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**Planting the Seeds: The Experiences of Community Psychology Graduates as
Agents of Systemic Social Change**

by

Peggy Ann Weston

Bachelor of Arts, Wilfrid Laurier University, Brantford, 2002

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for Master of Arts Degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

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Abstract

Social change is a part of human existence, but other than charismatic individuals such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi, little has been published about the lived experience of social change agents. Time (era, passage of time etc.,) is often neglected as an important temporal factor of analysis in systemic social change (SSC) activities. The intent is to explore the experience of people working as SSC agents and discover what influences their work. A better understanding of this experience would contribute to more effective SSC work and perhaps address challenges facing change agents. The main research question, “What are the experiences of WLU Community Psychology programme graduates as agents of social change over the last 30 years?” considers temporal influences, varying socio-economic and political contexts and responses to those challenges. Constructivist, hermeneutical and dialectic epistemologies for this exploratory research project were used in a case study method approach, analyzed for sensitized thematic content across cases. A stratified, purposive mixed male and female sample of 15 WLU graduates represented classes from 1975 to 2005 and was divided into three 10-year cohorts, 1975-1985, 1986-1995, and 1996-2005 with five participants per cohort. Semi-structured interviews were completed, transcribed and member-checked by participants before coding, using NVivo software (Richards, 1999). Field notes along with archival research provided additional data sources for triangulation. The initial findings were reviewed by a cohort member. Based on the findings, I developed a collective definition of SSC and a framework for understanding a collective experience of systemic change. Furthermore, recommendations are presented for supporting change agents, individually and collectively, in their work.

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Table of Contents	
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	viii
Introduction	9
Positioning My Relationships to the Research Topic.....	9
Purpose of Study	13
Literature Review	13
Definitions of Systemic Change	14
Philosophical Frameworks for Systemic Social Change	18
Conceptual Framework	20
Community Psychology and a History of Social Change	25
A Brief History of Community Psychology in Canada	26
Community Psychology in the Community.....	29
Experiences as Practitioner	
Micro level: the personal experience	30
Meso/relational level: the professional experience.....	33
Macro Level: The Collective Experience	38
Summary.....	40
Afterward	40
Methodology	
Assumptions Underlying the Research	40
Methods	41
Collective Case study	42
Interview Schedule Development	42
Sensitized Analytic Frameworks	43
Participants	
Developing a Research Relationship	44

Criteria	45
Recruitment.....	46
Data Collection	
Overview	47
Key Informant Interviews:	47
Additional Field Research.....	48
Data Treatment	
Transcription	49
Member checks	49
Cohort checks	50
Coding	51
Analysis of Data	52
Findings	54
Participant Characteristics.....	55
Individual Participant Experiences:	57
Overview and participant values	57
Six thematic Areas of SSC Work	60
Building and fostering relationships: Relational	60
Setting the context: preparation and groundwork.....	63
Identifying the what of change: systems	64
Strategizing and mobilizing initiatives: action / activism	65
Being inclusive: holistic systemic social change	68
Evaluate our actions: the feedback loop	69
Force Field Analysis of Agents' Experiences	70
Driving forces.....	71
Restraining Forces	76
Negative Cases	84
Definition of SSC	84
Developing a collective definition.....	85
Systemic Social Change	86
Systemic Social Change Definitions.....	87

Discussion	87
Participants and study design	88
SSC: Evolving Definitions of Change.....	89
A Concise and Collaborative Definition.....	90
The Collective Experience	90
1) Preparation	93
2) Relational	93
3) Systems	95
4) Action/Activism	96
5) Holistic, Systemic Well-being	96
6) Feedback Loop	97
Force Field Analysis: Driving and Restraining Forces	98
Conclusions	100
Recommendations	102
Limitations of the Study	103
Community Research: Lessons Learned	104
Dissemination Plan	105
Future Direction & Research	105
References.....	107
Endnotes	115
Appendix A: PsychINFO Database Search Listing	116
Appendix B: Interview Schedule	117
Appendix C: Telephone Interview Script	119
Appendix D: Code book for Sensitized Analytic Framework (SAF)	121
Appendix E: Letter of Information	124
Appendix F: Informed Consent	126
Appendix G: Summary of Emergent Collective Force Field Analysis Findings ...	128

List of Tables

Table Number	Page
1. Participant Demographics	56

List of Figures

<i>Figure Number</i>	<i>Page</i>
Figure 1 PsychINFO Database Search Results	35
Figure 2 A Sensitized Analytic Framework (SAF).....	43
Figure 3 A Framework for Understanding Systemic Social Change	92

Introduction

This research is about my interest in social change activities over time and whether the social change efforts of agents with academic backgrounds efficient and sustainable over the long term? The over arching question of the study is, “Are we doing enough as a sub-discipline of psychology to change power and resource inequities and ensure human rights for all?” To narrow the question down and to gain an understanding of systemic social change concepts presented in the Community Psychology (CP) programmes at Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU), my main research question is an exploration into how WLU CP graduates understand and experience systemic social change work.

Positioning my Relationship to the Research Topic and Personal Biases

My interest in the phenomena of systemic social change (SSC) and more specifically, how agents of change experience the process of change has many sources and is based in part from having lived through the last half of the 20th century in Canada. During my formative childhood years, in the 1950's and 1960's with over two decades of Cold War rhetoric, bomb shelters, and ever-present threats of nuclear war, I was keenly aware of the social, economic and political climate. I was ten years old when U.S. President J.F. Kennedy was assassinated which was followed by the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy in the next few years. These events all occurred in the neighbouring country of the United States. Wars, civil unrest and natural disasters were prominent on the international scene. Americans were involved in the war in Vietnam while massive anti-war demonstrations and protests were conducted in the United States. At one point, the unrest led to the killing of Kent State University

peace-activist students. Political scandals, President Nixon's involvement and cover-up of the Watergate incident rocked the nation and many people lost confidence in government and establishment structures, processes and powers.

Internationally, the horrors of the Nazi death camps and holocaust were part of the post WWII era. The colonies of European countries began to overthrow their oppressors, with rhetoric, protests, literature and civil strife. India successfully regained self government from the British, only to struggle with internal conflict leading to international peace activist Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. The Near East was rocked by the Six Day War.

In my early twenties I lived in South Africa and experienced the oppressive regime's apartheid policies and the consequent social economic climate. Although I was a white and privileged person, the attitudes and assumptions underlying the apartheid policies were completely foreign to my background and worldview. I was shocked to the core of my being from that experience. My measure of systemic social change is based on those global events and people, famous and unnamed, who were prominent in struggles for systemic social change during those two decades, my formative years.

As the twentieth century came to a close and the new millennium dawned, protests against the international economic forces of the World Trade Organization (WTO) made international headlines. Governing powers supporting neo-liberal views became increasingly popular. The newly elected Conservative Party of Ontario formed the government in 1995, and introduced a wave of new reform including socio-economic policiesⁱ. Governments, influenced by corporate culture, were experimenting with business and market-styles of governing rather than by providing services (Epstein, 2001;

Gamble, 2001; Hamnett, 2001; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Philo & Miller, 2001). I witnessed the challenge that fluctuating social, political and economic climates presented to community workers, volunteers, grassroots organizations and community programs. Economic survival is a main concern of individuals and organizations. How do individuals and organizations deal with limited resources when former community partners need to compete for ever-shrinking funding sources? Are social values of individual change agents compromised or perhaps radicalized in times of social uncertainty?

In considering the passage of time, I reflect on the lives of three generations of my family's women from 1895 to 2007. There have been great achievements in women and children's legal, social and civil rights. But many women still experience injustices, discrimination, violence and poverty, and I must ask how much has really changed in the lives of women, children, and other oppressed people? I use my family's three generation experience as a measure of change itself. How long does it truly take to make change, what changes are sustainable, and as a result of those questions, how do we define change, and what are the parameters?

My intellectual and academic interest comes from my graduate studies theoretical work. My initial encounter with community psychology as a sub-discipline of psychology was during an undergraduate lecture on health promotion's philosophy on the benefits of primary intervention. I thought I had found an area of study which was a good match for my worldview of power inequities, human rights and the connection with well-being. Community mental health and primary intervention, to me, meant dealing with the primary causes of mental illness, such as stress at environmental and ecological systems

levels before any onset of ill health occurs. However, once into graduate studies, it seemed to me that few of my colleagues, faculty or literature considered systemic change at the levels I had assumed were imperative for true primary intervention. Systemic change, second order change, and social change examples from the literature rarely focused on changing underlying assumptions about people and human relations, but seemed to be more about tinkering within health and educational systems and program delivery. Community psychology promotes values such as: holistic models of health and wellness, social justice, accountability, commitment, caring and compassion and respect for diversity. Also, the uniqueness of community psychology's value-based science is at odds with the value-neutral stance of mainstream traditional science. I wonder if change can be sustained when the underlying assumptions and world views of mainstream and dominant cultures remain unchallenged.

My experiences with challenging the status quo and the consequent conflict have formed a phenomenological baseline for understanding SSC agents' experiences of facilitating and restraining influences. My own experiences with choosing between my ideals and values, and economic survival were tough decisions. Likewise, I witnessed a range of similar concerns from my colleagues in graduate studies about issues surrounding the systemic social change work promoted in our course work and how challenges involved in such change work affects us in our ability to remain employed. This led me to and through a long process of research and thesis development to gain an understanding of the basic research question about systemic social change concepts. Many avenues were considered before arriving at the decision that the agents' voices of

experience would best represent the community-based experiential knowledge of systemic social change.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to understand the experience of systemic social change agents working in contemporary Canadian society. In order to do so, I examined the literature for definitions of second order change and systemic social change to establish if a common understanding about systemic social change exists and what it consists of, from the point of view of Canadian community psychology practitioners.

My specific research questions are:

- 1) What is the experience of WLU Community Psychology programme graduates acting as systemic social change agents in the contemporary (1975-2005) Canadian context?
- 2) Using Force Field Analysis theory, what are the major driving and restraining forces influencing systemic social change work?
- 3) From the collective experience can we establish a clearer and empirical understanding and definition of SSC from a uniquely Canadian community psychology perspective?

Literature Review

The personal experience of social change agents has received little coverage in the psychology peer-reviewed literature, but is often a topic of conversation in gatherings, and therefore of interest to Canadian community psychologists. The literature reviewed here covers concepts, models and analogies common to community psychology, such as systems theories and paradigms, organizational literature pertaining to discourse and change, as well as literature outlining the development of various definitions of SSC and

a few personal experiences of community psychology practitioners that have appeared in the literature.

While great tomes on social change theory exist from Habermas to Marx, social change theories and organizational change theories will only be covered here as they pertain directly to the question of the experience of social change agents and their understanding of systems change.

Definitions of Systemic Change

Using correct terminology to establish common understanding facilitates effective communication, thus avoiding confusion and incorrect assumptions. SSC terminology has been evolving along with the sub-discipline of community psychology, which has chosen to remain within the traditional fields of psychology and natural science. Change theory was derived from Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch (1974), and introduced to community psychology by Julian Rappaport (1977). The terms, 'critical change', 'second-order', 'transformative', 'ameliorative', 'accommodationist', and 'systemic social change' have all been used in community psychology. The evolution and development of change definition terminology follows in the next paragraphs.

The concepts that are commonly referred to as second-order and first-order change were developed using mathematical logic and principles. First order change occurs within a system or individual as an adaptation to the environment, thus implying that problems reside within individual deficits, and are not due to inconsistencies and/or inequities of the environment (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Rappaport, 1977; Watzlawick et al. 1974). Second-order change, assumes that there is a problem outside of an individual and occurs when there is a change in the relational dynamics between a

system and individuals (Doyle, Wilcox & Repucci, 1983; Levine & Perkins, 1997; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Rappaport, 1977; Watzlawick et al. 1974). By including ecological MLOA (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) to examine the relationships existing within and between systems and individuals, second order change strives to address power and resource inequities (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Rappaport, 1977; Seidman, 1983; Watzlawick et al. 1974).

The term social intervention incorporates Watzlawick et al.'s (1974) proposition of second-order change, but it is applied specifically to social systems with the purpose of changing dominant ideologies and accompanying values, policies etc. that encourage victim blaming (Rappaport, 1977; Seidman, 1983). For example, the decision to move mental health treatment from institutions to the community changed dominant ideologies from medical models of treatment with patients being regarded as helpless, to a view of people being more adaptive and self-reliant. What the terminology lacks is a consideration of the problems associated with the dominant socio-cultural ideology of Western society; and policies based on capitalist and World Bank beliefs, and a focus on strong individualism and measuring a person's value by their production-contribution to that society (Boulding, 1983).

As second order change became a common component in community psychology's social intervention and change theories, the term became interchangeable with a more descriptive label of transformative change (Doyle, Wilcox & Repucci, 1983; Levine & Perkins, 1997; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). SSC was further developed and elaborated on to become a comparative concept of transformative versus ameliorative change (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). An example of an ameliorative role would be for

community psychology practitioners to act as professionals in a problem-solving role, focusing on program development and evaluation in the community. Conversely, transformative roles would mean taking a more politically activist role in challenging the status quo and power inequities by working in solidarity with oppressed groups to alter oppressive life and socio-economic conditions.

Both terms are descriptive and somewhat self-explanatory; however, ameliorative change although normally considered an individual-based change, can also fall under second-order systemic change. Watzlawick, et al. (1974) did support incremental change approaches to large scale second-order social change programs saying that change:

... can be implemented effectively by focusing on minimal, concrete goals, going slowly, and proceeding step by step, rather than strongly promoting vast and vague targets with whose desirability nobody would take issue, but whose attainability is a different question altogether (p. 159).

One community psychology author, Jean Ann Linney, voiced her concern about motivational differences between two generations of community psychologists and the influence of the changing *societal zeitgeist* :

Students today seem more concerned with titles than we were and more concerned with the degree to which the tasks they are asked to do are commensurate with their advanced training. This attention to status and role is qualitatively different from 25 years ago, and I think may again inhibit risk taking, generation of ideas from direct experience, and full engagement with the community groups and settings that we know to be

so important. Over the last two decades our societal zeitgeist has become more individualistic than collective and certainly our discipline is not immune to the presses of the broader context (Linney, 2004, p. 99).

In this case, we might ask: how are new generations of community psychologists reading and interpreting literature on systemic social change? Are they satisfied with ameliorative change?

Organizational change theory, often found in management literature, recognizes the importance of discourse and communication, including language, in change work (Heracleous, & Barrett, 2001; Schein, 1993). Authors Seedat, Duncan and Lazarus in 2001 used the terms 'Accommodationist' and 'Critical' to distinguish between two types of community psychologists. An 'Accommodationist' refers to those working within a status quo framework accepting existing power and economic relationships. 'Critical' represents those who work at re-framing current systems to challenge status quo suppositions. As such, the latter's intentions are distinctly second-order systemic change, while the former group work in maintaining the current system. Kenneth Maton (2000) recognizes that the norms of society need to be acknowledged as important influences before successful and effective system change can occur. As Waltzlawick et al. (1974) demonstrated, and Rappaport (1977) elaborated, first-order change only serves to perpetuate systemic, circumstantial and situational conditions related to human functioning and well-being. Even when MLOA are used with first-order change, interventions are still directed at individuals, focusing on personal deficits, maladaptations and adjustments as seen in terms of skills building, self-esteem and support building interventions (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005). Successful SSC involves

framing the problem in macro-level terms of values, power, oppressive and liberating relationships, and MLOA focused on reducing risk factors with respect for individual diversity and strengths (Ibid.).

How agents of change understand and use SSC terminology will need to be considered as part of a social construct in pursuing the research question.

Philosophical Frameworks for Systemic Social Change

Included in the literature review are two theories developed by the physical sciences and adapted to human and social sciences: General Systems Theory (GST)ⁱⁱ (Bertalanffy, 1945) and paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1999a, 1999b).

Bertalanffy's GST with its two general systems: open or closed, can be considered as a bridging mechanism for interdisciplinary studies of social sciences systems. Closed systems have little or no energy transfers, like a rock sitting in the middle of a table. Open systems are dynamic, and interactive and can be linear such as a parent ordering a child to bed, or non-linear in a feedback or looped system such as a thermostat. Using the above parent-child metaphor in a non-linear family, a child would be able to explain that they have to complete an important project, but will go to bed when it is completed and negotiate with the parent. For the most part, human interactions are conceived as open systems with flowing inputs and outputs, interacting with other existing systems.

Twenty-five years ago I first read about Thomas Kuhn's remarkable work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) on paradigm shifts within the physical science field, a concept describing a non-commensurable shift in understanding a particular phenomenon. The term 'paradigm shift' consequently became popularized, appropriated and misunderstood. The term paradigm shift, as used in community psychology, is

apparently not the same as Kuhn had originally proposed. Examples of Kuhn's paradigm shift would be Copernicus' theory about the solar system challenging contemporaneous theories that the Earth was the centre of the universe, or when Columbus and a few others challenged and proved that the Earth is round and not flat. You can only believe one theory or the other, but not both. Community psychology continues to fit its principles and values within larger contemporary contexts that only allow for small changes, not paradigm changes in thinking.

From the domain of the physical sciences, Thomas Kuhn proposed a revolutionary view of the history of science in his now classic, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), by introducing the concept of dramatic paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1999a, 1999b). Kuhn proposed a cycle of 'normal science', which accumulates discarded and discounted anomalies until a critical moment when challenges to the infallibility of the current framework of understanding occurs. At this point, other alternative concepts become more acceptable and a shift in thinking occurs. Most often, those trained in earlier paradigms will continue to support the old frameworks, in spite of wide acceptance of newer theories. In other words at least one to two generationsⁱⁱⁱ must pass (15-30 years) before significant paradigm shifts can occur. By adapting the scientific concept of paradigm shifts to human sciences, we have a concept to understand major shifts in our understanding and perception of the world. An example of paradigmatic, systemic social change is found in the women's suffrage and equal rights movements, as Mary Wollstonecraft (1792) noted in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. For centuries women challenged their contemporaries' dominant and oppressive views that women are lesser human beings. More than two centuries after Wollstonecraft, social, political and

economic changes for women have occurred and gains have been made. But, 21st century women still struggle as individuals in daily life to re-define their status with themselves, in their personal relations and institutionally.

As Kuhn pointed out, paradigm changes can only be seen in retrospect even when a change is called for, the results of that change cannot be predicted.

Conceptual Framework

Because community psychology proposed a move from individual models of intervention to include external factors, many concepts, analogies and models have been introduced to the field. Often the models are based on systems theory. Dohrenwend's model (1978) considered how stress can generate psychopathology; Bronfenbrenner (1979) introduced the concept of ecological models in child development research, which included nested multiple levels of analysis (MLOA) and the terminology ontogenetic (individual), microsystems (immediate environment such as family), exosystems (community- medical, schools, etc.), macrosystems (level of culture). James G. Kelly (1966) also used ecological concepts: population, community, ecosystem and biosphere, which he introduced along with four ecology-based principles: interdependence, cycles of resources, adaptation and succession. Interdependence recognizes the complexity of systems by acknowledging that changes in one component affect and produce change in all other components of a system. Cycling resources continues from the first principle of interdependence, stating that resources cycle through a system and are not static. Following on the first two principles, adaptation occurs as a response to changes occurring within an ecosystem. The fourth principle, succession, recognizes that entire systems are dynamic and changing through human intent and natural causes.

More recent literature has given rise to new interest in systems theory applied to community psychology. Beverly Parsons (2007) has found that there is no single theory about systems and how they change. Parsons posits a Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory to account for the fact that systems are complex and dynamic and the fact that systems do adapt and recover (2007). Understanding the dynamic nature of human systems is an integral part of effective change and there is a lack in clarity about intended outcomes, theory and literature, which hinders systems change work (Tseng & Seidman, 2007) and our ability to think about social change (Christens, Hanlin & Speers, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007). Other authors have questioned whether we have effective evaluations in measuring change outcomes (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Kreger, Brindis, Manuel & Sassoubre, 2007).

