THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Innovations for Participatory Research:

Communications Implications of Paradigmatic Triangulation

by

Edith Gildart

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7 Jan. 1993
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Abstract

The focus of this thesis is the development and implementation of innovations for *participatory research* (PR), a collaborative process that unites inquiry, education and social action. First, it is proposed that *structuration theory* can be used to critique, reframe and reconcile the emphases of various inquiry paradigms inherent in PR. Second, it is also proposed that *paradigmatic triangulation* has the ability to generate more complete knowledge of local conditions and improve the theory and practice of PR. Third, it is suggested that *metaphors* can be used as a strategy to communicate the implications of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context. This thesis reports on how paradigmatic triangulation was implemented in a PR project with the Social Action Committee of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association. It is concluded that paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to strengthen the links between the theory and practice of PR.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all my "teachers" in the school of ideas and in the school of life who serendipitously appeared when I was ready.

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I. Introduction:

Inquiry, Participation and Communication

In a broad sense, both communication and social inquiry can be regarded as processes that link, construe and illuminate the human experience. This thesis is based on my interest in facilitating communication between and within different communities of people who participate in the process of conducting social inquiry. Consequently, three interrelated concepts provide the framework for this thesis: *inquiry, participation* and *communication.* These concepts are integral to *participatory research* (PR) or participatory action research (PAR) as it is often called: a collaborative process that unites inquiry, education and social action. This process includes the participation of research facilitators, including scholars or practitioners, and lay research collaborators, including people in a community, an organization or a common interest group.

The focus of this thesis is the development and implementation of innovations for PR which may improve communication between people who conduct social inquiry according to differing theoretical perspectives or paradigms; between people who theorize about social inquiry and people who practice it; and between people who have expert knowledge of social inquiry and people who have expert knowledge of their particular social experience. This thesis proposes innovations for the inquiry of PR at the level of metatheory and methodology and proposes a strategy to communicate these innovations to collaborators. While only the inquiry or research dimension of PR is addressed, it is recognized that social action is the central focus of PR. Furthermore, it should be noted that while the terms PR and PAR are often used interchangeably throughout the literature, the term PR will be used in this thesis because the latter focuses specifically on the research process.

The innovations proposed involve the application of *paradigmatic triangulation* — or different perspectives focused on a common research problem — in a PR context. This thesis provides a rationale for paradigmatic triangulation and an account of how it was implemented during the *inquiry planning process* of a PR project with the Social Action Committee of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association. The question that guides this thesis can be stated as: *What are the communications implications of conducting paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a participatory research context?*

Inquiry and Participation

Democratic participation in social inquiry can be regarded as the organizing principle of PR. All of the people who participate are referred to as researchers, and the various forms of knowledge or expertise they contribute to the process are equally valued. For example, the trained researchers who facilitate the PR process contribute *processed knowledge*, consisting of the metalanguages invented by social scientists in relation to social inquiry. The lay researchers who collaborate in the PR process contribute their *experiential knowledge*, consisting of what is considered socially meaningful by them in relation to their local conditions. Broader participation may also include scholars who regard PR as an appropriate vehicle for theorizing about social change.

Social inquiry is always conducted in real communities or organizations and all of the people who participate in the process are committed to improving local conditions. As a result, PR is a context-dependent enterprise which exhibits considerable variety in the types of change desired and in the inquiry methods used. In addition, PR projects also demonstrate a variety of emphases concerning assumptions about inquiry and social change. For example, some projects focus inquiry on explaining *causal relationships* and action is always carried out within the existing social system. Other projects focus inquiry on critiquing *unequal power relations* and action is designed to challenge or replace existing

social structures. Yet other projects focus inquiry on understanding *meaning systems* and action is carried out in a localized context. However, PR projects also demonstrate commonly held principles.

The principles which define PR and guide participation and inquiry set it apart from positivist social science inquiry. PR is interested in an inquiry process designed primarily to facilitate mutual learning and improve social conditions rather than primarily to formulate objective scientific laws or to improve theory or practice. PR is based on the assumption that the way the lay researchers or *collaborators* see their social conditions and goals is primary rather than on the assumption that participants are primarily useful objects of social research (Jacobson, 1991a). Furthermore, PR requires a commitment from the expert researcher or *facilitator* to fully participate in the realization of the social aims and objectives of the collaborators. In fact, facilitators often become advocates of social change in a particular context. The close identification between the facilitators and collaborators who participate in the process and their mutual commitment to the project is sometimes referred to as *solidarity*. While facilitators often produce scholarly accounts of PR projects and contribute to theory and practice, they are precluded from controlling the research process for scholarly purposes and are not regarded as disinterested, outside expert professionals or consultants. In other words, there is no room in PR for the value neutrality, disinterested inquiry, object/subject distinctions and controlled experimentation that occur in positivist social science research.

In addition, the ideal of *democratic* or egalitarian and inclusive participation is based on the assumption that lay people have a legitimate interest in conducting inquiry that leads to action and impacts their lives. Furthermore, the ideal of *horizontal* or two-way communication is based on the assumption that lay people are experts in terms of how they interpret their social conditions and aspirations. Consequently, since social science knowledge is not privileged nor is social inquiry expertise accorded elite status, the

traditional social division of knowledge and power between the social science and lay communities is challenged (Beausoleil, 1990, 208).

Since democratic participation and horizontal communication in the PR process are ideals at best, their expression in a real context incurs a need for *negotiation*. According to Mayer (1990), "...contrary to traditional research, the object of participatory research is not defined out of the theoretical tradition of a given discipline alone, nor out of the researcher's interest alone: it is, rather, the result of negotiations conducted between the researcher [facilitator] and the group [collaborators] concerned" (222). Negotiation which generates consensus, mutual learning and movement between various stages of the PR process is required. For example, the participation of people with different interests, perspectives and agendas needs to be negotiated to achieve consensus. Also, the forms of knowledge that different people bring to the process, i.e., processed and experiential knowledge, need to be negotiated or mediated for a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge to occur. Furthermore, the PR process needs to be negotiated or managed to generate a spiralling motion between reflection and action. These forms of negotiation place communication at the centre of PR since communication is critical to the process and outcome of negotiation.

The principles and processes of PR have implications which are problematic for communication in at least four different ways. First, communication between social scientists and participatory researchers has often been nonexistent or antagonistic. This is understandable since the principles of PR have been developed by some critics of positivist social science who have argued that the latter constitutes an unethical and ineffective approach to bringing about social change. On the other hand, critics of PR have viewed PR as primarily policy research or political activity, arguing that it is nonacademic (Jacobson, 1991a, 2). Unfortunately, PR has become marginalized and the lack of productive communication between the social science and PR communities has limited

social science contributions to the theory and practice of PR. Jacobson has called for a rapprochement between these two communities, arguing that there should be a role for academic involvement in both the pursuit of knowledge and of social change, and that there must be a metatheoretical or philosophical justification for this role. However, mutual interest in communications issues is developing between participatory researchers and social science scholars.[1] This is not surprising since communication is a condition of PR and is central to negotiating the participation of people, the inquiry and education process, and the organization of social action. The theoretical and practical work of this thesis, which primarily concerns communications as a social process in the context of participative inquiry, is an attempt to add to the growing scholarship about PR and communications and to generate more dialogue between the social science and PR communities.

Second, a lack of productive communication between the proponents of the two main streams of PR is evident in the recent writings of Whyte (1991) and Fals-Borda (1991). Whyte, who tends to emphasize inquiry into causal relationships related to process changes in organizational, corporate and agricultural settings, makes no mention of Fals-Borda's more critical work which emphasizes issues of unequal power relations related to structures of domination and oppression in developmental settings. Fals-Borda notes this omission and also states that PR is being co-opted by people who are diluting its emphasis on people's power. While there are obviously fundamental differences between these two streams, it is suggested here that there is little to be gained by the persistence of provincialism and much to be gained by finding ways to improve communication between people with different perspectives. The metatheoretical innovation proposed in this thesis is an attempt at reconciling different PR perspectives and generating a more productive dialogue aimed at a mutual contribution.

Third, there is also evidence that communication between PR theorists and practitioners needs to be improved. As one writer has stated: "Research professionals

retreat to their ivory tower to engage in obscure theoretical speculations and, when they do emerge in the field, they are distanced by theory"; while practitioners "are too immersed in their daily practice to be able to distance themselves from it; all reflective work on their own practice can only lead them to confirm their own representation of it" (Le Gall, 1984, 8, quoted in Mayer, 1990, 209). A number of scholars interested in PR have called for closer communication between theorists and practitioners in order to improve theory and practice (Jacobson, 1991a, 1991b; Servaes, 1989; Einsiedel, 1992; Whyte et al., 1991). They have argued that without careful and systematic documentation of practice or a broader theoretical framework for critical evaluation, it is difficult to improve either theory or practice. The methodological innovation proposed in this thesis is an attempt to make both a theoretical and a practical contribution to PR and to generate more dialogue between PR theorists and practitioners.

Fourth, the democratic participation of people with different kinds of knowledge and expertise in PR projects and the ideal of horizontal communication create challenges for both facilitators and collaborators. In particular, facilitators are faced with the challenge of communicating abstract concepts in a way evidences respect for what the collaborators already know, and in a manner that avoids imposing the "top-down" or "insider" jargon of the social sciences on the collaborators. It can be argued that this type of jargon is exclusionary and paternalistic and that it is more appropriate to communicate concepts and processes through language that is already common to both facilitators and collaborators. The practical communications strategy proposed in this thesis is an attempt to demonstrate how paradigmatically triangulated inquiry can be communicated in a manner that is respectful of the principle of horizontal communication.

The foregoing discussion has demonstrated how inquiry, communication and participation concerns are intertwined in PR. The second chapter of this thesis more fully discusses the origins of PR and its divergent streams. The discussion now turns to an

examination of inquiry, participation and communication against a broader theoretical framework.

Inquiry and Communication

It can be argued that *all* social actors, whether they are scholars or lay people, are social theorists or inquirers. While social scientists are more concerned with developing theoretical or processed knowledge about social phenomena, lay people are more concerned with applying practical or experiential knowledge in their daily social activities (Giddens, 1984). These two types of knowledge come together in a process which Giddens refers to as the *double hermeneutic*.

> The social sciences operate within a double hermeneutic, involving two-way ties with the actions and institutions of those they study. Sociological observers depend upon lay concepts to generate accurate descriptions of social processes; and agents regularly appropriate theories and concepts of social science within their behaviour, thus potentially changing its character (1987, 30-31).

> The theorizing of human beings about their action means that just as social theory was not an invention of professional social theorists, so the ideas produced by those theorists inevitably tend to be fed back into social life (1984, 27).

As a result, there is constant slippage between these two types of knowledge, and according to Giddens, no absolute dividing line between them.

It appears then, that processed social science knowledge and experiential lay knowledge are interdependent, interactive and therefore mutually influential. This implies that the mutual learning between facilitators and collaborators in a PR context is based on the principles of the double hermeneutic. Furthermore, the process of mutual learning involves the negotiation or mediation of processed and experiential knowledge. Consequently, PR presents scholars with an opportunity to learn about inquiry, mutual education and social action in a context that directly implicates and demonstrates the interaction of processed and experiential knowledge.

It can also be argued that theorizing about social life, whether by lay people or social scientists, is conducted from within a framework of implicit or explicit assumptions and beliefs about social life. In the social sciences, these frameworks are often referred to as theoretical perspectives, eg. critical theory, or "isms", eg. positivism, functionalism, interpretivism, or social constructivism. More recently, these frameworks have also been referred to as *paradigms*, an admittedly problematic term which lacks a common and clear definition. The contentious nature of this term is not surprising since Thomas Kuhn, who invented it in the early 1960s, used it in at least 21 different ways (Masterman, 1970). The generic definition of a paradigm provided by Guba is probably the most helpful for the purposes of this thesis. According to Guba (1990), a paradigm is "a basic set of beliefs that guides action, whether of the everyday garden variety or action taken in connection with a disciplined inquiry" (17). This definition incorporates the idea that the activities of both lay people and scholars are based on particular sets of beliefs, perspectives and assumptions. Since, as was argued earlier, processed social science knowledge and experiential lay knowledge are mutually interdependent, interactive and influential, it can be concluded that the paradigms which guide the theorizing of social scientists about social phenomena are in some ways similar to those which guide the theorizing of lay people about their daily social activities.

If paradigms condition inquiry in both of these domains, it is important to consider how they operate from a social science perspective. Inquiry is often regarded as a metatheoretical issue which goes beyond the explicit content of given theories. The way in which social scientists conduct inquiry depends largely on their paradigms, or implicit and explicit assumptions about the nature of inquiry and society. For example, Burrell and Morgan (1979) regard paradigms as metatheoretical assumptions which "underwrite the frame of reference, mode of theorising and *modus operandi* of the social theorists who operate within them" (23). This implies that there are sets of world views about the nature

of inquiry and society that intersect with both explicit theories and with implicit or taken-for-granted assumptions.[2] While the concept of paradigm implies a commonality of perspective, it does not necessitate complete unity of thought between theorists.

Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that paradigms represent internally consistent perspectives on reality. As a result, they operate like closed, mutually exclusive systems which tend to emphasize certain considerations to the exclusion of others which do not fit into the system. Recent work by Guba and others (1990) regarding three inquiry paradigms — post-positivist, social constructivist and critical — which constitute alternatives to positivist social science inquiry, is helpful for understanding the emphases of various inquiry paradigms.[3] None of these paradigms is complete and none, according to Guba, is the paradigm of choice. Since the assumptions of these paradigms echo the various PR inquiry emphases referred to earlier, it can be argued that the latter are commensurately incomplete.

The nature of paradigms appears to create a paradox. On the one hand, paradigmatic boundaries tend to separate social theorists into different and often opposing camps. As a result, communication between supporters of different paradigms often becomes a matter of defensive or offensive posturing. In addition, since paradigms are sufficiently divergent, it is difficult to find a common focus. In the context of PR, this explains why communication between the proponents of different PR approaches is either non-existent or often antagonistic. On the other hand, since each paradigm and each PR emphasis can be considered incomplete, more productive communication could help to fill the gaps or correct the imbalances.

It is proposed in this thesis that *structuration theory*, developed by Giddens over the past two decades, provides a useful metatheoretical framework for critiquing disparate paradigmatic perspectives and for reframing these perspectives in a way that encourages communication between paradigms. While Giddens prefers not use the term "paradigm"

because of its problematic nature, he critiques broad social theoretical perspectives or "isms", which are in large part based on the paradigmatic assumptions discussed by Guba. Briefly, structuration theory synthesizes the subjectivist and objectivist, macro and micro emphases of social science paradigms through a focus on social practices, thus providing a focal point for communication about different theoretical perspectives or paradigms. Giddens also corrects the emphases of various perspectives in a way that fills some of the gaps.[4] It can be argued then, that structuration theory can be used to critique and reframe the paradigmatic assumptions which underwrite the various PR emphases. This represents the first innovation proposed in this thesis, and it is discussed in greater detail in the third chapter.

However, while structuration theory constitutes a metatheory for critiquing and reframing paradigmatic assumptions, it does not provide a methodology for incorporating all of these assumptions into a single study. The possibility of incorporating different paradigmatic assumptions into a single study has been recently addressed through the notion of *paradigmatic triangulation*, or several paradigmatic perspectives focused on a common problem. Paradigmatic triangulation, or multiparadigmatic inquiry as it is sometimes called, has several advantages. According to Gioia and Pitre (1990) multiparadigmatic inquiry "can generate more complete knowledge than can any single paradigmatic perspective" (599). As Einsiedel (1992) suggests, multiparadigmatic inquiry also has the potential for improving theory and practice in PR:

> ...the very nature of...practice requires a comprehensive view that can be gained only when differing perspectives have been examined, evaluated and juxtaposed....this perspective allows us to get beyond the heated debates on theory, method and worldviews...debates which have been extensions of the paradigm incommensurability battles and which have left little room for expanding theoretical understanding" (13).

It can be argued then, that paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context has the ability to generate more comprehensive knowledge of local conditions and to improve the theory and

practice of PR. This represents the second innovation proposed in this thesis, and it is also discussed in more detail in the third chapter.

However, the application of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context necessitates mediation between processed and experiential knowledge. This involves communicating the assumptions of paradigms in a manner that does not violate horizontal communication and is respectful of what is commonly known by both the facilitator and the collaborators. It is suggested here that *metaphors* may provide a solution to this dilemma. According to Morgan (1986), metaphors are embedded in paradigms and "the use of metaphor implies a *way of thinking* and a *way of seeing* that pervade how we understand the world generally" (12).[5] Consequently, metaphors may provide a common, mutually understood and egalitarian language for mediating between processed experiential knowledge. It can be argued then, that metaphors can be used as a strategy to communicate the implications of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context. A more detailed discussion is presented in the third chapter of this thesis.

The foregoing discussion provides the conceptual framework for this thesis. First, it is argued that PR presents scholars with an opportunity to learn more about inquiry, mutual education and social action in a context where processed social science knowledge and experiential lay knowledge interact in a direct and immediate manner. It is hoped that a consideration of this opportunity will generate more dialogue between the social science and PR communities. Second, it is proposed that structuration theory can be used to critique, reframe and reconcile the emphases of various inquiry paradigms and their counterparts in PR. It is hoped that a consideration of this proposal will generate a more productive dialogue between the proponents of divergent PR streams. Third, it is proposed that paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context has the ability to generate more complete knowledge of local conditions and to improve the theory and practice of PR. It is hoped that a consideration of this proposal will generate more dialogue between PR practitioners

and theorists. Fourth, it is suggested that metaphors can be used as a strategy to communicate the implications of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context. It is hoped that a consideration of this suggestion will generate dialogue about communications strategies which are respectful of the principle of horizontal communication in PR.

Since horizontal communication and democratic participation are central to the tenets of PR, and since communication is a *condition* of participation in inquiry, as Waters (1992) has argued, it is appropriate to briefly consider these concepts against a broader theoretical framework and in relation to paradigmatically triangulated inquiry. The discussion now turns to this consideration.

Participation and Communication

Habermas' (1984) view of critical science is helpful for understanding the relationship between participation and communication aimed at *critical reflection*. For Habermas, critical social science is an emancipatory social process that combines a collaborative effort at critique, or a juxtaposition, examination and evaluation of dominant ideologies, with the political will to take action that overcomes the structural constraints which bring about injustices. It can be argued that paradigmatically triangulated inquiry can operate like critical theory because it allows for the juxtaposition, examination and evaluation of differing perspectives. In a PR context, it not only provides collaborators and facilitators with a more comprehensive perspective on local conditions, as was argued earlier, but also a perspective that is the product of critical reflection. However, in order for critical reflection to take place, the people who collaborate must be able to communicate freely and democratically.

The concept of *democratic communication* can be examined through Habermas' (1984) concept of the "ideal speech situation" which is implied in the structure of potential speech. Although it may be impossible to achieve, Habermas describes the ideal speech

situation on which society should be modelled. First, the ideal speech situation requires freedom of speech; there must be no constraints on what can be expressed. Second, all individuals must have equal access to speaking. In other words, all speakers must be recognized as legitimate. Finally, the norms and obligations of society must not be one-sided but must distribute power equally to all strata in society. Only when these requirements are met can emancipatory communication take place. Building on Habermas, Gustavsen (1985) proposes nine criteria for evaluating the degree of democratic dialogue in PR contexts. Of particular interest here is his idea that dialogue is an active process of exchange or negotiation, geared towards producing the understanding and agreement necessary for inquiry and action.

Habermas' ideal speech situation has implications for participation in the inquiry process. It can be argued that inquiry is not the privileged domain of theorists or practitioners and that lay people have a legitimate interest in participating in the inquiry, especially since research findings often have a real impact on social policies. Furthermore, democratic participation in inquiry requires that all people in the PR process have true equality in opportunities to speak, to question and to reason.[6]

Communication which respects the ideal of equality is also addressed by Beltran (1980). His idea of *horizontal communication* constitutes a critique of what he refers to as vertical, or one-way, top-down flows of information from First World experts to Third World peasants. He argues that vertical communication reinforces dependence and that First World principles of conducting inquiry tend to reproduce inequality. Rather, he advocates the rights of people to do their own research at grass roots levels and to communicate horizontally among themselves through dialogue and participation. Similarly it can be argued that PR facilitators who communicate with PR collaborators, through what the latter may consider the foreign language of the social sciences, are communicating in a vertical manner which perpetuates inequality. Consequently, a PR facilitator who uses

paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a PR context must exercise vigilance and communicate this concept in a manner that produces two-way egalitarian communication.[7] As was argued earlier, communication through metaphor does not privilege expert processed knowledge and it is now suggested that it does not reproduce inequality.

In summary, the foregoing discussion on participation and communication has implications for the paradigmatically triangulated PR process proposed in this thesis. First, such a process allows for critical reflection to take place in the collaborative context of PR. Second, it provides a democratic opportunity for various perspectives and voices to be heard. Third, it must be communicated to collaborators in a way that promotes equality. The discussion now introduces some considerations for implementing paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a PR context.

Implementing Paradigmatically Triangulated Inquiry

As was suggested earlier, PR involves various forms of negotiation. Since communication is a condition of PR it can also be argued that communication is a condition of negotiating a PR project. In a paradigmatically triangulated PR project, communication which facilitates successful negotiation becomes even more critical. For example, it can be argued that the *participation process* needs to be carefully negotiated to ensure the solidarity of the collaborators for a triangulated process, their democratic participation in the process and sensitivity to their research agenda. In addition, the *inquiry planning process* also needs to be carefully negotiated in order to gain the maximum value from paradigmatic triangulation and to horizontally communicate its implications. The fourth chapter of this thesis describes and analyses how these two processes were negotiated during a paradigmatically triangulated PR project with the Social Action Committee of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association. While this thesis does not report on how the actual *research process* was negotiated, since that part of the project had not been completed at the

time of writing, suggestions for transacting the inquiry and juxtaposing the findings in order to generate critical reflection are offered. As well, conclusions about the implications of these processes for communication are drawn.

The fifth and final chapter constitutes a broad reflection on the entire range of theoretical and practical issues in this thesis. It is suggested that, in the context of PR, paradigmatic triangulation presents an opportunity to: learn more about how paradigmatic assumptions condition inquiry and divide inquirers; explore how the concept of social practices serves to focus inquiry; learn more about how democratic participation and solidarity are negotiated; develop theoretical and practical knowledge about the mediation of processed and experiential knowledge; learn more about the relationship between metaphors and horizontal communication; and learn more about systematic processes that generate critical reflection. The challenges and issues raised by these opportunities are also addressed and the appropriateness of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context is evaluated. The discussion now returns to a more detailed examination of PR.

Notes

1. PR offers a whole range of communication issues including interpersonal and intergroup communication, communications technology and media, and cultural meaning systems among others, which are of interest not only to PR practitioners but to social science scholars as well (Jacobson, 1985, 90-96). Recently, Einsiedel (1992) has suggested three potential sites for communications scholarship in PR, namely communication as a social process or dialogue; communication as a social practice; and communication as a social right.

2. The interrelationship between paradigms, frames of reference and the way inquiry is conducted implicates communication since interpretive schemes involve the production and reproduction of meaning and link meaning with action. This interrelationship appears to have parallels with Giddens' (1984) conception of the recursive manner in which the duality of structure operates with regards to communication. According to Giddens, interpretive schemes are used as frameworks to access deep, abstract, symbolic structures in order to sustain the act of communication. Similarly, it can be argued that the explicit dimensions of particular paradigms are used to draw upon implicit assumptions about the nature of society and inquiry and condition inquiry. The issue of interpretive schemes or frameworks, a key concept in communication, becomes the linchpin for understanding how paradigms or world views are produced and reproduced and how inquiry is conditioned by them.

