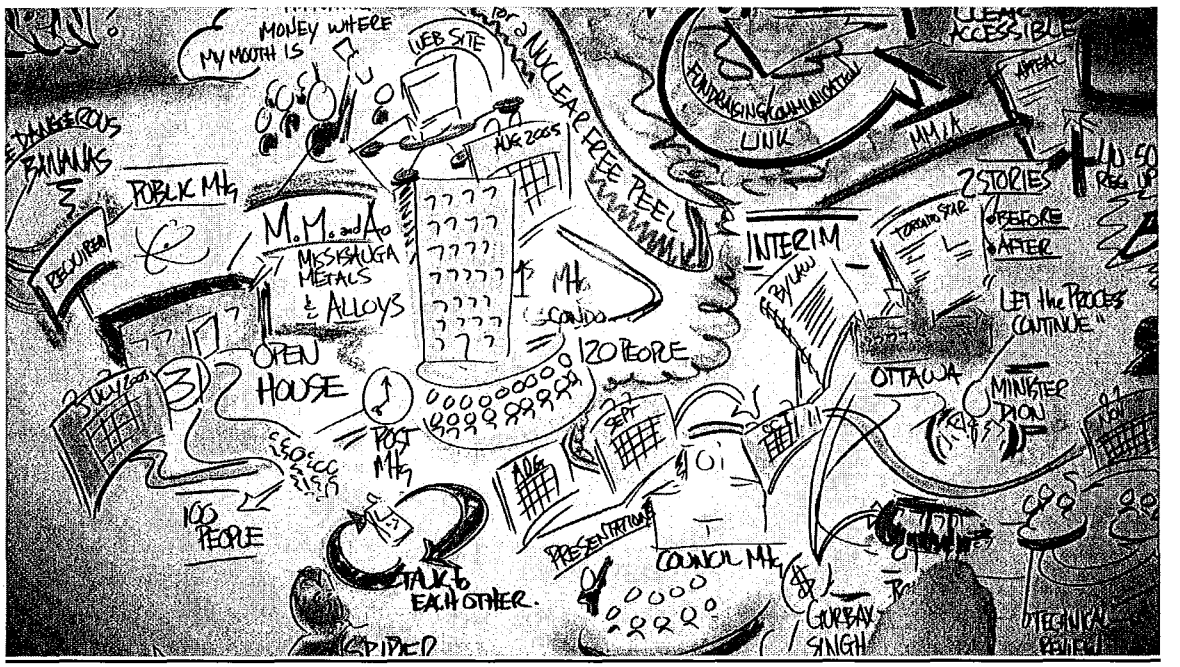
Because I locate myself as a Feminist, Feminist methodologies also influence me as a researcher and therefore influence how I conducted this research. Feminist research sees the researcher as an active presence in the research process. According to Neysmith (1995), "an appreciation of researcher influences explains why feminist researchers will go to such pains to explain the purpose of their research to participants, the assumptions underlying it, who she, the researcher, is, what experiences she has and has not had in the area, to include informants in shaping the research design, etc." (p 106). This researcher

position may seen in conflict with interpretative methodology, being that interpretive researchers do not locate themselves in the research however, as a feminist I am sensitive to my relationship as a researcher to participants. I made all attempts to frame my relationship to the research as the "learner" and "listener" and encourage participants to identify as experts on the subject matter. It was also important for me to thoroughly explain the purpose of the research, and my motives behind conducting the research.

Role of the Researcher: Final Decisions

Throughout this project I struggled with what I wanted my role to be. How my role ultimately was manifested is complex: I wanted to be the Feminist researcher, supporting and honouring the group's successes, but I also wondered if I should act as an outside observer, documenting both the "good" and the "bad" things that occurred. When it came to the findings, I made the conscious decision to commit myself to honoring the group's story as they wanted to tell it to me. The researcher role that I took on reflects my personal and professional beliefs about research, as much research does reveal about the researcher (Ristock and Pennell, p 3). Research as empowerment is less about prescribing and treating, and depends more on facilitating and collaborating (Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; Ristock and Pennell, 1996). This may lesson the critical power of the work; on the other hand, it provides a clear picture of some important issues as those that experienced them understood and saw them in reflection.

Chapter 4- Findings and Discussion: Building the Group



From a Small Group to a Mighty Force

The first section of the discussion will focus on the group-building process that PARC used to strengthen the campaign. Notably, part of the group-building happened before the actual campaign was cultivated by PARC leadership, although the process arguably strengthened throughout the campaign as strategies evolved[5]. The group-building process which eventually became a key priority is marked as a major contributor to the success of the campaign.

As indicated earlier, People Against Radioactive Contamination grew out of a very informal, spontaneous meeting in the parking lot of the Brampton Monte Carlo Inn. Half a dozen concerned individuals were drawn together by the

[5] This will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

concern that a local company would be contaminating their neighborhoods with radioactive materials. This initial coming together of community members grew into an effective action group which would eventually succeed in having the most egregious and dangerous practices severely curtailed and make the community a safer place. The following is an examination of the leadership who were involved, how they became involved, and how they were able to build a power base which allowed them to fight the company successfully.

4.1 Recruitment

One of the things that led to our success as a group was our ability to bring in more people. – Jaipaul

Power is essential in this society to have any sort of influence on the outside world. In order for action groups to attain power, as discussed earlier one crucial element is having a significant number of people involved (Alinsky, 1871; Gecan, 2004; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004). Companies have the power of money (Lee, 1999) but a community, in general must depend on numbers to provide itself with power (Staples, 2004). This is why recruitment was so important to PARC as an action strategy. The findings suggest however, that, although recruiting large numbers of people to support PARC was part of its success, the recruitment of new members who would actively participate in the campaign was a very difficult undertaking.

Participants reported that getting people to attend meetings was relatively simple, however recruiting people who were willing to work hard was

complicated. They found that new people would come to meetings, but were mostly in attendance to listen and sometimes sign petitions and offer advice (or criticism), but getting people to take initiative and action was difficult. "*What we didn't do well was attracting people to meetings who would take jobs and sort of lighten our load so it just seemed like it got heavier and heavier and heavier because there's more to do*" (Dora, Focus Group) As time went on and the workload for the group grew to be more demanding, they found that they were unable to recruit enough people who were willing to participate in the work to ease that pressure. It seems as though the existing leadership lacked any kind strategy to attain meaningful membership.

Along with recruiting new people came the struggle to fully incorporate them into the group. As Lamoreux, Mayer and Panet-Raymond (1989) suggest, it is crucial for all members to feel that they can contribute (p 165). Especially during the earliest meetings, new members would attend their first meeting, only to feel that they were not included in the planning process, or engaged by leadership. One participant recalled something that Mike, the organizer, said to her that revealed to her how new members might perceive the group. As Dora remembered:

> [Mike said] 'you are so immersed in it that you don't understand how people who don't know anything hear you anymore because you just know so much' ...and we also kind of thought we were right, and if only people would listen to the facts that they would be on our side, which wasn't always the case... (Dora, Focus Group)

It seemed that being so immersed in the issue created a barrier to supporting and encouraging new and fresh perspectives and ideas. Interestingly, the

literature often ignores this as an issue. Authors like Lee (1999) and Dale (1978) for example, spend considerable time discussing the need for developing solid information but do not mention the difficulty of spreading that information in a useful manner.

Retaining group members was also something that PARC struggled with. They found that people would attend information meetings and planning sessions, but often would not be committed to staying with the group, attending one or two times but then not returning. As Sandra said, "*It's also amazing how many people came out to those actual meetings and yet it still works down to a small group*". (Sandra, Focus Group) Other group members also expressed concern that they would see someone at a meeting who had powerful ideas and perspectives, however there was not enough follow up put in place whereby existing leadership would encourage people to come back to another meeting. Sandra actually suggested that someone should have been responsible for connecting with new people, getting contact information, and contacting them to ensure that they come to further meetings.

Although recruiting new members was a difficult thing for PARC members, they still were able to grow their membership, often to hundreds at a time for things like public meetings, and this is what many report to be the essence of why they were so successful. As one PARC member recalls, *"one of the things that led to our success as a group was our ability to bring in more people".* (Jaipaul, Public Presentation). They were able to adapt to the changing

circumstances by including new leaders and new ideas. And with the spread spoken of word, people became joining and committing to the campaign.

4.2 Importance of Leadership and of the Professional Organizer

Leadership is about action and the commitment to taking action- (Jaipaul)

There may be an idealistic notion that in a democracy groups spontaneously come together, rise up, and take on government or capitalist interests. The experience on the ground however is that campaign groups rarely come together and attain success on their own. While they may, and often do begin on their own, the evidence suggests that they require dedicated and skilled leaders and organizers to work hard and pull everything together (Lee, 1999; Lee and Todd, 2006; Alinsky, 1970; Staples, 2004; McWhorter, 2001). Part of the reason for PARC's success was the skilled and hard working leadership base that eventually manifested itself. As one group member defined leadership: "*the two things I consider to be leadership is about action and the commitment to taking action and the desire to bring other people into that action with you*" (Jaipaul, Public Presentation). Jaipaul's definition of leadership brings up two interesting points. Leadership is about action and getting things accomplished, but also it is about inspiring and engaging others to participate in this empowering process something that organizers have often asserted (Gecan, 2002; Alinsky, 1971). There were many skilled leaders recruited into the campaign, and participants felt that building this leadership base allowed the campaign to become stronger, which will be illustrated in the following section.

Thus, it is essential when looking at the formation of PARC to also examine the formation of leadership. New ideas and angles become necessary at times when the group seemed to be having difficulties, both internally at strategically (Gecan, 2002; Keating 1975). The PARC leadership seemed to change when the group recognized that it needed to change which wasn't always in a timely manner. Many PARC members recalled that having a change in leadership was necessary although difficult. As Jaipaul recalled,

> Regardless of how successful we are sometimes, we want to stay committed to what we're doing. We want to keep trying. We don't want to give up. And we don't want to let go of what we've built.... And I think consequently it becomes very difficult for the group, especially the leadership of the group, to say what we're doing isn't working, maybe we need new leadership. (Jaipaul, Public Presentation)

Gecan (2002) speaks to the issue of changing leadership or "reorganizing" as difficult for a group to do because it entails letting some people go, or disappointing some people, but reorganizing is essential for the successful organization when things are not working well as they are (Gecan, 2002; Keating, 1975).