General Systems Theory and an ecological-transactional framework are the backdrops for Edward Seidman's conceptions of social interventions (1983). An ecological-transactional framework also operates under the same assumption of resource exchanges and power dynamics, but also allows for differentiated sub-systems (Seidman, 1983). Basic system theories permit broader perspectives on problem-framing, as required in social change and social interventions (Doyle, Wilcox & Repucci, 1983; Rappaport, 1977; Seidman, 1983; Watzlawick, et al. 1974). General Systems Theory describes the interactions between system variables in such a way that cause and effect cannot be separated. This in effect says that relationship, that is the dynamics and interaction between variables including the context, is a key component in using systems theory (Bertalanffy, 1945; Bronfenbrenner 1979; Dohrenwend, 1978; Kelly, 1966; Lewin, 1947). For instance, applying General System theories to commuter traffic flows,

drivers of vehicles interact with each other, making decisions and anticipating other drivers' decisions. However, by adding a third dimension of reports from a news and traffic helicopter, new actions and reactions result, depending on if drivers are listening to the reports and acting on the information. Likewise, communities are open systems, meaning that there is a constant flow of energy, interactions and influences between all components.

Kurt Lewin, a founding member of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, was also concerned with social change. In 1947 he authored an article about analysis of group dynamics and social equilibria during periods of change or stability in which he stated:

... the conditions of these two states of affairs should be analyzed together for two reasons: (a) Change and constancy are relative concepts; group life is never without change, merely differences in the amount and type of change exist; (b) Any formula which states the conditions for change implies the conditions for no-change as limit, and the conditions of constancy can be analyzed only against the background of "potential" change (Lewin, 1947, p. 13).

In collaboration with his students, field theory was developed as a concept in understanding situational behaviour (De Rivera, 1976). Of special interest to SSC agents is Lewin's work on conflict, barriers and forces, which included a temporal dimension (Ibid.). According to Lewin one of the fundamental concepts of force field theory is that it includes the structure of the group and its ecological setting as represented by relative position of the entities. Possibilities of locomotion and prediction of actions depend on

the position and influence of forces present (Lewin, 1947). The terms ‘relative position’, ‘possibilities of locomotion’, and ‘predictions of actions’ can be interpreted as ‘status’, ‘potential for advancement’ and ‘choices’ for 21st century change agents.

Jim Dalton and Maurice Elias (2001) adapted Lewin's force field theories to develop a seven-step process in force field analysis. Their description of driving forces in this process includes tangible resources of people, organizations and funds supporting a goal and intangibles, such as a shared sense of community, and potential resources as yet undefined or discovered or committed. Restraining forces are forces already in the community, which keep the problem in existence, and resist or obstruct goal attainment. These may be tangibles – as people, organizations, lack of funding or similar resources, but also can include root causes, resistance to change and anyone who feels threatened by proposed changes. The *Seven Step Action Plan* strives to strengthen the driving forces and weaken or avoid the restraining forces (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001). In relation to the current research question, the driving forces would be supportive and facilitating influences, while restraining forces would be perceived threats or inhibitors. Once the forces have been identified, action can be taken to strengthen the supportive influences in SSC work and weaken the restraining forces.

A challenge for all SSC agents is to continually grow towards more equalized and power-sharing relationships in efforts to be in solidarity with those who have less power, opportunity and choice. But as individuals, we are still governed by reigning socio-political and economic restraints: “Self-absorption, due to excessive consumerism, individualism, and careerism, severely limits our potential to mobilize social and economic resources for the larger public interest” (Maton, 2000, p. 39). Our personal

choices at collective levels can support or hinder oppressive social, political and economic states. By making choices that move towards transforming the status quo to promote broader social change, states of collective well-being are enhanced and affirmed.

The goal of community psychologists is to promote states of well-being at all levels. In working towards these goals, community psychologists are subject to oppression, resistance, liberation and well-being, the same ecological influences experienced by the community members. As agents work towards their goals and experience insurmountable project problems and resistance, they may find themselves internalizing the oppression and resistance. The work on a project may stop or at least stagnate. The opposite condition of working within a supportive environment leads to states of personal, relational and collective well-being. Watzlawick, et al. (1974), cautioned against Utopian programs and projects for this very reason and stated that overly unrealistic plans are a common source of second-order change failures.

As previously stated, the context of the action will influence the outcomes and the change's sustainability. Higher order, systemic, institutional change (collective/macro level) can also occur from the inside, often referred to as the 'belly of the beast', or from the outside, as mounting pressures force paradigmatic social change. No matter the environment, once again we see that relationships are paramount to building successful opportunities for change:

It is through these values of interpersonal well-being that we can hope to promote personal well-being. The safe space created by partnerships enables people to work in solidarity for the promotion of collective well-being. Our challenge is to form partnerships where students, colleagues,

and community members alike can feel safe to explore the tenets of critical psychology, the need to resist oppression, and the role of power in quality of life. (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002, p. 164).

Community Psychology and a History of Social Change

Community Psychology is embedded in many layers of disciplinary traditions. It is nested in science, which is nested in socio-political, economic and temporal contexts, and each of those interacts with other layers. As such it is influenced and attempts to influence its neighbouring layers. William McGuire, a political psychologist, forecasts a possible fourth era in political science and psychology collaborations in which the past associations of individual processes (related to social factors which then influence society), are projected into a future of a “quantum leap of topic ... not to just another intrapersonal topic, but to interpersonal (and intergroup) processes.” (McGuire, 1993, p. 34). He further elaborates that it is likely that *macro research* will continue to grow with the interest in group processes and dynamics to include theories and methods with systems analysis characteristics (1993).

Politically and culturally, American and Western values are in general, historically located in the psychology and the cult of the self (Rose, 1998), typified as the strong individual who can 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps', overcoming all adversity. It is interesting to note that as post war clinical psychology reflected changing political and moral values, community psychology emerged and evolved from a perceived need to address mental health issues in the same manner as other public health policies and programs addressed physical health matters. But with a link to public policy, came the link with political values, morals and the paradox of power (Nelson &

Prilleltensky, 2005). From the 1960's and beyond there were great social, political & economic events associated with calls for reform. Different social movements, which are a type of group action, focused on a specific issue, advocated for social justice, civil rights, post-colonialism, and animal rights. Well-organized movements and individuals supported feminist and anti-war/peace activism. The end of communist Russia, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the 1980's spawned anti-globalization movements that recognized a growing concern about value-based issues surrounding debates over individual rights and freedoms vs. community life and sustainability. The Council of Canadians was formed in 1985 as a response to the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement^{iv}

A Brief History of Community Psychology in Canada

Formal recognition of Community Psychology (CP) as a sub-field and program of mainstream psychology is attributed to the 1965 Swampscott conference, in response to conference participants' call for new visions in directing focus away from individual, medical models and applying public health prevention concepts to the field of mental health (Klein, 1987; Rickel, 1987; Walsh, 1987). The following year the APA introduced Division 27, now called Society for Community Research and Action. Although community psychology's formal beginnings are attributed to Swampscott (Klein, 1987), the term 'community psychology' had been in use prior to the conference (Ibid.). Furthermore, Elias, (1987) reported, "...the legacy of the conference was rooted in the concepts of competence and knowledge building, as well as targeted prevention and *social activism*^v [emphasis added]" (p. 542). However, Walsh-Bowers, (2002b), noted that the discipline "has promoted adaptation to the status quo not social reform" (p.6) in

spite of claiming a focus on an environment-to-person fit. It was previously noted that Watzlawick et al. introduced the concept of second order change in 1974 and was cited in Julian Rappaport's 1977 text, *Community Psychology Values, Research and Action*. It is possible that the ideas of systemic and transformational change were merely underlying but unspoken assumptions indicative of the times, even if praxis seemed to retain an individual focus. Klein (1987), noted that the 10 year period from 1953-1963 was a key period for dissemination of community-type praxis to develop since it " had been generated by innovative studies in Wellesley, St. Louis, Nova Scotia, Yorkville, Denver, Toronto, and elsewhere..." (p. 532). Distinctive features in areas of education, social and health policies contribute to community psychology theory development in Canada (Walsh-Bowers, 1998). Linguistic and cultural challenges for French and English community psychology educational programs (Ibid.) also provide terrain for development of CP diversity theories. The documented first use of the term 'community psychology' is attributed to William Line in 1945, who reportedly used the term in his presidential address at the convention of the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), *but also included social action terms referring to resisting the status quo* (Nelson, Lavoie & Mitchell, 2007; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Walsh-Bowers, 1998). In 1982 the CPA formally recognized the community psychology sub-discipline in Canada by incorporating the CP (Section 3) (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Walsh-Bowers, 1998).

As Nelson and Prilleltensky (2005) point out, community psychology is not only hard to pin down to a single definition; its very nature is dynamically changing in response to the social, political, moral and economic contexts (Doyle, Wilcox & Repucci, 1983; Seidman, 1983). As such, training in the field must respond to community

dynamics and context and can be expected to vary. Once program graduates are working in the community, various factors have been noted as limitations to engaging in and with communities while maintaining community psychology values (holistic models of health and wellness, social justice, accountability, commitment, caring and compassion and respect for diversity) and principles (ecological perspectives, prevention and promotion, collaboration and partnerships, active participation and choice, strengths or assets-based approaches, cultural relativity and diversity and scientific inquiry for social action and social change).

Mainstream psychology gives little acknowledgement to community psychology's existence (Walsh-Bowers, 1998), and as a small sub-discipline of psychology, other community setting partners know little about community psychology as a discipline (Walsh-Bowers, 1998; WLU, 1997). Large Canadian geographic expanses can also contribute to isolation and is a restraining factor because the number of community psychology graduates and practitioners are few and scattered outside of the pools of community psychology practitioners who are concentrated in a limited number of urban centres in Ontario.

On the other hand, community psychology could use its marginalized status in the Canadian psychology family to its advantage and consciously and fully develop its mandate for emancipatory theory, ethics, research, practice, and training. Community psychologists have already demonstrated their leadership as researchers and social-change agents in many areas of primary prevention..." (Walsh-Bowers, 1998 p. 284-285).

Community Psychology in the Community

Program evaluations with WLU CP alumni emphasized the importance of ongoing support and networks as part of the post-graduation experience in relation to status quo and SSC (Alcade & Walsh-Bowers, 1996; Walsh-Bowers, 1998; WLU department archives 2001, 2004). Such post-graduate support systems have not been formally introduced into the program, and only exist if close relationships were initiated during or prior to the graduate studies period.

A gap exists in empirical, community psychology based, and peer-reviewed journal articles which only offer a limited selection of articles on the experience of SSC agents in the community (Fortin-Pellerin, Pouliot- LaPointe, Thibodeau & Gagne, 2007; Kelly, 2007). Peer-reviewed articles offer insights *only* from those who are motivated to write and submit to academic journals; however, many working in the field may not be so inclined or motivated (Fortin-Pellerin, et al., 2007). Fortin-Pellerin and colleagues speculated that one reason may be that:

It may be difficult for practitioners who have little training in research and little awareness of the rigorous requirements for publication to meet academic standards. One potential way of increasing the number of authors who are practitioners would be to encourage them to publish in collaboration with academic researchers as co-authors whenever possible. In this way, a more practical perspective could be integrated into CJCMH's (*Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*) content, partnerships could be encouraged and the contribution of practitioners to research theory could be accomplished (2007, p.36).

It has been my experience that few community workers have the time to write academic articles and would prefer to spend what time they have in the community, with writing limited to producing local or internal reports. Therefore, peer-reviewed journal articles alone may not necessarily be reflective of the experience of MA graduates working at the community level. In a recent special issue on Systems Change, the American Journal of Community Psychology (AJCP), focused on the topic of systems change, definitions, a need for clarity and a need to hear from the voices of experience (Behren & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Behren, 2007; Kelly, 2007; Kreger, et al., 2007; Parsons, 2007).

From a 1996-1997 WLU employability survey of program alumni, only 5 out of 27 respondents indicated they had gone on to post-graduate programs, and of those five it is not known who remained within academia (WLU, 2001). In terms of SSC, peer-reviewed publications do not give a true reflection of SSC and the community experience. A gap exists in the literature because SSC agents who are not part of, or motivated by, academic institutions are not participating in dialogues between the two realms of community and academia.

Experiences as Practitioner

Micro Level: The Personal Experience

Advocates who promote a more comprehensive approach to community psychology work by including contributing factors to well-being, such as the inclusion of environmental factors, social justice, poverty and political inequities, are challenged to remain true to their values in the face of institutionalized status quo pressures. Isaac

Prilleltensky captures the experience related to personal power in any setting and the ability to cope with “personal experiences of diminution”:

“... for me, one of the main challenges in practicing critical psychology is how to stay true to the values I believe in. Institutional traditions within the university conflict with values of collaborative research and with political action.” (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002, p. 2).

Community psychologists shared their experiences as community psychology practitioners in a series co-published simultaneously in the *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community* (2004) and *Six Community Psychologists Tell their Stories: History, Contexts and Narrative*. Important factors mentioned were: having strong academic mentor relationships, including values which put family before academic status, a strong supportive academic social climate, such as Yale's Psycho-educational clinic and on-going professional support (Linney, 2004; Reppucci, 2004; Trickett, 2004; Weinstein, 2004). Other notable comments were made about a psychological sense of community and the quality of graduates (Repucci, 2004).

The literature doesn't acknowledge the challenge of SSC work and personal cost to new or future community psychologists. Pioneers responsible for community psychology development such as Kelly have recently been asking:

How are future generations of community psychologists provided with the supportive environments to tune into the multi-year processes of gaining trust and collaboratively creating and understanding systemic change? How will future graduate training give new community psychologists the know how to engage in these enterprises? How can graduate training

sanction participation in multi year expeditions without major personal costs to new and potentially vulnerable members of SCRA? (Kelly, 2007).

The women authors in this co-published series, mentioned gender challenges and academic status priorities such as endless committee meetings and publishing and the need to be truly determined to pursue community psychology as a 'calling' (Linney, 2004; Weinstein, 2004). All of the contributing authors were from the 1960 to early 1970 undergraduate and graduate cohorts and all reflected on the social climate of the times as a pertinent influence on their choice of becoming community psychologists. Reflecting on the difference, one author commented on the differences of her cohort's experiences and current graduates' sense of irrelevance of social change topics:

Sometimes I wonder if many of the social conditions that propelled action in our field for my generation are no longer potent. Clearly there are social problems of great magnitude, but it seems there is greater concern with professional identity and status today and that this moderates the weights in our decision-making and may inhibit risk-taking for community psychologists. Students today seem more concerned with maintaining access to settings, and less attentive to the benefits of creating alternatives or shaking up a system that they acknowledge is counter-productive. I'm always a little disappointed with graduate students' concerns about acquiring credentials at what seems to be only for the sake of having those credentials (Linney, 2004, p. 98).

Clearly, the future of SSC in respect to the community psychology community is in question if this is indeed the current perspective of the majority of graduates entering the field.

Meso/Relational Level: The Professional Experience

As illustrated in the above Linney quote, there is an impression that graduates are concerned with credentials, perhaps more so than in the past. Credentials and related professional status are connected to the meso/relational level in MLOA analysis. Many professional organizations such as American Psychological Association (APA), the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA), academic institutions, research and non-governmental organizations exist with varying degrees of support for community psychologists and their activities. However, paradoxically, larger, more structured and institutionalized organizations are embedded within the status quo, and by their very nature tend to be inclined to maintain the interests of the status quo (Rappaport, 1977; Rose, 1998), by retaining focus on individual levels of analysis and intervention for psycho-social problems.

Other professional supports, journals and associations such as *Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI)*, *the American Journal of Community Psychology*, *Qualitative Health Research*, *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community*, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *Journal of Community Psychology*, *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, are a few of the academic based professional resources. In addition to the academic support, there are other professional and community based associations and related published materials such as trade journals, newsletters, along with on-going professional development opportunities like

conferences, workshops, and certification programs. These resources can vary from being highly structured institutions heavily invested in maintaining the status quo with close ties to governments all the way to grassroots organizations with little to lose by challenging status quo relations.

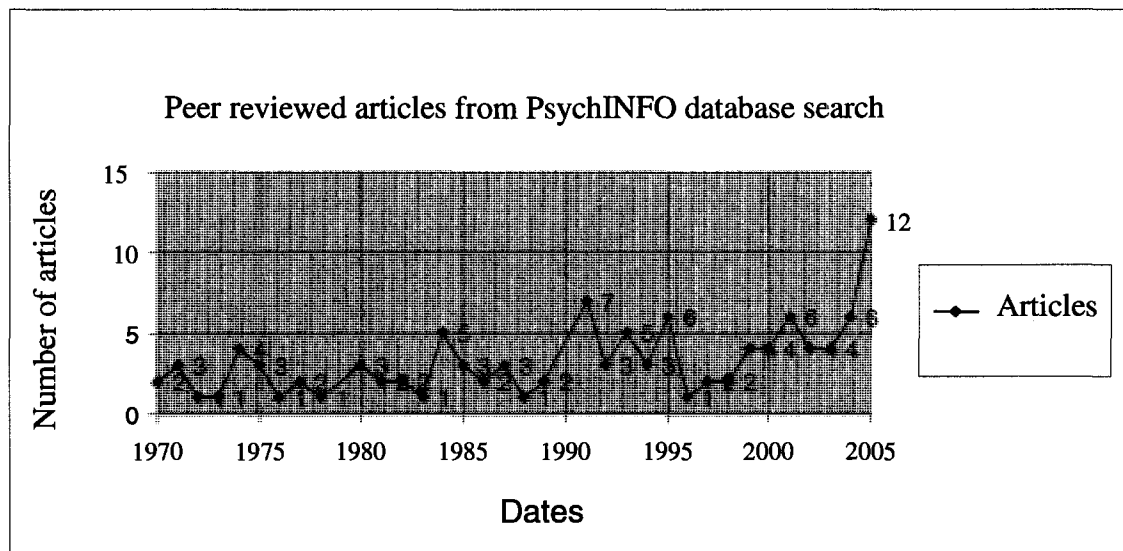
Publications offer one medium for the exchange of ideas, support or critical review of research and activities. If peer-reviewed journals can be considered as a primary source and medium for professional dialogue (Fortin-Pellerin, et al., 2007) we can see a fluctuating interest in the topic of SSC. For example, at the time of this research project's development, a psychINFO database search using the key words 'status quo' and 'social change' revealed available journal sources over the last 35 years (1970-2005) which had little on the subject matter of social change, let alone SSC in relation to status quo (See Appendix A for a listing of the number of articles for each year from 1970 to 2005). The results from such a broad-based social sciences search produced many articles in policing, linguistics and anthropology which were not pertinent to this study, but are still useful in revealing terminology use and 'hot topics' in academic discourse.

Other psychINFO database searches using the keyword "systemic social change" only resulted in 3 articles being found, and using three keywords: 'status quo', 'social change' and 'change agent' resulted in two articles. The keywords 'community psycholog*' and "social change" together produced zero publications but 13 scholars names, while the keywords "community psycholog*" and social intervention resulted in 304 peer reviewed articles in English. Since the term 'social intervention', as previously discussed (see p. 21) can have varying degrees of change associated with it, and is most often associated with change occurring in the intermediate sphere of individual levels of

intervention (as in close informal social supports) a scan of the 304 abstracts confirms that the majority of articles produced from the last database search mentioned cannot be truly SSC articles. The database searches were done to provide a scan of SSC activity reflected in a peer-reviewed level of professional support. If academic, peer reviewed journals provide an accurate reflection of mainstream thought, we can see that the topic of SSC is not substantially represented in mainstream journals and the reasons behind this lack of representation are unknown.

Figure 1.

PsychINFO Database Search Results



Between research development, field work and the writing of this paper there has been an increase in articles on SSC in peer-reviewed journals. The Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health (CJCHM) has published an article (Fortin-Pellerin, et al., 2007) on a content analysis of its past 25 years of publishing. Worthy of note is that needs assessment articles were popular from 1987 to 1991, and then program evaluations articles increased from 1992 to 1996, all the while social action articles waned in

popularity. Self-help and advocacy articles have all but disappeared after 1996. The majority of authors and editors in CJCMH have academic affiliations. The lack of community practitioner-authored articles is noted, and commented on as a paradox to the journal's mission statement to be a forum for Canadian scholars and practitioners (CJCMH, 2001).