3.   For example, while a critical perspective emphasizes the structural aspects of unequal power relations and the goal of inquiry is criticism and social change, it does not adequately account for micro-level processes or for human agency in the production and reproduction of society. On the other hand, while a social constructivist perspective emphasizes the social construction of meaning and the goal of inquiry is interpretation and understanding, it does not adequately account for macro-level processes or for the structural limitations and constraints on human agency. While a post-positivist perspective emphasizes causal relationships and the goal of inquiry is prediction and control, it does not adequately account for micro-level processes or for human agency and power relations.

4.   For example, the notion of interpretive schemes is grounded in a framework that links abstract structures or rules and social practices. In addition, Giddens broadens the concept of power in an understanding of human agency which takes into account the dialectic of control. Finally, Giddens reframes the notion of causality by grounding it in an understanding of how the purposive actions of people create intended and unintended or unpredictable consequences, which in turn course back to form the basis for subsequent action.

5.   Morgan uses metaphors to analyze the assumptions behind various forms of organization. Three of the many organizational metaphors he uses, namely organizations as cultures, as organisms and as political systems, reflect different paradigmatic assumptions. In a similar vein, Greene (1990) suggests that metaphors can be used to understand the assumptions behind different paradigms and are helpful for reflective dialogue about paradigms and their assumptions. In her discussion on inquiry paradigms, post-positivism is referred to as social engineering, social constructivism as storytelling and critical inquiry as political engagement and action.

6.   It can also be argued that Habermas' ideal speech situation presents an ideal on which social science inquiry could be modelled. For example, the provincialism inherent in the paradigm debates runs counter to the ideal speech situation since scholars sometimes consider their own paradigm to be the only legitimate one from which to conduct inquiry. For decades, positivistic, objectivist social science, or what Giddens refers to as the orthodox consensus, dominated social science inquiry. Even since the alternative paradigms — critical, post-positivist and social constructivist — described by Guba and others (1990) have emerged and become relatively established, they are often judged unfairly by criteria which are applicable only to positivistic objectivist social science. As Bochner (1985) states "none of the 'paradigms' of inquiry occupies a privileged position in the court of truth; all share the burden of justification" (52). It seems then that paradigmatically triangulated inquiry can clear the way for more open and productive communication because it does not constrain alternative paradigmatic perspectives, does not consider any one paradigm more legitimate than any other, and does not accord power to any one paradigm.

7.   Some might argue that paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a PR context constitutes an imposition from the social sciences. However, since processed knowledge is based on experiential knowledge, as Giddens suggests, it can be argued that the concept of paradigmatic triangulation arises from and has parallels in the world of experience, eg. the act of looking at a particular thing from various angles or through various lenses. As a result, the issue is not whether paradigmatic triangulation is used in a context where people are unfamiliar with its social science terminology, but rather whether this concept is communicated in a way that is already commonly understood.

II. Participatory Research

Introduction

As stated earlier, participatory research (PR) is a collaborative process that unites inquiry, education and social action. It is an inquiry and educational process in which both facilitators and collaborators participate in order to learn about each other as well as about local social conditions. It is also an action process in which both facilitators and collaborators learn about and work toward improving social conditions. The process is based on the assumption that the way lay people see their lives and formulate their own interests is of central importance to inquiry and action and that collective inquiry produces new knowledge for participants.

While this definition of PR presents a rather unified picture, there are major differences within PR itself. Some of these differences can be accounted for by the various contexts within which PR projects are conducted. For example, PR projects have been conducted in Third and First world countries, in rural and urban areas, in corporate and people's organizations, and in stable and revolutionary political environments. While the common focus of PR is inquiry, education and action, these elements find expression in different ways, depending on the context. Not only will the kind of change desired differ, but the abilities of the PR collaborators and the PR methods considered appropriate will also differ. In addition, the different backgrounds of the PR facilitators will influence the emphasis of each project. These contextual considerations often drive a project and define its parameters and as a result, no two PR projects are alike. However, and perhaps more significantly, the differences within PR can be accounted for by different assumptions about inquiry and social change which have taken PR in divergent directions.

This chapter begins with an overview of the origins of PR in the writings of Dewey and Lewin and the development of action research. The discussion then proceeds to

delineate two divergent streams of PR, focusing particularly on their different influences, their ideas about inquiry, participation and communication and their approaches to theory and practice. This chapter ends with a brief discussion of some problems and possibilities inherent in a convergence of these streams.

Origins

It has been said that the historical roots of action research, which is related to PR, extend to Aristotle's notion of how self-reflection informs practice and to the Greek notion of *praxis* (Grundy, 1987). According to Einsiedel (1992), the purpose of self-reflection is to "transform the knowledge base in order to guide further action" (4). Consequently, praxis requires reflection on three levels: the context of action; the way the action is conducted, perceived and understood by the people who put it into practice; and the impact of consequences of the action. This notion has given rise to the emphasis on praxis in PR and more specifically, to the concept of the action-reflection spiral and its importance for developing PR theory from practice on the one hand, and building knowledge in a PR context on the other.

The notion of praxis along with the idea of *democratic participation* in inquiry is also found in the early 20th Century writings of John Dewey, an educational and pragmatist philosopher. According to Bernstein (1971) Dewey viewed inquiry as a continuous self-corrective process, since every contention or knowledge claim was open to further criticism and discussion. Furthermore, Dewey was concerned with the demystification and democratization of conducting inquiry and argued that teachers, educational researchers and community members might collectively participate in addressing practical educational problems in order to create a better society. In addition, Dewey (1916), who was also interested in the development of theory from practice,

suggested that philosophy isolated from the rest of life was sterile and that social practice was an important focus of scientific inquiry.

Kurt Lewin, a social scientist, further elaborated the idea of democratic participation and action-reflection in the *inquiry process*. He invented the term *"action research"* in the 1940s to describe an inquiry process whereby social scientists worked collaboratively with a group, an organization or a community. For Lewin action research was a collaborative effort between social actors and trained researchers and involved a "joint project" that focused on both the amelioration of a social problem and the articulation of social theory. Furthermore, the inquiry process was characterized by cyclical elements of action-reflection, consisting of analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, execution, more fact-finding and evaluation (Lewin, 1946). Like Dewey, Lewin (1946) called for the need to understand the dynamic nature of change in a real context outside of the laboratory and argued for socially beneficial research, maintaining that "Research that produces nothing but books will not suffice" (34). Furthermore, his work with current social issues, such as his attempt to understand the social conditions from which prejudice evolved, suggests that Lewin saw a role for advocacy in the social sciences (Marrow, 1969).[1]

Action research was developed epistemologically as an alternative to the objectivist, value-free nature of traditional social science research. It was also developed practically, as an approach which included outsiders, or professional researchers, and insiders, or the social actors being researched, as participants in the entire research and action process.[2] The proponents of action research further refined the notion of participation in the inquiry and action process. It was proposed that the evaluation of and solution to practical social problems should begin from the way the group defines and interprets its problems and proceed through processes of critical self-reflection and collective evaluation rather than proceed from the interests of the outside researcher. Furthermore, the process of action

research postulated that all members of the group should become actively involved in the execution of a strategy which was then put to the test in social action.

Participatory research, which developed in the 1970s, was influenced by the ideas of Dewey and Lewin and developed these further, albeit in two radically different directions or streams. This divergence can be accounted for by the economic, social and political contexts in which these streams developed and also by theories and developments which appeared relevant to those contexts. As a result, the assumptions about inquiry and social change in each of these streams also became radically divergent. It is helpful to briefly examine the features of these streams — both of which refer to themselves as participatory action research (PAR) and which are referred to here as the First World and Third World PR streams because of their origins — which are salient to this discussion. While many PR projects do not precisely conform to either of these streams the latter are nonetheless presented here as ideal types for analytical purposes.

First World Stream

While the First World Stream of PR emerged in North America, it is currently in evidence throughout the world in both developed and developing contexts.[3] The First World PR stream, according to Whyte (1991), derived its impetus from three developments. First, there was a shift in thinking that a participatory and hands-on approach to applied research was, in many cases, more powerful than the applied social research model in which a professional expert simply reported findings to the decision makers. Second, there was a shift in thinking which recognized the value of participation of workers, first in industry and later in agriculture, in decision making. These first two developments echo the practical concerns of action research. Third, the development of socio-technical systems thinking provided a site for exploring the relationship between

social and technical processes in a participative context. This third and more recent

development has led to the incorporation of systems theory into the First World Stream.

Influenced by these developments, the First World stream has become what Mayer

(1990) refers to as

> ...a collective undertaking that integrates both a research strategy and an action strategy; it is accomplished by...researchers [facilitators] and actors [collaborators] in a cooperative relation; it is centred on a concrete problematic situation, inserted into real social relations and tied to an action for social change; it aims to increase knowledge about conditions and results of the action experimented with in order to pinpoint advantages that can be generalized; it requires the intellectual and emotional commitment of each participant, an openness to criticism and reevaluation, and the ability to evolve one's conceptions, one's practice, and one's interpersonal relationships as the project develops (208).

It is helpful to elaborate on this stream's approach to inquiry, participation, and

communication in order to understand the features that are salient to this discussion.

Inquiry in this stream is informed by an implicit utilitarian or instrumental ideology

(Vandenberg and Fear 1983). This stream seeks to improve rational and intelligent

decision making through the intervention of the PR facilitator and is most common in fields

of agriculture, organizational development and community development. There are two

important aims of inquiry. The first aim is instrumental and focuses on bringing about

social change for the benefit of the collaborators who are involved in implementing the

change or who will be affected by the change. The second aim is theoretical and involves

the interface between theory and practice; more particularly, theory building for the benefit

of the PR practitioner or facilitator (Vandenberg and Fear, 1983). The ultimate goal is to

produce objective knowledge that can be effectively used in applied and policy contexts to

stimulate the participation of communities of people in studying, analyzing and devising

solutions to their problems. There is considerable emphasis on people's rational

capabilities to deal intelligently with complex problems and to bring about change by

manipulating social events and reforming social structures. However, the transformation

of conditions is always accomplished within the existing social order and questions of

domination, unequal power relations and conflict are noticeably absent in the literature about this stream (Vandenberg and Fear 1983). The instrumental agenda and applied nature of this stream may be the reason that social scientists have regarded PR as primarily policy research.

The methods used in this PR stream are designed to promote mutual education through participation in the research process. Although standard qualitative and quantitative research methods or techniques are sometimes used by the facilitator, the context determines which methods are used and how they are used (Vandenberg and Fear 1983). Most importantly, the collaborators are encouraged to learn problem solving and conceptual skills — knowledge building (data collection and analysis), organizing, planning, decision making — that permit them to undertake the research-action process even after a particular project has been completed (Vandenberg and Fear, 1983, 20).

This PR stream emphasizes a strong relationship between *theory and practice* and the value of PR for testing existing theoretical hypotheses, formulating new hypotheses, developing local theory and generating grounded theory. As Whyte (1991) explains

> As I see it, PAR focuses more heavily on social structures and processes. Without rejecting the value of preformed hypotheses, PAR is likely to depend more on what I call "creative surprises" — new ideas that arise unexpectedly during the intervention process (97).

Going even further, Whyte et al. (1991) suggest that PR, as a method, is also helpful for theoretical development in the social sciences since it

> ...has important qualities as a method for examining the plausibility of theories....It is also productive in formulating new hypotheses about key relationships, hypotheses testable by either further...research or through conventional research methodologies. It is not, therefore, an alternative to existing social science but a way of dramatically enhancing our achievement of the goals of theoretical understanding and social betterment by widening the range of strategies at our disposal. Active involvement with practitioners struggling to solve important practical problems is highly likely to open up researchers' minds to new information and new ideas, leading to advances in theory as well as in practice (54).

Furthermore, Elden and Levin (1991) see the PR process as important for the development of local theory which they define as "the most direct, simple, and elegant context-bound explanation of cause-and-effect relations in a given situation that makes sense to those with the most local experience. It could be described as a causally focused, group cognitive map..." (138). In addition, PR provides a site for the development of grounded theory, or generating new knowledge based on data obtained through practice. For example, Whyte (1991) developed a new theory of worker participation when it became apparent that there was a contradiction between his observations on participation in a Xerox plant and existing theories of worker participation. It is apparent that, in the First World Stream, there is a considerable interest in improving theory and practice, in the development of grounded theory and an openness to a closer and mutually beneficial relationship with the social science community.

It becomes clear, then, that this PR stream is primarily interested in inquiry concerning issues related to causality and in contributing to both the theory and practice of PR. Furthermore, the emphasis on causality has a very practical connotation and is based on Lewin's proposition that "causal inferences about the behavior of human beings are more likely to be valid and enactable when the human beings in question participate in building and testing them" (Argyris and Schon, 1991, 86).

Since an instrumental approach assumes that the practical use of social theory is powerful for predicting or producing a desired event or preventing its occurrence, it runs the risk of being manipulative or authoritarian. Vandenberg and Fear (1983) argue that this trap is avoided through a strong emphasis on *participation*. However, it should be noted that the facilitator is often in control of the process and the extent of participation by collaborators varies considerably (Beausoleil, 1990, 157). Although the facilitator may initiate the process, the collaborators must at least recognize the problem. While the

facilitator is not performing expert consulting, much of the actual research is often carried

on by the facilitator and the collaborators are only involved where feasible.

Joint participation between facilitators and collaborators is problematic because it

raises issues concerning scientific rigour and objectivity, and issues concerning the

practical implications of inquiry. It involves considerable risk for those who participate, as

indicated by Beausoleil's (1990) description of several projects undertaken by the

Participatory Research Group on Support Networks and Institutional Practices in Montreal.

> The university team [facilitators] risked not being in a position to contribute to the
> development of new fundamental knowledge about community care, not receiving
> the recognition of the scientific community which values quantitative research
> copied from the natural science model, not satisfying their university's evaluative
> criteria, and finally, risked having trouble raising funding. Practitioners
> [collaborators] risked having trouble surmounting the dichotomy that separates
> academics from field workers. They feared being accused of lacking thoroughness
> and objectivity by the scientific as well as the professional community, worried that
> planning organizations might consider a collective undertaking threatening and
> finally, risked seeing their results taken up by government organizations who
> would use them to impose rigid evaluative norms (162).

This suggests that the traditional notion of objectivity and rigour is held up as a standard,

even though it does not apply to PR. Rather, this PR stream's definition of rigour is

intertwined with the notion of participation which is similar to that of interpretivist

sociology. Whyte et al. (1991) elaborate on the interrelationship when they state:

> According to conventional wisdom, no other research strategy can match the
> standard model for rigor. Whether this is true depends upon how we define *rigor*.
> In the standard model, the subjects of our studies have little or no opportunity to
> check facts or to offer alternative explanations. If we feed back our research reports
> and publications to members of the organization we studied, they often argue that
> we have made serious errors in facts and in interpretations. If the standard social
> science researcher hears such criticisms, he or she can shrug them off, telling
> colleagues that the subjects are just being defensive — defensiveness apparently
> being a characteristic of the subjects but not of social scientists themselves.
>
> PAR forces researchers to go through a rigorous process of checking the facts with
> those with firsthand knowledge before any reports are written (41).

Elden and Levin (1991) propose a model, which they refer to as cogenerative dialogue,

which places these issues in a framework that emphasizes the value of participation and the

confluence of two types of knowledge and expertise. While they recognize the differences

between expert and processed knowledge they postulate that equal and full participation

between collaborators and facilitators creates new understanding and new interpretive

frameworks. As they state:

> *Insiders* [collaborators]...are expert in the specifics of the setting or situation and know from personal experience how things work and how the elements are connected to each other and about values and attitudes, local company culture, and so on....They want to solve practical problems and achieve personal and organizational goals. The initial framework of what will become local theory comes from how individual organization members make sense out of their situation. They are experts in the particular situation but their theories are not systematically tested.

> *Outsiders* [facilitators]...have what's missing: training in systematic inquiry and analysis, in designing and carrying out research, and in recognizing patterns and creating new knowledge irrespective of content....The researcher's initial framework of what will become local theory is based on general theory or a particular way of thinking about the problem at hand.

> The insider comes to the inquiry because of a personal interest in a specific practical problem. The outsider, in contrast, comes because of an interest in solving particular kinds of problems (in theory and/or practice), methods, general knowledge, or values (132).

Through the interaction of these two frameworks, or the process of cogenerative dialogue,

empowering participation occurs between the insiders and outsiders. According to Elden

and Levin (1991),

> Both insiders and outsiders operate out of their initial frames of reference but communicate at a level where frames can be changed and new frames generated. Exchange on a level that affects one's frame of reference is a much more demanding form of communication than mere information exchange (134).

It appears that while Elden and Levin are still interested in the formulation of causal

explanations, they explicitly address and introduce the idea of the social construction of

meaning systems and the development of shared meaning systems to this PR stream. Of

interest here is how they interrelate the concepts of participative inquiry, equal participation

and the development of new frames of meaning, a decidedly *communications* issue.

Another communications issue, critical reflection through discussion, has been

addressed by Beausoleil (1990). He provides an interesting account of this dynamic

process which occurred among the academics who facilitated a community care PR project, and the health and social services administrators and representatives of community organizations who collaborated in the project.

> Discussions were rational but also emotional, reflecting the values and convictions of individuals. From meeting to meeting, the group approached the global situation via different themes, passed from one aspect to another in a spiraling motion and ended by unearthing a statement that explained and integrated a series of ideas, events, lived experiences, failures and successes. The analysis thus turned on itself. Spiral upon spiral, intersecting and merging in a continuous process, helped us arrive at a more coherent definition and explanation of the phenomena discussed, incorporating both the nature of events and the convictions and commitments of individuals and groups (181).

This description suggests that while the First World stream emphasizes the rational elements of decision making, there is a recognition that critical reflection also involves open communication about convictions, values and commitments and not merely the exchange of information. As a result the First World stream is both goal- and value-committed.

In summary, the First World PR stream focuses inquiry primarily on *causal relationships* related to social change, and combines an interest in social betterment with a practical and scholarly interest in learning about and implementing action. Furthermore, there is also evidence of a concern with *meaning systems* and the development of new interpretive frameworks. However, issues of unequal power relations within a broader socio-historical framework are still not being addressed by the First World stream. These latter concerns are very evident in the Third World Stream.

Third World Stream

While the Third World Stream emerged in Latin and South America, it is also currently in evidence throughout the world primarily in developing but also in developed countries.[4] Even though the Third World Stream addresses issues of unequal power relations, it was initially influenced by action research. Fals-Borda (1991, 160) explains that the Third World Stream deviated from action research when the latter became

preoccupied with small-group processes in industrial and organizational contexts and

attempted to reinforce and perfect the status quo, and when the former became more

militant in contexts of oppression and more concerned with broader issues of participation.

The Third World PR stream developed as a reaction to the failure of paternalistic

third world development methods for improving social and economic conditions and in

response to new alternatives which promised the oppressed classes economic and political

emancipation and the development of self reliance (Latapi, 1988). More specifically, it

developed as a reaction to the failure of conventional approaches to adult education,

modernization and development, and the failure of sociology to transform society (Fals-

Borda, 1979, 40). On the other hand, it was influenced by: Paulo Freiere's conceptual

approach to adult education; Catholicism's liberation theology; the rise of dependency

theory; a revitalization of the neo-Marxian view of Gramsci; and the emergence of cultural

revolutions (Latapi, 1988). These developments contributed to the emergence of a utopian

liberation ideal which emphasized the participation of the oppressed in changing their

conditions. The Third World stream developed through several stages.[5] According to

Rahman (1991), it now combines a micro- and a macro-level focus.

> At the micro level, PAR is a philosophy and style of work with the people to
> promote people's empowerment for changing their immediate environment —
> social and physical — in their favor (16).

> However, in terms of macro-social transformation, PAR at this stage may be
> viewed more as a cultural movement, independent of (in some countries in link
> with) political movements for people's liberation rather than a political alternative
> itself (19).

It is apparent that *inquiry* in this stream, unlike the First World stream, is informed

by an explicit emancipatory ideology designed to challenge status quo power relations.

Inquiry is viewed as a political act through which the power inherent in knowledge is

wrested away from the privileged and returned to the oppressed. This stream's primary

aim is to generate social change for the benefit of the oppressed and underprivileged, who

are also the instigators of change, and is most common in third world development work

(Latapi, 1988). Unlike in the First World stream, the transformation of social conditions is

often achieved by confronting the existing social order and either transforming the social

system or replacing existing social structures. The aims of this stream are often framed in

the context of a liberation or Marxian ideology (Himmelstrand, 1982). However, there

appears to be some confusion over the extent to which supporters of the Third World

stream are committed to a Marxist stance since, according to Latapi, some authors may use

Marxian terminology without necessarily committing themselves to Marxian philosophy.

Rahman (1985) notes that historical materialism has "passed through many hands" and

there no longer seems to be a broad consensus as to its operational meaning (118).

The methods used in this PR stream are designed to educate, enlighten and

emancipate oppressed people through participation in the research process. The most

effective methods are considered those that build knowledge in the specific context and they

can be either conventional or unconventional. Fals-Borda (1991) outlines some of the

techniques used in the following manner.

> *Collective research.* This is the use of information collected and systematized on a group basis, as a source of data and objective knowledge of facts resulting from meetings, socio-dramas, public assemblies, committees, fact-finding trips and so on. This collective and dialogical method not only produces data which may be immediately corrected and verified. It also provides a social validation of objective knowledge which cannot be achieved through other individual methods based on surveys or fieldwork.

> *Critical recovery of history.* This is an effort to discover selectively, through collective memory, those elements of the past which have proved useful in the defense of the interests of exploited classes and which may be applied to the present struggles to increase conscientization. Use is thus made of popular stories, oral tradition in the form of interviews and witness accounts by older members of the community...

> *Valuing and applying folk culture....*Account is taken of cultural and ethnic elements frequently ignored in regular political practice, such as art, music, drama, sports, beliefs, myths, story-telling and other expressions....

> *Production and diffusion of new knowledge.* This technique is integral to the research process because it is a central part of the feedback and evaluative objective of PAR....it incorporates various styles and procedures for systematizing new data

and knowledge according to the level of political conscience and ability for understanding written, oral or visual image by the base groups and public in general (8,9).

Unfortunately the research generated by this PR stream often does not go beyond the documentation of social conditions and rarely do facilitators record and analyze the types of action involved (Cassara, 1987; Latapi, 1988). Latapi, a supporter of this PR stream, also notes that many of its supporters fail to adequately define their concept of science and this gives the impression that any type of knowledge is scientific. Furthermore, he questions whether the inquiry done by this stream can be called science since:

> The process of scientific knowledge requires synthesis, systematization, and accumulation. It is a difficulty, to say the least, that PR carried out by local groups on isolated concrete topics may reach the levels of integration and synthesis required so as to supplant the knowledge obtained by established social research. In other words, PR may be suitable for reaching conclusions on local situations, but such conclusions require a further treatment in order to obtain broader validity (317).

It is not surprising then, that many social scientists do not accept PR as a valid scientific endeavour but view it as primarily political activity.

Furthermore, this stream's conception of what is meant by *theory and practice* differs sharply not only from that of traditional social science but also from the First World PR stream. Since the science of the people, rather than that of the scientific community, is paramount, theory consists of what the local people think and perceive and practice consists of how they act on this knowledge. According to Fals-Borda (1979),

> Within the context of regional field work, what was considered "theory" meant preconceived or preliminary ideas or exogenous information, related to "things-in-themelves", processes, events or trends observed in reality..."Practice" meant the application of principles or information gained through observation, application carried out primarily, by organized, basic groups as actors and controllers of the process (41).

Moreover, this union of theory and practice constitute what is meant by praxis in this PR stream. Praxis is political action designed to generate knowledge and change the structure

of society and Fals-Borda (1979, 41) contrasts this with the positivist notion of praxis which he interprets as knowledge to manipulate and control social processes.