One of the major turning points of the campaign seems to have been the eventual choice to expand leadership and invite others into the group. As one person stated, "*the more leaders we brought into our group, the more focused we became. The more leaders we brought into our group the more effective we became.* " (Jaipaul, Public Presentation) Increasing the leadership appeared to strengthen the campaign. New people with new skills and different ideas were integrated into the group. One group member recognized the success of this recruitment tactic, yet also acknowledged the struggle: *"Leadership is motivating*

to action and bringing people into it. We were very bad at the first thing, but we were pretty good at the second thing" (Jaipaul, Public Presentation). Participants had a sense that they were able to undertake outreach and recruit people through the neighborhoods; however they experienced difficulty with motivating people into action.

One leadership position in the group that was very much valued was that of Anna. Anna was hired as the local organizer. She is a local Brampton activist who has been involved in many different action campaigns. She had the skill set and the knowledge required to do a lot of the administrative and supportive tasks that allowed the group to function. As one focus group participant stated:

> The other key thing I think was having Anna with the group every community group I think you really need to hire someone to do those kinds of jobs because you can't tell volunteers to do this get this done by the end of the week, it just doesn't work this way... so would I highly recommend that... if you're in a long tern campaign that's going to take up a lot of your time, they should pay for help for the group ... administrative help. (Dora)

Having a leadership role designated to administrative tasks was clearly recognized as being of great importance to the campaign.

As already mentioned, there is a basic difference between the leader(s) and the outside organizer in action campaigns, and this difference very much applies to PARC. The basic difference is that leader(s) build power in order to achieve a goal, and the organizer facilitates opportunities for the leader(s) to achieve the power (Lee, 1999; Alinsky, 1971; Staples, 2004). Thus it is not surprising that a major factor that the participants attributed to the development of PARC as a group was hiring Mike as the professional organizer.

Mike was invited to join the group at a time when leadership felt that the campaign was struggling. Meetings were becoming ineffective, the workload was not equally shared among all members, and results of their hard work were not satisfying. People were tired and hopeless, and agreed to open the group to a professional organizer for help. As Mike stated:

> In experience that I've had being hired by groups is that they won't hire you if things are going well, whatever going well means. If the way they're doing things is working they have no need to hire some strange outsider, who they don't know, who's going to cost them money, and who has some bright idea. (Mike, Focus Group)

Mike felt that he was invited into the group because the group had no other way of staying alive. It is common that a community organization which is headed toward failure will hire a professional organizer in the hopes of using this individual as an action tool (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004).

The professional organizer typically has a skill set which she or he brings to a group and applies in order to support the success of the campaign (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004). As Alinsky (1971) suggests, the organizer will only be invited if these skills sets are seen as contributing to success (p 99). As one participant stated, "*I think really the most important thing is having someone who can really chair the meeting and keep it focused and keep it from going in all kinds of directions, and Mike certainly brought that to the group*" (Patti, Focus Group) Having access to this skill set that the professional organizer embodied seems to have been an immense relief to the group: "*When Mike came in I wasn't sure where we were going. It was too controlled, you know the meeting was too controlled at times but when we won I really realized that that was the*

only way to do a meeting" (Jagtar). Clearly, this skill set that the professional organizer brings is invaluable to the action group (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004).

Skills which the professional organizer and leader(s) bring to an action group often include, but are not limited to, listening, information gathering, analysis, facilitation and negotiation (Lee, 1999). Focus group participants suggested that, without the professional organizer, these skills were not necessarily present in the existing group. "*I tried doing as much as I could but I don't have it. I can't chair meetings that don't go all over the place. So, Mike not only offered his skills set, but encouraged the group to continue to recruit people into PARC with these skills who could become leaders*" (Patti, Focus Group). Organizing skills are essential for the community organization campaign (Alinsky, 1971; Lee, 1999, Staples, 2004) and PARC made good use of the leaders who had those skills.

4.3 Group Cohesion

There was a mutual respect and understanding of everyone who was in the group. – Eustace

Going from a small group of people, five or six concerned individuals, to about a dozen and then to a core membership of 30 to 40 meant that PARC had to build in some sustainability in order to operate effectively. Members had to learn to be accepting of one another and had to listen to the array of perspectives and ideas. Expanding the group could not mean that everyone had to conform to

the initial ideas of the founding members, but that the group had to expand and be open to changes.

One strategy to cultivate an environment where people would feel respected and important was to have a full meeting designated to talking about safety rules[6] (Lee, 1999; Lee and Balkwill, 1996) within the group, and about effective communication. As one group member recollects, "*there was at one point in time a decision was made that we needed time to talk about open communication and it made people feel comfortable expressing their opinion in the course of one of our meetings*" (Jaipaul, Focus Group). Another focus group member remembered "[*we] had the meeting about bringing it to the group about how we talk, the safety rules, and they were very well learned, I think that's a critical thing there*" (Sandra, Focus Group) This seems to have been very effective, as one other focus group member agreed: "*I think that the whole nature of the meeting, the checking in, um, the respect that we were all shown, that we were all able to voice our opinions, to say what we needed to say*" (Patti, Focus Group). Having a discussion about safety rules led not only the creation of a positive environment, but it also allowed the group to feel a sense of influence, a feeling of empowerment (Lee, 1999).

Observing the group and how they interacted with one another, group cohesion seemed to depend greatly on the amount of respect that people feel, and in relation to respect, how people are able to trust one another and relay trustworthiness to others. However this is not something that appears to be dealt

[6] Safety rules are often set at the beginning of a meeting to establish rules that the group will abide to assure that those in attendance can feel safe within the group, both emotionally, spiritually and physically.

with directly in the literature. Establishing safety rules (Lee, 1999; Lee and Balkwill, 1996) are seen as important, but not because of the sense of safety they provide; because they allow for democratic and fair group discussions.

Already noting how important safety was to respondents, respect seemed to be a huge part of safety. Group members needed to trust that "*there was a mutual respect and understanding of everyone who was in the group*" (Eustace, Focus Group). Trust is something that focus group members reported to be essential for their group cohesion. "*The trust issue has to be there, you have to trust*" (Sandra, Focus Group) Echoed by another focus group member: "*you gotta trust, you gotta believe, and you gotta have confidence in each other as a group for things to go ahead*" (Ed, Focus Group) This trust applied to trusting that others will respect all group members as individuals, but also referred to the trust in others that they are taking on equal amounts of work, that they are doing things wholeheartedly and that they can be relied on.

Another contributor to group cohesion was the integration of aspects of fun into the campaign. "*I think you need to build in some sort of fun, some social aspect and fun where you just go out together and I think that helps kind of make the group cohesive and um that and so build relationships*" (Dora, Focus Group) Another group member agreed, and offered that "*people would stick around for 20 minutes and talk about things outside of the group and that helped a lot*" (Mark, Focus Group). This reflects a point made by by Lee (1999), that positive social relations can alleviate some of the stress that people experience in a campaign (p 37), making the use of "fun" a strategic group building task. This

sentiment is echoed by Lee and Todd (2006) who show how positive relationships help to cultivate hope in a very stressful context (p 201).

4.4 Conflict within the Group

Any time you have a group of volunteers together there is going to be some of this conflict. – Ed

Although PARC members experienced a lot of cohesion, the group dynamic was not always peaceful. Participants reported that there always existed some level of tension and conflict within the group, especially in the beginning stages when leadership had not built in its activities group building strategies. Mike recalled the first PARC meeting he had attended: "*I came in and sat in on a meeting and it was awful. It was awful. And in the parking lot that night I go 'this thing's going nowhere*" (Mike, Public Presentation). He noticed that leadership was disrespectful of those in attendance, and that in one instance, a woman was yelled at for simply voicing her opinion (Mike, Public Presentation). But conflict is not something that just affected individuals. At times conflict seemed to undercut the effectiveness of the group. In instances when inside conflict was not properly addressed, arguments and disagreements reportedly took up a lot of time from other tasks such as planning. "*The conflict within the group from people that, I would agree, were nutty, just sucked away so much energy and makes you just not want to go and deal with it*" (Dora, Focus Group). Unfortunately, group conflict, such as that which participants reported, is not something that is properly addressed in the literature.

One other major source of conflict that was reported by PARC members was related to an issue previously discussed, integrating new members into the campaign. It related to the tension experienced people felt when confronted with questions about issues that they had dealt with earlier. Many reported a common progression of thought that all new members went through whereby they would ask the same questions, and make the same suggestions; however the group had already been through this progression many times before. It was very difficult for them to manage this because they wanted to proceed, but they were stuck dealing with catching new people up to date. As one group member recalled:

> Their was this tension that became very tangible ... how do we make sure that people understand the issues and have their questions answered?...the first thing you are is angry and then the next thing you do is ask all the obvious questions...but every time a new group of people came in you have to deal with that whole routine again and sometimes that became very difficult in the course of a meeting. (Jaipaul, Focus Group)

This tension was felt by many of the people who attended the focus group, and the depth of the tension was clear to me as this was a reoccurring topic in the data. As another participant echoed:

> When you're having a working meeting and you've been doing this forever and you want to come in and get something done, and then new people would come and exactly go through the thing "well why wouldn't you do this", and I guess we were sitting there, rolling our eyes, trying not to but probably doing it and thinking lets get on with the meeting, I've done this five thousand times I don't want to sit through it again. (Dora, Focus Group)

The conflict was not only interpersonal, but became a conflict rooted in important tactics. Existing group members were not sure how to address new people when including them actually took time away from the campaign, yet recruitment was a

major campaign tactic. Dealing with the conflict of involving new people is not openly talked about in organizing literature.

Conflict seems to have been present throughout the campaign, although participants suggested that they saw this as being typical of any action group. As one focus group participant put it, "*any time you have a group of volunteers together there is going to be some of this conflict*" (Ed, Focus Group). Although conflict can be seen as negative, it is also inevitable. Lee (1999) suggests that conflict should not be avoided, but rather managed in order to create stronger group cohesion (p 37). In the case of PARC, participants felt that conflict within the existing group was well managed and this contributed to the group cohesion.. "*Mike came in and he dealt with some of these things very well in fact he dealt with everybody very well including myself because when I get got out of line he would tell me that*" (Ed). However, the conflict that existed with some new members was not managed as well as it might have been, and this obviously hindered group cohesion. The group admitted that they really struggled with managing new members, and that if they had the opportunity to go back and re-do the campaign, they would devise a tactic to better manage this challenge. They imagined that they would have two separate meetings each week. One would be for current leadership, and one would be a mandatory orientation meeting for all new members. New people would have to attend this orientation meeting before they could join the larger group[7]. It seems as though participants felt unresolved over this tension associated with new people joining, and this

[7] This model had not been tested. Due to the constraints of this paper, I will not describe it any further.

seemed to have an impact on how they group felt about their ability to deal with conflict.