The AJCP produced a special issue on Systems Change in May 2007. The issue includes a historical perspective (Christens, et al., 2007), theories, methods, frameworks (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007; Kreger, et al., 2007; Parsons, 2007; Tseng & Seidman, 2007) and innovative strategies such as an 'incubation approach' to systems change (Staggs, White, Schewe, Davis & Dill, 2007). The latter article on incubation encourages collaborative work between change agents and insiders and comments on when and where this approach is most effective. The issue includes a commentary by James Kelly (2007) on the implications for the future of community psychology:

What would help, for example, is for authors of these reports to be encouraged to tell their stories about the nitty gritty of creating change. (...) How did the authors live with the 3-year constraint of funding and how did they temper their enthusiasm when the program began to be operational in four schools? How do initiators cope with modest success after a multi-disciplinary collaborative adventure? To reduce cynicism and burn out and to nurture savvy wisdom how do we reflect on our efforts and live with sometimes modest successes? (2007, p. 415).

Community psychologists and their relationship to mainstream psychology is an example of systemic change as a relational, meso level experience in an institutional setting. Community psychologists act as change agents, by challenging individualistic and medical models of treatment. Resistance to community psychology as a distinct discipline, with its methodologies, is strong and recognition for community psychology has been very slow in coming from mainstream academic journals and institutions. It has been 40 years since Swampscott but there are only three community psychology graduate degree programs currently in Canada, two in Quebec and one in Ontario, with a scattering of undergraduate courses offered at various Canadian universities. The uniqueness of community psychology as a value-based science is at odds with the mainstream value-neutral stance of traditional science. Community psychologists often favour alternative paradigm positions such as critical theory, feminist theory and constructivist/social-constructivist theories, and corresponding epistemologies and methodologies used by other human science disciplines. Consequently, community psychologists can expect resistance because they distance themselves from mainstream positivist and post-positivist paradigms by using hermeneutical, dialectic and dialogic methodologies along with participatory action research models (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As an example, community psychology researchers often favour qualitative research methods and experience resistance to these methodologies despite the fact that qualitative research has been a recognized and long-standing practice in other disciplines since the 1920's (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

I offer only a couple of examples here of the resistance community psychologists face within their own domain. We have only to look at the resistance to qualitative

research epistemologies, methodologies and methods from academia, publishers and funders. For instance, the psychology department at Wilfrid Laurier University first offered an undergraduate course in qualitative research methods (PS398), in the winter term of 2005 (Wilfrid Laurier University Calendar, 2004-2005). As a very recent and small step in achieving a minor systemic change in research methods that are recognized by an academic institution, it is representative of the resistance to systemic change in institutional settings. After requesting and receiving qualitative research methods training, academics, researchers and students have limited success at receiving grants, publication, jobs, promotions and graduation because qualitative research, as a viable research option, is often challenged, or rejected in spite of its long years of use in other disciplines such as anthropology and sociology (Eakin & Mykhalovskiy, 2005; Michell, 2004; Stoppard, 2002; Walsh-Bowers, 2002c; Wiggins & Forrest, 2005). These challenges and obstacles would understandably influence CP researchers' choices in where and how to focus and produce their work.

Macro Level: The Collective Experience

The collective experience at macro levels entails interactions with social, economic and political ideologies. These macro influences are the driving and resistant forces to major systemic change. Change, within systems and at individual levels, can support the status quo, while challenges to the status quo can occur as major or incremental stages leading to systemic change. Change can come from unexpected sources- environmental disasters or war, famine, drought, disease, which then requires a social response to provide aid and recovery missions. Change comes from the intentional efforts of one unique charismatic individual, such as Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), or

from the consciousness-raising efforts of social movements, such as the civil rights and feminist movements (Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005).

As an example of macro level concerns, Patrick O'Neill, as president of the CPA, in addressing the second bi-annual Ontario-Quebec community psychology conference, raised questions of the *ethics of framing research questions that may justify the maintenance or the change of the status quo, especially during politically and fiscally conservative times*. [emphasis added] (O'Neill, 2005). A specific example of others choosing to take a political-relevance stance is Walsh-Bowers, who has questioned if community psychology can pursue SSC when our Canadian society has embedded motivations to maintain the status quo through the dynamics of the big 'C', capitalist and consumer macro system (Walsh-Bowers, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c).

From the literature we can see that forces maintaining the status quo, such as power, economics, history, and social climate at MLOA, are influential in the decision making process. Likewise, driving forces are supportive environments, informal support systems such as family and institutional settings as educational and religious, strong mentoring and colleagues' support and social climates supportive of change. Larger macro theories of enhanced networks of networks (Heller, Price, Reinharz, Riger & Wandersman, 1984) are used in analysis of driving/restraining forces at work in the community psychology field. Micro levels of analysis focus on personal narratives of social change experiences to investigate converging/diverging concerns across time and varying political, economic and social issues.

Summary

I considered systems theories and sub-theories as philosophical and conceptual frameworks to understand the theoretical and empirical influences in the participants' experiences. I also looked for second order and systemic social change articles in psychology databases to see if there had been any consistency of academic interest in the topic over the last 30 years. Finally, I also reviewed the history of community psychology and its position as a sub-discipline of psychology and touched briefly on the pedagogical experience of graduates of Wilfrid Laurier University's graduate program in community psychology.

Afterward

The original literature review for the research was done in 2005. My proposal, fieldwork, data coding and analysis were completed by May 2007 before the AJCP published its special issue on Systems Change in June 2007 and the spring issue, 2007 of CJCMH published its article on a content analysis of the journal's last 26 years. Consequently, although I refer to these articles here, they had no influence on the content, or purpose of the study. In fact the 2007 articles are *a posteriori* knowledge. That is they have come afterward and are supportive and reflective of the experiences emerging through this research.

Methodology

Assumptions Underlying the Research

Considering that social change can be a process as much as an outcome, a considerable amount of time must pass before a review of the change process can occur. My concern for this work is to focus on process and less on outcomes. Therefore the

research design is focused on participant experience and meaning constructed through dialogue (Olesen, 1994). Epistemologically, I am positioned within the social-constructivist and critical paradigms, which are anchored in historical realism, a belief that reality is shaped by both context and values, which crystallizes over time^{vi} (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). As such, a qualitative hermeneutic–dialectic (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) approach to explore emerging SSC themes through the personal experience of change agents (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994) is appropriate to this study. The importance of a participant’s contributions in creating meaning through dialogue through the research process has been recognized and acknowledged by qualitative researchers (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research in human and social sciences has been recognized since the 1920’s (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Community psychology is a value-based science, and as such, psychologists from this sub-discipline are familiar with the values and principles present in qualitative research methods and participatory research designs and can therefore share their SSC experiences through these particular lenses. I engaged participants in a transactional^{vii} experience to create the findings. By using the approaches of the constructivist paradigm that acknowledges the ontology-relativism position of a “local and specific constructed reality” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109), a critical subjectivity and reflexivity also inform the findings.

Methods

I used collective case study as a method to explore the personal and collective experience of social change agents, with an academic background that theoretically supports systemic change as a power-equalizing intervention.

Collective Case Study

Stake (1994) considers case studies as a choice of what is studied, rather than a methodology. The case is what is studied. For the purposes of this research, as a method, it is a collection of stratified, individual cases that are combined in 3-ten year cohorts and re-combined into a thirty-year cohort. The collective case study approach allows for unique individual characteristics of experience to surface while at the same time permits a combining of similar experiences over time and space (Patton, 2002).

I used a stratified sample of male and female participants with a collective case study method in which each participant's experience is an individual case study that is then incorporated into a ten-year cohort case study. Three cohorts of 10 years each were gathered into a collective case study to represent SSC activities and experiences of 15 individuals over 30 years. Five graduates from each of three 10-year (1975-1985, 1986-1995, 1996-2005) groupings contributed to the 30-year collective case study. Participants completed interviews of approximately 1.5 hours in length, based on a semi-structured interview schedule developed for this study and derived from the research questions and a sensitized, thematic framework.

Interview Schedule Development

The research purpose and questions were reviewed to inform the semi-structured interview schedule development. Demographic questions were included in order to provide the study with some basic descriptive elements of the participants. The interview schedule (Appendix B & C) was intentionally open ended with a few prompts added as a reminder of the study's purpose. However, to refresh key informants' memory of terminology from course work, they were provided with brief definitions of social

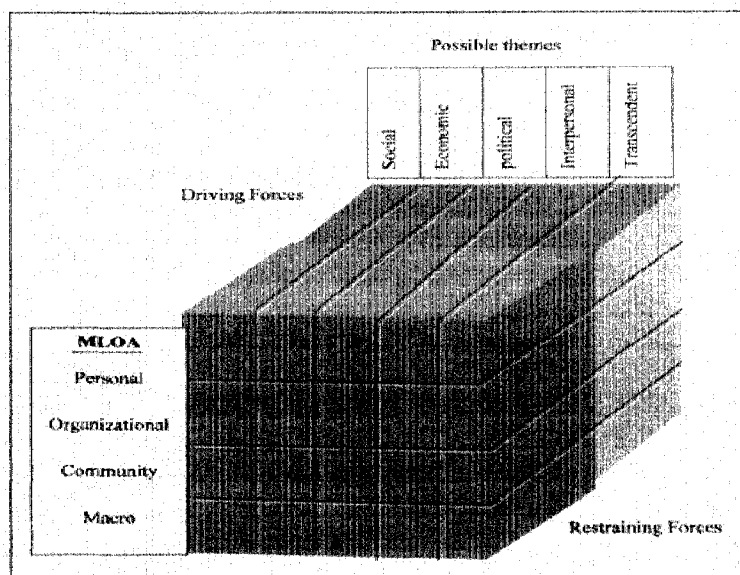
intervention, second order- systemic, transformative and ameliorative change before being asked to provide their own understanding of their preferred terminology.

Sensitized Analytic Frameworks (SAF)

The interview schedules were constructed with an analytic framework as an aid to formatting the research question for semi-structured interviews. MLOA as one dimension and force field influences as a second dimension formed the framework. Both the force field influences and the MLOA were compiled into a SAF (Figure 2), allowing for forty (five themes x four MLOA x two forces) possible influences to be coded (See Appendix D:Codebook for Sensitized Analytic Framework). Potential driving and restraining themes were developed from the literature (Dalton, Elias & Wandersman, 2001; Kelly, 2007; Linney, 2004; Maton, 2000; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Reppucci, 2004; Runyan, 1993; Sears, 1993; Sidanius, 1993; Trickett, 2004; Weinstein, 2004) and my personal observation and experience. The framework provided a minimum structure for the interviews, at the same time permitting participants to maximize their contributions.

Figure 2:

Sensitized Analytical Framework for Change Agents Experiences



The research proposal was reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Ethical Review Committee including the interview protocol, proposed recruitment procedures, consent forms, telephone scripts, and participant compensation.

Participants

Developing Research Relationships

The emergent nature of the study calls for an on-going relationship between me, as principle investigator and the research participants, my advisor and committee members. The primary relationship is between me and the key informants as dialogue themes emerged and developed. At the secondary stage of coding and analysis, my advisor, Dr. Terry Mitchell became engaged in the process as a third constituent of the research. My committee was like-wise engaged in the research developmental process both as thesis committee, but more importantly as community psychologists and educators, bringing their values and interests into the mix during committee meetings.

For the purpose of this document, the term ‘participant’ refers to the more traditional primary research participant recruited for key informant interviews. Secondary participants in the research relationship are cohort members who remained engaged in the discussion past the initial interview and member check, Dr. Terry Mitchell and my committee members Dr. Mark Pancer, Dr. Richard Walsh-Bowers and Dr. Scotney Evans. However, the research relationship went well beyond these twenty people to everyone who contributed to my investigation of SSC activity and experiences.

Because the community psychology community in Canada is relatively small, the ethics of preserving anonymity was at times, challenging. People can be recognized by references to colleagues, figures of speech, places of activity and so on. In order to

preserve anonymity I had to resort to broad generalizations in paraphrasing comments and when selecting quotes and consider at the same time if the impact of the statement was being compromised because of the generalization. Participants were consulted when I had to resort to these measures.

Four participants I already knew or had met; the remaining 11 were unknown to me. Prior knowledge and relationships did not appear to make any difference to the depth or engagement in the topic during the interviews or in further discussions. All were about equally enthusiastic during their interviews.

Criteria

While the study was to explore the experiences of agents of social change, such agents may have a wide variety of backgrounds and theoretical understandings. WLU Community Psychology graduates would have the most uniform academic backgrounds for comparative purposes of the study. The WLU program has been active for over 30 years, and is the only English-speaking graduate program in Canada.

The criterion for participating was to have been a graduate from the WLU Community Psychology master's degree program between the years 1975 to 2005, and to be working in Canada. Participants were required to complete an interview and the validation process of reviewing the interview's transcript prior to coding or other data treatment often referred to as a member check. To allow for continuing participation in the study's process each participant was asked if they would like to continue in the dialogue by reviewing their cohort's summary report and if convenient be present at the report's dissemination. Five participants from each of the three ten-year cohort (1975-

1985, 1986-1995, 1996-2005) participated. As there were more female graduates overall from the program than males, no criteria were set for a male/female mix.

Recruitment

I recruited a stratified (five participants for each of three decades from 1975 to 2005), purposeful sample for my participants using the WLU CP list-serve, which circulates to approximately 230 WLU CP graduates and other interested parties. Responses to an email request for study participants generated a sufficient self-selected sample for me to send letters of information (Appendix E), consent forms (Appendix F) and further contact information to each respondent. Thirteen of the participants were recruited in this manner. Two participants were suggested to me by referral, or 'snowball' by one of the self-selected participants. Participants each received a gift under \$10.00 in value and a ticket for a draw to win an evening for two to the movies.

A purposive, self-selected sample with a male:female ratio of 3:12 of key informants completed the interviews. A total of 15 participants completed interviews, 5 from each cohort. Cohort A, representing graduates from 1975 to 1985, had two men and three women participants, cohort B, 1986-1995, had four women and one man participate, and cohort C, 1996-2005, had all women participants. Overall there were three men and 12 women representing the 30 years from 1975 to 2005. There was a representation from across Canada among the participants, three working outside of Ontario: two in western provinces and one from the east coast. Additional interested parties came forward but did not meet the criteria, mostly because they have been working out of Canada since graduating.

Data Collection

Overview

Interviews were conducted in private; the audio-tapes of interviews were kept and transcribed by me, and transcripts were sent by email for member checks to participants with their prior approval. Identifiers such as proper names, place names and organization names were removed as they were not essential to the study. Quotes were identified by the code I used to identify each participant's transcript. For example, A5-KI-03 refers to cohort A (1975-1985), KI refers to Key Informant, and '03' means they were the third person to be interviewed out of 15 participants. Permission for the use of quotes was secured from each participant before the document was printed for circulation. By indicating the interview order, I was able to review the study's developmental process, as consecutive interviews could be adapted to include emergent nature of the research. Although each participant had given permission to use the quotes, with the aforementioned identifying code, for the final version of the document my committee requested that I use pseudonyms. In keeping with the theme of 'planting seeds', I have selected Latin names of trees native to Canada as participant pseudonyms.

Key Informant Interviews

The interviews were done over a 13-week period from June to September 2006. Five interviews were conducted by phone; the remaining interviews were conducted in person in settings suggested by the participants, often their office, or in a neutral area (a vacant office setting). Two interviews were done in public eating areas. All interviews were audio-taped with participant's permission, and field notes were written during and after each interview session. There were some difficulties with recording four of the

interviews. Two were due to technical problems with the microphone and two were due to poor cell phone connections. The first two interviews had technical recording problems, which were discovered early enough to permit the participant to review the material. One participant permitted me to record a shorter second interview to re-capture the previously missed section. Another participant emailed me additional thoughts a few days after completing the interview. There were deviations from the planned interview process as participants contacted me to contribute additional data after reflecting on the interview and emphasized points they believed to be of particular importance.

After reviewing the purpose of the study and consent forms with each person, I conducted one to one and a half hour person-to-person interviews with each key informant. The five telephone interviews were lacking visual cues and were susceptible to interruptions beyond my control. The face-to-face interviews tended to be more personal given that participants had selected the time, place and day of their choice. While everyone had received the interview schedule prior to being interviewed, not everyone had the opportunity to review it before hand. Those who had a chance to prepare were very succinct in their contributions. However, those key informants who were less prepared contributed more to the process through interacting with me allowing ideas to emerge through dialogue.

Additional Field Research

I found it useful to make notes in a field notebook to record pertinent information about settings, interruptions, and other conditions relevant to the interview and the audio-recording while keeping a second journal for writing personal ideas and insights as they

emerged at anytime, whether I was doing research or not. A third method of capturing the essence of the work was to use flip charts.

Field notes were also an important part of the research. I used note-taking during the interviews to keep focus and stay on track. Occasionally the key informants would want to refer back to something they had said earlier in the interview and I would have it noted, and confirmed. Taking field notes not only aided in capturing the essence of the interview sections missed due to technical problems, but contributed to the overall mood and passion of each individual key informant.

I also kept a journal throughout the research period noting my own interactions with the key informants, the raw material and new ideas that constantly surfaced. If there was time before the interview, I would make a note of the environment of the interview, if the person was ready or rushed, had only a short time frame or was interrupted by phone calls. After interviews I would make additional notes as to my impression of the interview; did it go well? Did they seem to understand the topic? Were they engaged with the subject matter? Sometimes, the depth of their comments would impress me as I observed the passion and engagement each participant had with community psychology and SSC work.

Journaling was also important during coding and interpretation and writing phases of the research, as new issues and thoughts surfaced in unusual places. I also used my cell phone to record messages to myself when pen and paper were not available.

Data Treatment

Transcription

I transcribed each interview, referring to field notes if necessary and included significant cues such as laughter, sighs and asides. Including such cues reminds me of the

tone of the interview, like whether a remark is meant to be sarcastic and helps in the correct interpretation of an excerpt. Lines in the transcript were numbered to provide reference points during coding and when requesting permission to use quotes.

Member checks

After transcribing each interview, I reviewed the transcript for corrections and removal of identifiers, and then sent the transcript by email to each participant for a member check. Not all participants replied to the initial request for a member check, which necessitated maintaining a check and response list. One participant gave me permission to proceed without her member check, as she would be unavailable for comment.

A member check allows for participants to continue in the research dialogue and process and to confirm accuracy and anonymity of the data, as well as authenticity and trustworthiness of the data (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Denzin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). An electronic copy of his or her interview transcript was provided to each key informant to read and provide a member check on the accuracy of the information. Any requested changes were made, most often being to remove any potential identifiers. Member checks allow participants to continue in the research dialogue and process.

Cohort checks

During the interviews, participants were asked if they were willing to review a summary report from the interviews of four other members of their 10-year cohort. The brief reports followed the interview schedule guideline and included definitions and examples of SSC, and a summary of the influences the members had experienced during

their work in the community. When the cohort summaries were completed, a report was sent out to a previously selected participant for review and comment. As with the member checks, cohort checks continued the research dialogue with self-selected key informants who expressed a desire to remain part of the research process by reviewing the cohort case summaries for their cohort. Each cycle of participant dialogue enriched the texture and depth of the research material.

After the reviewed cohort summaries were returned, the results were combined into a 30-year collective case study following the same sections and frameworks developed during the individual case coding procedures.

Coding

The transcribed and member checked documents were then saved as .rtf files in order to be imported into NVivo 2.0 (Richards, 1999) software program for coding. Codes for SSC definitions and examples, and a sensitized, framework for driving and restraining forces were established (see SAF Figure 3, page 43) prior to the coding process.