This notion of praxis has led, according to Latapi (1988), to a strong anti-intellectual component and lack of scholarly work in the Third World PR stream. Many supporters of this stream believe that knowledge leads to power and that only people's knowledge or the knowledge produced by the oppressed classes is valid. Therefore, the legitimation of academic knowledge only serves to perpetuate the domination of intellectuals and suppress the people's knowledge. While the process of popular production of the people's knowledge is undoubtedly empowering, it is also somewhat problematic, according to Gaventa (1991), a supporter of this stream.

> To the extent that it relies upon the peoples' experience as the basis of knowledge, how does it develop knowledge within the people that may be in their interest to know but is outside of their experience? What about the situation in which neither the dominant knowledge production system nor the peoples' own knowledge have the information to respond to the potential impact of a new technological development, such as the introduction of a new chemical in the workplace? Are there not circumstances, even for the oppressed, in which there is a need for a science which is democratic, but which does not require all of the people to become scientists in order to control and benefit from it? Is direct participation in all aspects of the knowledge production system the only form of its popular control (129)?

Gaventa raises some interesting questions which suggest that experiential knowledge has its limitations, that the people's participation in inquiry does not in and of itself guarantee a comprehensive understanding of a problem and that isolation from other knowledge production systems may be counterproductive. Thus, there appears to be a struggle in the Third World stream between the need for the people to control the research process and the need for outside participation.

In the Third World stream, *participation* is viewed as the key to increasing the knowledge, solidarity and self-reliance of the oppressed through the collaborative PR process. Fals-Borda (1991) defines participation as

> ...a teleological statement that sets up a standard to follow, one by which to measure social, economic and political advancement toward achievement of goals. In participatory action both researcher and researched recognize that despite their

otherness they seek the mutual goal of advancing knowledge in search of greater justice. They interact, collaborate, discuss, reflect and report in collectivities on an equal footing, each one offering in the relationship what he knows best. For instance, outside...[facilitators] may provide technical expertise or situational analysis or act as intermediaries with other groups or institutions, while local...[collaborators] will provide specific local knowledge and know-how and by acting as critics will adapt the research to their own reality. It is in this space of a truly participatory activity that the actual meeting of diverse scientific traditions takes place, resulting in an enriched overall knowledge, which in addition is more effective in the struggle for justice and the achievement of social progress and peace (152).

In this collaborative context, the PR facilitator must closely identify with the social justice aims of the oppressed people who are collaborators. The latter own and control the process in that they initiate the process, define the problem and carry out the research. The facilitator is merely a catalyst who helps clarify the intentions of the people and the relevant structural conditions and constraints and who may teach the collaborators how to transform local conditions through political action. As Fernandes and Tandon (1981) explain,

> The foremost implication for participatory social research is its clear attempt at power equalisation, by eliminating the distinction between the researcher and the people. This power equalisation assumes that research becomes an action-reflection-action process of interaction between the outsider who functions no more as a scholar but as a catalyst, and the local people (11).

However, Latapi (1988) notes that even though this PR stream insists on an equal power relationship between the facilitator and collaborators, in practice this is often difficult to achieve since:

> The professional researcher [facilitator] maintains a directive role that cannot be denied. The researchers have an overall understanding of the research process, they are more familiar with abstract thinking, and they are expected to assist the group [collaborators] and to provide the necessary tools. All this supports the existence of a certain superiority and entails the risk of paternalism and manipulation (317).

This points out that while equal and democratic participation in the Third World stream is considered ideal, it is in reality difficult to negotiate. It is also interesting to note that while the risks of joint participation between facilitators and collaborators in the First World stream are more connected to issues of scientific rigour and practical implications, in the

Third World stream they are more connected to issues of manipulation and domination. Despite these difficulties, both streams view participation as critical to building knowledge.

While participation is the key to increasing the knowledge, solidarity and self-reliance of the oppressed, *communication* is the key process through which the coordination and exchange of information or "knowledge empowerment" takes place. As in action research and the First World stream, the action-reflection spiral in the Third World stream is critical to the PR process. According to Latapi (1988), this involves: research, or the gradual discovery of new knowledge; action, as the component that spirals between practice and reflection; and education since through this process, the collaborators not only gain a better understanding of the social facts, but also improve their capacity for further reflection and analysis. Furthermore, he suggests that this process can only develop in the context of dialogue. De Roux (1991) provides an account of how this process worked in a Third World PR project. His account echoes Elden and Levin's discussion of cogenerative dialogue.

> Collectively producing knowledge meant that many actors, coming from their own individuality, at different times and in different situations, and based on their own perceptions and ways of communicating them, contributed a variety of experiences to what became a common vision of the situation. These meetings, wherein everyone was given the floor, were a context for bringing forth their everyday experience, their significant images and common sense, all of which yielded a collective reading of reality, not from the confines of academic disciplines but from a holistic perspective. The possibility of forging new common ground — based on the people's analytical categories, their own interpretations, their cultural prism, their collective outlook and their traditions — made it possible for the people's subjugated wisdom to rise up while empowering them to transcend it to forge a liberating vision capable of stirring emotions and translating shared concerns into actions (45, 46).

While de Roux is primarily interested in unequal knowledge and power relations, he explicitly addresses the idea of the social construction of meaning systems and the development of a shared meaning system. It is of interest that, like Elden and Levin, de Roux also interrelates the concepts of participative inquiry, equal participation and the development of new frames of meaning. For de Roux, this type of dialogue constitutes the

beginning of a process which ultimately leads to the people gaining control over decision making power.

It has become apparent that the Third World PR stream focuses inquiry primarily on issues of *unequal power relations* and social transformation. However, there is also evidence of a concern with *meaning systems* and the development of new interpretive frameworks. While it does address issues of causality, it tends to superimpose a socio-historical framework on these issues.

The Third World and First World streams have been presented here as divergent and totally separate, primarily for purposes of analysis. However, it should be emphasized that many PR projects exhibit the influences of one or both streams and do not conform precisely to either. Furthermore, there have been recent attempts to improve the links between theory and practice by selectively integrating theoretical and practical considerations from both streams (Einsiedel, 1992, Waters, 1992). The discussion now turns to a brief consideration of the possibilities and problems of a convergence between these streams.

Convergence

Various arguments for and against convergence indicate that this issue is complex and not easily resolved. One line of argument against convergence, presented by Fals-Borda (1991), concerns the possibility that the "establishment" (primarily academics and development agencies) may usurp PR for questionable motives and corrupt it in the process. Considering the Third World stream's insistence that PR is a way for the people to challenge the establishment and wrest the production of knowledge away from it, this concern is understandable. However, it can also be countered that this argument seriously limits the possibility of critical dialogue and mutual learning between the PR community and the social science community, between supporters of both PR streams, and between

PR scholars and practitioners. Fals-Borda's concern revolves around the issue of motive but as Waters (1992) argues, this is not problematic when the researcher makes an explicit commitment and decision to place the needs of the group first. However, manipulation may find expression in other ways as well and as Rahnema (1990) points out, some researchers in Third World contexts have tried to sway the people towards an acceptance of their own beliefs and of Marxist ideologies. As Waters (1992) reminds us, ethical issues are indeed problematic for anyone who becomes involved in PR and it is imperative that judgment and caution be exercised and that a genuine commitment to the principles of PR be proffered.

One line of argument for convergence directly concerns the need to improve the theory and practice of PR. Of particular note here is Waters' (1992) interest in making links between the theory and practice of PR and bringing to bear a variety of theoretical perspectives and the work of both the Third and First World PR streams. She focuses on dialogue, an issue which bridges both streams and on which there is much agreement. Similarly, Einsiedel (1992) argues for the development of theory grounded in practice and suggests that action research's theoretical interest in the ways that research and reflection lead to social change, combined with Habermas' critical perspective on the action-reflection cycle as the precursor for organizing action, may be helpful for developing grounded theory. The influences of both the Third and First World streams are thus selectively integrated into what Einsiedel refers to as a multiparadigmatic perspective. It is important to note that Einsiedel focuses a multiparadigmatic perspective on the action-reflection cycle, an aspect of PR which also represents the most common ground shared by both the First and Third World streams.

It appears that a focus on common ground between the two dominant streams represents one way of bridging them. However, bridging their fundamental differences becomes more problematic when some of the paradigmatic assumptions of these streams

are taken into account. The problem of integrating divergent philosophical or theoretical perspectives at the paradigmatic level through a pluralistic approach to PR is addressed by Jacobson (1991a) when he states:

> These various [philosophical and theoretical] approaches all have points to recommend them. But in sum, the variety results in theoretical problems for the participatory research movement as a whole, for two reasons. First, some of these approaches are not compatible. They provide different explanations of social conditions and plans, and they imply different courses of action. Sometimes, they directly contradict one another theoretically. Second, I believe at least some positions vastly overstate the kind of case that should be made against the social sciences (12).

This argument brings to mind the paradigm debate and the problems inherent in reconciling perspectives that are based on different assumptions. As proposed in the second chapter of this thesis, structuration theory may be helpful for reconciling some of the paradigmatic differences, at least at the level of inquiry. Furthermore, paradigmatic triangulation may be helpful for avoiding the conflation of contradictory assumptions.

Summary

To summarize, PR was influenced by action research, which developed as an alternative to objectivist and value-free traditional social science and applied research. Action research was interested in contributing to theory and practice by developing and testing causal inferences about change and in solving practical social problems by involving social actors in the research-action process. PR developed in the First and Third Worlds and this resulted in the development of two divergent streams.

The First World PR stream is informed by an implicit utilitarian or instrumental ideology with two aims. The first aim is to bring about socially beneficial change for the benefit of the PR collaborators within the context of the existing social order. The second aim is to build theory for the benefit of the PR practitioners or facilitators. Both of these aims can be accommodated in a project which involves the joint participation of facilitators and collaborators in all phases of the process. Communication as a social process is

implicated in participative dialogue which brings together processed and experiential knowledge, and in the action-reflection spiral which allows new learning to emerge. While much of the inquiry in this stream focuses on causal relationships there is also an interest in meaning systems but an absence of interest in unequal power relations.

The Third World PR stream is informed by an explicit emancipatory ideology with the primary aim of changing the status quo of power relations in favour of oppressed groups of people. A related aim concerns improving theory/practice for the benefit of the people. Facilitators and collaborators participate through all phases of the process but the facilitators must be committed to the social justice aims of the collaborators, and the latter must control the process. Communication as a social process is implicated in participative dialogue which allows the people to reclaim the production and reproduction of knowledge and which allows new learning to emerge. While much of the inquiry in this stream focuses on issues of unequal power relations, there is also an interest in meaning systems, but an absence of interest in causal relationships which favour the status quo.

The issue of convergence between these two streams is problematic, since they rest on different assumptions about the nature of inquiry and society and since they have different perspectives on theory and practice. It has been argued that the search for a common ground may be mutually beneficial for both streams. As proposed in the next chapter of this thesis, structuration theory may be helpful for reconciling some of the differences between these streams at the level of inquiry, and paradigmatic triangulation may be helpful for including their contradictory assumptions.

Notes

1. Lewin's influence is apparent in the work of the Research Center for Group Dynamics, which he founded, and the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in Great Britain. His ideas formed the basis for the development of the field of action research in the 1960s and spread through the disciplines of organizational and community development. The ideas of Lewin and action research became recognized as a solution to the problems generated by conventional top-down and undemocratic approaches to implementing change in organizations and social institutions.

2.   Action research, which became more fully developed in the 1960s, further elaborated Lewin's idea of a joint project which benefitted both social science and the society, and the process involved. In particular, action research became interested in testing solutions to problems to what was and is still termed an "intervention experiment" (Argyris and Schon 1991). It appears that action research was interested in making a contribution to society and to theory and practice through the intervention of the facilitator *and* collaborators. The nature of the intervention experiments indicates an interest in developing and testing causal inferences about change and formulating small, as opposed to grand, theories which are contextually based.

3.   For example, Whyte et al. (1991) have reported on a project with a Xerox plant in New York State designed to help management save costs and to help the union to save jobs. They have also reported on an interdisciplinary project with the Mondragon Cooperative Group in the Basque provinces of Spain designed to explain the success of cooperatives. Beausoleil (1990) has reported on several participatory research projects in which academics and their community-based partners worked together in order to improve community care in Montreal, Quebec. Walton and Gaffney (1991) have reported on participative projects designed to promote organizational change in the merchant shipping industry in Norway and the United States. Ortiz (1991) has reported on a joint venture in Guatemala to facilitate the dissemination of new agricultural technologies. Maclure and Bassey (1991) have reported on a project designed to improve maize storage systems in Togo, Africa.

4.   For example, de Roux (1991) reports on a project that was undertaken with peasants in Afro-Colombian communities in order to establish their right to quality electric service at reasonable and consistent rates. Salazar (1991) reports on a project with child labourers in poor suburban areas of Bogota in order to establish the viability of more critical policies geared to the protection of child labourers and to the gradual elimination of child labour. Rahman (1991) reports on several projects in Africa designed to help villagers and peasants reverse the process of underdevelopment. Nyoni (1991) reports on an initiative in Zimbabwe, following its attainment of independence, which constitutes an attempt to help rural villagers regain their power and participate in shaping their futures at community and national levels. Gaventa (1991) describes grass roots movements and people's projects in the developed world which show evidence of the Third World PR stream's concerns with domination and oppression.

5.   According to Rahman and Fals-Borda (1991), until 1977, the Third World Stream was characterized by an activist and anti-professional bent as well as by militancy. Ideas from Ghandi and Talmudian Marxism were particularly influential at the time. However, the early forms of radicalism and activism became revised through Gramsci's neo-Marxian views. During this reflective stage, theoretical propositions about participation, democracy and pluralism were further clarified. Furthermore, there was a move away from working with political organizations and towards working with democratic, autonomous people's organizations to promote their assertiveness and self-reliance (Rahman, 1991, 16). By 1982, when Rahman and Fals-Borda made their first formal presentation to the 10th World Congress of Sociology, the Third World stream had "achieved more self-identity and advanced from micro, peasant and local community issues to complex, urban, economic and regional dimensions (Rahman and Fals-Borda, 1991, 26).

III. Innovations For Participatory Research

Introduction

It has become apparent that there is a lack of productive communication between the proponents of the First and Third World PR streams. As was shown, much of this can be explained by their differing assumptions about the nature of inquiry and society. These assumptions inform the frames of reference, theories and methods which condition inquiry. Furthermore, they constitute different world views, perspectives or *paradigms*, as they are referred to here, and their boundaries tend to separate social theorists into different and often opposing camps. Unfortunately since the focus of each paradigm is either incomplete or imbalanced, as was suggested earlier, more productive communication about these paradigmatic perspectives can help fill the gaps or correct the imbalances. The metatheoretical innovation proposed in this chapter is an attempt at critiquing, reconciling and balancing the emphases of three different paradigms. It is hoped that this innovation may generate a more productive dialogue between the two primary PR streams. Specifically, it is proposed that *structuration theory* provides a useful metatheoretical framework for critiquing disparate paradigmatic perspectives and reframing these perspectives in a way that allows for a common focus. This chapter begins with an overview of three inquiry paradigms — post-positivist, critical and social constructivist — which appear to underlie the different inquiry emphases of the two PR streams. It then moves to a discussion of how these paradigmatic perspectives can be reframed through structuration theory. Since paradigms inform much of what happens at the theoretical and methodological level, it is proposed here that innovation must begin at the metatheoretical level.

It has also become apparent that communication between PR theorists and practitioners needs improvement, although it is recognized that not all PR practitioners are,

nor need they be, interested in this. As was suggested, closer links require both systematic documentation and a broader framework for critical reflection. However, while structuration theory constitutes a metatheory for critiquing and reframing paradigmatic emphases, it does not provide a methodology for incorporating all of these into a single study. The methodological innovation proposed in this chapter is an attempt to provide a systematic framework which allows for the generation of more complete knowledge and for critical reflection. It is also hoped that this innovation will generate more dialogue between PR theorists and practitioners. More specifically, is proposed in this chapter that *paradigmatic triangulation* provides a method for not only incorporating different paradigmatic emphases into a single study but also for serving as a framework for critical reflection. This chapter briefly discusses the implications of paradigmatic triangulation.

It has also become apparent that the democratic participation of people with different kinds of knowledge and expertise in PR projects creates challenges and risks for both facilitators and collaborators. As was suggested, the mediation between processed and experiential knowledge should demonstrate respect for the principles of horizontal communication. Consequently, PR facilitators who mediate paradigmatically triangulated to collaborators should do so in a way that produces two-way egalitarian communication. The practical communications strategy proposed in this thesis is an attempt to demonstrate how this might be done. It is hoped that a consideration of this suggestion will generate dialogue about communication as a social process that respects the principles of horizontal communication in PR. Specifically, it is suggested in this chapter that *metaphors* may provide a common, mutually understood and egalitarian language for communicating the implications of paradigmatic triangulation. This chapter concludes with the presentation of a framework and a process for developing metaphors which serve a variety of communications objectives, and provides examples of inquiry metaphors which might be used in the context of paradigmatic triangulation.

Inquiry Paradigms

As was shown, there is evidence of three inquiry emphases or interests in PR, namely causal relationships, unequal power relations and meaning systems. As was also suggested earlier, these emphases are based on particular world views, perspectives or paradigms. Since these paradigms contain particular sets of assumptions it is helpful to briefly examine the paradigms which appear to undergird the various PR emphases. Recent work by Guba (1990) and others on three inquiry paradigms — post-positivist, social constructivist and critical inquiry — is helpful for a closer examination of the inquiry emphases inherent in PR. While it is not suggested that there is an exact correspondence between these inquiry paradigms and the inquiry emphases in PR, there are enough similarities to warrant making the connection. Like PR, these paradigms represent alternatives to objectivist inquiry and are opposed to the value-neutral stance of positivist social science. The discussion now turns to a brief review of these inquiry paradigms as discussed by Guba (1990) and others in *The Alternative Paradigm Dialog*.

The *post-positivist paradigm* is difficult to delineate due to its breadth, complexity and lack of agreement on important issues among its adherents.[1] In general terms, post-positivism attempts to redress the imbalances of positivism by doing inquiry in more natural settings, using more qualitative methods, depending more on grounded theory, and reintroducing discovery into the inquiry process (Guba, 1990, 23).

Post-positivism emphasizes inquiry into causal relationships. While post-positivists believe that human phenomena can be explained by causal relationships, causality is assumed to be complex, multiplistic and interactive (Greene, 1990, 230). Theory remains small and knowledge claims are commensurately modest. Theoretical propositions are viewed as established regularities or probabilities about human phenomena rather than as universal laws.

The ontological stance of post-positivism appears to be critical realism. Although a real world driven by real natural causes exists, it is impossible for people to completely apprehend or understand these (Guba, 1990, 20). As a result, inquirers need to be critical of their work. Furthermore, while post-positivists believe that reality is socially constructed, they maintain that only one view, as opposed to multiple views of reality, can be right (Phillips, 1990, 41-43). The epistemological stance of this paradigm can be described as modified objectivism which constitutes a recognition that people remain human when they conduct inquiry (Guba, 1990, 20). Moreover, findings emerge from interaction between the inquired and the inquired into. However, objectivity is still a regulatory, although only approximated ideal, and open criticism from diverse and pluralistic scholarly perspectives provides a check on objectivity (Guba, 1990, 23). Furthermore, this regulatory ideal emphasizes precise and unbiased inquiry (Phillips, 1990, 43). As a result, post-positivist inquiry entails a modified experimental or manipulative methodology which emphasizes critical multiplism.

In post-positivism, theory and practice remain mostly separate although the line demarcating the two is permeable (Greene, 1990, 233). The post-positivist inquirer primarily participates in the critical community of inquirers for the purpose of developing theory with a potential to enhance practice. However some post-positivists (Cook, 1985) argue that social scientists should be more involved in applied contexts, especially policy contexts. Although the value foundation of post-positivism is often not made explicit, it can be characterized as utilitarianism, efficiency and instrumentality since it aims at prediction and control (Greene, 1990, 233).

The strength of the post-positivist perspective is that inquiry is conducted in more natural settings, qualitative methods are used, grounded theory is developed and the inquiry process allows for discovery. However, although causal relationships are viewed as complex and interactive, causality is still viewed as something that can be predicted and

also controlled. This represents a weakness since micro-level processes or human agency are not taken into consideration. Furthermore, post-positivists do not usually make explicit or even question the values inherent in instrumentality nor do they take into account the power relations inherent in these values.

The First World PR stream seems to be informed by some of the assumptions of post-positivism. For example, both demonstrate an emphasis on inquiry into causal relationships and both are based on the value foundation of utilitarianism, efficiency and instrumentality. Furthermore, both are interested in the development of localized or grounded theory.

The *critical paradigm* encompasses a host of alternatives which might be more appropriately referred to as ideologically-oriented inquiry, " including neo-Marxism, materialism, feminism, Freiereism, participatory inquiry, and other similar movements as well as critical theory itself" (Guba, 1990, 23). Inquiry is considered a political act since the purpose of inquiry is to transform the world (Guba, 1990, 24).

Like post-positivism, the ontological stance of the critical paradigm is critical realism although what is meant by this is somewhat different. While a true but obscured reality exists, it requires a critical and objective approach to uncover it. The concept of reality ties ideas, thought and language to social and historical conditions. Objectivity has nothing to do with external laws which need to be discovered and verified. Rather, to be objective means to consider "the *socially* formed patterns that impinge upon our daily life as unquestioned and seemingly natural boundaries; and, at the same time, because these conditions are historically formed through human struggles, the patterns are dynamic and changing" (Popkewitz, 1990, 56). This involves criticism in two senses: the internal criticism that comes from logical consistency in arguments, procedures and language, as well as continual cross examination and rigorous scrutiny of data; and the external criticism of conditions of social regulation, unequal distribution and power, and a skepticism toward

social institutions (Popkewitz, 1990, 47). The critical realist ontology which stresses objectivity is coupled with a subjectivistic epistemology in the sense that values mediate inquiry. Furthermore, subjectivity draws attention to the awareness that people have in their daily lives. The methodology of the critical paradigm is both dialogic and transformative. It attempts to "eliminate false consciousness and energize and facilitate transformation" (Guba, 1990, 25). Moreover, the methods are also a "cross-checking mechanism on the hubris of intellectuals and power relations that underlie the formation of knowledge itself" (Popkewitz, 1990, 64).

Critical scientists see knowledge as practical and action-oriented in that it helps to enlighten people and catalyze political and social change. In fact there is no separation between theory and practice in this paradigm. Rather, there is a "genuine unity of theory and revolutionary praxis where the theoretical understanding of the contradictions inherent in existing society, when appropriated by those who are exploited, becomes constitutive of their very activity to transform society" (Bernstein, 1976, 182). The value foundation is made explicit and can be characterized as emancipatory since it aims at the transformation of society.

The strength of the critical perspective is that inquiry takes into account social conditions from an historical perspective. However, these socio-historical conditions are often seen in a rather deterministic manner. Although issues of power are taken into account, power is often seen as one-sided and oppressive in that it is used for purposes of subjugation. This represents a weakness in critical inquiry since micro-level processes or human agency are not adequately taken into account. Furthermore, the emphasis on eradicating a false consciousness and replacing it with a true consciousness presupposes an elite who possess the latter form of consciousness. As a result, it could be argued that there is a close parallel between the risks of manipulation inherent in predicting and

controlling the world as in post-positivist inquiry, and in transforming the world as in critical inquiry.

The Third World PR stream seems to be informed by some of the assumptions of critical inquiry. For example, both demonstrate an emphasis on the ideological or practical implications of inquiry and both are based on the value foundation of emancipation. Also, both emphasize inquiry into power relations and conflict from a socio-historical perspective. Moreover, both unite theory and action into what is referred to as praxis.

The *social constructivist* paradigm is a major example of interpretivist thought which focuses on the reconstruction of intersubjective meanings that people construct in a given context and on how these meanings interrelate to form a whole (Greene, 1990, 235). Reconstruction is "ideographic, time-and-place bound; multiple reconstructions are pluralistic, divergent, even conflictual. Hence interpretivist knowledge resembles more context-specific working hypotheses than generalizable propositions warranting certainty or even probability" (Green, 1990, 235).