4.5 Diversity

I think a group has to be very culturally open and try to make that inclusive.
– Sandra

Diversity is something that came up in the focus group as important to PARC members. Many felt that the group was very diverse. "*We had a wide diversity and I think a group has to be very culturally open and try to make that inclusive because then your information gets out into a greater area*" (Sandra, Focus Group) Echoing this, another said: "*We were a politically diverse group. There were people in our group who belonged to every political party or no political party*" (Dora, Focus Group). Diversity was important to the campaign for a number of reasons. First, and stated by the participants, is that it got the issue out to a wider range of people. However, it is also important to foster diversity in a group because community problems are caused by unequal distribution of power (Lee, 1999; Alkinsky, 1970) and so the redistribution should reach all sectors of society (Lee, 1999), marginalized or not.

Diversity was seen as being strategically important by focus group members because they felt that it allowed them to demonstrate that they had representation from many socio-demographic communities. Also, it allowed them to have access to a greater range on community members. For example, they were able to publish an article in a community Sikh newsletter. As well, some of

their pamphlets were translated into Punjabi, and they also had some Punjabi interpreters. To the group, this was evidence that the group was diverse.

However, the opinion that PARC was a diverse group was not shared by all members. One focus group participant challenged the group's opinion on diversity:

> I would actually push back a little bit and I would say that we weren't as diverse as we should have been. I didn't feel that we were a very multicultural reflective group of the society of which we were, of the community of which we were doing this project in. (Jaipaul, Focus Group)

He goes on to challenge the notion that diversity means recruiting cultural groups and doing outreach in languages other than English; diversity to him meant allowing the group to be informed by the thoughts and opinions of all members of the community:

> To get to the point where individuals or groups are informing the core from their experiences [is diversity]. It's not just getting more south Asians so we can get into South Asian papers; it's 'as a South Asian do you have a perspective? Or does your community have a perspective that should inform us?' (Jaipaul).

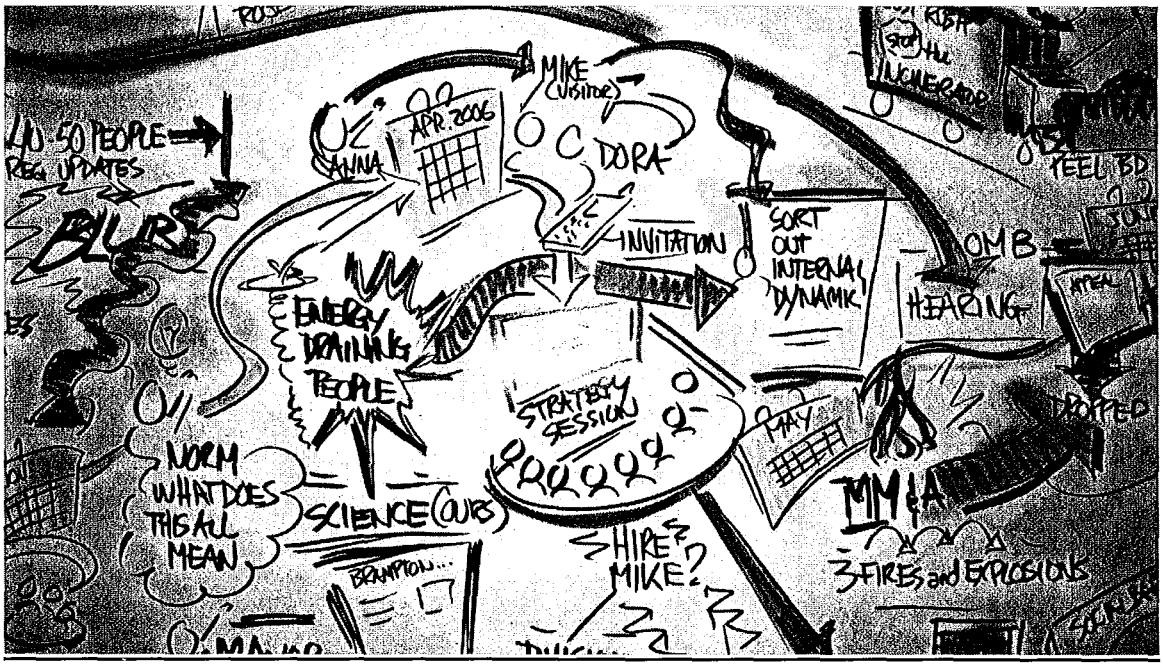
Only when the campaign was influenced by the whole community did he see it as truly diverse; according to Jaipaul this diversity was not achieved.

Conclusion

Group building in a community organization is a crucial element in social action. As Alinsky (1971) would argue, process is actually as important as the outcome it achieves. The recruitment, the development of leadership, the employment of a professional organizer, the cohesion and the conflict are and

were for PARC, all a part of the process of community organization. People were working toward power, in a system which offers none without a struggle. It became clear to the campaign group that the group building process contributed to a greater cause. In chapter 5 it becomes evident how the strength of PARC allowed the campaign to become just as strong. Also, in Chapter 6, the benefits associated with the process of group building, such as a sense of pride and a sense of community are illustrated. The following chapter will explore how PARC built a campaign out of the group that started from only a handful of concerned citizens, to a powerful entity in order to protect their community and their environment.

Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion: The Campaign



The Strategy Session

Once the group was built, PARC began its campaign against the business expansion of MM and A. The following section of this paper will examine how members of PARC experienced participating in the campaign, and will discuss the points of the campaign which PARC focus group participants felt were important. Following a period of organization and recruitment, concerned community members grew tired of the way that things were going. They wanted to participate in action, and they wanted to see positive results. They began a campaign which included the strategy of mass recruitment. Throughout the campaign the strategy grew stronger and more focused and they decided to target those at a Federal level, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. The

following is an examination of how the campaign evolved, and how those involved experienced it.

5.1 The Reality of Hard Work

It can take over your life. – Dora

Campaigns toward social justice and community needs take a lot of effort. (Lee, 1999, Alinsky, 1971, Lakey, 1987). The first comment that participants made when I asked them how it was to participate in a successful campaign was that it was hard work. Many people agreed that it tended to take over their lives and that the demands became tiring and difficult. As one participant stated: *"it can take over your life, and that was what we felt like when we first started along and for the first part of the campaign I guess it's overwhelming because its such a huge information gathering and learning curve"* (Dora, Focus Group).

The amount of work that goes into creating a successful campaign is, and for this group was, immense. One focus group participant listed some of the various chores in a manner that suggested how tiring it must have been. She stated,

> It's always so short changed, like the minutes, the communication, the making the appointments, just, you know, keeping track of contact information and mailing and that sort of thing. It's great to have volunteers to do a lot of those chores but the thing is that you have to have someone putting it all together first. (Patti, Focus Group).

Another focus group participant noted that a lot of work needs to be done in order for others to share in the workload. "*I think that too often people don't understand*

that there is a lot of coordinating that goes on ahead of time in order for them to do their volunteer work" (Patti, Focus Group). There needs to be someone there doing a significant amount of preparation in order for others to join in. This includes coordinating and organizing people and supporting their work. Supplies need to be arranged, space needs to be booked and people need to be contacted before action can even take place. There is a sense here that it is not simply that there is a great amount of work but that most of the volunteers don't see the preparatory work that has gone into setting it up.

A good deal of tension can develop in social action groups around the amount of work people are required to do (Lakey et al, 1995; Booth, 1984). Some participants attributed the amount of work that they had to do to the fact that often others were not willing to take on certain tasks:

> You get people in the organization who say you should be doing this, you should be doing that, how come you're not doing this ... and then you point right to them and you say 'well would you like to' but they don't want to do it. (Ed, Focus Group)

Some PARC members felt as though people were willing to come to community meetings and make suggestions for what could be done, however they did not offer to help with it. Some work that is more difficult, or less exciting, was often left for a small group of leaders who were willing to put in the time. Some participants reported that this left them tired and feeling overwhelmed.

One focus group participant voiced frustration with the fact that there was so much work to be done, but often community members assumed the work would get done by others without considering that all PARC members were also volunteers with busy lives. As she stated:

> People look at a group and think, I don't know what they think, that someone's getting paid to run it and there gonna show up to a meeting and tell people what to do. And maybe you need to state it at the beginning of every meeting, we're all volunteers and we need all the help we can get, cause that would wear you down. (Dora, Focus Group).

It is important to note that members of the group did not simply "stew" over the problem. A couple of the participants thought that the solution to this problem would be to find out what people are good at, what they like, and what they are comfortable with and having them work on those tasks. In fact the group came to the conclusion that if people do not enjoy what they are doing, they would not participate, leaving the brunt of the work to a small group of people. As one participant said:

> You gotta match, and you do that, by doing what Mike did, it's just having people choose what they do and attracting enough people to the group that there is enough people to cover all of the ... by not overwhelming them, and making it fun. (Dora, Focus Group)

This seems to meet a concern raised by Lee (1999), as well as Lamoureux, Mayer and Panet-Ramond (1989), that there be a proliferation of leadership roles. The need for other community members to take initiative is apparent when leadership is becoming worn down and tired.

Another reason that focus group participants felt that the campaign was a lot of work was that there was a small leadership that had been there from the beginning and had a lot of information about the issue. That meant that, as one focus group participant stated, "*There was this peak and there were a few people at the top of it that really had a lot of information and there was a lot of work*"

(Dora, Focus Group). Again, this idea that work is often concentrated among a small group of people becomes problematic.

Although focus group participants agreed that the campaign was a lot of work, some participants felt that the hard work actually made it exhilarating at times. One stated, "*at the very beginning its exhilarating because you are learning, it's hard, but you're learning a lot*" (Dora, Focus Group) The ability to experience the campaign at such and intimate level, and the lessons that PARC members learned seemed to help with the feeling of exhaustion that came about throughout the duration of the campaign.