During the coding it became apparent that the reported experiences could be coded at multiple levels, because any particular influence experienced would have points of origin and points of impact. For example, a political act to end social housing program funding would be an economic restraint to organizations uniquely mandated for meeting social housing needs. The transcript would be coded from the SAF as having economic (impact) and political (origin) themes experienced at both organizational, personal and community levels of influence.

A second review of transcripts treated emergent themes with an open coding process, allowing for the uniqueness of each case to emerge. Each transcript was treated as an individual case study during the initial coding. Afterward, a brief two to three page summary of each transcript was produced before proceeding to summarize the 15 transcripts into three-10 year cohort studies. Five individual transcripts for each period were summarized by research question categories for each ten-year period, noting both similarities and differences (negative cases) and any unique circumstances. The cohort summaries produced a second data set for analysis. Combining all transcripts for a 30-year collective case coding produced a third data set for analysis.

During the coding process I recorded my thoughts about the materials, my connections to the research and to others by writing memos and journaling. Some of the notes indicated a need to expand and elaborate on terms in the SAF initially developed. For example, I needed to add an explanation of what was meant by spiritual, 'transcendent', temporal and cultural influences.

Analysis of Data

For the individual, case-by-case analysis, each individual transcript was reviewed on its own merit using the SAF to situate the participant's experience in a time frame, degree of SSC activity and comfort levels with challenging status quo relationships. Analysis also included reviewing data from open coding processes to include emergent themes. I started with reviewing the coding from (SAF), for thematic commonalities and differences between individual transcripts and cohorts. The majority of transcripts had almost all of the forty possible themes present. I chose to start with the assumption that all forty SAF themes would be present in each transcript. As each transcript's codes were

reviewed SAF codes were deleted from the list of 40 possible themes, while new emergent themes that had been open coded were added. Thus, any of the remaining forty SAF codes could be assumed to NOT be an important influence, while new emergent codes could be added. A few surprises emerged in addition to the sensitized concepts. Spirituality, cultural contexts, temporal elements and 'solid structures,' such as bureaucracy and government, were included through the open coding process.

The individual transcripts were grouped according to graduation time periods, forming 3-10 year cohort groups comprised of five transcripts for each period (1975-1985, 1986-1995, and 1996-2005). Summaries of each cohort group were developed using the coding framework to produce an overview of three decades of graduates' experience. The summaries included SSC definitions and examples, new emergent themes, comfort levels with SSC activity and status quo challenges. For the 30-year collective case, I returned to NVivo software (Richards, 1999) coding to assemble similar themes across all cases, and then sift out significantly different themes that had surfaced, and note any negative cases that disconfirmed my initial findings and interpretations.

To establish terms of reference for the phrase *systemic social change*, each participant's response to the question to define SSC in their words was copied and pasted into a word document in order to do a side-by-side comparison of all 15 responses. Overwhelmed by the amount and range of SSC definitions, I needed to find a systematic way to grasp the responses. I devised a grammatical analysis to apply to participants' definitions and comments about SSC activity, namely, the *Who* (subject) *was doing what* (verb) with or to *whom or what* (object). Each response was coded for a subject, verb and object as well as breaking the term "systemic social change' into what system their

response was linked to, what did the term social imply, and what activity (verb) did change imply? The selected phrases were then analyzed at an individual level. To categorize each individual SSC definition, it was broken into its grammatical elements and entered into a table. Subjects, objects and verbs were then reviewed for similarities that would permit a table of categories to be developed. In grouping data in this manner I could view the collective experiential SSC definition by actions, players and systems. By selecting subjects, objects and verbs, I arrived at a collective definition of SSC that accommodates systems and degrees of SSC activity. I could then bring the experiences together to form a collective and community psychology specific SSC definition, with accompanying examples.

I used flip charts as another method to map emerging relationships, matrices and related themes to contexts. Visual aids assist me in my understanding of dynamics, movement and change. This method helped me to visualize the dynamics of complex systemic relationships which were surfacing during coding, interpretation and writing. During coding, the flip charts helped to group open coded items into groups and categories, which could then be charted in a manner to understand if there was any relation between categories.

Findings

The study's purpose is to document the SSC agents' experiences, from individual case through to a collective case in order to understand SSC from a community perspective and to establish a common systemic social change definition.

My specific research questions are:

- 1) What is the experience of WLU Community Psychology programme graduates acting as systemic social change agents in the contemporary (1975-2005) Canadian context?
- 2) Using Force Field Analysis theory, what are the major driving and restraining forces influencing systemic social change work?
- 3) From the collective experience can we establish a clearer and empirical understanding and definition of SSC from a uniquely Canadian community psychology perspective?

The first of the following sections documents the agents' basic demographics and their experiences. To understand the more salient of the experiences the second section includes the Sensitized Analytic Framework (SAF) as a means to identify driving and restraining forces which influence SSC efforts as well as emergent themes found during analysis. Participants' definitions and examples of their SSC work are presented in the last section.

Participant Characteristics

Participants' characteristics were included as a potential factor in the experiences of the change agents and provide a backdrop for the experience documentation.

Participants' ages, from Cohort A (1975-1985) to Cohort C (1996-2005), ranged from 56 to 27 years of age, representing three decades of community psychology graduates. The average age is 43 years. All participants either worked in community psychology type settings after graduating, or continued on to higher education. They represent a range of field experience from four to 25 years but collectively represent over 210 years of community psychology experience working as SSC agents.

All of the participants have worked in Ontario at one time and 12 were working in southern Ontario at the time of the interviews. Six reported that they are working or have

worked elsewhere. Two are currently in western provinces; one is in the Maritimes and four participants work or did work outside of Canada. Only one of the 15 participants preferred rural settings for their work all others work in urban settings. One participant's organization has started doing some rural consulting in northern Ontario.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Gender	Age	Years	Additional education	Job Descriptions
Female	33	10	Yes	Community-based and academic research, some policy work.
Female	27	4		Contract research- part time
Female	42	10		Consultant, management, program development, implementation and evaluation in public health
Female	46	13		Immigrant settlement counselor, project coordinator, public health planner, planning and evaluation management
Female	32	8 - 9	In progress	Public Health, education, mental health, counsellor, educator & teacher, community research, evaluation, community development
Female	46	18		Community mental health, child welfare programs, neighbourhood developments, supervisor of prevention and community-based programs in government, non-profit and grassroots.
Female	45	17		Research/contracts: community mental housing, women's health, clinical trials
Male	40	14		Director of Research
Female	37	14	In progress	Contract/academic
Male	56	28	Yes	Director of his own organization, consultant in conflict resolution, criminal justice intervention and healing
Male	51	21		Consultant, advocacy, public awareness, for differently-abled
Female	54	25	Yes	Senior management, large organization, addictions and mental health policy.
Female	48	16	Yes	Public health, policy, academic teaching & research, hospital settings
Female	50	7	In progress	Research

Community psychology jobs are varied and the settings are diverse. Allowing for overlap in some areas, four participants have worked in public health, four are directors in research and/or policy/advocacy organizations, seven work in research/academic and or policy areas with university-affiliated organizations and the remaining two are either working on contract or are in temporary research positions. Seven have pursued higher education, either in public health, law and justice or other fields related to community psychology's values and philosophy.

Annual earnings for the most part were between \$50,000.00 and \$85,000.00. Three of the 15 participants reported earning over \$100,000.00, with two women topping the list at over \$200,000.00 in earnings.

Individual Participant Experiences

A general overview of the collective experience is first presented here to lend a values-based backdrop and flavour to the preceding demographic section and provide a bridge into the more specific detailed section which follows. As the analysis progressed, participant experiences fell into six specific thematic areas of SSC work.

Overview and Participant Values

The majority of the participants not only work with and in community settings, but they also participate in social activist type groups- up to and including international level organizations, sit on local community boards or are involved in children's sports leagues. Their personal values were often what led them to community psychology and so they have maintained those values throughout graduate studies and beyond. One participant expressed their choice as:

It's more of my faith values than the community psychology values, to a certain extent, map on to and help to articulate and to frame issues in

helpful ways as opposed to casting all my present and future hopes on community psychology values? (...) A discipline which was able to articulate things and theorize things in a way that seemed to make a lot of sense to me [and] to help me understand the world a little bit better, and my place in it, and what my role could be in the world. – Juniperus

In this sense, community psychology academic programmes attract students who have already established a value-base similar to community psychology. Participants reported finding the WLU CP programme as being a good match for them.

In general terms of challenging the status quo, participants saw their lives, for the most part, as comfortable, but also acknowledged that their friends considered them to be ‘rebels’. One person, Thuja, confided that, ‘there are CPers and then there’s the rest of the world’, to express her occasional feelings of isolation while maintaining her community values. She also believed that her family and community didn’t necessarily understand the values and concepts which are an integral part of doing community psychology work and that sense of isolation had the potential for stress in doing change work because she was unable to share her work with the people closest to her.

The feeling of isolation was a fairly common theme for those living and working beyond the south-western Ontario region where many community psychology graduates have found a place to live and work. One person in the southern Ontario region admitted that:

“... when I joined this organization someone had already paved the way for these ideas and values.”
- Carya

In terms of isolation, alone-ness and being a change agent, it seemed to be much easier when the first cohort had already established themselves in a community and forged relationships, ideas and language for change work.

Spiritual and faith-based values are related to the caring and compassion values of community psychology but it became apparent during the interviews that there may be incompatibility between a community psychology perspective of change and a faith-based organization's perspective. Some of the opinions expressed during the interviews were based on formal and institutional religious ideals, while others expressed a more intuitive spirituality. Most of those participants viewed those values both as intrinsic motivators in their work and also being a valued resource for healing and burn-out prevention. In referring to the work of Henri Nouwen, Juniperus said:

[Henri Nouwen] speaks very strongly about the motivations for doing what you would call social change work. And he talked about it as not doing it out of our own needs, for purposes of our own needs, [but] that they need to come out of what he calls the house of prayer. That point where we as individuals, meet with our maker, with our creator and realize that we get our marching orders from him and not of ourselves. Part of it is, maybe a healing thing, kind of exercise you have to go through before you can actually go out and do the big work or the little work. -Juniperus

Regardless of whether one's faith was formal or intuitive, participants found by including their faith/spiritual values they could approach change work and deal with any stressful events in a healthy and balanced manner. Others found that by being in natural environments, or working with their hands as opposed to mental work, they could heal and balance their lives.

.... this is what I do, this is who I am. (...) it's just sort of one's sense of one's destiny. I do write very sad poetry and it's at times extremely angry and dark and desperate. And it's the things that I can't say in my public life and the emotional thoughts or feelings I'm having that as a professional simply can't be brought on the table. I think I'm compelled occasionally to write poetry to... to do that and another thing that I'm doing is I began carving about three years ago and I find it, working with my hands and carving, has a therapeutic dimension to it. - Abies

Involvement in the arts, music, poetry, and handicrafts etc., as indicated in the above quote can be one manner of healing and recovery from the sometimes demanding work of being a change agent.

Six Thematic Areas of SSC Work

Participants identified a number of ways and places in which SSC work can occur or be introduced. Assuming that an initial starting point for SSC is to identify problems, power inequities and imbalances, the following six areas emerged from a thematic analysis of participants' experiences with SSC activities: building and fostering relationships (relational), preparation and ground work (setting the context), identifying the what of change (systems), strategizing and mobilizing initiatives (action/activism), being inclusive of all stakeholders (holistic systemic social change) and evaluate our actions (feedback loop). The areas identified during the analysis can be linked as a process as well as separate activities.

Building and fostering relationships: relational.

The importance of relational work was a persistent theme in the interviews. Building relationships, fostering good relationships, supportive relationships, along with language and tools for building and maintaining those relationships were all essential activities of SSC work. In doing so, change agents transcend their immediate needs and requirements in their consideration of others' needs. One participant after the first interview with me had the experience of being approached by someone in the community who needed a listening post:

The whole notion of supporting people (...) who work within the system, actually, since we talked, people who worked within the system have, who I've worked with a lot, have approached me to (...) kind of to listen to things? In the last week. And so, I was thinking about how important it is

for them to have support within the system, I'm sure. But also outside the system, and what an important thing that is to do. Populus

In this quote one week had passed since the participant's interview and our second conversation. Over that time the participant had given much thought to the interview and relationships as a key point in her reflection on change work. The above quote was her reflection on both our conversation and the event that followed and she wanted to make a clear point to me the following week when we spoke about how important that realization was to her and this research. It is interesting because there is no direct or immediate gain for the participant in helping or supporting someone on the inside, but instead she acknowledges that change can happen indirectly by supporting others in their work, sometimes by just being a good listener.

Other relationships in community work are between professionals and lay people at grassroots levels. While not everyone has academic training, participants found that lay people understand concepts even if the technical language is not present.

I find when I talk to lay people [they] get it. [they] recognize that each relationship is valued and to be included and how you are actually [to]perform (...) and how you going to, you know ... There are relationships., [and it] makes sense to lay people. Juglans

Participants recognize the value of individual experience when working with grassroots and community groups. However, participants reported that it is a more challenging and difficult task to respect community members with values contrary to community values.

There's integrity. It's not about professionalism. (...) it *is* about professionalism, but it's also about integrity, about how you treat one another, is really important. You can have severe ideological clashes, but if you're at least being respectful, you can make it work. – Larix

The above quote is an illustration of a participant's response to her oppressive work environment during the Mike Harris political era, which was one of her greatest challenges. Her response was to rise above pettiness and call on her professional training and work from personal integrity and respect. Relationships in this case are about finding ways of working under difficult and stressful conditions with people who are opposed to social programs. Under these conditions respectful relationships become a key element in change work. Another participant expressed it this way:

So, always whining about this miserable state of affairs, you know I hate that. 'I hate Harris' and all that kind of stuff. That's not going to get you anywhere. And you know, maybe you don't want to go and have dinner with the guy, but you know, you can't avoid the fact that those people are in power and they control resources and isn't it more productive to have a constructive relationship and to find, not necessarily parallel ways of working, or agreement, but constructive ways of working together towards certain agendas.

- Thuja

Relationships between community organizations and grassroots groups are also important, especially during times of restraint and 'no change' or regressive policy making.

Another problem I see, and that is, a lot of people have similar ideas about how things need to change for second order change, but they are not working together, they are working at cross purposes, (...) I am shocked at how often these groups don't collaborate, or cooperate or even inform each other. And so, we're not well organized across the various groups that are involved in these changes, and those who don't want to change the status quo, take advantage of that.

- Tsuga

Participants viewed relationships not only as occurring between individuals, but also between groups. Collaborative and supportive relationships are necessary in the community in order to counter actions which create divisiveness and competition between change agent groups.

Other relationships that have long term influence on change work are the mentoring and supportive interactions which may occur during formative graduate work. One participant reported a comment from one of her students about the importance of having a strong mentoring relationship during his formative academic years:

One of my students, (...) said (...) you take up social change and activism if you have a professor who is known to protect you, to put their protective wings around you so that, you can be as activist as you want and take these to great passion and be a researcher and get your credentials, as long as you've got a supervisor who really knows, will swoop down and make sure that you stay fine in your career for those years. And that's a very powerful statement.

- Tsuga

A student's relationships fostered during their time of preparation can be as important as other relationships when working as a change agent. Many of the participants had similar reflections on their time as graduate students at Laurier. Some remembered significant readings; other still had books which had been mentioned during seminars, pulling them off bookshelves during the interview to give me titles and author information.

Setting the context: preparation and groundwork.

A few participants commented on their work and the realization that at times there might be a need to change the environment before SSC can happen: i.e., educating oneself, colleagues or others in finding common ground, appropriate language and concepts. It can mean engaging in self-assessment in determining if you are ready to take on bigger and bigger challenges by asking yourself 'what is your immediate comfort level with your work?' It can also mean that what didn't work in the past, may work this time around, and not to let inertia interfere with current progress.

... iatrogenesis, you know, we do things as a matter of course, because we have always done them that way, and don't realize that those sometimes

keep a system alive that has detrimental outcomes. So in the process of organizations, I think discovering that and learning that, there needs to be supports to do that in a way that isn't judgmental, that isn't finger pointing, that's invitational. - Salix

The same participant found that language which is invitational and nonjudgmental or confrontational in doing change work is useful at initial stages of community work when working with others. At other times the ground work lies within:

I think what sometimes stops us, is, you know, where our egos get in the way. So, our egos get very much intermingled with the job that we have, so the success of the project is our personal success. The failure of the project is our personal failure. I tried over time... so more or less successfully; it depends a lot on what side of the bed I get out of, to disentangle my ego from it. And put myself in. So I don't... I check my ego at the door, but I don't check myself at the door sometimes, as I come into the office? So that also gives me a sense of calm because I don't need to sustain that, or self-preserve that 'other' in here. - Salix

The participant emphasized the importance of engaging in self-reflection before entering a setting to determine what her personal entanglements in an issue might be, and then detaching her ego from the outcomes. In another part of the interview she had said she is clear with herself that if she loses a contract or a job, she is not losing her life. We can be passionate about an issue without it becoming personal.

Identifying the what of change: systems.

The systems level of analysis includes both concrete and abstract issues. Work in policy, rules and regulations were treated as concrete items while power and the inertia of organizations and institutions were considered as abstract concepts. One person's definition of SSC was simply to change the rules. Other informants define SSC to mean considering power at macro levels of social understanding and conditioning. Work at

macro levels has its own limitations and frustrations because we have to consider much larger timeframes for any kind of measurable outcome.

Where I work right now, (...) we have one foot in government one foot in community. I, if I ever have a moment really to think it through, and write it down there's something in that model that works, because quite frankly I can play the two systems off against each other. Right? Because if community goes totally overboard and wants to change the world tomorrow, but they need 3 million dollars, I can gently remind them that we're funded through government, if government wants to stifle a community action, I can say, 'but there's a whole connective thinking and action process', (...) so I feel that sometimes [I'm] a messenger between the two.
- Salix

Here the participant consciously works with each system and acts as facilitator and 'messenger' between two systems, considering it as a useful model in her work. Other participants have worked with different and non-traditional social change sectors such as business in developing climates for social responsibility in business and the community. One person related their experience with the local Chamber of Commerce as being a useful and welcome initiative for both parties.

Chamber of Commerce which doesn't talk social justice or social change language, but recognizes those ideas as being part of what makes for a vibrant community and therefore, a healthy business environment.
-Juniperus

Business is not often considered a 'natural' partner for social justice initiatives and the potential alliances with the economic sector for systems change can be ignored. The above quote illustrates that some change agents are considering these potential partners for change in community-based work and that there can be positive outcomes from those alliances.

Strategizing and mobilizing initiatives: action / activism.

Action work can happen in SSC as working for change becomes planned, and

visible. It can mean changes in policy but it can also mean changes in attitudes and assumptions about people. Participating in activism for change can motivate and inspire change agents.

I mean that was activism, in a way, and it felt like we were working towards some social, important social change on behalf of and with the residents, and then also, at a policy level in terms of, you know, what is the model, the most appropriate model of housing? - Taxus

The sense of accomplishment of doing something meaningful has remained with this participant for many years and is still fresh in her memory. Action for some participants meant being supportive of others who are better situated to be change agents:

I've found that there are really good people who are willing to work with community and who are willing to say, you know, ok. In my personal opinion might be one thing, my official worker opinion might be ... position might be something different, but here as a worker, within the system, here is what I suggest. You do to bring to, or bring me this, this and this so I can sit at meetings with so-and-so and such-and-such and this is how I suggest you can use me to help you move this forward. So they are willing to do what they can within their official position? And there's some really good people. Who are like, being squashed by the system and you know, I don't know how long they will last. - Populus

In this instance the participant was willing to facilitate the action of people working within the system providing materials and tools to aid in change work. The following quote shows that some of WLU CP graduates work with and between multiple systems as required. Although her field is public health she involves the judicial, medical and government systems in the realm of domestic violence by changing the systems' understanding of the phenomenon.