However, unlike interpretivism, social constructivism places the inquirer more directly in the role of translator or intermediary among differing communities, or in the role of an advocate for stakeholders in participant groups (Greene, 1990, 238). There is an emphasis on the mediation of frames of meaning between various groups. Moreover, some social constructivists are interested in issues of fairness, action and empowerment, and in involvement in social policy contexts (Greene, 1990, 238). Even so, social constructivist inquiry does not explicitly seek to predict, control or transform the world, but rather to reconstruct it at the point at which it exists, in the minds of the constructors (Guba, 1990, 27).

The ontological stance of social constructivism is relativist, positing that "realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, social and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them" (Guba,

1990, 27). The epistemological stance is subjectivist and the inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the result of interaction between the two (Guba, 1990, 27). Unlike post-positivists who view subjectivity as an inevitable human condition, social constructivists view it as the only means of unlocking the constructions held by people and as something to be celebrated (Guba, 1990, 26). The methodology is hermeneutic, dialectic and critically reflective in that "individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus" (Guba, 1990, 27). Furthermore, "The hermeneutic aspect consists in depicting individual constructions as accurately as possible, while the dialectic aspect consists of comparing and contrasting these existing individual (including the inquirer's) constructions so that each respondent must confront the constructions of others and come to terms with them" (Guba, 1990, 26).

For the social constructivist, knowledge is grounded, "not developed from armchair speculations or elegant deductive reasoning but both discovered and justified from the field-based, inductive *methodology*" (Greene, 1990, 235). Furthermore, knowledge is "embued with the normative pluralism of the world of practice."(Greene, 1990, 238).

Finally, social constructivist inquiry is value-bound, but not openly ideological since the relativist position rules out revolutionary and social control positions. Values are inherent in the research process and these should be made explicit and explored. Although social constructivists make their values explicit, it can be argued that the broad value foundation of social constructivism is solidarity because the inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single entity and because inquirers sometimes take action on behalf of stakeholders or participant groups. Taking action appears to contradict the value-relative position of this paradigm. However, as Greene (1990, 238) argues, social constructivist inquiry is also considered to be value-laden and is permeated by the values and the interests

of the inquirer. When social constructivists take action, they do so on the basis of their own values and not on the basis of the values inherent in this paradigm.

The major strengths of social constructivist inquiry are its focus on socially constructed meaning systems and a critically reflective methodology for interpreting and juxtaposing the constructions of individuals. Although it accounts for micro-level processes and celebrates intersubjectivity, social constructivist inquiry is overly voluntaristic and does not account for socio-historical processes which may impinge on individual constructions. This represents a weakness since it tends to decontextualize human agents in terms of a larger social and historical framework. Furthermore, it does not account for macro-level processes or the structural constraints on human agency.

Both the First and Third World PR streams demonstrate elements of social constructivist inquiry. For example, there is evidence in both streams of an interest in socially constructed meaning systems or frameworks and in critical reflection for knowledge empowerment.

As has been demonstrated, each of the three paradigms briefly outlined above has its strengths and weaknesses, gaps and imbalances. It has also been argued that greater communication between proponents of different paradigms might be productive; however, since paradigms often separate social theorists into different camps, reconciliation is difficult at best. There has been a longstanding and often heated debate about the feasibility of reconciliation between paradigms. For example, Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest that paradigms are mutually exclusive or incommensurable since their assumptions differ fundamentally. These writers argue that there are few if any common points of contact between paradigms since they

> offer alternative views of social reality, and to understand the nature of [them] is to understand...different views of society. They offer different ways of seeing. A synthesis is not possible, since in their pure forms they are contradictory, being based on at least one set of opposing meta-theoretical assumptions. They are alternatives, in the sense that one *can* operate in different paradigms sequentially over time, but mutually exclusive, in the sense that one cannot operate in more than

one paradigm at any given point in time, since in accepting the assumptions of one, we defy the assumptions of all the others (25).

Furthermore, Lincoln (1990) argues that paradigms are also deterministic, all-pervasive and often unconscious.

> Paradigms are ubiquitous entities, permeating and dictating choices even when we are unconscious of their influence in that process. Thus we have to make a commitment as inquirers to one or the other and behave in a fashion congruent with its dictates until we choose another system (81).

As do Burrell and Morgan, Lincoln (1990) also argues that paradigms are incommensurable in that they cannot be synthesized or accommodated.

> The immediate realization is that accommodation between paradigms is impossible. The rules of action, for process, for discourse, for what is considered knowledge and truth, are so vastly different that, although procedurally we may appear to be undertaking the same search, in fact, we are led to vastly diverse, disparate, distinctive, and typically antithetical ends.

> The socialization processes associated with each paradigm are sufficiently divergent, and the emotional and political commitments so high, that a mix-and-match strategy, at either the axiomatic or the practical level, is likely to produce little more than internal dissonance in the research process, a form of discursive incoherence that renders the findings useless for both camps (81).

Unfortunately, the view that paradigms are deterministic, mutually exclusive and all-pervasive can lead to the conclusion that there is little point in pursuing a productive dialogue and reconciliation between these paradigms. Gioia and Pitre (1990) suggest that reconciliation must begin at a metaparadigmatic level since this allows for each paradigm to be compared and contrasted from within a common framework. According to these authors, the metaparadigmatic perspective is "an attempt to deal with the intellectual provincialism that occurs when one accepts paradigms as fundamentally incommensurable and noncomparable and, therefore, proceeds with only one perspective without attempting to account for disparate views" (599). It appears then that a metatheoretical approach is needed to account for and reconcile different paradigmatic perspectives.

Structuration Theory

It is proposed in this thesis that structuration theory, a metatheory developed by Giddens over the past two decades, provides a useful framework for accounting for disparate views and establishing a discourse between paradigms. The basic tenets of structuration theory constitute a rejection of the assumptions of the orthodox consensus of social science i.e., the notion of positivism that the social sciences should be modeled after the natural sciences; the idea that the role of the social sciences is to explicate elements of social causation of which actors are unaware; and the functionalist view that social systems can be studied like biological systems (Giddens, 1989, 53). Instead, Giddens (1984) offers a selective synthesis of concepts drawn from a diversity of disciplines, including among others, the phenomenology of Schutz, the ethnomethodology of Goffman, and the understanding of abstract structure in structuralism. It also includes reformulations of the the functionalist conception of consequences by Merton and the historical materialism of Marx. However, structuration theory avoids the deterministic tendencies of structuralism and functionalism and the voluntaristic leanings of interpretive sociologies by focusing on how knowledgeable human agents produce and reproduce the social conditions which affect them.

Briefly, structuration theory links the subjectivist and objectivist, macro and micro emphases of social science paradigms through a focus on social practices, and thus provides a focal point for dialogue between these paradigms. The concept of structuration — the processes by which structures, social systems and institutions are produced and reproduced over time via the routinized and recursive social practices of people — offers a way of understanding how people are at the same time creators of society and yet created by it. While structuration theory has many aspects, only those that are pertinent to this discussion will be reviewed here.

Giddens' (1984) critique of functionalism provides a way of reframing the understanding of causal relationships in the post-positivist paradigm. Giddens has no quarrel with the functionalist emphasis on analysing the unintended consequences of institutionalized practices or individual activities and states that "The work of functionalist authors has been very important in social research precisely because it has directed attention to the disparities between what actors intended to do and the consequences which ensue from what they do" (1984, 296). However, he maintains that functionalists have not accorded enough importance to intentional or purposive action and often see causality in a deterministic manner. Alternatively, Giddens suggests that inquiry should explain how the social activities that are carried on in an intentional way by people, create unintended consequences for people and society. These consequences then course back into society to create the conditions which form the basis for subsequent social activities. This focus on the creation and recreation of society through the social practices of people lessens the force of the functionalist argument that powerful social forces, operating like the laws of nature, determine the activities of people and the nature of society.

Giddens' notion of intended and unintended consequences is of value for post-positivist inquiry and PR because it grounds the discussion of causal relationships in a framework that emphasizes the ability of people to create and recreate society, although in often unpredictable ways. By focusing inquiry on the intended and unintended consequences of human action implicated in the creation and recreation of society, participatory researchers gain the ability to not only describe but also to explain complex causal relationships in a way that is not deterministic since it includes human agency. This is important for both post-positivism and PR because it emphasizes that social change cannot be predicted or controlled since both intended and unintended (or unpredictable) consequences of knowledgeable human agency generate social change.

Giddens' critique of interpretivist sociology provides a way of reframing the descriptive, subjectivistic and relativistic emphases of the social constructivist paradigm. Giddens relies heavily on Schutz's understanding of social actors' stocks of knowledge, knowledge which is practical and is inherent in the capability of people to go on with the routines of social life. However, he criticizes the interpretivist sociologies for regarding "society as the plastic creation of human subjects" (1984, 26). As he states, for interpretivist sociologies,

> Subjectivity is the preconstituted centre of the experience of culture and history and as such provides the basic foundation of the social or human sciences. Outside the realm of subjective experience, and alien to it, lies the material world, governed by impersonal relations of cause and effect....In interpretive sociologies, action and meaning are accorded primacy in the explication of human conduct; structural concepts are not notably prominent, and there is not much talk of constraint (1984, 2).

What is lacking, according to Giddens, is the understanding that human interaction is linked to the implicit knowledge of rules or abstract structures that make it possible for people to go on in life. These social rules are procedures which people apply in the creation and recreation of social practices. They are not the same as formally expressed rules and operate more like the deep and implicit rules that govern language production and reproduction.

Giddens (1984) then links the implicit rules that guide human interaction with social accountability and with the interpretive schemes that make communication possible between people.

> 'Interpretive schemes' are the modes of typification incorporated within actors' stocks of knowledge, applied reflexively in the sustaining of communication. These stocks of knowledge which actors draw upon in the production and reproduction of interaction are the same as those whereby they are able to make accounts, offer reasons, etc. (29).

> To be a human being is to be a purposive agent, who both has reasons for his or her activities and is able, if asked, to elaborate discursively upon those reasons.... [However] purposive action is not composed of an aggregate or series of separate intentions, reasons and motives. Thus it is useful to speak of reflexivity as grounded in the continuous monitoring of action which human beings display and expect others to display (3).

By linking interpretive schemes with implicit structural rules on the one hand and social practices on the other, Giddens provides a corrective to the subjectivism of the constructivist paradigm.

Furthermore, Giddens suggests that inquiry into interpretive schemes can move beyond description and offer explanations regarding divergent and often unintelligible frames of meaning. Questions about divergent frames of meaning can be explored across the varying contexts of single societies as well as between societies. In fact, Giddens (1984, 285) describes the social scientist as a communicator who introduces frames of meaning associated with certain contexts of social life to people in other contexts. This "mediation of cultural settings" coupled with conceptual innovation has significant practical implications although the outcomes can never be predicted (1987, 47). As Giddens (1984) states: "...theories and findings in social sciences are likely to have practical (and political) consequences regardless of whether or not the sociological observer decides that they can be 'applied' to a given practical issue" (xxxv). In other words, explanations of the interpretive frameworks of particular groups of people to others outside those groups, carry the possibility of creating greater understanding and of generating social change.

Giddens' notion of interpretive schemes is of value to both social constructivist inquiry and PR because it grounds the notion of interpretive schemes in a framework that links abstract rules and social practices. Furthermore, by focusing inquiry on the explanation of the interpretive frameworks of some groups of people to others, participatory researchers can be firmly rooted in the communications mandate of the social sciences. This is important for both social constructivism and PR because it recognizes that the mediation of frames of meaning between different groups of people generates social change.

Giddens' critique of critical science provides a way of reframing the understanding of power and conflict relations in the critical paradigm. Giddens acknowledges the

contributions of Marx in bringing the notion of power into sociological discourse. According to Giddens (1984):

> Anyone who reflects upon the phrase 'human beings make history', particularly within the broader scope of Marx's writings, is inevitably led to consider questions of conflict and power. For in Marx's view, the making of history is done not just in relation to the natural world but also through the struggles which some human beings wage against others in circumstances of domination (256).

However, he maintains that while power is sometimes linked with oppression, class struggle and conflict in the sense of active struggle, it is a mistake to treat power as inherently divisive. Rather, power struggles should be seen as efforts by some groups of actors to influence the circumstances or actions of others. While the historical materialist view may be attractive to those who struggle for emancipation of the oppressed, it should be avoided since "The interests of the oppressed are not cut of whole cloth and frequently clash, while beneficial social changes often demand the use of differential power held only by the privileged" (1990, 155). Alternatively, Giddens (1984) suggests that power should be reframed as:

> ...the capacity to achieve outcomes; whether or not these are connected to purely sectional interests is not germane to its definition. Power is not, as such, an obstacle to freedom or emancipation but is their very medium — although it would be foolish, of course, to ignore its constraining properties (257).

The constraining properties of power are contextually derived and involve those things which place boundaries around the range of options open to people in a particular set of circumstances. One important constraint is *how* power is used to draw upon resources, either those involving material goods or authority, rather than the fact that it is used. This type of constraint is often expressed as sanctions of various kinds which may range from the direct application of force or violence, or the threat of such application, to the mild expression of disapproval. In other words, "Structural constraints do not operate independently of the motives and reasons that agents have for doing what they do" (Giddens, 1984, 181). However, constraints should always be considered alongside

enablements since these operate in tandem and one person's constraint is often another person's enablement.

This concept of power must be considered alongside Giddens' concept of agency, which refers to the ability and capacity of people to do things in the first place, as opposed to their intentions. According to Giddens (1984), action is a process which occurs in a continuous flow and "depends upon the capability of the individual to 'make a difference' to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events" (14). Therefore, power is at the very heart of the capability of agents to make a difference and to bring about the intended consequences of action. Even forms of dependence which appear to exhibit a lack of power offer some resources whereby those who are subordinate can influence and even control the activities of those who are superordinate. This is referred to as the dialectic of control and has direct implications for the examination of power relations in communities.

Giddens' notion of agency and power is of value for both critical inquiry and PR because it grounds the discussion of agency and constraint in a framework that emphasizes a more complete understanding of power. By focusing inquiry on the explanation of how and why agency and power are mobilized, participatory researchers gain the ability to analyse not only the constraining but also the enabling aspects of social practices. This is important for critical inquiry and PR because it recognizes that power is a resource inherent in knowledgeable human agency and that it generates social change.

While structuration theory is helpful for reframing the inquiry emphases of PR, it is also helpful for providing a common framework or focus. The focus on social practices provides such a framework and it is the primary concern of structuration theory. According to Giddens (1984),

> The basic domain of study of the social sciences, according to the theory of structuration, is neither the experience of the individual actor, nor the existence of any form of societal totality, but social practices ordered across space and time.

> Continuity of practices presumes reflexivity [of knowledgeable human agents], but reflexivity in turn is possible only because of the continuity of [social] practices that makes them distinctively 'the same' across space and time (2, 3).

Such an analysis is useful for participatory researchers because it goes beyond a description of the purely local context and incorporates a broader understanding of how social conditions have been created and maintained.

The focus on social practices also allows for the synthesis of a multiparadigmatic perspective especially when the emphases of the various inquiry paradigms are reframed in terms of structuration theory. For example, a post-positivist perspective that emphasizes intended and unintended consequences, a social constructivist perspective that emphasizes meaning systems, and a critical perspective that emphasizes agency and power, can be brought to bear on the issue of social practices. In other words, structuration theory provides a metatheoretical framework which allows these paradigmatic emphases to converge on a common focus. However, it does not provide a methodology for incorporating all of these emphases into a single study. What is required then, is a method that addresses this issue.

Paradigmatic Triangulation

It is proposed that paradigmatic triangulation provides a method for incorporating different paradigmatic emphases into a single study. According to Neuman (1991), triangulation means several perspectives on a common phenomenon. Denzin (1970) first opened the possibility of different kinds of triangulation by outlining four basic types: data, theory, method and investigator. However, he was primarily interested in overcoming problems of bias and validity and triangulation was conducted only within one paradigm. It is suggested here that paradigmatic triangulation, while not considered by Denzin, constitutes another method of triangulation.

As was suggested earlier, paradigmatic triangulation can serve as a systematic framework for critical reflection. Consequently, it offers a method for the building of grounded theory from practice or the testing of existent theories. As Gioia and Pitre (1990) have argued, paradigmatic triangulation, or multiparadigmatic inquiry as they call it, can assist in theory-building because it generates more complete knowledge than any single paradigmatic perspective. It can be argued that paradigmatic triangulation moves the concept of systematic practice to a higher level, requiring careful planning and documentation in order to achieve internal consistency at a paradigmatic level as well as comparison at a metaparadigmatic level. It is also suggested here that paradigmatic triangulation gives participatory researchers an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in an area that also affects the social sciences. As a result, dialogue between social scientists and participatory researchers may be opened, allowing for significant contributions by both communities.

However there are virtually no precedents for the practical application of multiparadigmatic research. An exception is a recent study by Hassard (1991) which employed "multiple paradigms". Hassard used Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four-paradigm model to study work behaviour in the British Fire Service. Some of the shortcomings of the research which Hassard points out are instructive. For example, one inquiry team, comprised of researchers from different disciplines, investigated four different topics, each from a different paradigm. As a result, it was not possible to compare the findings. Hassard suggests that investigating a single topic from various perspectives, in sequential order from micro- to macro-levels of analysis, would have provided a more powerful methodology. However, he warns that such a procedure would be very time consuming.

On the other hand, Gioia and Pitre (1990) suggest that the different paradigms be applied simultaneously to a particular problem in the course of inquiry. While this

suggestion is interesting in principle, it may be difficult in practice to keep the various emphases of each paradigm in perspective simultaneously. Furthermore, any one of these perspectives could become eclipsed by another and as a result compromise the intent of triangulation.

It is suggested in this thesis that the use of several paradigmatic inquiry teams offers one solution to the implementation of paradigmatic triangulation. In a PR context, the collaborators would divide into teams. Each team would conduct inquiry from a different paradigmatic perspective or emphasis which had been reframed through structuration theory as outlined earlier. Rather than moving from one perspective to another in a sequential manner, the three teams would conduct their inquiry simultaneously. For example, the post-positivist team would look at intended and unintended consequences, the social constructivist team at interpretive schemes and the critical team at agency and power. However, each team would triangulate or focus their paradigmatic perspective on a common problem and on the social practices implicated. This would allow for a comparison of the findings and help avoid the confusion that might arise as a result of constantly moving from one perspective to another or of trying to keep the various emphases in focus simultaneously. It would also be less time consuming to use inquiry teams which work separately yet simultaneously on a common problem focused around social practices of one variety or another.

Paradigmatic inquiry teams may also be useful for social science inquiry. However, in a PR context, they present additional problems which revolve around communication between processed and experiential knowledge. The implication here is that in order for horizontal communication to take place, not only must the PR facilitator reflect this principle attitudinally, but also use language that is understood by the PR collaborators in order to mediate processed knowledge and concepts. Thus it is important to develop a way of communicating the implications of the inquiry paradigms in a way that

makes sense to the PR collaborators, does not compromise horizontal communication, and still communicates the perspectives and emphases of these paradigms.

Metaphors and Communication

It is proposed here that metaphors can be used to communicate the implications of paradigmatic inquiry since, as was suggested earlier, metaphors are embedded in paradigms. Metaphor is the subject of a diverse and multidisciplinary literature, reaching back to the writings of Aristotle. Even within certain disciplines, such as linguistics, the literature demonstrates considerable theoretical variation with much emphasis on structural features, some on functional aspects and very little on contextual issues. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with the diversity in the literature. Rather, only the work that is salient to the use of metaphor as a communications strategy for the purpose of mediating between processed and experiential knowledge will be addressed here. Consequently, metaphors will be broadly conceptualized as expressive language — including similes, analogies and other forms of expression — that is contextually situated and serves a broad range of communicative or instrumental purposes. From this perspective, there are a number of ways metaphors can be defined and their definition depends directly on the particular purpose and context in which they are used.

Of interest here is Crider and Cirillo's (1991) framework for organizing the literature on metaphors into four systems according to communicative purpose. They contend that these systems "are not simply different theories about the same object, for each encompasses a different range of speeches. Even when various systems agree that a group of words is a metaphor, each makes a different meaningful object of these words, an object suitable for different purposes" (187). This framework is useful here because it focuses on metaphor as a communications strategy and cuts across all disciplines and domains of discourse.

The first system refers to metaphors which are used to achieve concise and vivid communication. Here a metaphor is defined as a *comparison* between a vehicle or metaphor, which is unlike the topic.[2] This use of metaphor accomplishes concise and vivid communication and is suitable for contexts where time for speech is short, where people rely on their unaided memories and when something complicated must be made familiar. The second system refers to metaphors which are used to create or reveal something new. Here a metaphor is defined as a *juxtaposition* of terms that are unrelated and where the interaction of the previously unrelated terms produces a novel object.[3] The use of creative or revelatory metaphors is appropriate in contexts where the primary goal is to provide access to new dimensions of experience. The third system refers to metaphors which are used to transform a perspective. Here metaphor is defined as a new perspective or a *frame of reference* which organizes or transforms thinking about a topic.[4] These transformative metaphors are most suitable for contexts in which the goal is to shape perceptions and beliefs and they are often used in educational, psychotherapy and social policy contexts. The fourth system refers to metaphors that are used to simultaneously represent different interests. Here metaphors are defined as expressions which convey *multiple meanings*, thereby condensing communication that would otherwise be separated.[5] One context where multiple meaning metaphors are suitable is that in which a speaker uses terminology that appeals to an audience's particular interests.

The foregoing framework is helpful for analyzing how metaphors can be used to communicate paradigmatically triangulated inquiry and for developing a strategy to achieve all four communicative purposes. For example, the use of metaphor to transform a perspective is particularly useful since it serves to provide a frame of reference and to *organize* thinking about inquiry from different paradigms.[6] The use of metaphor to create or reveal something new is particularly useful for vicariously generating the *experience* of conducting inquiry from a particular paradigmatic perspective.[7] Furthermore, the use of

metaphor to mediate between different interests is particularly useful since it serves to *connect* people who are conducting inquiry from a particular paradigmatic perspective.[8] Finally, the use of metaphor to communicate vividly and concisely is particularly useful since it serves to *substitute* economical and memorable expressions for lengthy and literal discussions about paradigms.[9]

The foregoing discussion points to how metaphors for conducting paradigmatically oriented inquiry in PR might be developed.[10] While the burden of developing the metaphors falls upon the shoulders of the PR facilitator, it should not be done without an analysis of what the collaborators already know and the implications of each inquiry paradigm.[11] The examples provided below suggest possible inquiry metaphors that might be used in the course of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry to accomplish the goals suggested by Crider and Cirillo. They are not offered as the only or even most appropriate metaphors that might be developed. The intention here is not to stereotype various forms of inquiry nor those who carry them out, but to convey a mental image of different approaches to inquiry. Furthermore, these metaphorical expressions presume that the collaborators have some knowledge of the vehicle i.e., metaphor, for understanding the topic i.e., different inquiry paradigms.

Development of a metaphor for post-positivist inquiry might proceed as follows. It can be argued that for post-positivists, society is a complex system of interrelated parts, and that the purpose of inquiry is to explain the causal relationships in the system. For example, an environmentalist is an inquirer who is concerned with explaining interrelationships in a system; he or she works within the context of an ecosystem. Therefore, PR collaborators conducting post-positivist inquiry could do so as if they were *environmentalists studying an ecosystem.* This metaphor captures the concepts of inquiry into causal relationships and consequences of action in that paradigm, and signals the need for the inquirer to use methods that provide an overview of the system and to attend to the

parts of the system. While this metaphor does not explicitly address social practices, the research question for the post-positivist team could be reframed to emphasize the intended and unintended consequences implicated in the social practices surrounding the common research problem.