5.2 Bringing the Campaign to the Community

People were thanking us for doing this and making them aware. - Dora

Among others, Lee (1999) and Staples (2004) state that one of the key elements of power is the involvement of large numbers of people. Thus, it is not surprising that a major strategy initiative which PARC members decided on was to educate the community and recruit more community members into the group. Members began canvassing local neighborhoods with the hope of getting others involved, or at the least informed and supportive. "*We would meet at a Tim Horton's and go out and go door to door and talk to people, and it was very successful, and people were thanking us for doing this and making them aware*" (Dora, Focus Group). Being visible and responsive to the surrounding neighborhoods about MMA's potential business expansion allowed more and more people to offer support to the campaign.

Going door to door to inform and recruit people to the cause is recognized as an important basic aspect of strategy in community work (Lee, 1999; Staples, 1984, Kahn, 1982). Canvassing was an important strategy for the group. Not only did it build numbers but many focus group participants reported enjoying the process of canvassing in local communities and that it was a positive experience. For example, one said: "*I really enjoyed canvassing. I felt that when I talked to people at the door that they believed me and thought we were believable* (Mike, Focus Group). Door to door interaction with community members proved to be a beneficial action strategy for PARC, as it is for many groups (Alinsky, 1971; Keating, 1975; Lee, 1999).

Focus group participants noted that people appreciated them coming to their neighborhoods to talk about the issue. As one person said, "*it wasn't a government official coming to his door, you know following a prescribed speech, it was actually a concerned citizen like that person*" (Eustice, Focus Group). They felt that people appreciated the fact that a volunteer from their neighborhood wanted them to know about what MMA was planning on doing, and how it would affect them and their families. This experience that people were weary of government or commercial representatives is echoed by Mike: "*There was a natural suspicion of the company and of different government agencies*" (Mike, Focus Group). Being a fellow concerned citizen has advantages when promoting an issue, because people see that there is an authentic concern, rather than a public-relations or political motive.

One local organizer, Anna, used what she referred to as the *Relational Interview* (Gecan, 2004) when speaking with people in her community, and she found this helpful. She would utilize a skill whereby she would approach a potential ally and request a meeting and ask this person some questions, such as "'do you know about this issue and are you concerned about it?'. "You ask these questions and then you shut up and listen, and they give you their opinion, and you form a relationship that way." (Anna, Public Presentation) This skill which Anna utilized allowed her to build a relationship with the ally and form a more democratic campaign tactic (Gecan, 2002) which worked really well for her.

Although many PARC members enjoyed canvassing, this tactic was sometimes difficult for others. As one focus group participant admitted, "*that was probably one of the most difficult things, was to convince people that this was a reality*" (Mark, Focus Group) Some PARC canvassers experienced ambivalence and sometimes hostility in their communities. Some people were resistant to their message. One focus group participant reported that

> One [person] argued very hotly with me that this is a good thing and it should be accepting it um and he felt that we were so off the track to even be talking about it, their wasn't dangerous about it, and this is the future, we're just stick-in-the-muds and not going along with the future. (Sandra, Focus Group)

It is not uncommon that there are people in communities will oppose the campaign, and will not be open to change (Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004). Gecan (2002) echoes this idea, by expanding and saying that there are those in the community who will not support a campaign, and these people are not worth the effort. The ambivalence of some did not seem, however, translate into a general

resistance in the community. Some were resistant, but many were receptive. One leader made this point from her experience:

> I think there were a few instances where there were a few people that were, they wouldn't believe you or they said oh who cares we're all gonna die anyways... But for the most part people were receptive and people took you seriously. (Anna, Focus Group)

It appears that that the PARC group did not really have to come to grips with a situation of a polarized community.

5.3 Meetings

We stopped having meetings where we just talked and didn't think. – Mike

As pointed out by Lee (1999) Staples, (2004) and Kahn (1982), meetings are a crucial means for informing, involving and mobilizing citizens. Often groups will have meetings of a weekly or monthly basis (Staples, 2004). Beginning meetings are directed toward informing people and listening to people, however as a campaign progresses, meetings can and must become a valuable tool for strategizing and acting (Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004)

PARC focus group participants admit that at the beginning of the campaign it was difficult to hold meetings what were meaningful and that allowed for things to be accomplished. At the very beginning stages of the group, meetings were often experienced as tedious, and dominated by a small group of leaders. As Mike explained it: "there were two or three people at the front telling everybody else why this was bad what's happening next, what we should do, and

saying 'if you want to get involved' but never really engaging with people" (Mike, Public Presentation). However this soon changed and meetings became a strong tactic for building the campaign. Meetings for PARC were a time when people could connect and not only talk about issues, but feel like they were doing something about them. People reported that they really enjoyed the meetings. As one focus group member recalls:

> When I came in they had consistent meetings every week to, so I knew every Wednesday at this time, so I think that was a really good thing because it kept you focused for those who could come because you had a set thing each week. (Patti, Focus Group).

Implied in this quote is that the consistency of meetings was helpful for allowing people to remain involved. This echoes experienced practitioners like Hope and Timmel (1984) and Booth (1974) that meetings are a place and time for people to become reconnected to the cause of the work.

One concern that focus group participants reported was that at the beginning of the campaign meetings tended to be disorganized and lacked an agenda. Meetings that are not necessary or that don't achieve anything for the group can cause burnout and discourage people from coming back again (Staples, 2004). However, once the leadership finally changed[8], and the outside organizer was hired, meetings took on a new form and were focused on meaningful discussion and action. As one PARC member recalled:

> The meetings had an agenda and they were about business and time was spent in each of those meetings updating what had happened deciding how to work with that information and then passing that information out... And I think because they took on that structure,

[8] At one point the group came to a consensus that they needed to recruit more leaders in order to diffuse the domineering leadership skills of a small group of people who were presently in the group.

> people felt like these were a good use of their time. (Jaipaul, Focus Group).

Having meetings that served a purpose meant that time was spent in a way that was meaningful for the people in attendance. As stated by Lee (1999), it is important that people leave a meeting feeling as though things were accomplished and that there are reasonable expectations for work to get done in between meetings, because people will feel more energized about coming back for the next meeting.

PARC focus group participants valued meeting that were action focused and suggested became a clear aspect of campaigning:

> We stopped having meetings where we just talked and didn't think. We committed to having a meeting every Wednesday night, and the meeting was held, I think once a month we talked, and the other two or three weeks we did stuff. We held our meetings in the community, had leaflets, and knocked on doors... (Mike, Public Presentation)

Holding meetings that were focused on action rather than solely on discussion allowed the group to feel as though their efforts were making a difference toward the campaign. Meetings should be lively and exciting (Staples, 2004) and engage members into action (Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004).

As suggested by Staples (2004) meetings should never be held merely to have general discussions around and issue (p 204). Focus group members also stressed the fact that meetings must be useful. They did not think meetings should be allotted to gossiping or complaining or arguing, but must contribute to the advancement of the campaign. Participants felt that they were busy enough in their lives, and could not see the purpose of taking time away from their lives

to deliberate issues over and again. One focus group participant noted that it was helpful to let decide on an issue or topic for the following meeting so that people could think about it in the meantime, and come to the meeting prepared with their thoughts on the topic. She recalled:

> Someone would always leave with some sort of a question, like a segue to get you to come back for the following week. But the idea was that something was thrown out for you to think about and to chew on so that next week when you came you had already done some pre-thinking, and I like that an awful lot. (Patti, Focus Group)

The idea that people had an issue to think about, like an assignment, encouraged them to come back to the next meeting, but this also served the purpose of creating meetings that were more efficient and productive because people were already informed about the issue for the next week and had the chance to become familiar with the issue in advance (Lee, 1999).

Referring to a meeting that was held which was dedicated to discussing safety rules[9] (Lee, 1999; Lee and Balkwill, 1996, pp.21-28) within the group, one PARC member recalled:

> That could have been a real train wreck of a meeting because we're going to talk about nothing for a couple of hours but we had already built within ourselves that this meetings are valuable and they are useful and they are a good investment of our time as a group. (Jaipaul, Focus Group)

Participants indicated that people were open to talking about issues because there was a culture of openness where rules were put in place so that meetings

[9] Safety rules are often set at the beginning of a meeting to establish rules that the group will abide to assure that those in attendance can feel safe within the group, both emotionally, spiritually and physically (Lee and Balkwill, 1996).

would not be controlled by a minority of leaders but would be democratic and that issues were discussed equally.

One statement that epitomized the importance of well organized and purposeful meetings came from one local organizer who said: "*the differences between a poorly facilitated meeting and a well facilitated meeting is at the end of the poorly facilitated meeting you feel drained, but at the end of a well facilitated meeting you feel energized.*" (Anna, Public Presentation) This is a powerful statement because, essentially, social action should be energizing, and empowering.

5.4 Allies

We had those relationships and we developed them. – Dora

In community organizing and action campaigns it is agreed that it is not only important to identify major targets, but also to identify the major supporters or allies. Obtaining or recruiting allies is essential to build power (Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999). Identifying and creating allies thus, was another issue that was crucial for PARC, as they are for all community campaigns. Allies for PARC included local business owners, Members of Provincial Parliament, and City Hall staff. These allies were important because, as one focus group participant recalled:

> They lived in the community, and they don't want it. They would actually volunteer information from the city so we had those relationships and we developed them with the press and we just kept giving them information and from the very beginning we made sure

> that everything we said was true and reportable, absolutely when we gave information we gave sources. (Dora, Focus Group)

Creating and maintaining allies has a great deal to do with groups' credibility (Lee 1999; Staples 2004; Kahn 1985; Alinsky 1970) and how they are seen by the community. Having this positive relationship with city officials and the media fostered positive alliances.

Mike, the organizer went over the barometer of support (Appendix D) which identified existing allies, potential allies and those who were neutral or part of the opposition. The group discussed how to get those who were neutral and even part of the opposition (Lee, 1999), to support PARC's campaign. This was a powerful exercise for the group, because it allowed them to see how they might increase their allies, and increase their power

Lee (1999) argues that media is a significant though difficult institution to nurture as an ally. PARC focus group participants acknowledged that the media was an important player to bring on board. The media can either be an ally or an enemy (Alinsky, 1970; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004), because it not only educates the public, but has the related ability to put pressure on policy makers and government officials (Staples, 2004). In PARC's case, the media acted as both an ally and an enemy: "*the media was for the most part favorable towards us, but there were a couple of articles here and there that kind of made us look like we were a crazy whack of people*" (Mark, Focus Group). Group members reported that they had to be very careful about how they used the media (Staples, 2004),

and that this relationship was important, yet fragile (Alinsky, 1971; Staples, 2004).