I deal a lot with governments and how they respond to its citizens from a medical, public health perspective. So, advocating for change, heading up things for them to help them see things differently. I do a lot as you may know in terms of domestic violence victims, and how we do, move resources around, I then work within the court areas to how we can make the court procedures better and more empowering for domestic violence

victims, and child abuse victims, who are almost all female. And then, from the other side, how groups are treated in society, more generally. That's more from the public health focus, and that would be how disadvantaged groups, determinants of health issues, are addressed by individuals, organizations, and then the community. And then I work again with the government. So, how I do this is through academic publications. (...) The other way is to be on various committees and groups. Which works very well. The other thing is to be called in to comment on these things because you're seen as being an expert to the government.

- Larix

Also, the quote demonstrates that after a practitioner has spent enough time developing expertise, they can be recognized and called on as consultants. Therefore, by building credibility it becomes easier to make change happen.

Community psychology in addressing power relations, supports the expertise of individuals, no matter what their background or training, and attempts to exert our 'professionalism' in community work. In some cases this seemed to be an upward battle as the socio-political and economic environment was devaluing volunteerism.

I think we've also been conditioned so much to think 'only professional' is the only way. I think since that time, the whole volunteerism push has, you know, even come you know, even through that. And I also believe that the church has in my belief, the major role, as to be the transforming agent in our world, and even the church becomes professionalized, like, a lot of churches [have a] whole raft of paid staff on their roster. At least in North America, not other places, but North America we're so professionalized. And so when I came here, a lot of the work here is, is really challenging professionalism.

-Juniperus

Experiential knowledge is an undervalued asset, as the above quote points out. While credentials can be important, it seems that in general, volunteers and lay people are being pushed aside and professionals assume positions of power. Community psychology principles value individual experience and equitable power sharing, but the sub-discipline is also part of a hierarchical academic and professional system. There is a paradox at

work when the politically Conservative era in Ontario looked to volunteers to take up the burden of meeting social needs, while at the same time the demand for credentials and professionalism is increasing.

As far as working in the ‘belly-of-the-beast’ and political systems and community psychology values, at least one person saw working within the government as a plus.

Working for a government institution as opposed to a not-for-profit, makes a big difference, ‘cause there’s far greater control over and ... and power. That, that one has to ... to make a difference. Not a lot of power, but quite a bit more.
- Carya

In this case the participant’s position has enough power for her to maintain her value-base and use her knowledge of the political system to work toward change. She compared her ‘insider’ position to the position of acquaintances in not-for-profits and believed it was easier for her to gain a foothold with decision makers than her community counterparts.

Being inclusive: holistic systemic social change.

The desired outcome of any SSC work is to develop balanced and more holistic systems. Participants reflected on getting lost in the process while working toward that goal. First order, and incremental, accommodationist changes have a place within the larger context of SSC outcomes:

Most of our work is really about connecting the past, and dealing with the present then looking into, into the future. And just constantly thinking in those terms. I try to share my experiences as much as I can. There are certain traps that people fall into when it comes to policy development. ‘Oh, this did not work ten years ago, and sometimes that’s such an immobilizing way of thinking. You know, I’ve learned how to deconstruct that type of thinking, understand what is it, that were the forces ... what were the forces that made something fail? And how much of what happened in the past can really be ascribed to the present, and how much could not be? So, that they could move on.
- Carya

The above passage is an interesting comment from a participant representing the most recent cohort. Although a relatively new graduate, she has been able to see the work from an historical perspective, linking past, present and future and using that concept to reconcile some larger influences related to systems inertia. A different participant understood the holistic concept in terms of forces inside and outside of a system in a push-pull dynamic to promote change momentum.

I think about the fact that it can't really happen by itself, it has to happen with first order change. You need people pushing on the outside of the system and then you need people within the system that are willing to help channel that energy and that push and know how to navigate the system and um ... to move things forward for change and use their relationships within the system to do that.
- Populus

Once again it is relationships inside, outside and transcending the system which aid change agents in navigating a labyrinth of nested and inter-related systems. It is almost like mythological tales of journeys where the principle character has 'helpers' to provide insight and navigation tools to achieve the goal or attain the prize. Our relationships foster networks from which we can gather knowledge, insight and tools for the quest of change.

Evaluate our actions: the feedback loop.

A few participants also reflected on the paradox of change of SSC work. The paradox of change, related to chaos theory is that by changing any one component of a system, all other components also change.

A great article while I was there, [WLU] by Julian Rappaport called, *The Power Of Paradox* [See AJCP, *In praise of paradox: A social policy of empowerment over prevention*, 1981], and what it talks about is knowing that no matter what good you think you're doing, no matter what systemic change you think the world needs... as soon as you do it, you've got something wrong and you need to keep looking at it. And that's the nature of it. And as wonderful as we think we are in terms of knowing what the

world, you know, how the world should operate, by our, you know, our very essence of changing it, we've done something horrible..... somewhere. And we need to keep our eyes out as to, you know, what that change really means for other people. The grandest example is the asylums. You know, we did not create those because we wanted to torture people. We created them 'cause we thought that was *the best thing to do*.

- Picea

The feedback loop is an important part of open systems and using the concept of interconnectedness to evaluate the outcomes of change activity. The aforementioned Rappaport article refers to outcomes of change that can be divergent and not convergent, meaning that change can result in unanticipated consequences, either positive or negative. Agents need to be both reflexive and inclusive in their actions to be accountable. By including a feedback loop in the framework accountability becomes an integral part of change.

Force Field Analysis of Agents' Experiences

Force field analysis was used to understand the more salient of the individual case experiences, particularly in regards to the second research question pertaining to the driving and restraining forces influencing SSC. Salience was determined by the degree of influence a factor had on an agent, such as job loss may have been a question of economic viability and survival. If an agent had other sources of income and financial support threats of job loss may have been less salient for an individual.

Force field analysis can be used to understand individual experiences as well as community or organizational dynamics of change (Lewin, 1947). The purpose of examining influential forces is to eliminate the restraining forces, those elements which inhibit change and change agents from acting, and to enhance and support those forces which are driving the change activity.

The forty possible themes (five themes *times* four MLOA *times* two forces) listed in the SAF (see page 43) were present across all cohorts in the collective findings. For a theme to be considered as the most persistent it needed to be present more than once in each cohort, and be present in all cohorts. However, rather than present all codes here, only quotes illustrating the most persistent of the possible themes from the SAF are presented here first as *Driving Forces* or *Restraining Forces* and classified first by MLOA (personal, organizational, community, macro) then by thematic code (social, political, economic, interpersonal, transcendent or emergent).

Emergent themes and codes are presented following the SAF themes. More emergent themes were present in the restraining forces category than in the driving forces category. New codes were developed for emergent themes of: spiritual, temporal, bureaucratic, solid systems, entropy, cultural and geospatial (distances and sparse resources).

A table of transcript codes is available in Appendix D: Codebook of Force Field Analytic Framework. New emerging themes, in both the driving and restraining influence categories, are presented in Appendix G: Summary of Emergent Collective Force Field Analysis. Contradictory findings are included in the Negative Case Findings section.

Driving Forces

Anything identified in the transcripts as supportive or which could be assumed to be enhancing or exerting a positive influence on participants was coded as a driving force. The positive influences identified covered a broad range of levels from the personal to international events and social-political movements. The examples of driving

forces are categorized by MLOA, personal to macro, and then by thematic code (social to transcendent).

It was clear that all of the participants are passionate about their work and that passion is an important factor in how change agents experience and interpret external forces influencing their work. Most of the participants' comments on driving forces were focused at the personal level with social, interpersonal and political themes being the most salient driving influences.

Personal-social. There is a social factor in some community work which can be a motivator for deciding to volunteer. The desire to create and maintain social ties to a community can be considered as a driving force for an agent because there is no economic or professional tie that could be threatened. In the following example, not only is SSC work done through volunteer action, an added benefit was that the participant came to know the community in which she lives:

I really wanted to just make more connections with my community, so that, you know, and, and it's interesting. 'Cause now I go to the grocery store and see people that I know, and, because I've made ... I got to know people in my home, but because I'm not connected in a formal or professional sense to those groups, I guess I didn't feel restrained or restricted, in saying what I thought was appropriate, or would work, or wouldn't work and, I guess I had the flexibility of freedom in that situation to challenge a few things.

- Thuja

In our course work, little mention is made of community psychology practitioners volunteering their expertise as change agents or of the social benefit to an individual by volunteering. Occasionally reference was made about volunteering on a community board or steering committee, but the topic was not necessarily a course topic, except for references to working as a professional with a community group. For this individual, her

ties to the community were strengthened, thus enhancing any future SSC work in her local area.

Personal-interpersonal. The social context extends into becoming an interpersonal one when relationships are formed and supportive connections made. The interpersonal theme represents the dynamics of relationships. A relationship, for the purpose of this study, refers to any interpersonal interactions or dynamics which may arise in the course of change work.

I didn't necessarily take a front role in any of those things, yet, I, you know, I remember having many conversations, with the people who were in those positions about, strategizing, having a look at letters that are going out to the community, how can you get messages out, out to residents to inform them about what's happening, you know, what might be an appropriate strategy if this, if this decision comes about. So it's not so much formal volunteer roles in agencies, but it's about integrating the community way of thinking, the way of practicing the theories, into everyday life?
- Thuja

This individual 'integrated community way of thinking' into her daily life by having helpful conversations with community members about strategic actions, not as a professional, but as a community-minded citizen in an informal volunteer role. By developing interpersonal dynamics which were helpful and facilitative, SSC work is strengthened by supportive actions, informal organizing and relationship building rather than by fragmented change efforts, or lack of financial resources to hire professionals. The motivation here is not to be social in the sense of developing friendships, but to provide help and alternative methods in community growth.

Personal-political. When strong personal values are supported by a political victory, the memory can sustain an agent in doing other social action work years later.

It was a high point and we were the first. We got a decision overturned by the government, for the first [time] to me in [that province's] history, for

environmental reasons, so it was pretty big success. (...) at the end of the initiative, like, we had all these plans, you know. We had a camp, and we were going to barricade the road and people had determined who could go to jail and all that stuff. And we had all the training in non-violent resistances. We were fully expecting to have to do all that and then the decision was overturned and we had... we called it a surprise party, 'cause we were all surprised! (laughing) and we went into the area and we and [had] a big surprise party. Celebrated. - Populus

In this particular case of environmental activism, the participant learned the values of pursuing a cause, especially when going against formal and organized institutions, like government and business. Memories of a political victory not only serve the participant in pursuing her current work, and can also serve to inspire others.

Other levels and themes had driving influences but were interpreted through the personal lens. For example, a few of the participants had created their own consulting firms and were self-employed. Although they each admitted they could receive much better financial compensation by working for big firms or organizations, they all considered that being in smaller and self-directed organizations was a much more gratifying. So, there has been a driving force behind the creation of small organizations at community levels, but the influences are not economic, political, social or interpersonal. However, if there was a political or economic benefit for community work to be done by small organizations, then the driving forces could be said to be due to economic assistance or political support through policy for such endeavours.

Spiritual Themes

Spiritual factors across all cohorts and at the personal and community level were a dominant theme emerging out of the interviews. In this context, the word 'spiritual' refers to a philosophy that goes beyond a secular worldview and may or may not be tied to a

religious affiliation and belief system. At a personal level, the experience was extended to reflect on change work in general:

I think there's this whole other thing that we're missing the boat on, is soul work, which is different from spirituality. But when you're doing something meaningful, in your life, it affects both spirit and soul. So if community psychology is meaningful in your life, you are working with spirit and soul.
- Ostrya

Not only were spiritual themes present at personal levels, but were common to community and organizational levels too. Spirituality at a community level was coded as when people's thoughts transcend the personal and relational to more holistic perspectives on social issues.

... and so it's not only me, as a Christian who's saying this, you know these are, Punjabi, Muslim, they're also naming that. (...) The tangibles become a little bit more abstract. Ah, so we do talk about system level, as not helping individuals, but changing the structures and order of our society, and a lot of my work is articulated at that, in that kind of language, but I also trying to link it to the fact that the "why am I doing that?", is because there's another level out there that intends for us to be living in that kind of peace and harmony, and not just for our own needs.
- Juniperus

Overall, the most common theme to be added to the codebook was the need to acknowledge a spiritual component to SSC work. At personal levels, the spiritual component is an intrinsic motivation for doing caring work in human relations, pursuing a degree in community psychology and even going on to higher education to gain more advanced skills and training.

Spiritual components beyond the personal level enhanced an agent's sense of well-being and buffered them from feelings of isolation and depression, whether that spiritual component was an institutional religion, or recognizing a need to retreat into nature to heal as an expression of holistic values.

Outstanding driving forces were directly related to personal levels of an agent's well-being through social connectedness. A sense of belonging emerged as a driving force from actions such as volunteerism, civic engagement, and community membership. And related to that sense of belonging was the successful stewardship of a community through political wins.

Restraining Forces

Influences coded as restraining forces were people, systems or events perceived to be, or experienced as, threats to personal well-being (such as job loss), political or economic restraints to a community or organization. The most salient of the SAF themes were economic, political and social, which were coded as occurring at the personal and organizational levels.

Personal-economic. The following quote is an excellent example of the direct impact of a restraining force on an agent's activity. The impact experienced was at a personal level with an economic thematic content as it involved job loss.

... the need had not changed, so, the need was still there. The capacity was still there, in terms of the sector, but the funding and the political will were not. And so, then I, you know, it's hard not to take these things personally, so, not only did I lose my job, but, you know, you saw this whole sector wither away and die because... not die, but in terms of the development aspect, and the capacity to do that, it really, greatly diminished. Locally here anyway, and you know there have been some small successes since. But it's really been on a case-by-case basis. I found that very challenging, ideologically, personally. I kept remembering the pendulum swing but... (laughing, voice emotional) I'm still waiting for it to come back. - Taxus

This participant not only lost her source of income and gratification from work, but the whole sector was greatly diminished, so the organization lost out, and the ultimate outcome was diminished capacity at the community level. This example is illustrative of

a single event having an influence at multiple levels. Economic and political forces had an immediate and visible impact at personal, organizational and community levels.

Personal-political. In coding the transcript, I needed to consider the political origin of the influence and the ripple effect of political decisions. The political coding was not just concerning partisan politics, but included influence of personal politics in organizational settings often termed office politics:

It's very hard to instill ideas of community psychology, empowerment, social change, and all those things into a system that's just not willing or ready to hear it. And so I was in a very traditional psychology department, and while they wanted it to be seen that they hired somebody who was a community psychology type person, because the hospital was supposed to be doing outreach and they talked a lot about how they had somebody (...), and got their identity, and their credence for that, they never wanted to hear about it. And so it was the 'wanting to be seen to be doing the right thing, but not really wanting to listen. (...) Or even giving me the ability to even express it. So, those were two years of buckling under, and realizing it was a means to an end for me.

- Larix

In this instance, the participant had the foresight to work through her time in a politically oppressive work setting realizing it was not the time or place for her to be an active change agent. As in the quote, she believed that she could not express her thoughts--even though she had been hired to lend credence to the organization's policy on being inclusive--let alone put those values into action.

Organizational-social. Restraining influences at the organizational- social level of change work can occur with groups with similar values and purposes but who are not working together cohesively for change. I coded the following excerpt as having a social thematic content because there must be a social contact and open communications established before organizations can work cooperatively or collaboratively.

We're not well organized, across the various groups that are involved in these changes, and, those who don't want to change the status quo take

advantage of that. They give each a little bit of money to go research it, or they set up different committees with all these different people on it. They can have five committees going on about, you know, the lack of housing in {large urban area}, and the committees get ownership over their own group and don't think to collaborate with the other ones and the government, and others use that to their advantage, and so it looks like to the government they're doing something, but it will never ever result in anything. And so I think that we're not well organized and we don't know how to mobilize ourselves in order to promote some of these changes. And those in the status quo figured that out, unfortunately. - Tsuga

The above illustration also extends into the interpersonal and political content thematic areas. While the quote is based on the participant's experience at an organizational level, the participant was also reflecting on the impact at community and macro levels when other groups use the competition and fragmentation of community organizations to maintain status quo agendas. SSC work is restrained as long as groups with similar values and goals remain unorganized, fragmented and are in competition with each other.

Emergent restraining forces included spiritual, temporal, geographic, and cultural themes. The spiritual themes were identified in the same manner as described in the preceding section of Emergent Driving Forces. Temporal themes were selected and coded when the participant's experiences had a component in which time is identified as an influence or was directly related to an influence. For example, if an agent expressed a need for patience during change work, patience is related to passage of time and would be coded as related in some way to temporal elements. Temporal codes were also applied when an experience was directly related to a particular era. For example, the degree of change may be relative to the socio-political and economic era in which it takes place.

Organizational-spiritual factors. Surprisingly enough, spiritual factors also were considered as restraining forces at the personal, community and macro levels of analysis.

Usually this meant being in settings which were restrictive in a religious or personal values sense in comparison to the participant's values. A case of a restraining spiritual theme was an experience of working within a rigid and formal religious organization with values which did not make for a good match for the person's personal or professional community psychology values.

When the realization struck? I cried! (laughing) I think, truthfully, I recognize that it was not a good fit and that I did my best, while I was there. (...) But, you know, I couldn't be myself there. And [I] learned about the systems, which I learned to navigate. And that has helped me in future positions, for sure. The learning was rich. - Juglans

However, although the participant experienced this as a restraint, to her credit, through reflective exercise, she turned the restraint into an opportunity for personal growth. Participant Picea, has found in his experience in dealing with others and their motivations, that faith and human service worker positions are not necessarily a good combination, and can lead to worker burn out, as in the previously mentioned Henri Nouwen quote.

Because they're, they can't separate kind of, I think, their own need to support people in accordance with their faith, or to live well within their faith, and reality. And what is possible, and what, you know, is ..., Many people, I think, who are faith-based, tend to try and make um, Mickey-mouse club members of the Hell's Angels....(laughing) [it] just doesn't work. - Picea

In this instance, the participant was reflecting on his observations of what can happen with volunteers and the clash between faith and reality when reality doesn't meet the expectation of values.

Another participant experienced a clash in values in her first job after graduation, as she moved from a highly supportive practicum setting into a faith-based organization

with a value statement similar to community psychology, but was in fact a very oppressive setting in which any kind of reflective dialogue was not welcome.

And then in terms of my first job, I suppose after that, just recognizing that, 'do other groups share those values? [Not] necessarily? It wasn't really; there wasn't the space to sort of even talk about those values, and to engage in that kind of discussion. But to be able to critique the work that we were doing, there wasn't the space to do that. - Juglans

Personal-spiritual. As pointed out earlier, one event can be experienced at multiple levels. The following example occurs in a macro political context as the point of origin, with the impact being at a personal-spiritual level. One participant spoke directly of her experience of working within the system during the Mike Harris government era. The policies and outcomes from the sweeping changes made during that time were difficult for many people in many sectors including those working within the system.

So, ya, it was hard on the *soul*. I would say, the summary I would put on it, I mean I was there for the strikes. I was there for the riot police. You know, I saw what that (...) and I think that people were just scared. People were on both sides of (...) Just; they had no idea what they were doing. But, you know, it was very hard on the soul. - Larix

Temporal themes. Temporal themes had a number of restraint dimensions to them. Time is a factor in patience/impatience leading to frustrations in waiting for change to occur or for policies to be implemented. The passage of time can fool us into thinking change is complete and irreversible, until the pendulum of popular opinion and social climate swings in the opposite direct. We might assume that one cohort of graduates will have the same motivation and drive as preceding ones, but everyone is susceptible to environmental influences.

Community-temporal. Many participants acknowledged that changing social, economic and political cultural contexts heavily influence SSC work:

... the concept of the age of restraint. We may be slightly coming out of it, but, you know, it's still bottom-line politics. And that's what runs the, runs the world at the end of the day. Still hear about it (...) federal politics and they're not in trouble anymore. You know, the governments of the past fifteen years have done a smashing job, at debt and deficit reduction. Just smashing! It seems to be looking up, because nobody's willing to go back and start spending the money again, for fear they end up, you know, painted with that, historic, ..., [with sarcasm] historical *and* hysterical brush. It was quite an influence in human services. - Picea

Here the participant was reflecting on the general, country-wide mood of fiscal restraint which became a major restraining force in social programs, including his own organization's supportive social housing program. The effect of that restraint is still being felt although governments are no longer experiencing deficits.