Development of a metaphor for social constructivist inquiry might proceed as follows. It can be argued that for social constructivists, society is a rich tapestry with many different threads woven into a coherent pattern, and that the purpose of inquiry is to describe the meaning of those threads and patterns. For example, an anthropologist is an inquirer who is concerned with describing individual diversity and larger patterns; he or she works within the context of a culture. Therefore, PR collaborators conducting social constructivist inquiry could do so as if they were *anthropologists studying a culture.* This metaphor captures the notions of individual interpretive frameworks and social patterns in the social constructivist paradigm and signals the need for the inquirer to use methods which reveal how people interpret their lives. While this metaphor does not explicitly address social practices, the research question for this team could be reframed to emphasize the interpretive schemes implicated in the social practices surrounding the common research problem.

Development of a metaphor for critical inquiry might proceed as follows. It can be argued that for critical inquirers, society is an obscured battleground in the power struggle between truth and falsification, and that the purpose of inquiry is to expose and eliminate the sources of falsification so that truth may triumph. An investigative reporter is an inquirer who is concerned with revealing the truth; he or she works in the context of a political situation. Therefore, PR collaborators conducting critical inquiry could do so as if they were *investigative reporters studying a political situation.* This metaphor captures the concepts of power relations in the critical paradigm and signals the need for the inquirer to use methods which can expose why these relations exist and persist. While this metaphor

does not explicitly address social practices, the research question for this team could be reframed to emphasize the manner in which agency and power are implicated in the social practices surrounding the common research problem.

The use of metaphor as a communications strategy is indeed not new. However, when metaphor is used as a strategy to mediate processed and experiential knowledge in a paradigmatically triangulated PR project, it needs to be developed in a way that allows for effective, efficient, insightful and meaningful communication to occur. As a result, the knowledge, social context and culture of the collaborators must be taken into account. [12]

Summary

In summary, it has been shown that the First World PR stream is informed by some of the assumptions of post-positivist inquiry, that the Third World PR stream is informed by some of the assumptions of critical inquiry and that both streams also demonstrate elements of social constructivist inquiry. It has been demonstrated that each of these inquiry paradigms have strengths but also have gaps, weaknesses and imbalances.

The first innovation proposed in this thesis, has concerned the use of structuration theory to account for the disparate views of these paradigms. First, Giddens' notion of intended and unintended consequences is of value for post-positivist inquiry and PR because it grounds the discussion of causal relationships in a framework that emphasizes the ability of people to create and recreate society, although in an often unpredictable way. It has been argued that by focusing inquiry on the intended and unintended consequences of human action implicated in the creation and recreation of society, participatory researchers have the ability to not only describe but also to explain complex causal relationships in a way that is not deterministic since human agency is included. This is important for both post-positivism and PR because it emphasizes that social change cannot be predicted or controlled since both intended and unintended (or unpredictable)

consequences of knowledgeable human agency generate social change. Second, Giddens' notion of interpretive schemes is of value to both social constructivist inquiry and PR because it grounds the notion of interpretive schemes in a framework that links abstract rules and social practices. It has been argued that by focusing inquiry on the explanation of the interpretive schemes of some groups of people to others, participatory researchers can be firmly rooted in the communications mandate of the social sciences. This is important for both social constructivism and PR because it recognizes that the mediation of frames of meaning between stakeholders, including participants and policy makers, generates social change. Third, Giddens' notion of agency and power is of value for both critical inquiry and PR because it grounds the discussion of agency and constraint in a framework that emphasizes a more complete understanding of power. It has been argued that by focusing inquiry on the explanation of how and why agency and power are mobilized, participatory researchers gain the ability to analyse not only the constraining but also the enabling aspects of social practices. Furthermore, this is important for critical inquiry and PR because it recognizes that power is a resource inherent in human action and agency, and that it generates change.

While structuration theory is helpful for reframing the inquiry emphases of PR, it is also helpful for providing a common framework or focus. The focus on social practices provides such a framework and it is the primary concern of structuration theory. Structuration theory does not, however, provide a methodology for incorporating all of these emphases into a single study. What is required then, is a method that addresses this issue.

The second innovation proposed in this thesis, has concerned the use of paradigmatic triangulation as a method for incorporating different paradigmatic emphases into a single study. As was suggested earlier, it also serves as a systematic framework for critical reflection. Consequently, it offers a method for the building of grounded theory

from practice or for the testing of existent theories. Moreover, paradigmatic triangulation moves the concept of systematic practice to a higher level. It requires careful thought and documentation to achieve internal consistency at a paradigmatic level as well as external consistency at a metaparadigmatic level. It was suggested that the use of several paradigmatic inquiry teams offers a solution to the implementation of paradigmatic triangulation. In a participatory research context, the collaborators would divide into teams, with each team conducting inquiry from a different paradigmatic perspective or emphasis which had been reframed through structuration theory as outlined earlier.

It has been proposed that metaphors can be used to communicate the implications of paradigmatic inquiry. For example, metaphors can organize thinking about inquiry from different paradigms; vicariously generate the experience of conducting inquiry from different paradigmatic perspectives; substitute economical and memorable expressions for lengthy and literal discussions about paradigms; and connect people who are conducting inquiry. It has been suggested that: a team of PR collaborators conducting post-positivist inquiry could do so as if they were environmentalists studying an ecosystem; a team of collaborators conducting social constructivist inquiry could do so as if they were anthropologists studying a culture; and a team of collaborators conducting critical inquiry could do so as if they were investigative reporters studying a political situation.

The discussion now turns to a description and analysis of how planning for paradigmatic inquiry using those particular metaphors was conducted within the context of a PR project with the Social Action Committee of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association.

Notes

1.   There is some debate as to whether it is a modified version of positivism that places less emphasis on objectivism, quantitative methods, and grand theory or whether it is so named because it arose after the demise of positivism (Guba, 1990, Phillips, 1990).

2.   This view assumes that the relevant characteristics between the vehicle and the topic are already established. According to Crider and Cirillo (1991), "Variants of this view treat meaning as a series of discrete features, a configuration, or a coordinate in space, and variously regard the constituents of meaning as properties of the lexicon, of the referent, or of phenomenal experience" (175). Comparison metaphors can be used in different ways. For example, they can be used as substitutes for lengthy literal descriptions by employing a vehicle to suggest many characteristics that might be shared by the topic. They can also be graphic and therefore memorable, stimulating immediate experience of what is shared by the topic and the vehicle. Furthermore, they can used to express something that cannot be expressed through the conventional use of words.

3.   This view assumes that although the meanings of words are relatively fixed, when those same words are placed in unusual combinations, their meaning becomes transformed. This use of metaphor also has the capacity to generate a richness of experience through which it is possible to become aware of the similarities and differences between things.

4.   This view assumes the possession of organized knowledge about the domain of the vehicle and a terminology for talking about it. "The metaphor invites us to project this knowledge onto the topic and to reconstrue it by analogy" (Crider and Cirillo, 1991, 181). In other words, this use of metaphor implies sets of relations which organize the topic in a new way and constitute an entire perspective.

5.   This view assumes that language communicates between the different interests of people and that when these interests are complicated or conflicting, metaphors mediate between them. There are two primary purposes served by this use of metaphor. One is to bring together unconnected interests and the second is to reveal to one audience, interests that are simultaneously hidden from the other.

6.   Since metaphors express models, their use for this purpose can help PR collaborators clarify various relationships entailed by each paradigmatic model. For example, each paradigm posits different sets of relationships between the individual and society, between inquirers and the inquired into and between the elements of inquiry. It is important for both PR facilitators and collaborators to understand these relationships.

7.   Since metaphors have the capacity to generate richness of experience and create an awareness of similarities or differences, their use for this purpose can help PR collaborators identify with other inquirers who operate from within particular paradigms. For example, there are some types of inquirers who exemplify the various paradigmatic perspectives. It is important for PR facilitators and collaborators to be able to envision themselves as those types of inquirers.

8.   Since metaphors have the capacity to generate a sense of community and make distinctions between other communities, their use for this purpose can provide paradigmatic inquiry teams with membership and identity. For example, each paradigmatic inquiry team needs to work together on a common perspective and it is important for the PR facilitator and collaborators to identify not only with that perspective but with the other members of the team. Furthermore, they also need to be able to distinguish themselves from the other teams.

9.   Since metaphors have the capacity to convey complexity in a shorthand form, their use for this purpose can anchor a particular paradigmatic perspective in the minds of both PR facilitators and collaborators. For example, each paradigmatic perspective constitutes a world view which is complex and it is important for PR facilitators and collaborators to be able to internalize those features and recall them immediately.

10.   First, inquiry metaphors need to suggest relationships between various elements of inquiry from a particular paradigmatic perspective so that the collaborators understand the

implications of inquiry from that perspective. Second, inquiry metaphors need to convey the experience of conducting inquiry from a particular paradigmatic perspective so that the PR collaborators can imaginatively place themselves within the the role of a particular type of inquirer and the context of inquiry and thereby within a particular paradigmatic perspective. Third, inquiry metaphors need to simultaneously convey complexity and simplicity so collaborators can make the connection between the metaphor and the particular paradigmatic perspective. Complexity is important because the metaphor must be able to incorporate a variety of concepts and allow for elaboration of the paradigm. Simplicity is important because the metaphor must offer a memorable reference point to the paradigm. Fourth, inquiry metaphors need to create a sense of identity for the members of particular inquiry teams so that each team operates as a cohesive unit which is distinct from the other teams.

11. It is proposed here that developing inquiry metaphors entails a three stage process. The first stage involves developing a metaphor for *society* from a particular paradigmatic perspective and a metaphor for for the *purpose of inquiry* from that perspective. This set of metaphors serves to organize thinking about inquiry from a particular perspective since it expresses a model. The second stage involves identifying a *type of inquirer* who looks at society from a particular paradigmatic perspective. This serves to create a sense of identification with a particular type of inquirer. This stage also involves identifying the *context* in which that particular inquirer works. This serves to generate vicariously the experience of conducting inquiry in that context. The third stage involves developing a new metaphor which implicitly incorporates the ideas from the first set of metaphors, and explicitly refers to the type of inquirer and the context of inquiry. This serves to anchor the paradigmatic model, the identification with a particular inquirer, and that inquirer's experience in a memorable way. This process should be repeated for each paradigmatic perspective. Once the new metaphor has been formulated, it may be helpful to represent it visually.

12. The metaphors suggested here are admittedly limited to a situation where the collaborators know about investigative reporters, anthropologists and environmentalists. In contexts where this type of information is not known, the same process for developing metaphors can be still be used, taking what the collaborators know into account and using examples of inquirers with which the collaborators are familiar. However, in cultures where there is no clear evidence of the three paradigms used in this thesis, it is important to discover which paradigms are important in that culture. Since paradigms represent world views about the way society works, this might be done by asking a number of different people in that culture why things happen the way they do in society. The reasons given may indicate parallels with the three paradigms referred to here or they may not. In the latter case, the facilitator would then need to develop new models, incorporating the epistemological and ontological stances of the paradigms in that culture. In order to conduct paradigmatically triangulated inquiry, more than one model should be developed, although this might be difficult in cultures that do not exhibit the pluralism of western society.

IV. Case Study:

Planning for Paradigmatically Triangulated Inquiry

Introduction

In moving from the world of ideas about communication, PR, and multiparadigmatic inquiry to the world of experience, it became evident that the implementation of these ideas in a real context involved negotiation. While the innovations were being developed, the concept of negotiation had not emerged. However, it became a central theme as soon as people with differing agendas, expertise, forms of knowledge and roles began to participate in the process. It also became apparent that communication was critical to both the means and the outcome of negotiation.

This chapter analyses two processes, participation and inquiry planning that had to be negotiated during a paradigmatically triangulated PR project with the Social Action Committee (SAC) of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association (ACAA). While these processes were intertwined throughout the project, they are separated in this chapter for analytical purposes. The *participation* process had to be carefully negotiated in order to build solidarity for a paradigmatically triangulated project and achieve solidarity among people who had a stake in the project. The *inquiry planning* process involved three types of negotiation. Negotiation among people was needed in order to reach agreement on the research focus; negotiation between processed and experiential knowledge was needed in order to mediate paradigmatically triangulated inquiry; and negotiation between objectives and means was needed in order to evaluate the research methods. All of these forms of negotiation implicated horizontal and democratic communication, an issue of considerable importance in PR. While this thesis does not report on how the *research process* was negotiated, since that part of the project had not been completed at the time of writing, this chapter also offers suggestions for transacting the inquiry and juxtaposing the findings in

order to gain maximum value from multiparadigmatic inquiry. It is suggested that this process needs to be carefully negotiated in order to produce enlightened communication.

As becomes obvious, the case is presented in a style that differs from the previous theoretical work of this thesis. There are several reasons for using a more ethnographic style which includes experiential elements and detailed descriptions of processes. First, PR is a dynamic human enterprise and the experiential realities of facilitating a project often stand in stark contrast to the abstract theoretical formulations about PR and inquiry. Bracketing the theoretical from the experiential serves to contextualize the process and illustrate the gulf between thinking about PR and the experience of doing it. Second, the process of facilitating a PR project often generates practical problems and their resolution is critical to the successful implementation of theoretical innovation. Documenting some of the problems that may arise in the course of facilitating paradigmatically triangulated inquiry serves to illustrate the importance of ensuring that a paradigmatically triangulated process takes both people and ideas into account. Third, communication is a condition of PR and this involves the development of relationships between people with different skills, forms of knowledge and experiences. Documenting interpersonal and group interaction serves to illustrate the dynamic tension between the facilitator and collaborators and the manner in which the insider/outsider relationship changes. Finally, it was important that the collaborators validate my interpretation of the process in which we jointly participated. Communicating the case in a manner that is honest, open and accessible to people who are not familiar with theoretical language serves to underline the importance of horizontal communication.

Negotiating the Participation Process

Negotiating the participation process involved explicit, direct and honest communication about the project and inclusive, empathetic and sensitive communication

between people. These communication attributes allowed for solidarity among members of the group and for the project to gradually develop and flourish.

The participation process began unexpectedly when I approached the Executive Director of ACAA in October 1991 in order to find out about the organization's research problems. The purpose of the meeting was not to initiate a participatory research project but simply to ground my ideas for a paper on paradigmatic triangulation in a real rather than a hypothetical context.[1] During the course of this initial meeting I learned about the organization. For example, the Executive Director described how much ACAA, a non-profit charitable organization, has grown since its inception in 1985, increasing its budget to $800,000, its volunteers to 200 people, its membership to 400 people and its staff to 14 people. Unfortunately the steadily increasing number of people infected with HIV/AIDS has made this growth not only necessary but also insufficient. At the time, the organization's clients, people infected with HIV/AIDS numbered 147, out of a known total of approximately 800 infected people in the Calgary area. I learned that providing support for HIV/AIDS infected people represents only one dimension of ACAA. The organization also provides HIV/AIDS prevention education particularly to high school students and high-risk groups such as gay men, IV drug users and sex-trade workers. In addition, I learned that ACAA is involved with funding agencies and other AIDS-related organizations in order to coordinate programs and fundraising. The Executive Director explained that a volunteer Board of Directors governs ACAA and that paid staff co-ordinate its day-to-day activities.

I also learned about the people who are involved in the organization. The Executive Director mentioned that the volunteers and staff of AIDS Calgary come from very diverse backgrounds and interests, but uniting and motivating them is a passion for social justice on behalf of people marginalized by HIV/AIDS.[2] Rather than focusing on the social justice issue of gay rights, ACAA has chosen to focus on HIV/AIDS as a public health issue.

This broad social justice focus has allowed for the inclusion of staff and volunteers with different sexual orientations and has given the organization greater credibility in the broader community.

During the course of our conversation, the Executive Director mentioned some research problems that might be of interest to me, such as interagency co-ordination and funding, and I agreed to think about these and perhaps call him again for more information. The conversation then turned to my interest in PR and the innovations I had begun developing. It became apparent that the Executive Director knew about and strongly supported the aims and methods of PR.[3] More importantly, he was very interested in the process of bringing different perspectives to bear on a problem. At the end of our meeting, an hour and a half since we had first met, the Executive Director asked me to submit a proposal outlining how I might conduct a paradigmatically triangulated PR project for ACAA.[4] If the proposal met with his and the Board's approval, I would then be invited to facilitate such a project. It was understood that the project should contribute both to my thesis research and to the mission of ACAA. However, the details of the project, such as the research problem or the group of people that would collaborate, were not yet clear. Following the meeting, I drafted a proposal which outlined the principles of PR and the innovations I was proposing, describing how they might benefit ACAA and my research interests. I did not, however, specify a research question since doing so would be contrary to the principles of PR as I interpreted them.

A few weeks later, I again met with the Executive Director to confirm his acceptance of my proposal and to consider a site for the PR project. He informed me that the Social Action Committee, which had been formed a year before, might be interested in a PR project.[4] The Executive Director had discussed my proposal and the interests of the Committee with its Chairperson and the latter had expressed some interest in a PR project. Apparently the volunteer members of the Social Action Committee (SAC) were interested in

researching and taking action on five topics directly or indirectly related to discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS: public perception; housing; transportation; embalming; and the isolation measures in the Public Health Act. The interests of the Committee in reducing discrimination appeared to dovetail with the central social action-oriented thrust of PR and I confirmed that I would be interested in facilitating a PR project for the SAC.

However, before the project could begin I would need to establish solidarity with the Chairperson and members of the SAC and they would need to invite me to facilitate the project and commit to collaborating in the PR process. In addition, the Board would also need to be in agreement. To ensure that everyone directly involved with the project would be clear about the nature of their participation, the Executive Director asked me to draw up a formal learning agreement. The resulting agreement integrated the principles of PR with the aims and objectives of the SAC and outlined the expectations of me as the facilitator, the Chair and members of SAC as collaborators, and the Executive Director as the link between the staff, Board and SAC. (See Appendix I: Learning Agreement.)

Shortly thereafter, I met with the Chairperson of the Social Action Committee. This meeting was my first encounter with an SAC member and with a person whom I knew to be HIV/AIDS-infected. The easiest aspect of the meeting was establishing rapport and trust and the most difficult was explaining paradigmatically triangulated inquiry. The conversation ranged from very personal issues to committee issues and I began to realize that solidarity would mean intertwining both types of issues.[6] The Chairperson intuitively liked my proposal even though he did not fully understand it. Part of the problem was the abstract way in which I communicated the concepts. Unfortunately, I was still working through the concepts and implications of paradigmatic inquiry teams and was not able to be more specific or concrete. In addition, the metaphors for inquiry had not yet been fully developed. I began to realize that the process of actually mediating between processed and

experiential knowledge might be more difficult than it seemed when I was thinking or writing about it. Despite this communication gap, the Chairperson invited me to present the proposal to the SAC members. He also suggested that if I facilitated the project, it should be as a member of the Committee, rather than as an outside expert.[7] We reviewed a draft of the learning agreement and the Chairperson suggested that it be presented to the Committee after an initial meeting in order to give the members some time to consider the commitments required by the project, should they invite me to facilitate it.[8]

My first opportunity to meet with the Social Action Committee came in December, 1991. The Committee was composed of seven people who appeared, at least on the surface, to express considerable variance. Unfortunately, not all of the members were present at the first meeting. There were both gay and straight men and women on the Committee. Some were infected with HIV/AIDS and others were not. However, all had in one way or another been affected by the consequences of HIV/AIDS, either personally or through people they knew. I was the only one who had no personal connection with HIV/AIDS. Some had no formal education beyond high school and some had Masters degrees. None had ever done social science research and none were familiar with participatory research. It became clear that in order to establish solidarity, we would need to learn a great deal about each other and about participatory research.

My first meeting with the SAC took place in December 1991. At this meeting and prior to my presentation to the Committee, the members discussed the five areas of discrimination which the previous year's Committee had decided to tackle. I learned a great deal about the fear and apprehension which surrounds people with HIV/AIDS and how this translates into discriminatory social practices. For example, the members felt that the negative public perception of people with HIV/AIDS was driven by blind fear and ignorance. They knew of cases where taxi drivers had refused to transport people with HIV/AIDS and where landlords had evicted these people. Also the insurance benefits of

some people with HIV/AIDS had been prematurely terminated. Furthermore, the partners of infected people, even though they were HIV negative, were unable to get insurance because they were considered to be in a high risk group. Furthermore, Alberta's Public Health contained stipulations which could potentially place HIV/AIDS infected people into forced isolation. It also disallowed their embalming after death and forced the deceased to be placed in sealed metal containers for burial thereby disallowing viewing of the body by friends and family. The issues promptly introduced me to some of the problems experienced by HIV/AIDS infected people.

Next it was time for the Committee to learn about my research interests. At the outset of my presentation the Committee, I told them that the Executive Director of ACAA and the Chairperson of the SAC had invited me to facilitate a PR project with the Committee. However, I would not agree to do so unless the Committee also extended the invitation and was committed to collaborating in such a project. I told them that at this meeting, I would explain how such a project might work and then wait for their decision as to whether or not they chose to proceed. I was very adamant in telling them that no matter who else had thought it was a good idea, they were really the key players and it could not work without their desire or commitment.

During my presentation, I explained the principles of participatory research, emphasizing the ownership of the collaborators over the process. I drew upon the content of the learning agreement but without actually presenting it. I also tried rather unsuccessfully to explain the innovations for PR that I was proposing. (Details of this discussion are presented in the following section on negotiating the inquiry planning process.) I told the members that these innovations would entail dividing the Committee into three inquiry teams, each doing research from a different perspective. I emphasized that taking action was not precluded during the inquiry process but that any major actions should have the consensus of the whole Committee rather than one of the inquiry teams.

Furthermore, I explained that my own research interests were different from the Committee's but that the two could be accommodated within the same project. I also reassured them that my own research interests would take second place. After I completed the hour and a half presentation, I suggested that the members take some time to discuss and think about whether they would like to collaborate in a PR project. I also insisted that I be absent during the discussion in order to allow for a more open and free discussion among the members.[9] After fifteen minutes, the Chairperson called me back into the meeting and informed me that the Committee would like me to facilitate the project. The Chairperson also said he would contact the members who were not at the meeting and obtain their agreement in the next few days.

I mentioned to the members that I had noticed some hesitation about the project and asked for an explanation. I expected the hesitation to concern either myself as an outsider or the complexity of the project. However, the person who had expressed the greatest reservation said it was not about the project but about a concern for my research needs. He and a few others were hesitant about committing to the project because of what might happen to my research if some of the Committee members became ill or died. I was deeply moved by their solidarity with my research needs, something which I had not expected. I reassured them that in participatory research, we need to be flexible and put the collaborators' needs first.[10]

The concerns with the health of the Committee members foreshadowed what was to come. The Chairperson, who was a strong force for cohesion on the Committee, did become very ill shortly after we began. His failing health and lack of energy demoralized some members of the Committee who were also HIV infected and his inability to provide consistent leadership slowed the process. Furthermore, some of the other members also periodically suffered from low energy because of health or other personal problems. As a result, we were unable to complete the project in the time that I or anyone else on the

Committee had anticipated. However, the same factors which slowed the project drew us together in personal solidarity.

I had realized early on that in order to establish solidarity, it was important to get to know these people in a personal way in order to learn about their lives and also to learn more about HIV/AIDS. I learned some important things during the initial process of developing a relationship with the other members. For example, some were quick to tell me that it was preferable not to use the term AIDS because it implies a terminal illness or death sentence rather than a chronic condition. Even those committee members who were already suffering from a variety of HIV related illness, or what is sometimes referred to as full-blown AIDS, and those who were facing death, preferred to be known as living with HIV. This choice of language may appear minor to an outsider but for these insiders it was a major issue and revealed some of the content of their interpretive schemes. This content can be partially described as hopefulness, courage, dignity, a desire for respect and most importantly, as a sense of personal empowerment and human agency. The issue of how we characterized HIV/AIDS infected people was one that we would be sensitive to throughout the course of the research project.