5.5 The Evolution of the Strategy

We had a lot of energy. We had a lot of passion. But we had no strategy. We had no focus. –Jaipaul

Most writers on social action contend that strategy cannot be a static part of a campaign. It must be dynamic to meet the challenges of changing circumstances (Dale, 1978; Alinsky, 1971; Kahn, 1984). Throughout the campaign, PARC experienced consistent change and progression in its strategy. The alterations came about because they realized that at particular times things weren't working for them they way they were. The goals and purpose of the campaign changed, as well as the issues. This statement from Jaipaul reflected the consistent changes that PARC experienced:

> It was a very dynamic changing group and it was dynamic and changing because the issue we were fighting was dynamic and changing because the conditions of which we were fighting our issue were dynamic and changing and also the target we were fighting was dynamic and changing. (Jaipaul, Public Presentation)

The changing landscape of the campaign resulted in a changing strategy and target.

One major change that occurred was when the group realized that information and knowledge were not enough ammunition to win a campaign. As Dora stated: "*I think just before Mike came we did several things well and one thing we did really well was the research and information gathering and then*

when Mike came he said that unfortunately its not going to be won on facts or on what's right" (Dora, Focus Group). Until an outside organizer was hired, the leadership did not have the skills or the energy to devout to developing the group. Time and energy was spent on contemplating the issue and finding the facts. Patty echoed Dora's point that information was not enough to win a campaign with: "I mean certainly they had all the facts and figures, I guess the challenge was to bring it beyond that to get into the action mode" (Patti, Focus Group). Bringing the group to action mode was one thing that the outside organizer, Mike, as the organizer, helped with[10]. Lee and Todd (2006) stress the importance of moving community organizations from conversation to action (34) in order for group members to feel as though things are moving forward.

Holding a meeting that was completely dedicated to strategy was a major priority once Mike, the organizer, joined the group. Patti recalled in the focus group: *"I think that we had that one day strategy meeting, and there was, what, twelve of us there? And we set our 5 top priorities. We listed all the priorities that we were all, we made a big huge list and then we voted on what we thought the 5 top were*" (Patti, Focus Group). This act of democratically choosing the top five priorities led the group to make decisions about what the goals were, and what the appropriate strategies to achieve those goals would realistically be.

The most significant strategy change was the choice to switch targets. Participants reported that initially, PARC was targeting MMA, and thinking

[10] A number of authors – Alinsky, 1970; Cruikshank, (1990), (Burghardt, (1882); Lee (1999), Lee, B., George, U., McGrath, S., Moffatt, K. (2002) for example - address the issue of the organizer as an outsider and what s/he can bring to a situation.. This issue however is outside the scope of this study and will not be addressed further than acknowledging that it is an important issue in community practice.

(inaccurately) that pleas to City Hall would lead to a positive outcome. The group soon saw that they would have to target the true power-holders, the National governing body for nuclear energy.

> Instead of focusing all of our energy on telling the community to hate this one company, what we did is focus on getting the community to put pressure on the one group that could make a difference in the issue, the one group that could change the rules: the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission. (Jaipaul, Public Presentation)

Changing targets is something thus that PARC intentionally undertook as an aspect of strategy change. They realized that they were going to be unsuccessful if they had not re-evaluated their strategy. This new strategy had a higher chance of making positive changes because they were targeting the policy makers (Alinsky, 1971; Gecan, 2002), the rule makers, the governing body of MMA. No longer would they attack just the company on which they had little direct leverage and instead target the government overseer of the company.

Among the changes and developments that the campaign went through, focus group members considered the campaign to have been in two-parts. The first being the information gathering stage, and also the "anger" stage, and the second part being the action stage. As one leader explained:

> I do have this sense that this was almost a two part journey...the first half almost feels like, like most groups I have belonged to, and that is the outrage, the anger, the emotion, but that is an information gathering, information disseminating thing, and most groups don't get beyond that. (Jaipaul, Focus Group).

Jaipaul continued, saying : "*I think there's something different that happened with this group that was aided by what a lot of people said today, and that is their was a campaign, and most groups I don't think have a campaign*

(Jaipaul, Focus Group). When I asked the group how they thought they got from the first stage to the second stage, considering what Jaipaul said about most groups not getting to the second stage, they responded "we hired Mike".

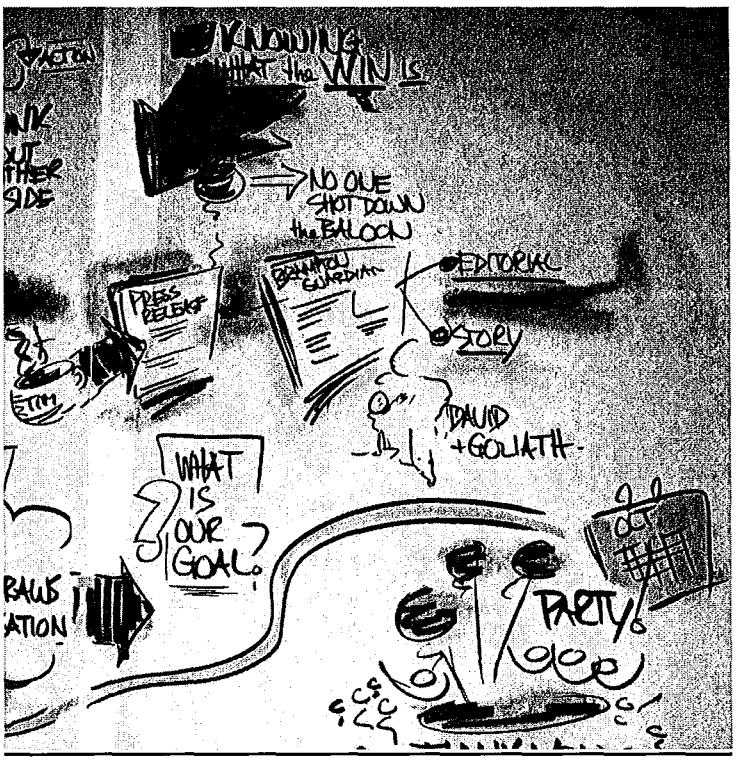
Having a concrete goal and an action plan was liberating for some PARC members. Dora recalled, "*we were forced to decide what our goals were and match the capacity to our goal and I came into that thinking this is doable and before that I thought we could all work all day every day and I don't think that was doable and that was very liberating*" (Dora, Focus Group). Having goals that are manageable and realistic for people can be very empowering (Alinsky, 1971, 1989; Lee, 1999) because they can see an end, and this is more energizing than feeling like the campaign might never end.

Conclusion

The strategies and skills used by PARC activists, and the hard work and dedication they demonstrated, were enough to defeat the primary target. Just as PARC was about to move on with the campaign and involve federal authorities, MMA quietly withdrew their application, and abandoned their attempt at their very dangerous business expansion. Many tactics that PARC employed, including increasing allies, and changing targets, contributed to their success. Arguably, another contributor to the achievement was the strong leadership and group cohesion that was built among the members. Chapter 4 discussed the development of PARC as a group of concerned citizens, and Chapter 5 continues that exploration by discussing how the campaign grew out of the

founding group. Following, in chapter 6, is an exploration into how group members perceived their gains and their success once the campaign came to an end.

Chapter 6- Findings and Discussion: Understanding Success



Making Sense of Success

Although MMA's attempts to expand were defeated by PARC, the final outcome of the PARC campaign is seen differently by different actors. These differences contribute to the understanding that insiders experience a campaign in very different ways (Moyer, 2001). Participants experienced themselves as receiving different benefits to organizing and different a sense of feeling empowered through the experience. The following is an examination of how campaign actors saw their eventual success, both personally and collectively, and how this might give the reader an idea of how different people see outcomes of campaigning.

6.1 Benefits to Organizing

I liked the sense of adventure. When campaigns are going well they are very fun.
– Anna

As indicated earlier, the campaign was a successful piece of work. How success was understood by participants however, was expressed in various ways. This should not come as a surprise as people involve themselves in community issues for various reasons (Alinsky, 1970; Plant, 1974,; Lee, 1999). One way participants expressed success was in personal terms. That is, there were personal benefits to being part of a successful social action campaign.

One major benefit identified by participants was that by being part of the campaign they felt that they had learned a great deal. Ed's comment is typical,

> I think one of the things that you find out first of all, you meet a lot of interesting people, and you learn a lot of interesting things about how things work things that you never knew anything about before and I think that that helps you sort of, it makes your life interesting I guess to be able to do these different things with these different people. (Ed, Focus Group)

Ed's testimony is echoed by Sandra: *"for me I love to learn, this was such a venue for learning and things, and it was exhilarating that way*" (Sandra, Focus Group). The opportunity to learn provided some personal rewards for participants. Also Jaipaul stated :

> I now know how to do stuff that I didn't know how to do a year ago and I feel a lot more confident about dealing with issues. I feel a lot more confident in every element going and talking to people about stuff. I'm not afraid to ask for money. I'm not afraid to knock on doors. I'm not afraid to believe I'm right, and have people hear about that. (Jaipaul, Focus Group)

The opportunity for people to learn is essential in action work (Alinsky, 1971) but also suggests that community organizations must provide a venue for learning because the opportunity for learning is essential for empowerment (p 165). Lee (1999) echoes this idea, stating that social learning is linked with power: people acquire skills, knowledge and an analysis which allows them to be empowered (p 48), not only in the campaign, but in their lives.

A second personal benefit of success reported was the pride that people felt because of what they had accomplished. Focus group participants reported taking pride in the positive feedback they received from their community. One participant recalled:

> There was a woman who had a young child and she thanked me profusely, she wanted to thank they group profusely for uh doing this... there are a lot of people out there who want to get involved because of various things they can't so they are very happy that you are doing something. (Sandra, Focus Group)

The recognition from the community, the thankfulness from the woman Sandra spoke of, is not something that individuals may be looking for when they join in an action but it becomes a personal benefit. As indicated earlier, the literature in community action suggests that the reasons for individuals to involve themselves in a community organization will vary (Alinsky, 1970; Plant, 1974; Lee, 1999), and this sense of pride and recognition from the community is a common one (Gecan, 2002).