Community-Geographic. The realities and time restraints of working in isolated, rural Canadian communities were a concern for those involved in this particular aspect of community work. The few participants who have worked in rural and remote regions identified factors related specifically to geographic restraints to SSC work.

... it's a huge... the region that we worked in is 17,000 square miles. So, you know, there was a lot of travel, but That was a challenge, but getting to know different communities was really neat. - Populus

One was a time-distance factor in bringing people together. Financial resources were directly connected to those factors, for example, if project funding is tied to population density small and isolated rural settings will not meet criteria. Only one of the 15 participants interviewed has specifically chosen to work in rural areas.

Organizational-temporal. For those working at the community level, in small NGO's and consulting businesses, time is a limiting factor in what you or your organization can chose to do or accomplish:

... I don't go to CPA anymore. Like, I have to pick, really carefully, which ones are the most core focussed, on the actual content of the work

that I'm doing. And so, those ones tend to, if I have to pay for them and I have to pay for our staff to go, then those ones tend to be the higher on the priority list than... Wouldn't it be nice to go to CPA and get together with my community psych [ology] colleagues, and reflect on what we're learning? Even 'though I'd really like to do that, I have to prioritize how to use the resources we have in terms of future work and ... you know contacts... etc
- Populus

Here time is expressed as a restraint to participating in activities which may provide supportive relationships and networks for change agents. Frustration can arise when faced with continually making time related choices. Frustration can hinder SSC work at all levels when any kind of change takes so long to happen. The larger cultural Western worldview is tied to outcomes and cost effectiveness, both limiting the type and degree of change that can be attempted at any time.

...but I'm typically finding these concepts maybe very challenging for organizations that are more focused on concrete thinking and specific issues, and seeing immediate outcomes. Dealing with long term outcomes and just the fact that these changes take long time is a very difficult thing to sell.
- Carya

In this case we see a conflict between the value of those supporting short-term outcomes and long term change. Here we see organizations being restrained in long term change activity because funders or other partners only seek immediate outcomes. In a larger macro context of societal values we can see the influence of immediate gratification.

Overall, the preceding quotes illustrate the link between levels of influence. The fiscal restraints during a politically, socially, and economically conservative era limits the financial resources a community can have immediate access to. Consequently, community organizations and service providers as well as individuals are forced into short-term outcome agendas with little time for organizational or personal development.

The cliché that ‘time equals money’ seems to be the operative phrase in community work during times of restraint.

Other emergent restraining influences were related to institutional structures, entropy/ inertia and cultural differences. The more 'solid' and institutional structures were the most likely to be resistant to change due to entropy/inertia.

Organizational-Entropy/ Inertia. Resistance to change was also a common theme that was attributed to ‘solid systems’ and structures that require elaborate process to change, such as laws, buildings, or in any kind of democracy, meetings, committees and discussions. Inertia exists from the personal level all the way through to macro levels of analysis.

... those medical, psychiatry, philosophy and anthropology [?] are the systems that are stifling. And they’re stifling because they refuse to be reflective. And they refuse to look at themselves. ... - Salix

One participant when speaking of the dismantling social support systems attributed those decisions to ‘benign ignorance’ rather than political bullying.

... and moving more broadly toward, you know, social justice and ya, you meet with resistance all the time. Sometimes it’s just benign ignorance. And people don’t really know what it is you’re saying. - Abies

The second most common theme was the recognition of temporal elements to SSC work, whether that meant to be patient at the personal level, to respectful of others at other levels and to include reflexive exercises as part of the process.

I try to put where we are, as humanity, into perspective as well in terms of measuring results. And I somehow have to believe that the quality of life for the majority of people in the planet is indeed better than it was a hundred years ago and better than a thousand. -Abies

Economic forces were the strongest and most common of the restraining forces because conditions of economic restraint affected not only individuals but organizations

and communities. Connected to economic restraint were corporate culture-based political and social policies especially present in Ontario during the 1990's political Conservative Party era. Longer temporal perspectives also acted as restraining influences, as governments looked to short-term outcomes rather than longer early intervention programs.

Negative Cases

One of the participants reported having no problems with restraints in her SSC work. Part of this was attributed to her work as a facilitator without invested interest in outcomes. In another case, a participant assumed that working in a faith-based setting would have been supportive, but found that it was not a good or supportive work setting.

Another participant had no problem making a choice between his values and a position which would provide him comfortable job and income, but it was apparent that the organization had only appropriated community psychology values without action.

The individual and collective participant experiences helped to illustrate the diversity of SSC work happening regardless of credentials or work setting. Part of the work involves interpretation and adaptation to an ever-changing context. Few participants had a working definition for their change work, and most preferred to provide examples of their work. Their interpretation of the philosophy and principles of SSC is a revealing window into the how, what and why of change in evolving contexts. From the illustrative quotes as an interpretation of SSC work emerged a collective definition of SSC.

Definition of SSC

The third research question is concerned with how we define change work, as individuals and as a collective, if there is a common understanding and definition from

which we base our change work, and from which we can evaluate change activities and be held accountable for our claims.

The interview question on SSC definitions referred to the evolving terminology of change definitions in WLU program course work, to refresh participants' memories as well as to prime the discussion on change work. Most of the participants did not have a ready definition at their finger tips, and were more comfortable with providing examples of their work as a means of defining their understanding of SSC. The following selection of quotes illustrating the participants' explanations of their work is presented in a format which highlights the ways in which agents understand their work in terms of what systems, what actions, and the players involved in change work.

Developing a Collective Definition

Most participants spoke of a shift in power relations, or related organizational structures when discussing systemic or second order change definitions. Others declined to define it but offered that their SSC work was more of a personal and intuitive response to an issue than a reasoned or strategic planned definition. SSC had differing degrees and levels of change across the 15 participants. Some expressed a view that changes need to occur at universal and international levels, while others thought that changes need to occur closer to individual levels.

I previously discussed the complex analytic process I used to interpret the responses to the question about a definition of SSC in the Analysis of Data section. The collective responses categorized by players, actions and systems are presented here in the appropriate category of: what *nouns* were used to describe the *system* (systemic), the

adjectives or adverbs to describe what the term *social* implied for an agent or what *verbs* were used to describe the change activity.

Systemic Social Change

Systemic was discussed in terms of systems which are perceived to be *barriers* to well-being: organizational, governance models, social assumptions, rules, things, processes, laws, system levels (including hierarchies) and *even international, macro and meta levels* of human systems. At a systems level, there was no mention of a facilitating mechanism. One participant saw systems to mean models at a local or institutional level:

I'm also finding that organizational change is very appealing to me, and I've been lucky that I've [had] opportunities in my organization, and organizations that I volunteered with, to experiment with those concepts, introducing new concepts, new perspectives... to [see] how organizations see their role.
- Carya

A participant from the earliest cohort considered systems change to be at governmental levels, while another informant saw SSC as an opportunity for organizations to grow in a developmental sense as well as just a natural process of community life.

Not necessarily looking at one organization, but looking at whole systems of organizations within a community, and even at ministry levels within the province and how all these things interconnect to make changes that will benefit the recipients but also how they impact the workday lives of the professionals who are doing that.
- Thuja

Social descriptions involved people, resources, management, policies, awareness, and power relations.

“(...) it's the way in which we feel that we need to interact with and or use power. And, I think people continue predominantly to choose or be accustomed to using power over, (...), and work that needs to be done is at such a deeper personal and values level that we may over estimate what can be achieved in, in the grand notion of systemic change.” - Abies

However, it was noted by some that those most common descriptions were lacking an acknowledgement of a spiritual component to the human condition.

Change was described as an action to intervene, prevent or remedy (primary, secondary, tertiary) processes. It can be organic, developmental, thinking out-of-the-box, *nine-dots shifting for a whole new nine dots*^{viii}, a reframing, or paradigm dancing between worldviews and cultures. One key informant went a little further with the nine-dot example and stated that it was equally important to acknowledge *and* be comfortable with the discomfort that the shifting exercise triggers.

We talked about the nine dots. [yes] and I, and how I use that exercise as a way to show how I think about second order changes, shifting your nine dots, getting a new set of nine dots. And, being comfortable, or being accepting of discomfort, in-between the old nine dots and the new nine dots, and using that exercise and analogy to help have that conversation with other people. And it tends to work fairly well. - Populus

Systemic Social Change Definitions

Systemic social change was *explained* collectively as a planned intervention or prevention activity that is intended to shift the processes, usual thinking, awareness and framing of assumptions and worldviews about people, resources, management, policies, and power relations (human relations) at systemic levels, whether that is organizational, models of governance and research, rules, things, processes, laws, systems levels (hierarchy to collaborative) up to and including international, macro and meta levels of human systems which are barriers to a person's well-being at individual as well as collective levels.

Discussion

The participants' responses revealed a number of definitions, examples, driving and restraining forces, and questions about our work as SSC agents. In many ways the

daily life of a change agent is not much different than any other average working person in Canada. Most work settings have the potential for conflict caused by office politics and differing social and economic values. However, the assumption that everyone working for social change has similar values, principles and motivations has proven to be erroneous. In our communications we have not worked from an empirically derived, common and clear definition of what systemic social change is, where it might occur, or how it is done. The experiences related here are the beginnings of establishing that understanding. In working toward that empirical and collective definition, a framework emerged which was derived from the individual experience and evolved into a collective understanding of the how, where, and why of SSC.

Participants and Study Design

It was clear that all of the community psychology practitioners interviewed are a very passionate group of people, at least when it comes to social action. I was very happy with the diversity of people who came forward to participate in this work. Although participant gender was heavily weighted with female representation, it is reflective of the male: female graduate student ratio in the community psychology graduate program. I heard about community psychology work in a number of community settings and operational levels. I also felt very honoured that highly placed, well respected people would spend some time with me in exploring ideas about social change activities.

I found this work to be a true 'discovery' of community psychology practitioners' field work experiences, which is lacking in the literature (Fortin-Pellerin, et al., 2007; Kelly, 2007; Maton, 2000; Walsh-Bowers, 1998). Many participants found that participation in this reflection and review exercise about social activism was healing and

gratifying (Kelly, 2007). The research design was significant in allowing themes to emerge as participants explored ideas and issues with me in a free-flowing interview style.

SSC: Evolving Definitions of Change

From the wide variety of definitions and meanings generated in the interview dialogues, and the occasional expressed hesitation about terminology, I can say that there needs to be a stronger emphasis on being explicit about the importance and value of systemic change in community psychology work, and being explicit about what systems we are talking about. In the literature, ways of defining change can be limited to a particular discipline, such as organizational literature's structured understanding, the what how and why of change (Burke, 2002; Lippitt, Watson & Westley, 1958) or can be vague and extremely complex as in GST (Bertalanffy, 1945) and Chaos Theory (Lorenz, 1996) and CAS (Parsons, 2007). Organizational change theory also recognizes the importance of language, communications and discourse in change work (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Schein, 1993). The variance in definitions and the gaps in community psychology literature, as an explicit reference point for systemic social change, leaves the field open to the personal understanding of each individual claiming to be doing systemic change. If indeed SSC work is being done, the systems need to be identified, and the degree of change indicated in the same way community psychology uses standpoint theory to position researchers and authors. In this way, researchers and readers can clearly identify the intent of a proposed change. Change can be identified as ameliorative, but placed within a larger context of transformative change or systemic change, as

Watzlawick et al. (1974) proposed. Alternatively, change can be ameliorative with the caveat that under periods of restraint it is the best possible alternative.

In summary, through my analysis I found that systemic social change was *explained* by the collective participant responses as a planned intervention or prevention activity that is intended to shift the processes, usual thinking, awareness and framing of assumptions and worldviews about people, resources, management, policies, and power relations (human relations) at systemic levels, whether that is organizational, models of governance and research, rules, things, processes, laws, systems levels (hierarchy to collaborative) up to and including international, macro and meta levels of human systems which are barriers to a person's well-being at individual as well as collective levels. More than one participant related that the ultimate question of equity lies in power relations – the 'who gets to name is who gets to decide' and the power differentials that create conditions of oppression. While power equity is the ultimate goal, it is more of a direction than an obtainable goal. In order to establish a more succinct, working definition I extrapolated from the collective explanation a more concise definition.

A Concise and Collaborative Definition

Systemic Social Change is a planned activity intended to shift awareness about human relations and subsequent actions at systemic levels to promote the well-being of all people through power equity.

The Collective Experience

A flowchart of SSC activity emerged from the collective participant experience. As I began to see certain preferences or expertise in certain domains, a framework for understanding the complexity of change activity unfolded. The framework is a visual

representation of how we can move from the individual experience to a collective understanding of SSC work. (See Figure 3, A Framework for Understanding Systemic Social Change p. 92). The emergent theme of complexity confirms the 2007 literature on change and CAS (Christens, et al., 2007; Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007; Parsons, 2007; Tseng & Seidman, 2007). The flowchart has the how and what components of change theory from organizational change literature, (Burke, 2002; Lippitt, Watson & Westley, 1958) and the non-linear nature of change, which is also part of GST and chaos theory (Burke, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Organizational change literature explains the how of change as a process, which was the verb component in my grammatical analysis, and the what of change as the content of a change activity which is the subject/object component from my grammatical analysis. By using common grammatical analysis, my findings are accessible to a broad and diverse audience.

The framework is a model of how individual agents work in differing areas of SSC work. It also illustrates that working in isolation plus the complexity of systems change makes the work challenging and inhibits the promotion of SSC. Some of the participants are good at the reframing of problems and work very well at the community level facilitating that reframing through education and awareness on issues. Others functioned at a systems level, taking on government policy, wording and equal rights agendas as a focus of their work. Yet others liked the activism work, getting out and shaking up worldviews and being just slightly unsettling, enough so that communities begin to reflect on their own about new ways of seeing issues. To do so, SSC agents often needed to check their egos at the door, and be happy that change happens, without being

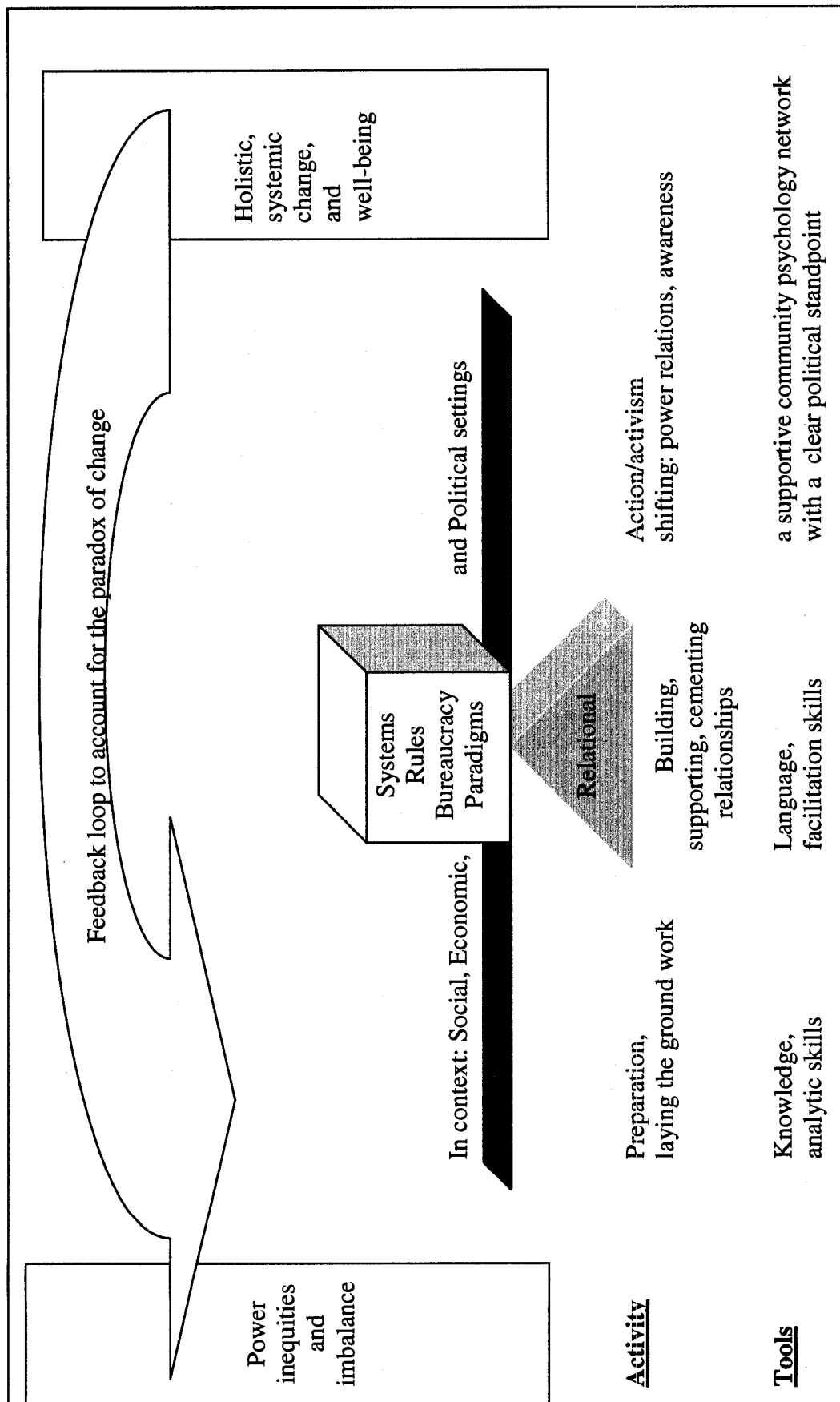


Figure 3. A Framework for Understanding Systemic Social Change

credited for it. Others were aware of the paradox of change; with any change, comes new imbalances and inequities to be addressed.

Following the framework from left to right the areas which emerged are: 1) Preparation, 2) Relational, 3) Systems, 4) Action/Activism 5) Holistic, Systemic Well-being and 6) Feedback Loop. On the far left is a starting point which refers to any current state, at any level, of imbalance or inequity.

1) Preparation

In the accompanying figure, preparation is an activity between inequity and relational/systemic work. No visible action is taken or outcomes expected. Preparation for change involved not only defining a setting and its stakeholders, but also includes checking one's own assumptions, abilities and readiness to take on a challenge at any particular time. A community psychology practitioner's awareness of being connected and responsible to others underlies their commitment to SSC activity. SSC agents also need to check their egos at the threshold of change activities (Maton, 2000). Many times the ground work and preparation for a change will be done, but in the short term, no action is taken. It might be years later that a proposal will be taken up by new players in the community and the developers of the original idea do not get recognition. At this point one needs to be reminded of the big picture and if SSC work is for personal gratification and recognition or for the greater good.

2) Relational

The most outstanding theme arising from all cohorts was the importance of relationships. Building, maintaining and strengthening relationships in whatever level of community one is working in is paramount to SSC work. The challenge is to avoid

working in isolation and to promote communication and collaboration through relationships. In the literature, Kelly (2007) referred to the importance of graduates being supported during the multi year process of relationship-building. To do so, agents need a strong theoretical background and training in language and communications skills. These tools come from both formal education and continuing support through networks, workshops and maintaining strong connectivity with community psychology. Intrinsic community values mapped onto community psychology values and philosophy are strengthened and enhanced by supportive relationships and connectivity with like-minded individuals and groups in community and work settings. Supportive environments seemed to be lacking for community psychology graduates who have left the WLU immediate environment, and many of those commented on feelings of isolation. What is the place of an institution and program such as WLU's Community Psychology in fostering on-going relationships with graduates? Are students seen as a commodity which cycles through every few years only to be heard about if they stay in the immediate community or publish? In Figure 1, I have set the Relational component as the fulcrum of change. On-going building, supporting and cementing of relationships is fundamental to community work, no matter who is involved and this view is supported in the literature (Alcade & Walsh-Bowers, 1996; Kelly, 2007; Linney, 2004; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Reppucci, 2004; Trickett, 2004; Walsh-Bowers, 1998; Weinstein, 2004). Part of that relational equation is respect and respectful relationships even with those with differing views and philosophy. Finding common ground is one key to having and fostering respect. Many participants noted that when sitting at a community roundtable, at least one person at the table will have a family member with mental health concerns,

another one will have personal connections with people who are differently-abled physically or developmentally. Yet, stigmas about these issues are still well entrenched in society. Situated in the field of psychology, community psychology practitioners are well placed to begin to break down those walls and begin dialogues about those issues in a safe and appropriate manner. Working with people inside a system is similar to the incubation approach of fostering collaborative work (Staggs et al., 2007). Many participants spoke of learning and using language and other concepts like the nine-dot puzzle to explain to others that reframing issues and change is possible. Organizational literature also supports the importance of communication in language and discourse in change work (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Schein, 1993). In working at the relational level, community psychology practitioners work to shift awareness about power structures, issues of system imbalance and paradigms of thought.