The personal relationships the Committee members developed cannot be underestimated or adequately described. All of the members were very interested in sharing their lives with me, and in educating me about the various dimensions of HIV/AIDS. At first, I felt like an outsider entering a foreign country. There was so much I needed to learn about these people in order to understand the problems of HIV/AIDS on a personal and social level. As time progressed, I felt like an insider, so much so that my own research concerns often took a distant second place to the personal concerns of the Committee members. I was very conscious of not using the members for my research purposes and so after my research had ended in May 1992, I remained a member of the Committee and have continued to facilitate the project. Following the urging of the

Chairperson and members of the Committee, I subsequently ran for and was elected to the position of Chairperson of the SAC and a member of the Board of ACCA in September 1992.[11]

At the second meeting of the Committee in January 1992, the Chairperson read the learning agreement — which included the general parameters of the project, the principles of PR and the expectations of the facilitator and the collaborators — to the rest of the Committee. It was clearly an agreement which did not privilege my interest as the facilitator. The discussion of the agreement opened the negotiation about the expectations of participation in a paradigmatically triangulated project. One point of discussion pertained to the suggestion that each member devote four hours a week to the project. Some members felt this was too much and so I suggested that this should be interpreted as a goal and not a stipulation. Another point of discussion pertained to confidentiality. One person was concerned that while it was important to be very open and honest during the process, that it was also important that I not use personal details or anecdotes when I reported my research. I agreed that I would be sensitive to this and that any presentation or publication of my research would first be reviewed by the Committee to ensure that it did not compromise confidentiality and to ensure that it was valid. The members were also concerned about their ability to do the research. I confirmed that I would facilitate the inquiry for each team as well as the whole Committee and furthermore, that I would stay on the Committee after my own research was completed. After these issues were clarified, the members signed the agreement. Subsequently I realized that negotiating the participation of the collaborators was greatly enhanced by the discussion of the formal learning agreement.

Also at the second meeting, we decided that there might be more issues than the five originally discussed. While many more issues did surface, we were unable to come to an agreement on which of these should be investigated or which should receive priority.

(This discussion is presented in fuller detail in the following section on negotiating the inquiry planning process.)

Negotiating the participation of members on the inquiry teams was the next step and this also occurred at the second meeting. I felt it was important for the members to choose the team they wished to be on since I thought it would be easier for each person to work with the paradigm with which they most closely identified. I also thought this choice should be based on information plus intuition and that the choice should not be based on personal preference with respect to the other people on a particular team. We discussed the three paradigmatic perspectives from which the inquiry would be conducted, using the metaphorical expressions of the investigative reporter studying a political situation, the environmentalist studying an ecosystem and the anthropologist studying a culture. (This discussion is presented in fuller detail in the following section on negotiating the inquiry planning process.) I demonstrated how our research could be done from similar perspectives. I presented the paradigmatic perspectives as incomplete but equally meritorious. Then I asked the members to think about all three perspectives and determine the one with which they identified with most closely. I also asked them to make a second and third choice. In silence, they contemplated the choices, marked them on sheets of paper and handed them in to me. All of the first choices were evenly spread across the three teams with the result that everyone's first choice was accommodated. The teams were almost ready to begin. What still needed to be decided was the focus of the research and who should participate in the research.

Selecting the research participants occurred one week later at a third meeting which I was unable to attend. After the meeting, the Chairperson called me to tell me that the meeting had gone very well and that the members had decided they wanted to broaden the research focus to any and all social practices that support or discriminate against people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. As a result, the members had decided that participants

in the study should include people infected with HIV/AIDS and their caregivers. The latter might include people in the medical, social and spiritual caregiving professions and also partners and family members. Finding people to participate in the study was not an easy task, primarily because of the need to respect confidentiality and the fear of reprisals. For example, none of the AIDS related agencies were allowed to give us the names of their clients. All recruiting was done on a one-to-one individual basis by members of the committee and by professional caregivers who supported the study. As much care as possible was taken to protect the identities of the participants.

Professional caregivers were contacted directly by a member of the Committee and then sent a followup letter signed by the President of the Board of ACAA. The letter explained the study and asked them to pass on a second letter to any of their clients who were HIV/AIDS infected. The second letter explained the study, assured confidentiality and requested that people interested in participating in the Committee's study call a contact person at ACAA , leaving only their first name and telephone number. A member of the Committee would then call them to arrange for their participation. While the caregivers expressed much enthusiasm about the project when they were initially contacted, their enthusiasm did not translate into many participants. As a result, some of the members of SAC made special appeals for participants at client group meetings of ACAA. People were asked to sign up to participate directly after the appeal. Also, we personally approached people who we knew were HIV/AIDS infected and asked them to participate. In addition, the contact person at ACAA took it upon himself to recruit participants for our study. The recruiting of participants through personal contact was much more successful. It appears that it was very important to communicate directly with potential participants in order to demonstrate our solidarity with their condition and gain their trust and agreement to participate.

The list of those who agreed to participate in the Committee's study was divided among the teams, according to the number of participants that were needed by each team.[12] We also decided that participants should be invited to a special meeting after the study was completed, and that they be the first to learn about the findings. This would be a way of returning the knowledge they gave to us and also of helping to validate our findings.

During the process of negotiating participation, the issue of empowerment emerged for all those involved. For example, members of the Committee and the participants shared intimate details of their lives, details which spoke of great courage, hope, love, forgiveness and human agency in the face of marginalization and discrimination. I became very aware that many of these people did not see themselves as victims, but as people empowered to respond to devastating circumstances.[13] Also, the members of the Committee became empowered through learning about the research process. For most of them, participation in and ownership of research was the privilege of academics, and not other types of people. They were also intrigued with the possibility of looking behind research and understanding the assumptions that guide it. Moreover, we all felt that our research would make a real social difference and that, as individuals and members of a group, we had the power to affect policy and thereby the lives of people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.[14]

In retrospect, it is apparent that in a number of ways, communication was central to negotiating the participation of all people involved in the project: myself as the facilitator, the Executive Director and Board of ACAA, collaborators or members of the SAC and the participants in the study. Explicit and direct, written and verbal communication about agendas, expectations and concerns was critical to gaining mutual agreement for participation in this paradigmatically triangulated project . On the other hand, empathetic interpersonal communication was critical to achieving solidarity among all those who participated in the project. Furthermore, open and sensitive communication was critical to mediating the differences in interpretive frameworks, experiences, skills and roles that

emerged in the context of participation. Truthful, inclusive and nonjudgmental communication was critical to ensuring a democratic participation process. Finally, reflective communication was critical to ensuring that participation in the project was empowering for everyone involved.

Negotiating the Inquiry Planning Process

Negotiating the paradigmatically triangulated inquiry planning process involved reaching agreement on the research focus, mediating paradigmatically triangulated inquiry and analyzing the methodological options. While the first two aspects of this process are discussed separately below for purposes of analysis, they occurred simultaneously.

Reaching Agreement on the Research Focus

As indicated earlier, the five issues the Committee had inherited from the previous year's committee were raised at the first meeting in December. There was considerable disagreement over whether the issues should be tackled all at once or whether the most important ones should receive priority. Whatever the case, the members were committed to dealing with all of them over the course of a year. I had some difficulty envisioning how paradigmatic triangulation could be successfully done in either case.[15] My preference, for practical reasons, was to research only one issue but this was clearly at variance with the preferences of the other members. During the course of the discussion about the options, I noticed that thoughts rather than feelings about the issues were being expressed and that the discussion seemed abstract and decontextualized. In other words, I sensed that the issues were not yet personally meaningful to any of us. We were unable to reach agreement about the issues at this meeting and the discussion concluded on a note of frustration and disappointment that more progress had not been made.[16]

After the meeting, as I reflected on the lack of personal meaning, it occurred to me that a process to arouse passion about and ownership of the issues, to place them in a context, and to prioritize them was needed. It seemed that such a process should be highly experiential rather than intellectual. On the other hand, the Chairperson was more concerned with what he interpreted as confusion about the process. He felt that a more structured process was needed to guide the Committee to agreement. As I reflected on the need for a structured yet experiential process, it occurred to me that a visioning exercise might provide the solution. It also occurred to me that questions about experiences might reveal the most meaningful issues and that ordering these questions in a particular way might prioritize the issues. Also, it seemed that these questions should incorporate temporal dimensions in order to place the issues in a context. Three questions that could be presented to the Committee at its next meeting came to mind: (1) Based on your *experiences* and those of others, how have HIV/AIDS infected people been *hurt* by people and discriminatory social practices? (2) When you *imagine* a more just and compassionate society for HIV/AIDS infected people, what *positive* social practices do you envision? (3) In light of our personal and collective *will and resources*, which of the discriminatory social practices identified above do we initially *choose* to tackle? I discussed these questions with the Chairperson and he suggested that I facilitate a discussion about these questions at the next Committee meeting.[17]

At the second meeting in January, I introduced the visioning exercise and explained that it would help us to identify personally, rather than intellectually, with the issues. I handed out the questions, read them aloud, and explained that social practices are implied in the things people do when they interact with others, as well as in organizational policies. The use of the term "social practices" seemed to help the committee members understand the types of actions and policies that might constitute discrimination. I asked them to take some time reflecting upon the questions and answering them privately.

When the answers were later recorded on a flipchart, the responses came very quickly and spontaneously. Instance upon instance of personal knowledge of, or experience with, discrimination was mentioned and soon three large sheets of paper were filled. The accounts were often characterized by deep and often overwhelming feelings of sadness, anger and despair. I realized that the first question had served as a catalyst in several different ways. First, the committee members began to deeply identify with the issues in a way that was not possible with the original list they had inherited. Second, the new list was so extensive that other issues not previously considered came to the fore. Third, by hearing about the first hand experiences of HIV infected people, I developed a better understanding of them and a stronger commitment to their aims. Fourth, the sharing of these experiences, often in a very open and emotional way, helped us to develop greater solidarity which would be crucial in the work ahead.

We then grouped the instances of discriminatory social practices and ten problem areas emerged including insurance, housing, health care, employment, travel, education, personal contact, the media, the Public Health Act and the church.[18] There was also much discussion about homophobia and the need to separate the HIV/AIDS issues from gay rights issues, a separation which would be difficult considering that HIV/AIDS had for years been characterized as a gay issue by the media and that phobias about HIV/AIDS and homosexuality were often intertwined.

The second question asking the members to imagine a more just and compassionate society towards HIV/AIDS infected people yielded six suggestions. They included the need for: normal treatment from health care workers; alternative therapies in the management and resolution of trauma associated with HIV/AIDS; positive support for HIV/AIDS infected people who are concerned with living rather than dying; flexible and creative management of HIV/AIDS infected people in the workplace and a recognition of their special needs; emphasizing to the public that HIV/AIDS is a chronic disease rather

than emphasizing that it is a death sentence; public recognition that HIV/AIDS is like any other chronic disease and that people with the disease should not be judged or blamed for having it.

The most significant aspect of this discussion related to the suggestion by one member that discrimination should always be considered alongside support since the latter was also a common experience. The discussion then turned to a concern for balancing the positive with the negative and the need to increase support and decrease discrimination. Although unanticipated, this suggestion served as a catalyst for focusing the subsequent research on both support and discrimination. It also transformed the earlier emotions of sadness into feelings of empowerment.

The third question concerned identifying which of the social practices we had the will and resources to tackle first. Two priorities were identified: the Public Health Act and treatment by caregivers. However, we were unable to decide which of these should be dealt with first. By this time, we were all exhausted and decided to resume the discussion a week later.

At the third meeting, which I was unable to attend, the members again tried to reach a consensus about which issue should be researched. By this time, they were all convinced that more than one issue would make the project too big and time consuming. However, they could not reach a consensus. The minutes of that meeting indicate that following this impasse, the discussion began to shift from the importance of selecting one issue to the importance of finding one broadly based research question which could encompass many issues and which would emphasize both support and discrimination. The research question was framed as the following statement: "Discrimination and Pro-active Response to People with HIV". At a subsequent meeting, this statement was reworded as: "Social practices that support or discriminate against people who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS". The rewording placed the focus on social practices, which would be an important emphasis

for the paradigmatically triangulated research, and included people who may suffer discrimination as a result of caring for HIV/AIDS infected people. Following the third meeting, I realized that after its rocky start, the project was now beginning to reflect the principles of PR. My absence from the meeting allowed the members of the Committee to demonstrate more control and ownership over the inquiry process.[19]

In retrospect, it appears that a number of communication issues were central to achieving a consensus on the research focus. First, it was important to communicate in a way that encouraged the collaborators to allow their experiences to emerge and form the base for the inquiry. Asking questions about experiences rather than making statements about issues was critical to clarifying the immediate problems. Second, it was important to communicate in a way that allowed for the expression of both positive and negative feelings. While the visioning exercise was not originally intended to do so, it allowed for issues of disempowerment and empowerment to emerge as two sides of the same coin. The reflection on both sides of the coin ultimately produced an inquiry question that was in itself a critical juxtaposition of the issues. Third, it was important to communicate about experiences in a temporal framework. The three questions in the visioning exercise encompassed the past, present and future, bringing a sense of reality and context into the inquiry process. Fourth, it was important to communicate democratically in order to allow all voices to emerge. Had any of us tried to control or rush the process it is doubtful whether an equally good research question would have emerged. It is even more doubtful that commitment to the project could have been generated. Fifth, it was important to communicate in a way that allowed mutual learning to occur. Communication about experiences rather than about issues allowed all of us on the Committee to learn much more about the problems of HIV/AIDS infected people than we had at the first meeting which dealt with these in an intellectual manner. Furthermore, by communicating within the structure of the visioning exercise, the members learned how to contextualize and ground

the issues in time and experience. Sixth, it was important to communicate in a way that focused the issues on social practices. It is of interest that the issues generated by the first question included references to the structural dimensions of discrimination eg., fear, blame and ignorance, as well as to the interactive dimensions of discriminatory social practices eg., restrictions, rejection and isolation. These issues also ranged across interpersonal, organizational and institutional levels of social organization.

Mediating Paradigmatically Triangulated Inquiry

At the Committee's first meeting in December, I explained the concept and implications of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry. It was the last item of business and followed the discussion of the initial five issues and my presentation of the principles of PR. The Chairperson had insisted that copies of a portion of my paper about the process be given to the members in advance of the meeting, even though it was still in draft form. He thought it important for the members to have something on paper to guide their thinking.

During the course of the discussion at the first meeting, a number of difficulties emerged.[20] I struggled to explain the entire sequence of the research process to the members, giving them far too much information to digest. I also tried to explain paradigmatic triangulation with process diagrams depicting the relationship between agency and structure from the three paradigmatic perspectives. This was highly ineffective because the diagrams were much too abstract. When the members asked me to concretely demonstrate how one of the five issues could be investigated from all three perspectives, I was hard pressed to provide an example. Finally, I told the Committee that since I had not found any precedent for researching an issue from different perspectives, and since I was still in the middle of inventing a process that would work for a PR project, I was simply unable to be more clear or concrete. I said I understood their frustration because it was

mine as well. Furthermore, I admitted that doing the research involved all of us taking a

risk without knowing or understanding everything that was involved. Because of the risks

involved, we would simply have to place trust in each other and in the process. However,

I added that I was convinced that using three different inquiry perspectives in the research

process could give the Committee a more complete picture of the issues. Although I

believed this to be the case, they would also have to be convinced of this. Considering the

problems we encountered in this meeting, I was surprised when they invited me to facilitate

the project.[21]

After the meeting, I began to question whether superimposing the metaphors I had

chosen on this particular research context was defensible or appropriate. In retrospect it

seems that it might have been wiser to generate the metaphors through a group process. I

also questioned whether the particular metaphors would be useful but decided that since the

members had some rudimentary understanding of them, I would simply need to develop a

way to communicate their implications more concretely and effectively. To do this, I

realized that I would have to clearly visualize and internalize the implications of the

metaphorical expressions before using them with the Committee members.

In order to facilitate my own understanding, I began to think about how inquiry

done by investigative reporters, environmentalists and anthropologists might be depicted

diagramatically. I began to develop three separate diagrams which showed the purpose,

focus and context of each form of inquiry . After I had completed the diagrams, I showed

them to the Chairperson. He was very excited about the diagrams because they

immediately helped him understand the three inquiry perspectives. As we analyzed the first

three diagrams, it became apparent that another three were needed to bridge the gap

between how investigative reporters, anthropologists and environmentalists might conduct

inquiry and the way each of our three teams might conduct their inquiry on a particular

issue related to HIV/AIDS. The Chairperson suggested that I use the isolation policy of the Public Health Act as an example and create a second set of diagrams.

I realized at this point that well developed diagrams might provide several advantages. First, they represented a more concrete way of communicating the implications of the metaphors for our inquiry. Second, they might be helpful for stimulating discussion and insights into inquiry. Third, they might be useful for helping each member select the inquiry metaphor with which he or she most closely identified, thereby basing the choice of an inquiry team on the paradigmatic perspective of the individual.

I then further refined the diagrams in a way that integrated the implications of the paradigmatic perspectives, the metaphors for inquiry and one of the issues. Like the metaphors for inquiry, the structural format of the diagrams reflected the purpose and focus of each of the three paradigmatic perspectives. One set of three diagrams depicted the context of the particular inquiry metaphor. Another set of three diagrams depicted the context of investigating the discriminatory isolation policy of the Public Health Act for a particular inquiry team. In all, six diagrams (see Figures 1 to 6) were developed, two for each perspective.[22]

Figure 1

An Environmentalist Studying an Ecosystem

Key Words:
• influences and effects
• events, actions and consequences
• relationships and connections among parts of the system
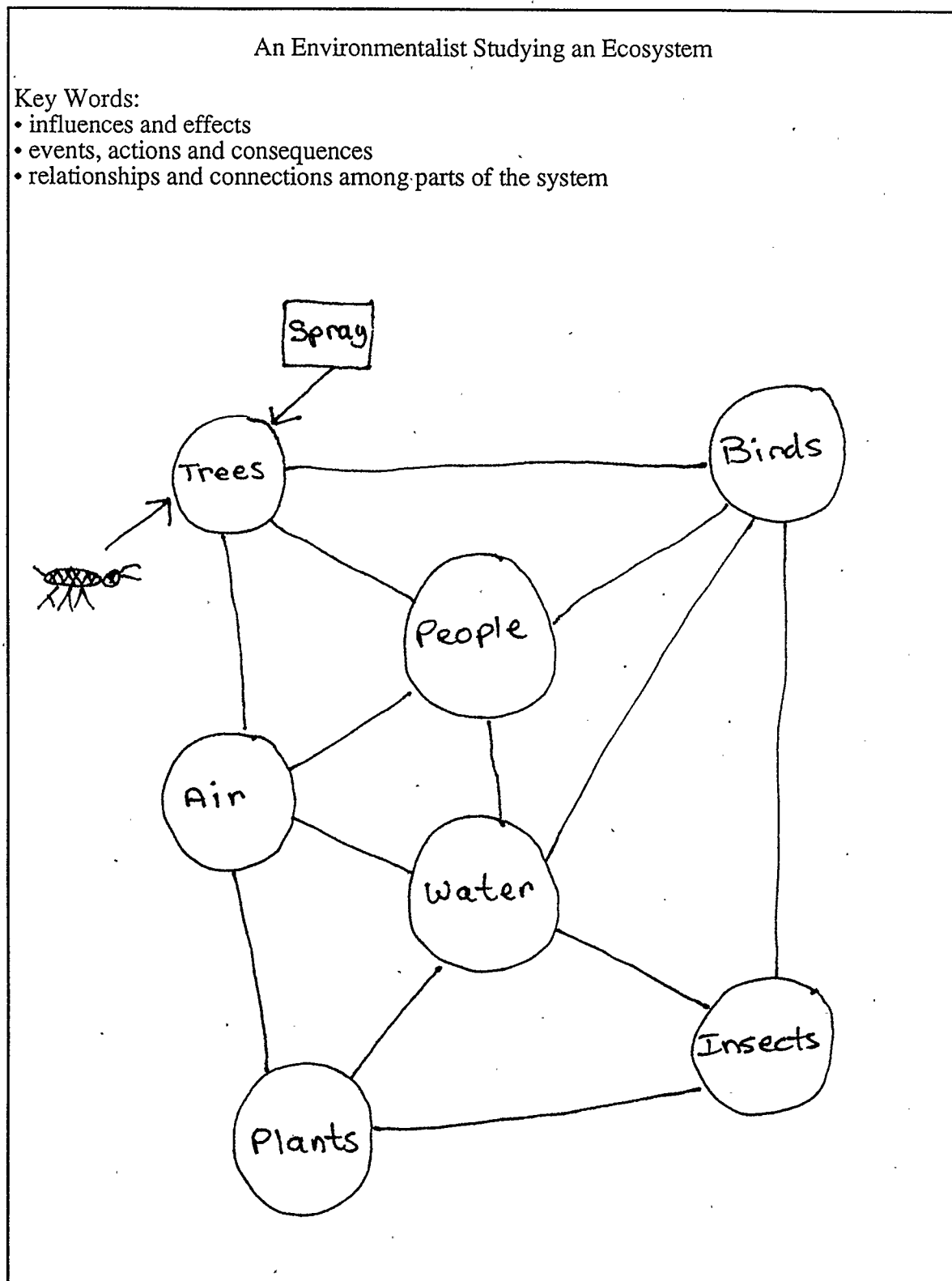
Figure 2

How we can study issues such as *AIDS* and the *Public Health Act*
like an *Environmentalist Studying and Ecosystem*

Key Words:
• How has the AIDS issue and society influenced the Public Health Act and what are the
effects?

Figure 3

An Anthropologist Studying a Culture

Figure 4

How we can study issues such as *AIDS* and the *Public Health Act*
like an *Anthropologist Studying a Culture*

Key Words:
• How do people understand the AIDS issue, public protection and rights and how is this
reflected in the Public Health Act?

Figure 5

An Investigative Reporter Studying a Political Situation

Key Words:
• motives
• hidden agendas
• why are some people allowed to dominate others?