Another benefit that focus group participants report that they experienced was a sense of empowerment. A major point made by Saul Alinsky (1971; 1989) and affirmed by Lee (1999) is that this is a major focus of community practice,

assisting people to gain a sense of their ability to influence their context. PARC had built some power for itself, and this felt good for the campaigners. As Anna said: "*We built our power and MM and A had to recognize that*" (Anna, Public Presentation). Jagtar commented on the feeling of winning. "*When we had the winning thing, then I realized that we had won it was a really nice feeling*" (Jagtar, Focus Group) Finally, Anna commented on the sense of power that she felt from solving the problem at a community level: "I liked the sense of efficacy. We solved the problem ourselves, we did our own research." (Anna, Public Presentation) As Alinsky (1971) suggests, self respect comes from people solving their own problems (p123), and he states that the process is the purpose (122); that feeling of empowerment that comes from participating in a campaign is as important as the win itself (Alinsky 1971, 1989).

The social aspect of organizing was another aspect experienced that was reported. Thus, the meetings that were important for decision making and education were also seen as opportunities to experience community connectedness. Patti echoed the sentiment:, "*I really enjoyed the meetings, it was great to come together as a group and you didn't want that to end*" (Patti, Focus Group). Lee (1999) talks about the importance of having a sense of community as an objective of community practice (p 45). This sense of being valued in a community has the potential to reduce the feeling of powerlessness (Lee, 1999; 46) that is often present in the struggle to achieve success in a campaign.

Along with the social aspects associated with organizing is the strong sense of community that activists feel (Alinsky, 1989; Lee, 1999). One participant, Anna, mentioned that previous to participating in PARC she felt as though her community was ambivalent and inactive, however this particular campaign allowed her to connect with other activists in her community. As she stated: "*Another thing I liked was the sense of community*" (Anna, Public Presentation). Alinsky (1989) speaks to Anna's sentiment, saying that people who live in urban cities are used to experiencing their communities as ambivalent and apathetic, but organizing allows people to experience a stronger sense of community (43).

Finally, having something accomplished was reported to be a major benefit to participating in PARC. "*I have been part of many organizations and a part of many groups and very seldom have I been able to say that the group accomplished what it set out to do*" (Jaipaul, Public Presentation). This sense of success that comes from organizing is supported by Lee (1999). The achievement of one success has the potential to lead to the confidence that other successes can be achieved as well (Lee, 1999; p 47).

6.2 Struggling with Success

It felt good to win. No win is ever complete though.- (Mark, Focus Group)

Staples (2004) and Moyer (2001) suggest that often those in an action group will have very different definitions of "what happened". Staples (2004)

suggests that if there is no general consensus about what happened, a group's sense of unity and cohesion is jeopardized. Moyer (2001) also speaks of the tendency for groups to experience different degrees failure or achievement even though the campaign has been successful. PARC is a good example of a group which struggles with defining and accepting the outcomes of their campaign, and the following is a discussion about how those struggles are experienced.

By the time that the focus group for this research was held, the campaign was pretty much at a closing. MMA had been banned from expanding its business, and this was the goal of PARC. Many members of the group celebrated this accomplishment; on the other hand there are also those who felt unresolved around the issue. Moyer (2001) suggests that at times of victory there will also be a sense that the "win" is not big enough. People have been working away at bringing there efforts to a conclusion and it is never perfect as the words of one participant indicated, "*in the public perception we did win a battle but we still feel that there's more*" (Patti, Focus Group). Another articulated the concern that this win was not getting at the big picture. "*Even when you win clearly as we did we have such an awareness of how big the problems are out there that it's hard to feel good about it*" (Mike, Focus Group). This concern rather echoes writers like Mayo (1977) and Mowbray (1985) that local work and local success is simply a kind of analgesic that may deal with a small issue but the underlying problem is not really dealt with.

Some group members felt that the victory was only partial and they worried that the company could make a "come back". This kind of feeling is well articulated by a number of the participants. For example:

> It felt, it felt good that we had set out goals and we accomplished them. But I still have this feeling, I got a bad feeling like somehow we didn't put the right kind of stake through their heart, I mean they could be coming back or something. (Ed, Focus Group)

Another stated that, "*it's just like a cease-fire, you know you can say you won but they still haven't cleaned stuff up*" (Jagtar, Focus Group). Finally one member expressed ambivalence in military language: "*it's a war and we won a battle and we weakened them and they are exposed but I very much worry that they'll come back, it's just too lucrative of a business*" (Dora, Focus Group). Some group members had a hard time coming to grips with the fact that they really had been part of an action that had achieved a significant purpose, and ended up feeling defeated. Moyer (2001) addresses the feeling that some activists have that the "power holders are too strong" (p 59). Although there were many benefits that people experienced from participating in PARC, the process was not always experienced as one of empowerment and fulfillment.

Some felt that it took some time for the win to sink in. One said, "*most people had to go home and think about it. And it was next week that we were like 'ya, we won*!'" (Jaipaul, Focus Group). Another made the point that it was necessary for their achievement to be affirmed by the media before they could take it in: "*well we thought if the paper says we won, then maybe we did win*!" (Patti, Focus Group). Another member was very explicit about his feelings: *"I can remember at the meeting when Mike and I met outside and we were walking in*

and he said well I guess I can tell you we've won and I kind of looked at him and it didn't click, and he had to tell me like three times before I could accept it" (Mark, Focus Group). Finally, Mike, the organizer put it into the perspective of needing distance from the action: "*It is always hard in the heat of the moment to know what winning looks like*" (Mike, Focus Group).

Moyer (2001) has noted that members of successful action groups often do not experience what seems objectively as victory as a real success. This can be because group members might have fostered unrealistic expectations in too short of a time (Moyer, 2001; p 59). Mike, the organizer put it this way, "*winning became a moving target, and I think that what happened is people became more and more emotionally invested in putting the company out of business because of their belief*" (Mike, Focus Group). This idea that the target grew larger and larger, and possibly too large, could explain why people feel unresolved. People's personal goals went from preventing MM and A from expanding, to shutting them down altogether, and because the final "goal" wasn't achieved, there is a feeling of defeat.

Also, because of the nature of the win, focus group participants reported feeling a lack of satisfaction in their particular win for two reasons: first, the company ended up quietly backing down, and second, there was no visual cue to signify the win. Sandra's words sum this up well:

> If the backyard was blank, then I think visually we would have had a sense of win, because since we were fighting something that didn't get built if it had been destroyed before our eyes we would have visually had an impact um so when you stop something that hasn't even been started it doesn't have the emotional impact. (Sandra, Focus Group)

Dora echoed: "*we didn't know when to stop*" (Dora). Alinsky (1989) discussed the outcome of a campaign in which the opponent quietly "backs down" and there is not this immense sense of victory or success. If people cannot see how they have directly "taken down" the opponent, there is less of a cathartic experience, and people's passions and aggressions tend to remain unresolved (Alinsky, 1989; p 152).

When people were able to derive meaning from their experience it appears that it allowed them to feel a greater sense of satisfaction. Both Lee (1999) and Moyer (2001) make the case that "debriefing" or considering actions in context is an important aspect for groups that engage in action. Some members did seem to be able to place their feelings in context and there are a number who provided some very insightful comments. One noted the time frame that was operative, "*I realize that that was maybe an unrealistic goal in the time frame that we had*" (Eustace, Focus Group). Finally one person made the very useful distinction between what they wanted to achieve as individuals and whet they could achieve as a group, "*that issue in and of itself may not my resolved to the extent that any of us want it on a personal level, but as a group we achieved what we wanted to achieve.*" (Jaipaul, Focus Group). This sense of perspective is also echoes by another participant: "*we had exposed what they really were and you know we let them know that everybody is on to them and I felt that that was the most important thing*" (Eustace, Focus Group). Finally, one statement offers another positive perspective: "*I'd like to think, you know, as long as we feel dissatisfied, they should still be nervous*" (Jaipaul, Focus Group). Although the

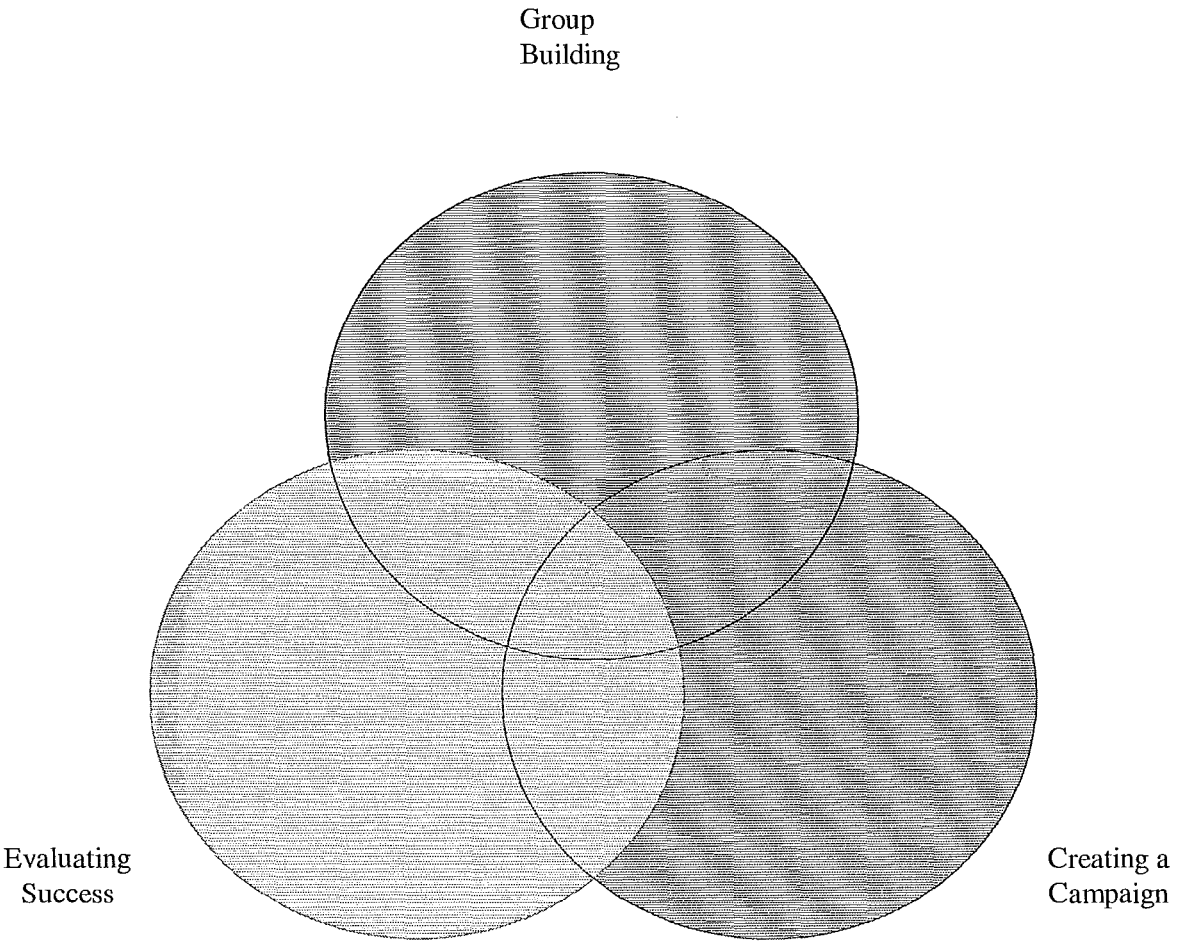
win might not have been a glamorous, cathartic event, it was still a win, and there were some who really felt this way.