3) Systems

In the framework diagram systems is represented as a box balanced on a line sitting on top of the fulcrum. A cube was chosen to represent systems because the surface resting on the line indicates resistance to change. Moving in either direction will take considerable effort. Likewise, maintaining balance (as in maintaining the status quo) also takes considerable effort; consider the image of politicians waffling on issues as an example. Participants viewed systems as barriers to overcome, go around, reframe or avoid. No one spoke about systems as facilitating or enhancing SSC work. For this study, systems were rules, economic, political, bureaucratic systems as well as abstract things like social and cultural assumptions, status quo, inertia and resistance to change. Depending on what system was being targeted for change, positive outcomes could

happen relatively quickly, as when a funding rule or policy is changed, or very slowly over decades, as in changing fundamental attitudes, world views and assumptions.

4) Action/Activism

The concept of action research is a basic principle in community psychology (Elias, 1987; Nelson et al., 2007; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2005; Walsh-Bowers, 1998). Some of the graduates interviewed were better suited and situated to take on the role of activist. Most of those positioned for SSC work had pursued higher degrees to gather knowledge, tools and skills for that purpose or found themselves ideally situated to initiate change through a combination of luck and hard work. Activism essentially targeted imbalances in laws, policy, funding rules as well as shifting people's assumptions about the world and how it functioned, as in pointing out there is an alternative of collaborative vs. hierarchical relationships. As in most populations, there is diversity in community psychology expressed in willingness to be politically active or not. Only one person believed the WLU CP program was lacking in political will, while most were in the middle and one other person expressed some discomfort with the degree of political pressure existing during her time as a grad student. Overall, most believed that more support from community psychology as a discipline, and perhaps a clearer political standpoint from the WLU CP community, would be welcome as tools for supporting and sustaining SSC work.

5) Holistic, systemic well-being

At the far right of the figure is a text box representing the outcome of SSC: holistic, systemic change and universal well-being. As a goal, it is utopian, but serves as a guiding principle in initiating and instituting change. Watzlawick et al. (1974) cited

unrealistic and Utopian values as a common cause of failure in what they termed second order change activities.

I used the term 'holism' when participants referred to being inclusive in SSC activities by remembering *all* stakeholders and *all* forms of progressive change move us towards the end goal of well-being. At least one participant acknowledged the paradox of change: with every change an imbalance occurs, something else in the system will be out of balance and also need to be addressed.

6) Feedback loop

The feedback loop is an important, but often neglected part of the SSC framework. All open, well functioning systems have a feedback loop (Bertalanffy, 1945). The thermostat in a home regulates the temperature from becoming too hot or too cold, maintaining the setting between two thresholds of hot/cold comfort levels. The SSC feedback loop serves to keep settings within comfort levels of tolerance. The feedback loop can also be useful by incorporating evaluations on change activity. Recent literature has questioned if there are effective outcomes measure for measuring change (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Kreger et al., 2007). As in Watzlawick et al.'s cautionary note about degrees of change, by pushing too hard, or too fast, can disrupt relationships and is counterproductive. When the feedback loop is lacking in SSC activities, sustaining change is less likely because we assume that once a change is made it will remain. However, in the greater temporal and social-economic-political (SEP) context, we can see historically that socio-economic and political climates change, and with that change socially progressive policies can be reversed, as in politically conservative Ontario during 1995 to 2003. Community psychology practitioners can serve to remind us of the holistic

vision, that everyone has a place in change, and that even incremental changes if consistent and sustained will result in long term change.

The framework I present here is a fairly simple flowchart on the WLU CP graduate participants' collective experience of SSC work. The work of SSC is very complex and dynamic (Parsons, 2007; Tseng & Seidman, 2007) and I do not want to oversimplify a complex phenomenon. What I am presenting in this model is how the placement and actions of individual agents can become a collective force for change through collaboration and broad and long term holistic vision and planning. The pivotal component is relationships and the key to effective relationships and collaboration is good communication skills, common values, language and understanding. In the model, action is seen as moving from left to right along the bottom, rising through the right-hand column to loop back to either existing inequities or newly created ones resulting from shifting within or between systems. As mentioned in the Literature section, a more complete view of frameworks, the development of systems theories, case studies and methods for evaluating and documenting change were presented in the recent AJCP special issue on systemic change (Behrens & Foster-Fishman, 2007; Foster-Fishman & Behrens, 2007; Kelly, 2007; Kreger, et al., 2007; Parsons, 2007).

Force Field Analysis: Driving and Restraining Forces

The purpose of using force field analysis is first to understand the influences, then work to mediate those forces, i.e., inhibit or redirect the restraining forces and enhance the driving forces (Dalton et al., 2001; De Rivera, 1976; Lewin, 1947). Individuals, organizations and communities can all benefit from using force field analysis. In this case, I used the analysis to see what driving and restraining influences agents experience

in their work. From the most salient and persistent of those forces we can direct our energy to enhance the work of change agents.

From the SAF themes presented the most persistent and salient driving themes were personal-social, personal-interpersonal and personal political. Two of these themes are components of relationships and the third represents supportive setting influences. Emergent themes from the analysis presented some new themes that community psychology needs to consider when approaching SSC type work. Spiritual themes were present as both driving and restraining forces and the persistence of the theme indicates there are forces of influence that the community psychology field does not recognize.

The most persistent and salient of the SAF restraining force themes were personal-economic, personal-political and organizational-social. It is important to understand and acknowledge the risks associated with being a change agent. The gap in the literature concerning the field experiences of community psychology practitioners is an example of our lack of understanding of the risks and subsequent restraining forces in SSC work. Here, I presented WLU alumni who have experienced job loss and threats of job loss along with stressful and oppressive work settings.

The emergent restraining forces were at personal, organizational, and community levels. Themes emerging at those levels were: personal-spiritual, organizational-spiritual, organizational-temporal, organizational-inertia, community-temporal, and community-geographic.

Spiritual themes already mentioned in driving forces, were also persistent as restraining forces. Often expressed as clashes between values, participants struggled with this theme, changing what they had control over, such as making it a learning experience,

or getting through it intact, as a means to an end. Unfortunately we don't have a forum where we can all learn from practitioners who wish to share these experiences; hence we get to repeat the mistakes of others.

The inertia of individuals and organizations, the basic resistance to change and cultural/regional differences should be part of graduate work and on-going discussions. How can we best address the issues of change? What tools might we develop in recognizing what is behind resistance? Is it power? Is it lack of knowledge or political will? And how can we work towards correcting the imbalance?

Overall, the most challenging aspect is temporal at two levels because we have little control over time. However, by using force field analysis, we can choose to use the most efficient and effective means to do change work. One is at the individual level, mentioned by Kelly (2007), to maintain interest, pressure and sustain the work when there is little or no progress or when the social, political or economic context is inhibiting. The other perspective is that SSC change may be of a more geological time frame, requiring centuries to measure change, especially attitudinal changes.

Conclusions

The work provided me with data to produce an empirical understanding of the experience of SSC work and develop an empirically based definition of SSC through the 30 year collective case experience. If community psychology continues to pursue systemic social change as a tool of primary prevention, then we need to have consistent and clear definitions before we can evaluate SSC outcomes and communicate about our work.

The empirical framework for understanding the practitioners' experiences of systems change work, from individual to collective, at various levels, time periods and social-political contexts, contributes key components in SSC work. Relationships proved to be the most significant of the six framework components, acting as a fulcrum for moving change forward, backward or simply maintaining the status quo. Part of relationships is the ability to communicate effectively, hence language also becomes an important consideration in change work. Language needs to be common and accessible to all community stakeholders. A third key component is the why, or purpose of pursuing SSC. We need to keep a focus on moving towards establishing and maintaining power equity as the basis and wellspring of community well-being. By using the framework to identify key components in change work, students can learn to strategize for change activities and agents can use the framework to re-position themselves in fluctuating political, economic and social contexts.

The research also contributes to a greater understanding of the driving and restraining forces influencing change agents. The strongest driving force was the social component to the work in building, maintaining and supporting relationships between individuals and within and between organizations and community. Particularly, the pivotal importance to relationships in change work contexts and consequently the importance of communication and language in building common understanding. The importance of social driving forces is also present in the framework. The strongest restraining force was the impact of political, social and fiscal policies during the conservative 1990 period. During this time social programming was reduced or eliminated, and communities, organizations and individuals all experienced the threat of

job and economic loss, and related job satisfaction, friendships and stability. In order to maintain pressure for sustainable, systemic social change which is based on power equity, we need to find mechanisms to support our activity during times which oppose our values, instead of naively expecting that socially responsible programs and values will be maintained once established at policy levels as they were in the 1970s, but were rescinded in the 1990 time period.

Reflecting on the participants' contributions, there are actions we can take to advance the cause of greater systemic change. The work presented here illustrates that there are factors influencing SSC activities which can be mediated. Driving forces can be maximized while restraining forces can be countered, eliminated or minimized.

Recommendations

I recommend that:

1) The discipline and practitioners of community psychology work to create a working definition by adopting a succinct and clear definition of systemic social change in order that measures of change parameters and outcomes are available for the evaluation and accountability of systemic social change claims.

2) We need to encourage and support the inclusion of community level practitioners' experiences in academic literature.

3) We need to establish better vehicles and mechanisms for sharing common understandings and experiences especially for those graduates who are farther a field and isolated in their work settings. Such vehicles and mechanisms can assist in establishing and maintaining communications, celebrating the victories and sustaining the work in times of restraint by creating a greater sense of community.

4) Community psychology academic programs need to a) be clearer on their position on SSC work when recruiting faculty and graduate students and b) offer continuing support and networking opportunities to all practitioners if long term change is to be sustained.

Limitations of the Study

Community psychology does not have exclusive rights over the ideas and philosophy surrounding systemic social change theory. This study was limited to the collective 30 years of field experience of 15 people who had a formal training in prevention and social intervention based theories. The Wilfrid Laurier Community Psychology graduate program has also evolved over that same time frame, adapting itself to the faculty and student feedback from self-evaluation reports.

The participants were self-selected from a WLU department's list-serve, therefore those graduates who are not on the list-serve, or who have not maintained contacts have been missed. Also, only those interested came forward, so I have missed a part of the population who may have been disappointed with their experience with community psychology programs and have disassociated themselves from the field. I would have liked to have had their input and believe a broader survey would be useful in terms of understanding both the theories and praxis of systemic social change from a community psychology perspective.

Given the study's parameters, the findings are a limited to being a narrow focus on the experiences of Anglophone, Canadian, and WLU CP graduates working as systemic social change agents in the contemporary Canadian context. Graduates from multi-disciplinary studies would contribute to a broader understanding of human systems

and collaborative work on systems change may prove to be more effective than working uniquely from a singular position.

Overall, the framework for understanding SSC presented here is a fairly simplistic representation of SSC work by community psychology graduates.

Community Research: Lessons Learned

We can learn much more about SSC by listening to the experiences of those working for change. Theory and praxis together give us a better understanding of the dynamics and relationships in creating change opportunities. Community psychology as a sub-discipline of psychology is well placed in understanding human nature and the resistance to change that we face when initiating change.

The majority of informants expressed a desire for better access and connectivity to the WLU department and alumni, and the earlier cohorts miss receiving a newsletter that had previously been circulated. They also believed that a resource for sharing experiences would not only support, but further the work of SSC. A few also expressed an interest in exploring whether community psychology belongs in psychology, or in an academic institution, or if it should be some form of stand-alone research or centre of excellence for SSC work.

Using the analogy of not seeing the forest for the trees, I would say that I was seeing the trees, but not listening to the life in the forest. The depth and texture of those unique and distinct voices make the experience come alive.

Finally, as I neared the end of this work, I realized that Systemic Social Change is not about systems as much as it is about people, relationships and *changing attitudes and assumptions*, a paradigm shift of understanding by which SSC becomes more sustainable.

Systems will revert to oppressive forms if populations remain uninformed of alternative opportunities. Long term, sustainable change is about changing attitudes and shifting awareness and assumptions about people and relationships.

Dissemination Plan

I plan to submit two articles for publication based on this study to community-based journals, including AJCP as a follow up to the Spring 2007 series on systemic change, as well as presenting my findings to a Wilfrid Laurier University Community Research in Action seminar.

Future Direction & Research

Based on this study's limitations and lessons learned, a larger, multidisciplinary sample of change agents would assist in understanding systemic level change, particularly how that change can be sustained over time. We need greater understanding about lasting, entrenched change, which addresses power inequity, and supports agents in their work. We may need to recruit graduates to participate in a long-term study based on their documented experiences. Through multi-sector, collaborative work we can establish that understanding, and the means of measuring change for accountability. We can address the need to influence decision-makers in making long-term social programming agendas, and not short-term, bottom-line vision as a basis for policy-making.

Although pedagogy was not addressed in this paper, there are instances presented that could lead to fruitful research and pedagogical developments in our field.

It is interesting to note the recent return to SSC work in AJCP (2007) and CJCMH (2007) articles. Peer-reviewed journals could be more inclusive of practitioner experiences to sustain interest in SSC, as the most innovative of prevention work.

Personal statements and evaluations from community and critical psychologists about the challenges faced in doing systemic social change work, are reflected in the words of Isaac Prilleltensky, "... we all need support in our effort to swim against the tide" (Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002, p. 2). If the field of community psychology is determined to make a difference in the well-being of people and communities, we also need to listen to the voices of our practitioners and understand what makes the work of change easier and sustainable.

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Endnotes

ⁱ *Globe & Mail* columnist Terence Corcoran noted that [Mr. Eves's] ... financial statement was an outline of spending cuts, nothing more. ... Eves chopped payments to municipalities, school boards, hospitals, and universities by \$3.5 billion next year, and a further \$2.5 billion by 1999. Internal spending will fall \$1 billion, and handouts to business \$230 million. Not all of this will be saved, though. For example, Eves promised the \$1.3 billion in cuts to hospitals will be "reinvested" in the health care budget. More will be spent on other "investment" commitments, like the \$500 million workfare program. Not even cosmetic cuts were made in MPPs' salaries, tax-free benefits, and pensions, or in subsidies to political parties. As Charles Gordon once said: "Note that the tough decisions are never tough on those who take them." From: <http://www.libertarian.on.ca/bulletin/v17n3a.htm>

ⁱⁱ The first articles from Bertalanffy on General Systems Theory:
1945, *Zu einer allgemeinen Systemlehre*, Blätter für deutsche Philosophie, 3/4. (Extract in: *Biologia Generalis*, 19 (1949), 139-164.
1950, *An Outline of General System Theory*, British Journal for the Philosophy of Science 1, p.139-164
1951, *General system theory - A new approach to unity of science* (Symposium), Human Biology, Dec 1951, Vol. 23, p. 303-361.

ⁱⁱⁱ The term 'generation' as a meaningful measure has been criticized as a social construct. However, political science has used the term since the WWII era, in developing human science theories about social change events.

^{iv} Founded in 1985 to oppose the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, the Council of Canadians is a left wing citizens' organization that advocates for progressive policies on behalf of its members across the country. The Council concentrates its advocacy around the core issues of fair trade, public health care and the right to water, but has recently focused on what it calls the deep integration of Canada with the United States. From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Council_of_Canadians and <http://www.canadians.org/index.html>

^v The well known terms activism and activist used in a political manner first appeared in the Belgian press in 1916 in connection with the Flamingo movement. The word "activism" is often used synonymously with protest or dissent, but activism can stem from any number of political orientations and take a wide range of forms, from writing letters to newspapers or politicians, political campaigning, economic activism (such as boycotts or preferentially patronizing preferred businesses), rallies and street marches, strikes, or even guerrilla tactics... Transformational activism is the idea that people need to transform on the inside as well on the outside in order to create any meaningful change in the world. One example of transformational activism is peacekeeping which, as defined by the United Nations, is "a way to help countries torn by conflict create conditions for sustainable peace." Peacekeepers monitor and observe peace processes in post-conflict areas and assist ex-combatants in implementing the peace agreements they may have signed. Such assistance comes in many forms, including confidence-building measures, power-sharing arrangements, electoral support, strengthening the rule of law, and economic and social development. Accordingly UN peacekeepers (often referred to as Blue Helmets because of their light blue helmets) can include soldiers, civilian police officers, and other civilian personnel. From: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_activism

^{vi} Guba & Lincoln on describing the historical realism ontology of critical theory states: "A reality is assumed to be apprehendable that was once plastic, but that was, over time, shaped by a congeries of social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and then crystallized (reified) into a series of structures that are now (inappropriately) taken as "real," that is, natural and immutable. For a all practical purposes the structures *are* "real," a virtual or historical reality (1994, p. 110)

^{vii} Guba and Lincoln in describing critical theory epistemology as transactional and subjectivist state: "The investigator and the investigated object are assumed to be interactively linked, with the values of the investigator (and of the situated "others") inevitably influencing the inquiry. Findings are therefore *value mediated*. Note that this posture effectively challenges the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology; what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between a *particular* investigator and a *particular* object or group." (1994, p. 110)

^{viii} The nine dot puzzle was used in training sessions within the Walt Disney organization. Each dot has a meaning and the two points outside of the box were labeled as "The Vision" and "The Method.". According to Kihn, consultants of the 1970s and 1980s tried to make their prospective clients feel inferior by presenting them with the puzzle. The challenge is to connect the dots by drawing four straight, continuous lines, and never lifting the pencil from the paper. The puzzle is easily solved, but only if you draw the lines outside of the confines of the square area defined by the nine dots themselves. Thus, the phrase "thinking outside the box" was born. The Word Mavens refer to Prof. Daniel Kies of the College of DuPage, who observes that the puzzle is only difficult because "we imagine a boundary around the edge of the dot array."

The nine dots puzzle is much older than the slogan. It appears in Sam Loyd's 1914 *Cyclopedia of Puzzles*.^[2]
Nine dots reference from Wikipedia nine dots origins: -Peggy 8/11/07 3:34 PM

Appendix A: PsychINFO Database search

Year	# articles	Total
1970	2	
1971	3	
1972	1	
1973	1	
1974	4	
1975	3	
1976	1	
1977	2	
1978	1	
1980	3	
1981	2	
1982	2	
1983	1	
1984	5	
1985	3	
1986	2	
1987	3	
1988	1	
1989	2	
1991	7	
1992	3	
1993	5	
1994	3	
1995	6	
1996	1	
1997	2	
1998	2	
1999	4	
2000	4	
2001	6	
2002	4	
2003	4	
2004	6	
2005	12	
Total		111

Appendix B
WLU CP graduate face-to-face semi-structured interview protocol

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of systemic social change agents in fluctuating social, economic, political contexts using a collective case study design resulting in a case study of driving and restraining forces influencing systemic social change activities. At this stage in the research the terms second order change, transformational change and social intervention have all been used to describe social interventions aimed at levels other than individuals. In order to maintain consistency throughout the proposal the term systemic social change (SSC) will be used. Interview format reviewed. Ethics and consent forms read, explained and signed.