Figure 6

How we can study issues such as *AIDS* and the *Public Health Act* like an *Investigative Reporter Studying a Political Situation*
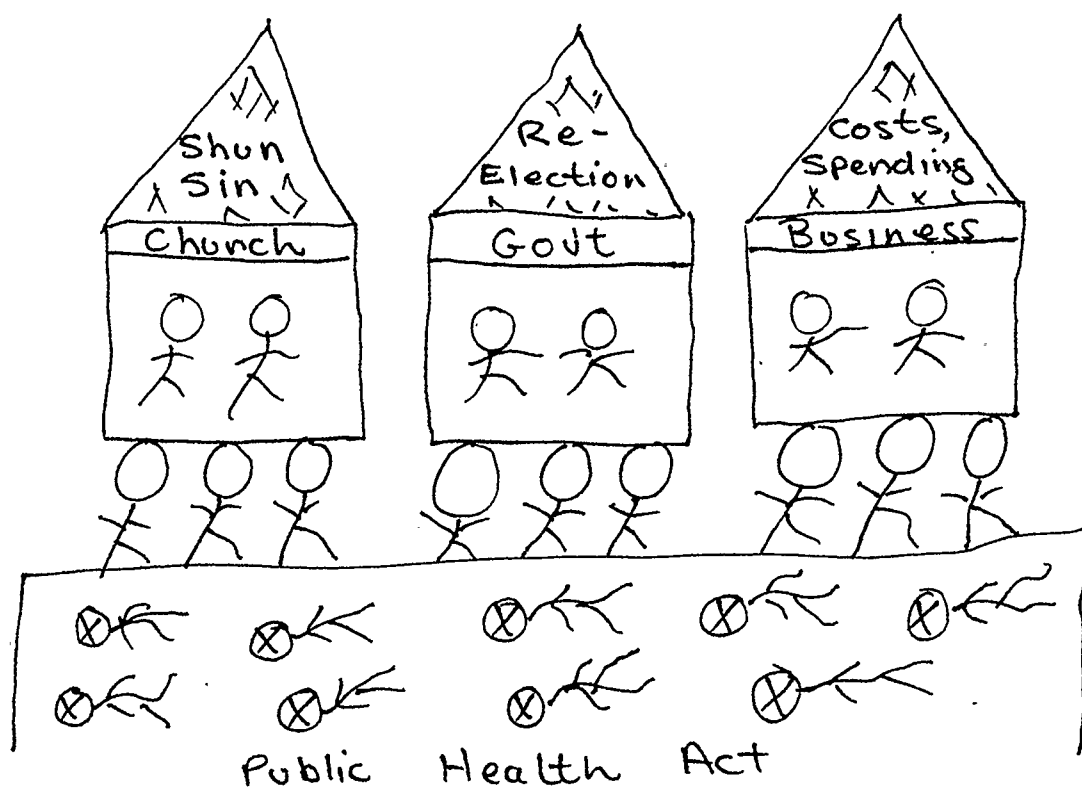
At the second meeting of the Committee in January, I began by telling the members that since we would be dividing into teams with different inquiry perspectives, it was important for everyone to understand these perspectives before making a choice. I said that I was now prepared to show how one of the issues could be studied from three different perspectives. To do this, we would talk about what other researchers do and how we could pattern our inquiry in a similar way. We began by talking about what environmentalists, investigative reporters and anthropologists do when they conduct inquiry. In each case, we talked about the purp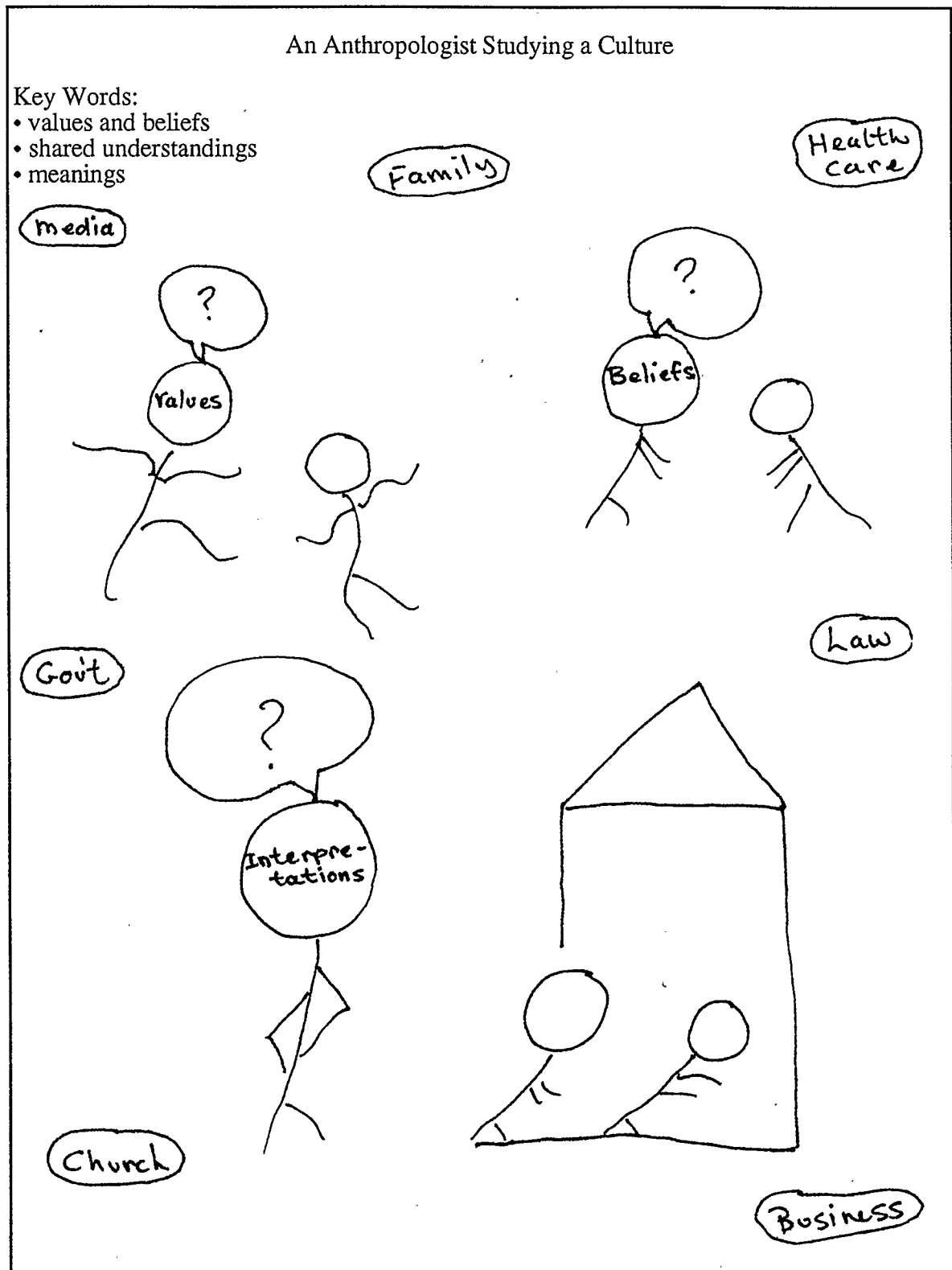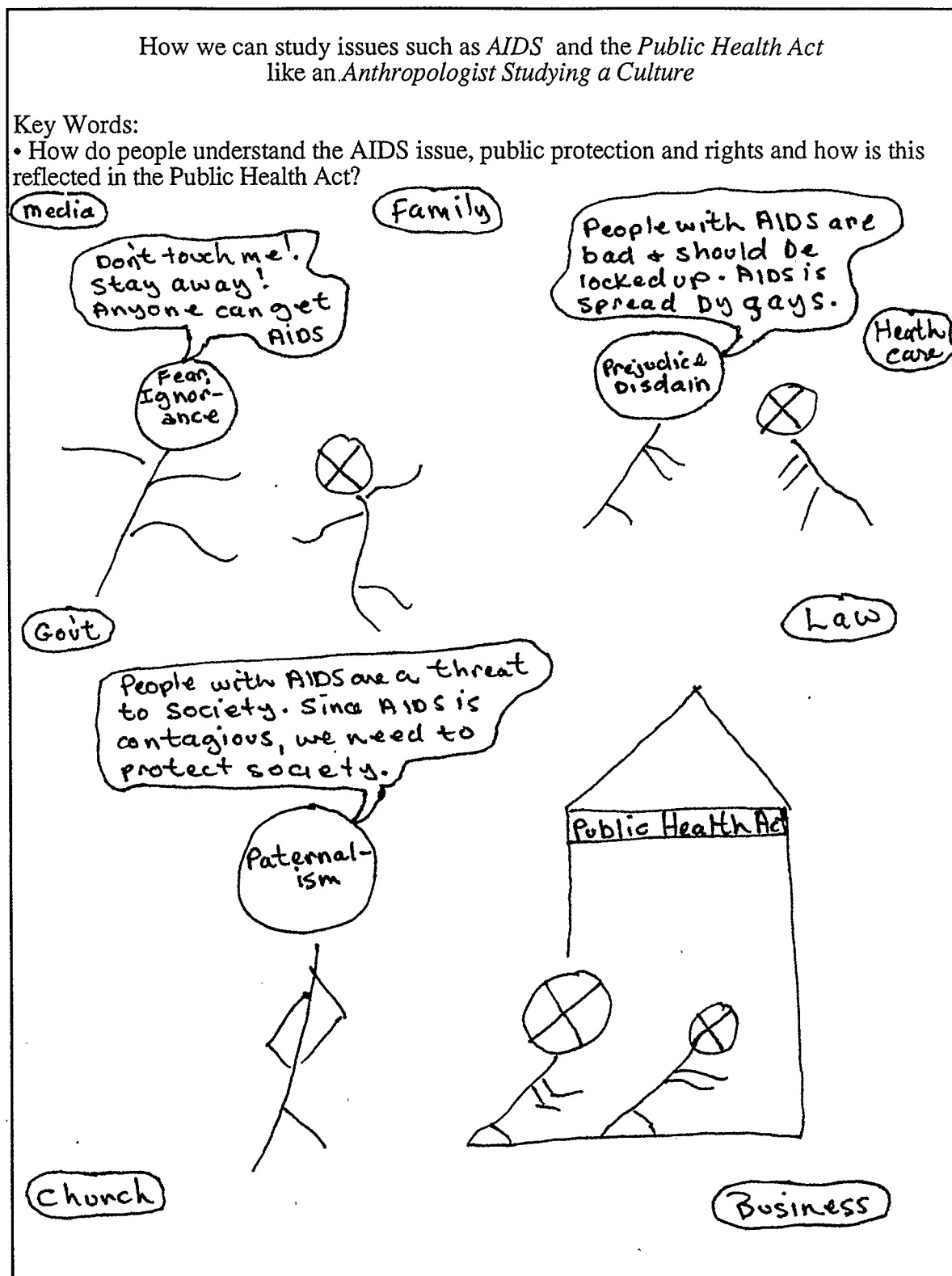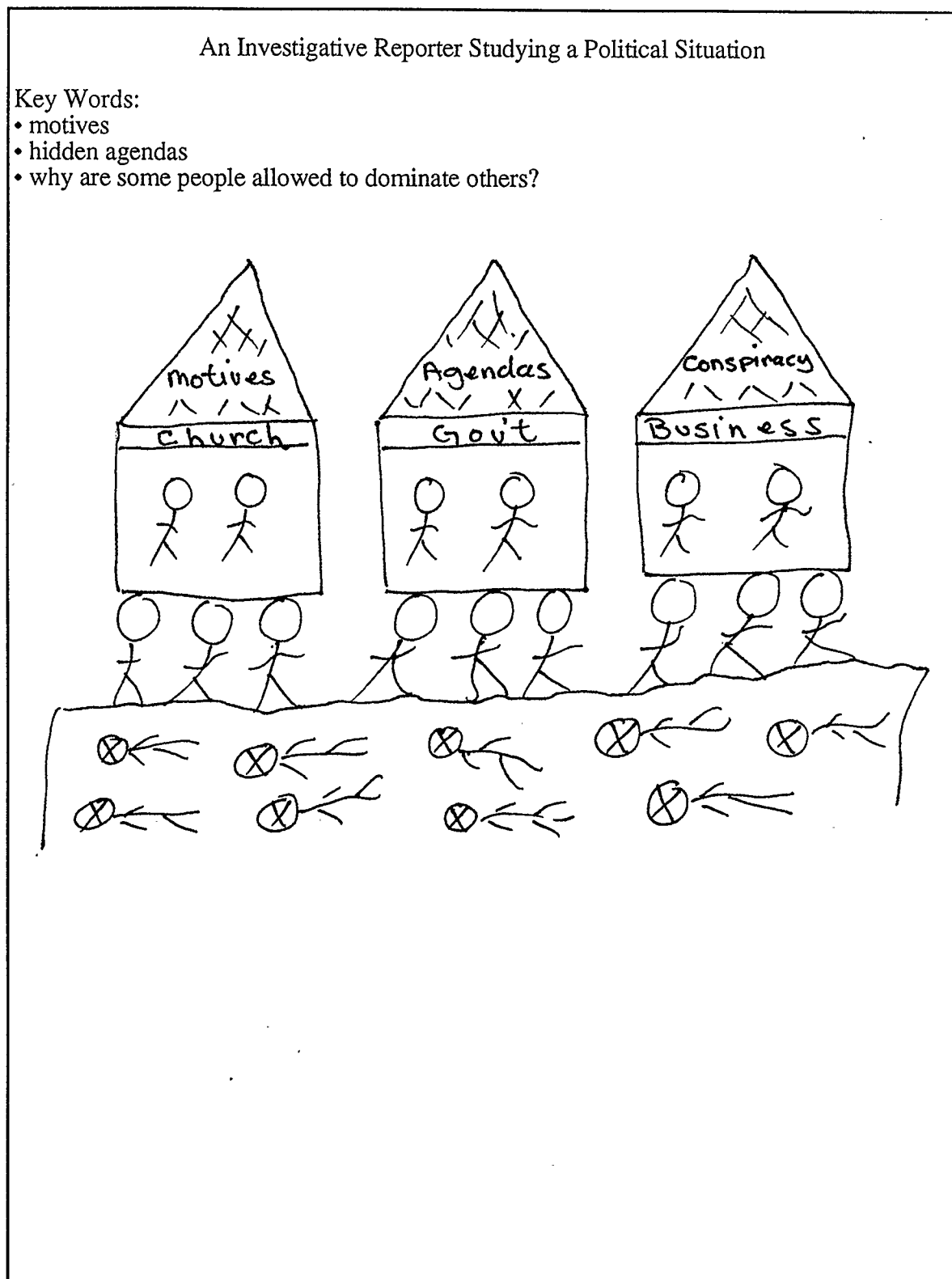ose, or why they do it; their focus, or what they look at; and the context, or where they do it. We also talked about real examples of these types of inquirers. To help the Committee members begin identifying with the metaphors, I asked them to imagine themselves as anthropologists, environmentalists and investigative reporters as I went through each case. I tried to use vivid language to convey various dimensions of the things they might do or experience as these types of researchers. During this discussion, I was able to bring in some of the key concepts related to the paradigms which the metaphors represented. This general discussion formed the basis introducing the diagrams.

Next, we began discussing the diagrams one at a time, looking at and analyzing what we saw in the first and then second diagram for each perspective.[23] The discussion about the second diagram for each perspective became very animated and it seemed as though members were making discoveries. Comments like "I see how this works now" and "This is much better" punctuated the discussion. After all the diagrams had been discussed separately, members began discussing and comparing the second diagrams for each perspective among themselves, asking each other questions and providing explanations.

Some of this discussion was quite revealing in terms of the personal paradigms favoured by the members. One person, who had started nodding vigorously as soon as we

began discussing the investigative reporter diagram, continued to emphatically state that the real problem with discrimination was the "perpetration of lies about HIV/AIDS" and that we needed to expose the sources of these lies. His comments seemed to echo some aspects of the critical paradigm on which the investigative reporter metaphor was based and this person later chose to be on the investigative reporter team. Another person with a more conciliatory tone said we had to be very careful in labelling everything as discrimination and should avoid judging or making assumptions because "we don't always know what's in people's minds". Furthermore, she suggested that we take a more balanced perspective and also look at support. Her comments seemed to echo some aspects of the social constructivist or interpretivist paradigm on which the anthropologist metaphor was based and this person later chose to be on the anthropologist team. Yet another person with a very cautious demeanor said that even though social institutions are the primary cause of discrimination, he felt we should be careful about how our findings were presented since it was important not to "rock any boats" or alienate anyone. His comments seemed to echo some aspects of the post-positivist paradigm on which the environmentalist metaphor was based and this person later chose to be on the environmentalist team. The members also began to talk about which of the perspectives was the most valid, framing their comments in terms of their own paradigmatic preferences and sometimes not listening to each other. I had to caution them that each perspective was only partial, but that together, they formed a more complete picture.

Following discussion about the diagrams, it was time to form inquiry teams. I asked members to select the one diagram in the second set with which they most closely identified. I also made it clear that from now on each of the teams would meet separately and that I would facilitate the research process for each team. Including myself on each team, each team had either three or four members. We also agreed to continue our monthly

meetings as a large group but only to deal with Committee issues and common problems in our research.

As soon as the inquiry teams started meeting independently towards the end of February, it became apparent that team members were internalizing and identifying with their metaphors. For example, they would refer to themselves as investigative reporters or anthropologists and some began to think that their particular perspective was more suitable than the others. I had to continually caution them that each perspective was only one way of looking at something and that none was in itself any better than any other. In fact, all perspectives were important for gaining a complete picture and this would become evident when we eventually compiled the findings of all three teams.

It appears that a number of communication issues were central to mediating paradigmatic triangulation through metaphors. First, it was important to develop metaphors which were complex enough to communicate the focus, purpose and context of an inquiry perspective. As the facilitator, I had to fully understand, develop and internalize the metaphors before I was able to use them as a communications strategy. Second, it was important to communicate the implications of inquiry from a particular perspective at two levels: first at the level of the inquiry metaphor and second at the level of our particular inquiry. Third, it was important to communicate the metaphors through strategies which engaged the members as fully as possible. The use of diagrams to communicate the inquiry perspectives represented by the metaphors was critical to generating reflection and dialogue. Also a focus on the diagrams rather than on me talking seemed to facilitate a greater sense of horizontal communication. Fourth, the metaphors and diagrams for each perspective had to be sufficiently different in terms of focus and purpose yet sufficiently similar in terms of their larger framework in order to communicate the differences of perspectives in a cohesive manner. Fifth, it was important to develop diagrams which communicated the complexity of the metaphors in a simple way. It was also important to

communicate various dimensions of social interaction through the diagrams in order to keep the focus on social practices.

The discussion about the diagrams seems to confirm that the paradigms used by social scientists to conduct social inquiry and the paradigms used by lay people to explain how society works are two sides of the same coin. Consequently, metaphors which are understood by both social scientists and lay people are useful for mediating processed and experiential knowledge. Furthermore, just as a social scientist may believe that one paradigmatic perspective is more valid than the others for conducting inquiry than the others, a lay person may also believe that one perspective is more valid for explaining the way society works. This suggests that while process of comparing and juxtaposing the different paradigms through metaphors may bring other perspectives into a discussion, it does not guarantee that they will be perceived as equally valid.

Evaluating Research Methods

The first meeting for each inquiry team involved a brief review of the metaphor and decisions about the methods we would use to conduct our inquiry. By this time the team members were anxious to get on with their research and had difficulty understanding why we were spending so much time planning the inquiry. By the time we reviewed the metaphors at this meeting, most of the members on each team said it was not necessary to go into this again because they were more than ready to move on and make decisions about methods.

First, however, the general research question — social practices that support or discriminate against HIV/AIDS infected people — had to be refocused in accordance with the each perspective. Reference to the earlier diagrams about the Public Health Act issue made this process relatively easy. For example, the environmentalist team members soon agreed that it was important to look at the way in which the social practices of people and

social institutions discriminate against or support HIV/AIDS infected people and the consequences of this. On the other hand, already suspecting that discrimination against HIV/AIDS infected people was the result of hidden agendas, the investigative reporter team decided that it was important to look for evidence of the real reasons behind discriminatory social practices. It was more difficult for them to think in terms of support. Furthermore, the anthropologist team agreed that it was most important to look at how discriminatory and supportive social practices affected the lives of HIV/AIDS infected people.

Next, in order to determine whether they were interested in using creative or conventional methods, I asked them how they wanted to present their results to the other teams and to people who had not been involved in the project. All teams were quick to assert that they wanted to prepare a "real" research report that would have credibility in the eyes of policy makers and the public.[24] As a result, I framed the ensuing discussion about methods in conventional terms. Rather than suggesting the methods I thought most appropriate, I began by asking what we needed to illuminate through each focus and how we might go about this. Next I explained that there were various methods that could be used, some better than others for what they wanted to do, and that I would briefly describe them. I reviewed conventional social science methods such as interviews, surveys, focus groups and analysis of written materials. In the discussion, I reviewed the strengths and the weaknesses of each method for asking certain kinds of questions, the type of work involved, the time commitments required, the process involved, how the data would be analysed, and possible ways of presenting the findings. A brief review of how each team handled evaluated the research methods is illustrative of how objectives and means were negotiated.

At their first meeting, the environmentalist team members said it was important to get a lot of information about the social practices of people and institutions so that we could show numbers in our report. As a result they suggested that we contact as many

HIV/AIDS infected people as possible in order to obtain this information. After the review of the methods, they decided that surveys and focus groups would yield the type of information needed. Over the course of the next few environmentalist team meetings, a survey questionnaire and a focus group questionnaire were developed. The two were quite similar except that the survey questionnaire also included questions which would be addressed through discussion during the focus group. My role in facilitating the development of these instruments was quite minor since the other team members knew exactly what they wanted to ask. The questions that were developed show that the environmentalist team members understood that the purpose of their perspective was to determine where in the social system discrimination or support was coming from and the consequences of discriminatory or supportive social practices. The structure of the questionnaire also allowed for an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. (See Appendix II: Environmentalist Team Questions.)

At their first team meeting, the anthropologist team members said it was important to hear the stories of HIV/AIDS infected people. As a result, they suggested we talk with these people in an indepth and informal manner. After I reviewed the options for methods and their requirements, this team decided that semi-structured interviews were most suitable for what they needed. An interview format was developed at a subsequent anthropologist team meeting which I was unable to attend and therefore unable to facilitate. (See Appendix IV) The questions developed without me by the anthropologist team, demonstrated that these team members understood that the purpose of their perspective was to gain an understanding of how HIV/AIDS infected people interpreted their experiences rather than making prior assumptions. In addition, the various questions about actions and responses reflected the general emphasis on social practices and a focus on human agency. Moreover, a question concerning whether discrimination occurs as a result of how HIV/AIDS was contracted, shows a concern for abstract symbolic structures which

condition discriminatory social practices. (See Appendix III: Anthropologist Team Questions)

At their first team meeting, the investigative reporter team members said it was important to gain a broader perspective of why discrimination against HIV/AIDS infected people was occurring. They suggested that we look for clues in things that had already been written about this topic and ask probing questions of the caregivers and advocates of HIV/AIDS infected people. This would help us make comparisons. In addition, the caregivers and advocates had probably heard many examples of discrimination over a long period of time so this would give us a longer range view. After the review of the methods, they decided that structured interviews of caregivers and advocates and a literature review were suitable for their purposes. Using ACAA's CD ROM data base as a place to begin their search, they were interested in finding case studies which provided examples of discrimination or support. At subsequent meetings of the investigative report team, a long list of questions for caregivers and advocates was developed. The questions demonstrated that these team members understood the need to probe for reasons why certain types of discrimination or support occur. The questions about actions that have been taken indicated the importance of human agency and a concern for balancing the constraining and enabling aspects of social practices on human agency. Furthermore, the questions took a broader social perspective. (See Appendix IV: Investigative Reporter Team Questions.)

In retrospect, communication was central to an evaluation of the research methods. First, asking questions about objectives and means helped the members to analyze the methods from the perspective of the outcomes they desired. Second, by asking members questions instead of simply giving them advice, I was able to facilitate their increasing control over the research process. Third, a communication pattern that spiralled around questions, responses, mutual reflection and decisions enabled each team to easily produce and reproduce the internal consistency of its inquiry perspective.

Negotiating the Research Process

The discussion now turns to suggestions for negotiating the research process which involves transacting the inquiry and juxtaposing the results. The first part of the process involves data collection by the members of each team and the second part involves the comparison and contrast of each team's findings by the whole group.

Transacting the Inquiry

This process includes making contact with the participants and arranging for their participation. Explicit, direct and honest communication about the project and empathetic, sensitive and inclusive communication with the participants is required in order to ensure they are not treated like research objects.[25] Before the the collaborators on each team, either individually or in groups, begin collecting and recording the information given them by the participants, it is useful to prepare work plans to ensure that responsibilities are fairly distributed and that the project stays within the time frame to which everyone has agreed. While these work plans will undoubtedly be altered as the project progresses due to any number of factors, it is important to communicate these expectations clearly so that neither solidarity between members or with the project is jeopardized.

After the teams begin collecting the information, it is important that the team members meet periodically in order to offer mutual support and encouragement, work out any problems and reflect on the process. Working with marginalized people can be very difficult in the context of a PR project. While solidarity can be invigorating and rewarding, it can also become draining and overwhelming in the face of suffering and discrimination. As a result, it is important that the team members continually communicate with each other. In addition, group meetings are also useful for airing problems and concerns, comparing experiences and devising solutions.