Conclusion

These comments suggest that there has been a significant amount of learning and development on the part of the participants in terms of social action. It is understandable that such a complex endeavor has left participants with complex thoughts and feelings. As Lee and Todd (2007) suggest there are a myriad number of factors at work in community organizing. As indicated, people do not necessarily experience or, feel the same way about outcomes, however there is a general agreement that as a group, PARC was powerful in its context. As a group, and as a campaign, outcomes are apparent. Even if a group has not achieved exactly what it sought to achieve, the skills and ability to have an impact on an outside, powerful force were gained, and an impact was made (Lee, 1999; 202). Whether the group feels that they were successful or not, it is difficult to imagine that there could be a serious argument that they achieved nothing.

Chapter 7: Implications for the Research

Throughout this paper there appeared to be an interesting relationship between the three major issues of community organizing that were explored; group building, organizing, and winning. The inside experiences of activists appears to suggest to links among the elements. The experiences that participants had in the group-building stage of the campaign were of struggles and success, and this led to a dedication to the campaign which then led to the



eventual success. Throughout, their seemed to be a sense that what was done in one stage informed what would happen in the next. For example, the decision to change strategy was born from the decision to strengthen leadership. This complex interconnectedness of participant's experiences and insights evokes a deeper analysis into the significance of allowing voices that would not otherwise be present in organizing literature. Seeing how struggles and achievements are entangled within the process of organizing might possibly give more experienced organizers a refreshing insight, and new activists some realistic things to think about.

A More Realistic Interpretation of Community Work

Considering the tendency for many professionals, such as social workers, to work in a context of increasing power-imbalances and resistance to change, it is necessary to align this research with a different kind of community work which sees opportunities for social change and justice. Community work currently employs community organizing as a tool for achieving social justice; however community organizing literature fails to adequately illustrate the experiences of doing this work. Too commonly, community organizing literature is written from the perspective of a professional organizer or a seasoned organizing veteran or an academic. The importance of communicating the experiences of others, those who do the ground work and are intimately involved with action is that an unseen reservoir of knowledge and analysis is revealed which is not found in other community organizing literature.

This research has allowed me to explore some of the inside experiences, the personal struggles and difficulties, and the real-life benefits and challenges of organizing. This research I hope, reflects a different voice; not of the professional organizer, but of local activists and leaders. The experience of doing this research is not that existing community organizing literature is lacking in content, however being able to test common community organizing theory with the experience of a group of grassroots organizers, real people, presents some implications for further exploration.

One major difference between this research and the literature on community organizing I reviewed is that the findings around group building revealed the immense struggles and pressures that activists feel in the beginning stages of a campaign. Issues such as recruiting, creating cohesion within the group, developing strong leadership and managing group conflict are explored in a realistic way, revealing how difficult the work really is. This in analysis is not seen in a lot of the literature (Alinsky, 1946; Alinsky 1971; Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999; Staples, 2004), which may present community organizing as a simple, formulaic, fool proof process; shortcomings are rarely discussed.

Another major difference between this research and other texts on organizing is the fact that having inside voices speak of their experiences of organizing suggests a deeper analysis of how the hard work and immense dedication really affects people. The experience that the campaign was such hard work that it was draining, and the feeling of exhaustion is not expressed in community organizing literature (Alinsky; 1971; Gecan, 2002; Lee, 1999; Staples,

2002) as it is in this research. This research suggests that we must look beyond theoretical strategies and tactics, and spend more time on examining the human impact of such work.

Finally, the impact on activists that occurs after a campaign win is not sufficiently covered in the literature. The findings of this research suggest how ambivalent and dissatisfied people can feel even in winning, and how diverse the experience of winning can be. Moyer (2001) addresses the issue but more as a roadblock for further organizing. The people I interviewed and heard from put stress on it in a very personal manner. It would be interesting to see research mounted that examined the interplay of the experience of hard work and ambivalent feelings of success.

In closing, it is important to point out and agree with Lee, McGrath, Moffat and George (1966) that community practice generally is an under-researched area of social work in Canada. As indicated in the introduction community organization, an element of that practice (Rothman and Tropman, 1987) is even less researched. While this paper suggests that the personal element has been poorly attended to in the literature of community organization, that assertion must be set with the reality that the profession and its education arm has paid far too little attention to an important practice tradition. I hope that this thesis will provide some impetus for social work to attend better to all forms of community practice in both undergraduate and undergraduate programs.

Works Cited

Alinsky, Saul D. (1946). Reveille for Radicals. New York: Vintage Books.

Alinsky, Saul D. (1971). Rules for Radicals. New York: Vintage Books.

Babbie, Earl. (2001). The Practice of Social Research 9th Edition. Wadsworth, Bellmont.

Booth, H. (1974). Handbook for Organizing Women. Chicago: Midwest Academy.

Brown, Leslie and Strega. (2005). Research as Resistance. Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press.

Burghardt, S. (1982). The other side of organizing: The personal dilemmas and political demands of daily practice. Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company.

Cary, L.J. (1970). Community development as process. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Craig, G. and Mayo, M. *(1995) Community empowerment.* London: Zed Books.

Creswell, John W. (1998). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five traditions. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cruikshank, J. (1990). The Outsider: An uneasy role in community development. *Canadian Social Work Review.* Vol. 7, no 2 (pp. 245 -259).

Dale, D. (1978) How to make citizen involvement work. Citizen Involvement Training Project. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

Falls-Borda, Orlando and Rahman, Mohammad Anisur. (1991). Action and Knowledge. New York: The Apex Press.

Fisher, R. (1984) *Let the people decide.* Boston: J.K. Hall and Company.

Denzin, Norman K and Lincoln, Yvonna S. (1998). Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials. Sage Publications.

Gecan, Michael. (2002). Going Public: An organizers guide to citizen action. New York: Anchor Books.

Hope, A. and Timmel, S. (1984). Training for Transformation. (Vol. 1-3) Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press.

Horwitt, Stanton, D. (1989) *Let them call me rebel:* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Jackson, W. (1999). Methods: Doing social research. Second Edition. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada,.

Kahn, S. (1982). Organizing. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Kaplan, A. (2002) Development practitioners and social process. London: Pluto Press.

Keeting, D. (1975) The power to make things happen. Greentree.

Lakey, G. (1987). Powerful Peacemaking. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Lakey, B, (Lakey), G, Napier, R. Robinson, J. (1995) Grassroots and nonprofit leadership. Philadelphia: New Society Press.

Lamoureux, H., Mayer, R. Panet-Ramond, J. (1989) Community action. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Lee, Bill. (1999). Pragmatics of Community Organization. Mississauga: Common Act Press.

Lee, Bill and Balkwill, Mike. (1996). Participatory Planning for Action. Mississauga: Commonact Press.

Lee, B., George, U., McGrath, S., Moffatt, K. (2002). Exploring the Role of the Insider in Community Work in Marginalized Communities. *Critical Social Work.* Vol. 2, No. 2, Fall. pp. 69-87. http://wwwCriticalSocialWork.com

Lee, B., McGrath, S., Moffatt, K., George, U. (1996) "Community Practice Education in Canadian Schools of Social Work". *Canadian Social Work Review.* Vol. 13, No. 2 (summer). 221-236

Maguire, Patricia. (1987). Doing Participatory Research. Massachusetts: Centre for International Education.

Mayo, M. (1977). Community Development for Social Change. In R. Bailey and M. Brake (eds). *Radical Social Work.* Pp. 129-143. London: Edwards Arnold.

McWhorter, Dianne. (2002). Carry Me Home : Birmingham, Alabama: The Climactic Battle of the Civil Rights Revolution. Simon & Schuster

Mowbray, M. (1985). The Medicinal properties of localism. In R. Thorpe and J. Petruchenia (eds.). *Community Work or Social Change?* London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.

Moyer, Bill. (2001). Doing Democracy. Gabriola Island: New Society Publishers.

Neuman, L. (1997). The Meanings of Methodology. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.* Pp. 60-87.

Neysmith, S.M. (1995). Feminist Methodologies: A Consideration of Principles and Practice for Research in Gerontology. Canadian Journal of Aging 14 (1): 100-118.

Plant, Raymond. (1974). Community and ideology, an essay in applied social philosophy. London: Routledge & Keegna Paul.

Ristock, Janice L., and Pennell, Joan. (1996) Community Research as Empowerment. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Rivera, F.G. and Erlich, J.L. (1995) Community organizing in a diverse society. Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Ross, M.G. (1972). *Community organization.*2nd edition. New York: Harper and Row.

Rothman, Jack and Tropman, John. (1987). Models of Community Organization and Macro Practice Perspectives: Their Mixing and Phasing. In: Cox et al. 1987. Strategies of Community Organization. Itasca: Peacock Publishers.

Shragge, E. (2003) Activism and social change, lessons for community and local organizing. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Speeter, G. (1978) Power, a repossession manual. Involvement Training Project. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.

Staples, Lee. (2004). Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing. Praeger Publishers, Westport.

Stake, E. (1998). Case Studies. In *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry.* Eds: Denzin, Norman, K. & Loncoln, Yvonna S. P 86-109.