Part A: Demographic questions for purposes of defining any demographics influencing social change activities

1. *Age* or age range
2. *Year of Graduation* from WLU CP MA program
3. *Number of years working* in CP work environments
4. *Current salary range*
5. *Types of employment*
6. Current *job description and organizational level*: government, academic, community organization (NGO), grassroots, religious, other
7. *Geographic location(s) of employment*
8. What kind of volunteer activities do you engage in?
9. *What other activities do you engage in related to social activism, social change initiatives?*
 1. Professional % of time
 2. Volunteer % of time
 3. Personal life % of time
 4. Other..... % of time

Part B: Second order change (vs. first order change) has been defined as change occurring as either “out-of-the-box” thinking at the individual level, or a change in systems other than at the individual level. Various other terms are used as well such as social intervention, accomodationist vs. critical, and ameliorative vs transformative.

1. *Please describe your idea of systemic social change.* SSC description/definition is in preamble, but what is your sense of social change? How do you see it in relation to the status quo?
2. Reflect on *your first community psychology related job after graduation, please describe what it is /was like?* a) *The settings* (looking for government, non-profit agency, grassroots organizations, b) *geographic locations*, -size of community

awareness of similar work, focus in the community or committee work, c) ***job descriptions***

3. Using multiple levels of analysis, at a personal level ***what do you remember about things, people or events that either supported or hindered activities of social change or activism?*** a) ***What were the challenges*** in relation to changing the status quo? b) Was it even an issue in your work? c) Prompts- looking for was it a part of their formal training? How much is happening through your work, can you describe, or give an example? What levels of activity do you participate in SSC and where?
4. Would you care to elaborate on your experience of SSC challenges that have enhanced or inhibited your activities? a) What have you found in your life or community environment that hinders systemic social change? b) Looking for status quo pressures, how much, what kind and how is it addressed?- change, & challenge or avoidance?)
 - c) What have you found in your life that supports or enhances systemic social change?
 - d) ***Has it changed over the years, are you more comfortable after securing status and professional and financial security?***
5. ***Other variables/factors***
 - a) Personal supports family, informal networks? b) Other professional supports or organizations not community psychology?- social justice movements, community groups (environmental, homelessness, anti-poverty, mental health awareness, sexual diversity?) c) Church groups, religion, or social groups?

APPENDIX C
WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Explorations into the Socio-political and Economic Contextual Experiences of
Community Psychology Graduates as Agents of Transformational Social Change

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Peggy Ann Weston, a Wilfrid Laurier University Community Psychology Master's graduate student. I am conducting this research with my research advisor, Dr. Terry L. Mitchell.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of WLU community psychology graduates as systemic social change agents over time, in fluctuating social, economic, political contexts. A collective case study design is used, resulting in a case study of the driving and restraining forces influencing systemic social change activities. The terms second order change, transformational change and social intervention have all been used to describe social interventions aimed at levels other than individuals. In order to maintain consistency throughout the research the term systemic social change (SSC) will be used.

You are invited to participate as a participant-researcher for this study as a key informant, advisory group and / or focus group member to gain your perspective of the experience of systemic social change agents in the Canadian social, economic and political context.

The study will consist of audiotape recorded face-to-face interviews. You have the right to refuse the tape-recording of the interview. Each interview will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, will be transcribed by a person under a signed confidentiality agreement, and returned to each key informant for a member check. Each transcript, on return, will be analyzed for driving and restraining force themes related to social, economic and political contexts which fluctuate over time. Primary analysis will be presented to a focus group convened to review initial findings. Total number of participants is expected to be between 12 to 20 individuals who have graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University between the years 1985 to 2005 and have practiced in Canada.

BENEFITS

Benefits to science from this research may include increased understanding of the driving and restraining forces experienced by those involved in systemic social change activities. Individuals participating in the research benefit by being involved in research that is intrinsically linked to their social change activities in the community as professionals and as individuals. Participants will be encouraged to remain actively engaged throughout the research process of interviews, focus groups and advisory board meetings. Participants will have the opportunity to give voice to the experience of inhibiting and inspiring forces which influence them, their families, and their communities. Participants will have a chance to contribute to community development through the development of a report to be distributed to the Wilfrid Laurier University psychology department.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will receive a gift package and a ballot for a draw for theatre tickets for two. Chances of winning the draw are about one out of twenty, if there are a maximum of 20 participants. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will receive the free gift package. The draw will take place at the end of the focus group session, sometime in July, 2006 but no later than September, 2006.

Appendix C

RISKS

To avoid risk of personal disclosure you are asked to avoid topics of a personal nature. If an anecdote is relevant to the discussion, anonymity can be assured by creating a fictional character and location. All focus group participants are asked to be in agreement in regards to respecting group members' rights to confidentiality. Although this is a shared experience, there can be no guarantee that information shared will be entirely confidential. Information for counselling and support will be offered to those experiencing emotional and psychological problems.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in this study is voluntary. I will request information describing your age, gender, income and work status. You may decline to answer any of the questions at any time if you wish. Further, you can withdraw from this study at any time by advising the researcher. There will be no consequences if you choose to withdraw.

All information you provide will be heard/seen by, the principal researcher, her advisor and a paid transcribers, and will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this study unless prior written permission on the consent form is given for the use of quotes. The information gathered from this study will be used to develop a better understanding of the forces shaping systemic social change and to evaluate the study process itself. The audio-tapes will be destroyed after transcription is completed and the transcriptions will be coded and will be retained for 7 years in a secured location in the psychology department of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. The research results will be available by November, 2006. You may receive a copy by providing a stamped, self addressed envelope, or an email address.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Peggy Weston .or the research advisor, Dr. Terry Mitchell, at Wilfrid Laurier University, Psychology department, 75 University Ave W, Waterloo and (519) 884-0710 ext 2052. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The results of the research will be presented at a Wilfrid Laurier University Psychology department thesis defence in September, 2006. An additional written report will be available by November, by the electronic cp-loop list serve or, by email if addresses are provided. Articles will be submitted to Community Stream and Social Action journals

AGREEMENT

Do you wish to participate in this interview? Do you wish to remain engaged in the research as an advisory group or focus group member?

Appendix D

Code Book for Sensitized Analytic Framework

The levels in the sensitized analytic framework are the personal, organizational, community and macro. The first three are self-explanatory. Macro includes provincial and federal (national) levels of interaction and influence. The highest level of influence mentioned in one interview was the international level, which I subsequently coded and included in the final sensitized framework as a Meta level of influence. This would include United Nations declarations, policies and activities as well as World Bank, G8, and international or trans-national corporations and their activities.

Possible Levels of Analysis	Driving Forces (supportive, enhancing, motivational)
Personal	<p>Social: social factors in one's personal life, family, friends, coworkers</p> <p>Economic: if one is not overly concerned about finances, has financial support or personal philosophy of abundance</p> <p>Political: one's own political stance, motivations</p> <p>Interpersonal: relational pressures, usually within a work environment and power relations</p> <p>Transcendent: <i>ability to shift beyond one's self. "The greater good" the balance and relationship between the individual and the community</i></p>
Organizational	<p>Social: social factors directly related to organizational culture, if that culture is supportive of making changes and status quo challenges or not.</p> <p>Economic: does the work setting feel comfortable (economically) within it's community setting in challenging community status quo?</p> <p>Political: does the work setting feel comfortable (politically) within it's community setting in challenging community status quo? Are the office politics minimal?</p> <p>Interpersonal: what are the interpersonal relationships in the organization/work setting like? Are coworkers supportive of each other's work and freedom to question, or not.</p> <p>Transcendent: is the setting supportive of going beyond individual personalities and politics to work for the greater good?</p>
Community	<p>Social: is the community supportive of progressive social changes?</p> <p>Economic: does the community have access to resources and capacities for making social change?</p> <p>Political: does the community have the political will to make change?</p> <p>Interpersonal: does the community have good supportive and respectful interpersonal relationships?</p> <p>Transcendent: has the community demonstrated an ability to go beyond local politics and work for the greater good.</p>
Macro	<p>Social: What is the overall zeitgeist? Is it supportive of SSC?</p> <p>Economic: what kinds of economic policies are being made? What values drive economic policy?</p> <p>Political: what are the current political influences? (World trade, wars...)</p> <p>Interpersonal: what are the relationships between federal government and citizens like? Do politicians and policy-makers listen?</p> <p>Transcendent: is there a zeitgeist of concern for the greater good, or for business and bottom-line policy driving social policy?</p>

Restraining Forces (inhibiting, suppressing, nil, perceived risk factors)	
Personal	<p>Social: social factors in one's personal life, family, friends, coworkers</p> <p>Economic: one is concerned about finances, or a risk personal loss, job or status.</p> <p>Political: one's own political stance, motivations are in conflict with immediate environment</p> <p>Interpersonal: relational pressures, usually within a work environment and power relations</p> <p>Transcendent: ability to shift beyond one's self. "The greater good" the balance and relationship between the individual and the community. Might experience restraint as a learning experience.</p>
Organizational	<p>Social: social factors directly related to organizational culture, if that culture is not supportive of change and status quo challenges.</p> <p>Economic: is the work setting economically at risk within it's community setting in challenging community status quo?(fear of losing funding, or in competition for shrinking funds?)</p> <p>Political: is the work setting politically at risk within its community setting in challenging community status quo? Are the office politics minimal?</p> <p>Interpersonal: what are the interpersonal relationships in the organization/work setting like?</p> <p>Transcendent: does the setting suppress initiatives that are for the greater good?</p>
Community	<p>Social: Are the community's dominant culture, philosophy and values contrary to SSC initiatives??</p> <p>Economic: does the community have access to resources and capacities for making social change?</p> <p>Political: does the community have the political will to make change?</p> <p>Interpersonal: does the community have good supportive and respectful interpersonal relationships?</p> <p>Transcendent: has the community demonstrated an ability to go beyond local politics and work for the greater good, or remains very parochial and patronizing in its values?</p>
Macro	<p>Social: is the social climate supportive of SSC? What is the overall zeitgeist?</p> <p>Economic: what kinds of economic policies are being made? What values drive economic policy?</p> <p>Political: what are the current political influences? (World trade, wars...)</p> <p>Interpersonal: what are the relationships between federal government and citizens like? Do politicians and policy-makers listen?</p> <p>Transcendent: is there a zeitgeist of concern for the greater good, or for business and bottom-line policy driving social policy?</p>

Additional Codes Surfacing During Coding Work.

Three more codes surfaced frequently enough to be included in the sensitized analytic framework. Spiritual, temporal, Government, bureaucracy, solid systems, *Entropy*, *Cultural* and geographic influences were contributed as either driving and / or restraining influences at all three levels of analysis.

Spiritual refers to a philosophy that goes beyond a secular worldview and may or may not be tied to a religious affiliation and belief system. Sections of transcripts were coded spiritual as both driving and restraining forces.

Temporal (time) was used to code sections of transcripts in which time was a restraining factor to SSC activity or sustainability of programs. Successful programs had been cut due to changes in governments, (electorates and pendulum swings influence change and social policy), long-term change is a hard sell or organizations and communities change over time, stakeholder desires for quick-change vs. sustainable change. Time never coded as a driving force.

Geographic location- (isolation, lack of resources) large geographic areas perceived and lumped together as 'a community', but sharing the same funding pot but having distinctive diversity and needs were coded as a restraining force as time and distance made for greater challenges than working in urban areas for SSC.

Entropy refers to a stagnant organization or community neither moving forward or backwards. It can also indicate a stalemate in community change discussions, politics or relationships.

Cultural refers to a specific cultural system, which might be ethnic, political, economic or any other organizational culture system which influences human activity, thoughts and behaviours.

Appendix E

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY Explorations into the Socio-political and Economic Contextual Experiences of Community Psychology Graduates as Agents of Transformational Social Change

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR KEY INFORMANTS, ADVISORY AND FOCUS GROUP MEMBERS

This study is conducted by Peggy Ann Weston, a Wilfrid Laurier University Community Psychology Master's level graduate student and Dr. Terry L. Mitchell, her research advisor.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of WLU community psychology graduates as systemic social change agents over time, in fluctuating social, economic, political contexts. A collective case study design is used, resulting in a case study of the driving and restraining forces influencing systemic social change activities. The terms second order change, transformational change and social intervention have all been used to describe social interventions aimed at levels other than individuals. In order to maintain consistency throughout the research the term systemic social change (SSC) will be used.

You are invited to participate as a participant-researcher for this study as a key informant, advisory group and / or focus group member to gain your perspective of the experience of systemic social change agents in the Canadian social, economic and political context.

The study will consist of audiotape recorded face-to-face interviews. Each interview will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, will be transcribed by a person under a signed confidentiality agreement, and returned to each key informant for a member check. Each transcript, on return, will be analyzed for driving and restraining force themes related to social, economic and political contexts which fluctuate over time. Primary analysis will be presented to a focus group convened to review initial findings. Total number of participants is expected to be between 12 to 20 individuals who have graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University between the years 1985 to 2005 and have practiced in Canada.

BENEFITS

Benefits to science from this research may include increased understanding of the driving and restraining forces experienced by those involved in systemic social change activities. Individuals participating in the research benefit by being involved in research that is intrinsically linked to their social change activities in the community as professionals and as individuals. Participants will be encouraged to remain actively engaged throughout the research process of interviews, focus groups and advisory board meetings. Participants will have the opportunity to give voice to the experience of inhibiting and inspiring forces which influence them, their families, and their communities. Participants will have a chance to contribute to community development through the development of a report to be distributed to the Wilfrid Laurier University psychology department.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will receive a gift package and a ballot for a draw for theatre tickets for two. Chances of winning the draw are about one out of twenty, if there are a maximum of 20 participants. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will receive the free gift package. The draw will take place at the end of the focus group session, sometime in July, 2006 but no later than September, 2006.

Appendix E

RISKS

To avoid risk of personal disclosure you are asked to avoid topics of a personal nature. If an anecdote is relevant to the discussion, anonymity can be assured by creating a fictional character and location. All focus group participants are asked to be in agreement in regards to respecting group members' rights to confidentiality. Although this is a shared experience, there can be no guarantee that information shared will be entirely confidential. Information for counselling and support will be offered to those experiencing emotional and psychological problems.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in this study is voluntary. I will request information describing your age, gender, income and work status. You may decline to answer any of the questions at any time if you wish. Further, you can withdraw from this study at any time by advising the researcher. There will be no consequences if you choose to withdraw.

All information you provide will be heard/seen by, the principal researcher, her advisor and a paid transcriber, and will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this study unless prior written permission on the consent form is given for the use of quotes. The information gathered from this study will be used to develop a better understanding of the forces shaping systemic social change and to evaluate the study process itself. The audio-tapes will be destroyed after transcription is completed and the transcriptions will be coded and will be retained for 7 years in a secured location in the psychology department of Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo. The research results will be available by November, 2006. You may receive a copy by providing a stamped, self addressed envelope, or an email address.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Peggy Weston or the research advisor, Dr. Terry Mitchell, at Wilfrid Laurier University, Psychology department, 75 University Ave W, Waterloo and (519) 884-0710 ext 2052. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The results of the research will be presented at a Wilfrid Laurier University Psychology department thesis defense in September, 2006. An additional written report will be available by November, by the electronic cp-loop list serve or, by email if addresses are provided. Articles will be submitted to Community Stream and Social Action journals.

Appendix F: Informed Consent Form

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

Explorations into the Socio-political and Economic Contextual Experiences of Community Psychology Graduates as Agents of Transformational Social Change

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Principal investigator: Peggy A. Weston

Advisor: Dr. Terry L. Mitchell

You are invited to participate in a research study key informant interview to gain your perspective of the experience of systemic social change agents in the Canadian social, economic and political context. This study is conducted by a Wilfrid Laurier University Community Psychology Master's level graduate student and her research advisor.

INFORMATION

The study will be a series of audiotape recorded face-to-face interviews. Each interview will last approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, will be transcribed by a person under a signed confidentiality agreement, and returned to each key informant for a member check. Each transcript, on return, will be analyzed for driving and restraining force themes related to social, economic and political contexts which fluctuate over time. Anonymized, initial analysis will be shared with a representative from your 10 year cohort grouping recruited from participants for the purpose of assisting in a review and interpretation of the initial findings. Total number of participants is expected to be between 15 to 20 individuals who have graduated from Wilfrid Laurier University community psychology program between the years 1975 to 2005, and working in Canada. Research is to be completed by the end of August, 2006. No deception is involved in this research.

RISKS

You are advised that the researcher is legally obliged to report any illegal activity that involves child abuse, or the taking of a life, either someone else's or oneself, or the intention to do so. To avoid risk of personal disclosure you are asked to avoid topics of a personal nature. If an anecdote is relevant to the discussion, anonymity can be assured by creating a fictional character and location. All possible measures will be taken for the information to remain anonymous and confidential. Information for counselling and support services will be available to all participants

BENEFITS

Benefits to science from this research may include increased understanding of the driving and restraining forces experienced by those involved in systemic social change activities. Individuals participating in the research benefit by being involved in research that is intrinsically linked to their social change activities in the community as professionals and as individuals. Participants will be encouraged to remain actively engaged throughout the research process of interviews, and follow-ups. Participants will have the opportunity to give voice to the experience of inhibiting and inspiring forces which influence them, their families, and their communities. Participants will have a chance to contribute to community development through the development of a report to be distributed to the Wilfrid Laurier University psychology department.

_____Participant's initials

Appendix F : INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT continued

CONFIDENTIALITY

Participation in this study is voluntary. I will request information about your age, gender, income and work status due to the nature of these demographics having an influence on the research question. You may decline to answer any of the questions at any time. Further, you can withdraw from this study at any time by advising the researcher. There will be no consequences if you choose to withdraw. All information you provide will be heard/seen by, the principal researcher, her advisor and a paid transcriber, and will be kept confidential. Your name will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this study. Prior written permission from participants will be required for the use of quotes. The information gathered from this study will be used to develop a better understanding of the forces shaping systemic social change and to evaluate the study process itself. The audio-tapes will be destroyed after transcription is completed and the transcriptions will be coded and retained in Wilfrid Laurier University's psychology department a secured location for seven years. The research results will be available by November, 2006. You may receive a copy by providing a stamped, self addressed envelope, or an email address.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will receive a gift package valued at no more than \$10.00, and a ballot for a draw for movie tickets for two. Chances of winning the draw are about one out of twenty, if there are a maximum of 20 participants. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will receive the free gift package, but no ballot for the draw.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study,*) you may contact the researcher, Peggy Weston at west2990@wlu.ca or the research advisor, Dr. Terry Mitchell, at Wilfrid Laurier University, Psychology department, 75 University Ave W, Waterloo and (519) 884-0710 ext 2052. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose. You may not withdraw after the interview is completed due to the anonymous nature of the data, which will be confidential with all identifying information removed on transcription. You will have an opportunity to review the transcription as part of a member check.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

The results of the research will be presented at a Wilfrid Laurier University Psychology department thesis defence in September, 2006. An additional written report will be available by November, by the electronic cp-loop list serve or, by email if addresses are provided. Publication will be sought in articles submitted to Community Stream and Social Action journals

<u>CONSENT for Key informant:</u> I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.	
Participant's signature _____	Date _____
Investigator's signature _____	Date _____
<u>Consent to use quotes from interview:</u>	
Participant's signature _____	Date _____
Investigator's signature _____	Date _____

Appendix G

Summary of Emergent Collective Force Field Analysis Findings

MLOA	Cohort	Driving Forces	Restraining Forces
Personal	A	Spiritual (faith)	Government, bureaucracy, 'solid systems'
	B	Spiritual	Spiritual
	C	Spiritual	Political (lack organizational skills), government, bureaucracy, 'solid systems'
Organizational	A		Temporal, spiritual, entropy (inertia), cultural
	B		Temporal
	C		Temporal
Community	A		Spiritual
	B	Spiritual	Geographic location (isolation, resources), spiritual
	C	Spiritual	Spiritual
Macro	A		Cultural, temporal, spiritual, economic policies
	B		
	C		Spiritual