Wharf, B. (1995). "Community Organizing, Canadian Experiences" in Wharf, B. and Clague, M. (Eds). Community Organizing, Canadian Experiences. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp 1-4.

Appendix A

Information for Potential Case Study Participants

My name is Sara McAuley and I am a Masters Student at McMaster University looking to research the process of community organizing. I am interested in conducting a case study on the successful campaign which the People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC) has engaged in to protect their neighborhood from the dangers posed by a local business.

The information that you provide if you choose to participate will be included in my Masters Thesis. It will attempt to explore the process of community organizing, community campaigning and social action. I believe that participation in the project will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on your own participation in particular and on the events in general.

In addition to the Thesis, I will also be writing smaller, more accessible document/article which I hope will help the group communicate their successes to the community. This document also has the potential for informing and educating social workers, and other and other community activists about how people go about the business of influencing important social and environmental issues.

There are two possibilities for involvement in this project.

First, I would like to hold a focus group with members of PARC. The purpose of the focus group will be (a) to hear from you about your experience of being involved with the PARC campaign; (b) to provide any information which you think would be relevant to the case study and (c) to discuss ways in which this case study might materialize in a way that would benefit the group and the larger society.

Second, I would like to conduct brief follow-up phone interviews or e-mail exchanges. The purpose of these interviews would be to fill out what might have been said at the focus group discussion or to provide additional details about the campaign. Those who would like to participate in the follow-up interviews will be asked to provide contact information at the focus group discussion. However, if you would prefer not to participate in the follow-up interviews, you are still free to participate in the focus group discussion and do not need to provide me with contact information.

Focus groups will be recorded, with the permission of the group, to ensure accuracy of data. Follow up phone call interviews will not be recorded. A transcript of the focus group will be sent to all members in attendance after the focus group has taken place so that members can have a chance to correct inaccuracies and/or add information.

There will be approximately three hours set aside for the focus group discussion. The date and location of the focus group will be arranged by a PARC member. With the permission of individual group members I may ask for follow-up contact information (telephone number, e-mail address) so that I may conduct informal telephone interviews (which will not be recorded) in order to clarify points that were made in the focus group. Telephone interviews would be from 15 to 30 minutes, or as needed.

Each group member has the right to be anonymous in the written report; no real names will be used in the written report(s) unless requested by the group member (s).

I greatly appreciate your help and hope that this will be a rewarding and beneficial experience. I have attached a copy of the informed consent form that you will be asked to sign. If you have any questions please feel free to call or e-mail myself or the research supervisor.

Researcher
Sara McAuley
(905) 297-1398
mcaules@mcmaster.ca

Research Supervisor
Bill Lee
(905) 525 9140 ex 23782
laoi@sympatico.ca.ca

Appendix B

Focus Group Research Guide:

What did participating in a campaign look/feel like to you?

Where were the moments of struggle for the group as it went through the process?

What was it like to engage in conflict/confrontation?

Do you feel that campaigning/organizing was worth it? Do you think you won?

What do individuals/groups gain from participating in campaigns?

What lessons did you learn and what would you do differently if you could do all of this again?

Appendix C

McMaster University

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Sara McAuley, Researcher
McMaster University
1280 Main St W, KTH 327
Hamilton On
mcaules@mcmaster.ca
Phone: (905) 297-1398

Dr. Bill Lee, Research Supervisor
McMaster University
1280 Main St W., KTH-327
Hamilton, On, L8S 4M4
E-mail: laoi@sympatico.ca.ca
Phone (905) 525 9140 ex 23782

PROJECT TITLE: Inside Perspectives on a Social Action Campaign

You are asked to take part in a research project facilitated by a Masters student from the McMaster School of Social Work. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH:

I am interested in conducting a case study on a campaign called People Against Radioactive Contamination (PARC). The information that you provide if you choose to participate will be included in a Masters Thesis, and will reveal a great deal about the process of community organizing, community campaigning and social action. This case study has the potential for informing and educating the social work field, and other related fields about the process of organizing.

PROCEDURES:

There are two possibilities for involvement in this project.

First, I would like to hold a focus group with members of PARC. The purpose of the focus group will be (a) to hear from you about your experience of being involved with the PARC campaign; (b) to provide any information which you think would be relevant to the case study and (c) to discuss ways in which this case

study might materialize in a way that would benefit the group and the larger society.

Second, I would like to conduct brief follow-up phone interviews or e-mail exchanges. The purpose of these interviews would be to fill out what might have been said at the focus group discussion or to provide additional details about the campaign. Those who would like to participate in the follow-up interviews will be asked to provide contact information for themselves at the focus group discussion. However, if you would prefer not to participate in the follow-up interviews, you are still free to participate in the focus group discussion and do not need to provide me with your information.

Focus groups will be recorded, with the permission of the group, to ensure accuracy of data. Follow up phone call interviews will not be recorded. A transcript of the focus group will be sent to all members in attendance after the focus group has taken place so that members can have a chance to correct inaccuracies and/or add information.

There will be approximately three hours set aside for the focus group discussion. The date and location of the focus group will be arranged by a PARC member. With the permission of individual group members I may ask for follow-up contact information (telephone number, e-mail address) so that I may conduct informal telephone interviews (which will not be recorded) in order to clarify points that were made in the focus group. Telephone interviews would be from 15 to 30 minutes, or as needed.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY:

Participation will contribute to a case study which may be used to educate organizers from the School of Social Work, and other related disciplines. Participation in the research will help honor the hard work done by PARC members. Lastly, the group will have the ability to decide how the case study will be constructed in a way that will be beneficial to PARC and to the wider community. Participating in this case study will give the members of PARC an opportunity to reflect on the success and challenges that were experienced throughout the campaign.

POTENTIAL RISKS TO PARTICIPANTS:

It is not likely that there will be any harms or discomforts associated with participating in the case study; however you may feel uncomfortable with discussing points of discomfort, conflicts or struggle. You may also worry about how others will react to what you say. You do not need to answer questions that make you uncomfortable or that you do not want to answer. If at any time you prefer not to participate in the discussion, you have the right to pass, or even to withdraw.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

You have the option of having your name used in this study or having your identity protected. If you would like your identity protected, I will not use your name in any report(s) or presentations. Nor will I use any information that would allow you to be identified.

Since the views and information you provide will be offered in a focus group setting, I will also be asking all group members to respect each others' privacy and to keep to themselves who participated and who said what over the course of the discussion. However, I cannot guarantee that this request will be honored by everyone. Nor can I guarantee that transcripts of the discussion (names removed) will not be shared with others. Please keep this in mind and make only those comments that you would feel
comfortable making in public.

Each participant in the research project has the right to be anonymous in the written report; no real names will be used in the written report(s) nor will I be including any information that would allow you to be identified unless requested by the group member (s). Confidentiality can not, however, be guaranteed within the focus group, therefore I must suggest that you make only those comments that you would be comfortable making in a public setting; and to refrain from comments that you would not say publicly.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWL:

If you decide to participate you may choose not to answer any questions during the focus group and you may withdraw from the focus group at any time. You may also decline to offer follow-up contact information. If after the focus group you decide to withdraw from the research all information will be destroyed, unless you indicate otherwise.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS:

This project had been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB). If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant contact:

MREB Secretariat
McMaster University
1280 Main St W., GH-306
Hamilton, On, L8S 4L9

Telephone: (905) 525-9140, ext 23142
E-mail: srebsec@mcmaster.ca
Fax: (905) 540-8019

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT:

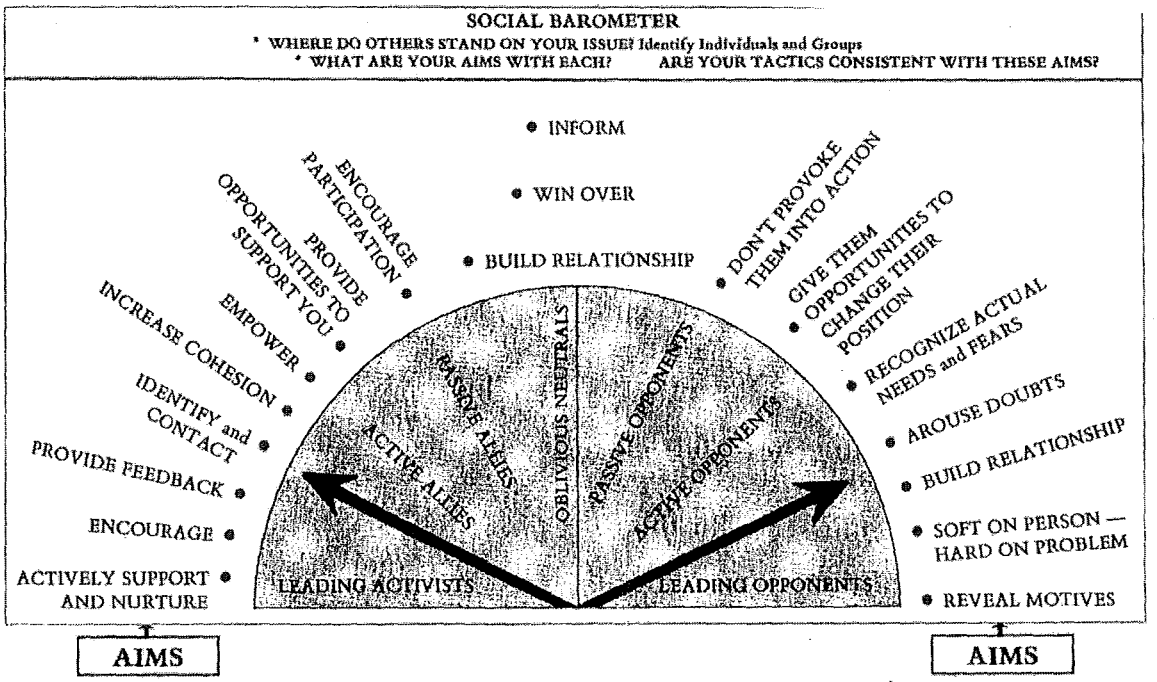
I understand the information provided above and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this research. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ _____

Signature of Participant Date

If you have any questions regarding the study please contact myself or Bill Lee, the research supervisor.

Appendix D



I wish to acknowledge inspiration from David H. Albert: "People Power — Applying Non Violence Theory" New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1985.