After the information has been collected, it is important for team members to reflect on, organize, understand and analyse it. If the collaborators want to write a highly structured and formal report, the facilitator is probably in the best position to develop a format for how this might be done. The format should not only allow for a comparison of the results between the teams but also reflect the different perspectives of each team.[26] The preparation of a report format for each team might be useful for helping the members write their reports. A format containing questions, rather than statements, might guide the members when they write their report. In addition, the formats could be structured in similar ways to allow for comparison. On the other hand, if the collaborators choose a more interactive way of conducting or presenting their inquiry, such as drama or debate, the process of organizing, understanding and analysing the information will undoubtedly be more dynamic and much less structured.

During the process of dealing with the information, it is important to communicate in a way that encourages the active participation of the team members. If the facilitator merely raises questions or offers guidelines and refrains from controlling the content, it is more likely that the collaborators will feel control and ownership of the results.

Juxtaposing the Results

In the event that the collaborators choose to write a report, this part of the process first involves the presentation of each team's results to the whole group and then a discussion comparing and contrasting each team's results, conclusions and recommendations for action. Following this, it might be useful for the collaborators to take some time to reflect on the various presentations and the discussion in order to synthesize all of the conclusions and recommendations. At a subsequent meeting collaborators might debate the conclusions and recommendations for action and come to an agreement about which of these should be integrated into a final report. The final report could be organized

in different ways. For example, it might include a separate section for each team's results and conclusions and a section for the recommendations for action agreed to by all of the collaborators. On the other hand, the final report might represent an integration of all findings.

If, on the other hand, the collaborators choose a different form of presentation, the presentation of different perspectives on the problem, a discussion of the different perspectives, reflective integration, debate and consensus can be adapted to that form. If one of the perspectives is emphasized more than the others in the final presentation of the findings, it will be so because the explanations are more powerful to all of the collaborators.

Juxtaposing each team's results involves shifts in communication styles. First, democratic and inclusive communication is necessary if all perspectives are to be heard, given equal time and respected. Second, a vigorous dialectic is necessary in order to allow for critical reflection and evaluation of the merits of each perspective on the problem. It is at this point that enlightenment or a more complete perspective begins to emerge. Third, reflective and conciliatory communication is necessary to allow for the emergence of a consensus. It is at this point that a more complete perspective is consolidated. This final shift may be the most difficult since it is also at this point that team members must relinquish ownership of their perspective and distance themselves from it in order to serve the interests of the whole group. As a result, the facilitator should ensure that the collaborators understand how these shifts can generate a more complete perspective, the raison d'etre for conducting their project in a paradigmatically triangulated manner.

From Inquiry to Action

There are several considerations regarding action in the context of the foregoing discussion that should be emphasized. First, the taking of action at any point in a

paradigmatically triangulated PR process is not precluded should such an opportunity present itself. However, there should be consensus among the whole group on such action and not just among members of one of the teams. Second, the paradigmatically triangulated process bases the choice of action on a broad and firm foundation. Finally, it can be argued that the process of negotiating participation, inquiry planning and research in a paradigmatically triangulated manner is in itself a form of action that has the potential to change the way people think, interact and communicate.

Summary

In summary, negotiation was critical to the inquiry planning process. First, the participation process needed to be carefully negotiated in order to achieve solidarity with a paradigmatically triangulated project and among people who have a stake in the project. In the context of this case, it involved explicit, direct and honest communication about the project and inclusive, empathetic and sensitive communication among people. In retrospect, it is apparent that in a number of ways, communication was central to negotiating the participation of all people involved in the project: me as the facilitator, the Executive Director and Board of ACAA, collaborators or members of the SAC and the participants in the study. Explicit and direct, written and oral communication about agendas, expectations and concerns was critical to gaining mutual agreement for participation in the project. On the other hand, empathetic interpersonal communication was critical to achieving solidarity among all those who participated in the project. Furthermore, open and sensitive communication was critical to mediating the differences between interpretive frameworks, experiences, skills and roles that emerged in the context of participation. Moreover, truthful, inclusive and nonjudgmental communication was critical to ensuring a democratic participation process. Finally, reflective communication

was critical to ensuring that participation in the project was empowering for everyone involved.

Second, it appeared that the inquiry planning process involved three types of negotiation. Negotiation among people was needed in order to reach agreement on the research focus. In retrospect, it appears that a number of communication issues were central to achieving a consensus on the research focus. It was important to communicate in a way that encouraged people to allow their experiences to emerge and form the base for the inquiry. Asking questions about experiences rather than making statements about issues was critical to the clarifying the immediate problems. It was also important to communicate in a way that allowed for the expression of both positive and negative feelings. While the visioning exercise was not originally intended to do so, it allowed for issues of disempowerment and empowerment to emerge as two sides of the same coin. The reflection on both sides of the coin ultimately produced an inquiry question that was in itself a critical juxtaposition of the issues. It was also important to communicate from within a temporal framework. The three questions in the visioning exercise brought a sense of reality and context into the inquiry process. It was important to communicate democratically in order to allow all voices to emerge. Had any of us tried to control or rush the process it is doubtful whether an equally good research question would have emerged. It is even more doubtful that commitment to the project could have been generated. It was important to communicate in a way that allowed mutual learning to occur. Communication about experiences, rather than issues allowed us to learn much more about the problems of HIV/AIDS infected people than we had at the first meeting which dealt with these at a distance. Furthermore, by communicating within the structure of the visioning exercise, the members learned how to contextualize and ground the issues in time and experience. It was important to communicate in a way that focused the issues on social practices. It is of interest that the issues generated by the first question included references to the structural

dimensions of discrimination eg., fear, blame and ignorance as well as the interactive dimensions of discriminatory social practices eg., restrictions, rejection and isolation. These issues also ranged across interpersonal, organizational and institutional levels of social organization.

Negotiation between different forms of knowledge was needed in order to mediate paradigmatically triangulated inquiry. It appeared that a number of communication issues were central to mediating paradigmatic triangulation through metaphors. It was important to develop metaphors which were complex enough to communicate the focus, purpose and context of an inquiry perspective. As the facilitator, I had to fully understand, develop and internalize the metaphors before I was able to use them as a communications strategy. It was important to communicate the implications of inquiry from a particular perspective at two levels: first at the level of the inquiry metaphor and second at the level of our particular inquiry. It was also important to communicate the metaphors through strategies which engaged the members as fully as possible. The use of diagrams to communicate the inquiry perspectives represented by the metaphors was critical to generating reflection and dialogue. Also, a focus on the diagrams rather than on me talking seemed to facilitate a greater sense of horizontal communication. The metaphors and diagrams for each perspective had to be sufficiently different in terms of focus and purpose yet sufficiently similar in terms of their larger framework in order to communicate the differences of perspectives in a cohesive manner. It was important to develop diagrams which communicated the complexity of the metaphors in a simple way, including the various dimensions of social interaction, in order to keep the focus on social practices.

The discussion about the diagrams seems to confirm that the paradigms used by social scientists to conduct social inquiry and the paradigms used by lay people to explain how society works are two sides of the same coin. Consequently, metaphors which are understood by both social scientists and lay people are useful for mediating between

processed and experiential knowledge. Furthermore, just as a social scientist may believe that one paradigmatic perspective is more valid than the others for conducting inquiry than the others, a lay person may also believe that one perspective is more valid for explaining the way society works. This suggests that while process of comparing and juxtaposing the different paradigms through metaphors may bring other perspectives into a discussion, it does not guarantee that they will be perceived as equally valid.

Negotiation between objectives and means was needed in order to evaluate the research methods. In retrospect, communication was central to an evaluation of the research methods. Asking questions about objectives and means helped the members to analyse the methods from the perspective of the outcomes they desired. By asking members questions instead of simply giving them advice, I was able to facilitate their increasing control over the research process. A communication pattern that spiralled around questions, responses, mutual reflection and decisions enabled each team to easily produce and reproduce the internal consistency of its inquiry perspective.

Third, it was argued that the research process also needs to be negotiated in order to gain maximum value from a triangulated process. Juxtaposing the results involves shifts in communication styles. Democratic and inclusive communication is necessary if all perspectives are to be heard, given equal time, and respected. A vigorous dialectic is necessary in order to allow for critical reflection and evaluation of the merits of each perspective on the problem. It is at this point that enlightenment or a more complete perspective begins to emerge. Reflective and conciliatory communication is necessary to allow for the emergence of a consensus. It is at this point that a more complete perspective is consolidated. This final shift may be the most difficult since it is also at this point that team members must relinquish ownership of their perspective and distance themselves from it in order to serve the interests of the whole group. As a result, the facilitator should ensure that the collaborators understand how these shifts can generate a more complete

perspective, the raison d'etre for conducting their project in a paradigmatically triangulated manner.

The discussion now turns to a broader perspective of the theoretical and practical implications of paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context.

Notes

1.   Ironically, the Executive Director's first words were "I hope you are not planning to do research here" and I truthfully assured him that this was not my intention and that I had never even considered the possibility of doing research with ACAA.

2.   I also learned that the people involved in ACAA were motivated by what the Executive Director referred to as "AIDS time" or an intense drive to prevent and solve the problems left in the wake of a disease which was reaching epidemic proportions throughout the world. Not everything I learned about the people involved in ACAA resulted from my conversation with the Executive Director. During the half hour that I waited for my appointment with the Executive Director, I took the opportunity to wander around the office area and observe the people working there. I was struck by the warm, open and caring attitudes of the people around me, people who laughed and interacted among themselves and with me in an easy manner and who at the same time seemed very busy and charged with a sense of purpose and mission. Although I was initially apprehensive about how I would feel when I walked into the office of an organization dealing with a complex set of so-called "social taboos", namely sin, sex, disease and death, I found myself feeling very comfortable in that environment and intrigued by the work of ACAA. I was also very comfortable with the Executive Director, who impressed me as a very knowledgeable, direct, passionate and energetic person.

3.   His background included a Masters degree in Social Work and activism with Latin Americans in Calgary to raise funds for liberated zones in El Salvador.

4.   The prospect of facilitating a PR project at ACAA was both emotionally and intellectually engaging. I felt a sense of solidarity not only with the people I had met but also with the social justice orientation of ACAA.

5.   The Committee was responsible, according to its mandate, for researching i.e., investigating and soliciting expert opinions, on issues brought to the Board of Directors or Committee.

6.   We realized that we had some common interests and a similar approach to life. He impressed me as a soft-spoken yet personally empowered person who was deeply committed to making the world a better place for HIV/AIDS infected people.

7.   Membership in the Committee would involve my payment of a $10.00 membership fee to ACAA and my signing a confidentiality agreement.

8.   Following the meeting, I gave more thought to the metaphorical expressions that could guide the inquiry: the anthropologist studying a culture, the environmentalist studying an ecosystem and the investigative reporter studying a political situation. I sent a memo to the Chairperson, reviewing our discussion, introducing the concept of the metaphors and committing to facilitate not only the PR project for the whole committee but the inquiry process for each team. I also explained the difference between my thesis research project,

which involved integrating my interest in implementing multiparadigmatic inquiry and the Committee's interest in the five areas of discrimination against HIV/AIDS infected people. In keeping with the principles of PR, I assured him that the Committee's agenda would take precedence over mine.

9. Although the Committee members wanted more than a few minutes to think about it, the Chairperson expected a decision that night rather than at the next meeting which was a month away. Upon his urging, they decided to discuss it and I left the room, not knowing what the Committee would decide.

10. To indicate my willingness to become an integral part of the group, I went to each of the members and embraced them. As an outsider who had no personal contact with HIV/AIDS, I felt this was an important symbolic gesture in negotiating the interpersonal dimension of the process. It demonstrated my lack of fear and prejudice and seemed to make them more comfortable with me. It may also have been an important gesture since parts of the meeting had been characterized by tension and frustration and there did not appear to be much solidarity among the other members or between them and me.

11. Shortly thereafter, at the beginning of October 1992, the former Chairperson, who was still determined to continue contributing to the Committee's research despite his failing health, entered a hospice. Solidarity took on new meaning as several of us on the Committee, the Executive Director and the past President of ACAA, among others, took the time to spend much of the last two weeks and final minutes of his life with him. The day before he died, he spoke to us of the need for leaders contribute to the lives of the people with love, humility and respect rather than with a desire for fame, glory and power. For me, his words echoed the requirements of an effective PR facilitator.

12. Unfortunately, most of the participants turned out to be gay males. Only one heterosexual couple volunteered. We learned that straight men and women were reluctant to participate because ACAA was wrongly identified as an organization for gay men. In fact, many straight men and women who were HIV/AIDS infected still blamed the disease on the homosexual community. Many hemophiliacs also had the same concerns. Also, some women felt reluctant to participate in the study because they had only been recently diagnosed and were still trying to deal with the personal trauma of their diagnosis. It was also impossible to gain the participation of IV needle users because of possible legal recriminations and sex-trade workers because of recriminations by pimps. Although we were unable to negotiate the participation of a broader cross section of people, we recognized that people could not be forced to participate and that we would have to do our best with what we had. We also recognized that the overrepresentation of gay men in the study was due to the fact that many of these people had taken the initiative to be tested for HIV/AIDS, since the disease was originally labelled as a gay disease, and that many heterosexual people were as yet undiagnosed because they felt they were not at risk and had therefore felt no need to be tested.

13. In fact, many of the people I encountered had successfully dealt with discrimination based on sex, sin, disease and death in a way that radically improved the quality of their lives. Their example forced me to reflect upon and learn about my own sense of empowerment and the quality of my life.

14. Although it is not reported elsewhere in this thesis, many of the people who became participants in the study said they found it empowering to tell their stories to people who were truly interested in their situation and willing to take some action. It can be argued that in an important way, the participation of all those involved in the project represents a form of action which resulted in greater empowerment.

15. For example, if all the issues were researched at the same time, the project might become inordinately large and lengthy. Furthermore, if such a large project was rushed to

completion within a year, none of the issues might receive adequate treatment. On the other hand, if two or three issues were dealt with at a time, the inquiry process would have to be repeated at least twice and this could result in duplicated effort.

16. In fact, some members suggested that there might be even more issues about which we were unaware. I told the members that I would do my best to work with whatever we eventually decided even though I had difficulty envisioning a successful project which dealt with more than one issue.

17. The Chairman also suggested that prior to the discussion, each member should be given the questions on a sheet of paper and asked to answer them privately, providing concrete examples. Everyone's answers should then be recorded on a flip chart for all to see.

18. Insurance: since gay couples are not considered a family in Alberta, insurance benefits are not extended to the other partner, thereby creating economic hardship if one of them becomes ill as a result of HIV/AIDS. Housing: some people with HIV/AIDS live in constant fear being evicted from their homes by landlords; there is little or no low cost housing for single people which creates economic hardship for single people who cannot work due to HIV/AIDS; people who are infected with HIV/AIDS are unable to obtain mortgage insurance. Health Care: some HIV/AIDS infected people have received rough treatment or been refused treatment by health care workers; since gay couples are not considered families, the partner of a person very ill with HIV/AIDS is sometimes refused access to the hospital room which creates emotional hardship for both partners; health care workers sometimes conduct HIV testing without the consent of the person, which is an invasion of privacy. Employment: some places of employment require pre-employment HIV testing and then refuse to hire HIV positive people because they cannot be covered under the company's insurance policy; some HIV/AIDS infected people have lost their jobs and income on the basis of positive HIV status. Travel: HIV/AIDS infected people are refused entry into the U.S.A and other countries, thereby restricting the freedom to travel for business, pleasure or family reasons; a person in Calgary was refused a taxi ride because the driver knew he was HIV positive. Personal contact: many HIV/AIDS infected people experience rejection and a loss of physical contact when others become aware of their infectious status. Media: sensationalism about HIV/AIDS and homophobic jokes related to HIV status reinforces negative public perceptions about people infected with HIV/AIDS. Education: misconceptions and ignorance about HIV/AIDS are being perpetuated in the school system. Public Health Act: denial of embalming to people who have died with AIDS creates hardships for families of the deceased because they are not allowed to view the body. Church: moral judgments about gay people with HIV/AIDS perpetuates the notion that these people are bad and deserve what they get, including discrimination.

19. I was also humbled and relieved that the collaborators had the skills to facilitate aspects of the project that I assumed required my expertise.

20. The Chairperson had suggested that I just talk about the paper since neither of us knew what to expect. In deference to him but against my better judgment, I agreed to do as he asked. Only one person had read the paper and the others kept flipping through their copies as I spoke. In addition, the Boardroom where we met was too large for our small group. The Chairperson insisted that the members sit in a long row facing a blackboard, creating a setting that looked and felt very much like a lecture. Although the metaphors had still not been fully developed at this point, I made brief reference to them without really explaining their implications. While the members knew what environmentalists, anthropologists and investigative reporters do, my inability to take the metaphors further and discuss their implications only confused matters more. Even the most highly educated member kept repeating that he didn't understand what I was talking about and continued to express doubt about the existence of more than one perspective. Consequently, I began to wonder if I truly understood what I was talking about. Unfortunately, the more I struggled

to communicate, the more intensely, quickly and repetitiously I spoke, and the more I failed to communicate effectively. By the time the Committee took a short break, the frustration was very evident. The Chairperson, becoming increasingly impatient, privately urged me to become more concrete. I impatiently told him that I was doing my best and couldn't do any more.

21. When I left the room to await their decision, I became acutely aware that it was one thing to talk about mediating processed knowledge but an entirely different thing to actually do it. Because of the great difficulty I had experienced in trying to communicate the process and benefits of paradigmatic triangulation I almost hoped the Committee would decide against the project. When instead they decided for it, I was truly surprised. I suspect that the Chairperson's interest in gaining a more complete picture of the issues and his general support for the project was the deciding factor. It certainly was not my ability to communicate.

22. The first diagram of the environmentalist studying an ecosystem depicted the interaction between parts of a system. This diagram showed the introduction of an insect into the environment, the subsequent spraying of the insect with chemicals and the ensuing intended and unintended consequences in various parts of the environment such as plants, trees, animals, birds, fish and people. Lines were drawn between the various parts demonstrating the a multiplicity of interrelated consequences. The diagram suggested that environmentalists look at causal relationships, although these cannot be predetermined, among parts of an environmental system. In the corner of the diagram, I wrote key words or phrases such as: influences and effects; events, actions and consequences; and relationships and connections among parts of the system. The second diagram bridged the metaphor of the environmentalist studying an ecosystem with a consideration of how one of our inquiry teams could study the discriminatory isolation policy of the Public Health Act in a similar way. Using exactly the same format, I first replaced the insect with an HIV/AIDS infected person (marked by an X on the head). Second, I replaced the chemicals with the isolation policy of the Public Health Act. Third, I replaced the parts of the environmental system with various parts of the social system, such as people, organizations and institutions. Fourth, I replaced the environmental consequences with social consequences.

The first diagram of the anthropologist studying a culture depicted groups of people with question marks in their heads interacting in social groups in different ways. This diagram suggested that anthropologists try to understand how people interpret their lives. In the corner of the diagram I wrote key words or phrases such as: values and beliefs; shared understandings; and meanings. The second diagram helped to bridge the metaphor of the anthropologist studying a culture with a consideration of how one of our inquiry teams could study the discriminatory isolation policy of the Public Health Act in a similar way. Using the same format, I first replaced the question marks in some of the people's heads with Xs, denoting HIV/AIDS infection, and removed the other question marks. Second, I inserted clouds containing phrases to represent the unspoken thoughts of each person about the type of interaction that was occurring in each group. The thoughts also depicted very different interpretations of isolation from the perspectives of both types of people and among different groups.

The first diagram of the investigative reporter studying a political situation depicted several sets of houses with labels of institutions such as government, church, and education on them. Inside the houses were people who were depicted as having power over or dominating those on the outside. Each house had an attic and inside each attic were words that represented the hidden agendas or motives of the people inside the houses. There were two types of people on the outside: people who were being dominated but who were either unaware of this or who were not having a problem with it, and people who were downtrodden and suffering as a result. None of the people on the outside could see what was in the attics. This diagram suggested that investigative reporters try to find out the

hidden agendas of people who are powerful and tend to dominate others, in order to expose what is really going on. In the corner of the diagram I wrote key words or phrases such as: motives; hidden agendas; and why are some people allowed to dominate others? The second diagram helped to bridge the metaphor of the investigative reporter studying a political situation with a consideration of how one of our inquiry teams could study the discriminatory isolation policy of the Public Health Act in a similar way. In the second diagram, I demonstrated how this could be applied to our research context. Using the same format, I first replaced the words in the attics with others that represented different types of underlying reasons for wanting HIV/AIDS infected people placed in isolation. Second, I placed Xs on the heads of the people who were downtrodden and suffering.

Because I am not artistically inclined, all of my diagrams were simply and crudely executed. However, they seemed to integrate the elements of context, purpose and focus and represent how the discriminatory isolation policy of the Public Health Act could be studied from three different perspectives. I was now ready to try communicating paradigmatically triangulated inquiry to the Committee at its next meeting.

23. The simplicity of the diagrams and my obvious lack of artistic skill provided for a great deal of humour at my expense. This seemed to reduce some of the barriers to a horizontal relationship.

24. I suggested there were alternative and possibly more creative or interactive methods such as drama, debate or audio visual presentation but they insisted on a report.

25. It is important for the facilitator and collaborators to try to imagine themselves in the position of the participants in order to take their needs into account. Each team should prepare script on what to say to the participants, including the purpose of the study, who is sponsoring and conducting the study, how the participant is expected to contribute and how the participant's contribution will be used. The script should also address confidentiality and other sensitive issues. It is critical to establish solidarity with the participants and to assure them that the results will be used in their best interest. In addition, participants should be told about measures which will be taken to return the knowledge they have given.

26. For example, in the case of the SAC's project, the results of the three teams could be organized in the following manner. The environmentalist team might make a list of the *institutions, organizations or groups*, and list, in order of impact, social practices in each type that support and discriminate against HIV/AIDS infected people. Each social practice should then be described and explained, and examples provided. The anthropologist team might look for patterns of *issues* concerning supportive social practices and list these. The same would also be done for issues concerning discriminatory social practices. Each issue should then be described and examples provided. The investigative reporter team could make a list of the *reasons* for the social practices that support and discriminate against people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and provide examples for each reason.

V. Conclusions:

Reflections on Paradigmatic Triangulation

This thesis has revolved around theoretical and practical considerations concerning paradigmatic triangulation in a PR context and the implications for communication have been demonstrated throughout the discussion.   In reflecting on the entire range of issues that have been presented, it is apparent that the most significant implication concerns the development of theory and practice for PR. Consequently, the conclusions presented below implicitly incorporate both of these dimensions and are framed in terms of opportunities and challenges. As a result they constitute a broadly based rationale for paradigmatically triangulated inquiry and raise issues which take the theoretical and practical work of this thesis into account and point to further development. Furthermore, it is apparent that these conclusions require the strengthening of communication links between the social science and PR communities, between PR theorists and practitioners and between the proponents of different PR streams.

Inquiry

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to learn more about how paradigmatic assumptions condition inquiry and divide inquirers.

The debate on social science inquiry paradigms presents a useful starting point for an examination of this issue. As Guba (1990) suggests, paradigms are basic sets of beliefs that guide the activities of lay actors and social theorists. For social scientists, as Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest, paradigms are metatheoretical assumptions which underwrite their frames of reference, modes of theorising and *modus operandi*. Giddens' (1984) concept of the duality of structure is helpful for explaining how frames of reference produce and reproduce meaning and link meaning with action. Parallels can be drawn

between this concept and the way frames of reference, or the explicit dimensions of paradigms, are used to draw upon implicit assumptions about the nature of society and inquiry and how these in turn condition inquiry. When these implicit and explicit assumptions are grouped together into internally consistent sets of epistemological and ontological assumptions, or paradigms, they tend to become mutually exclusive, deterministic and noncomparable, as Lincoln (1990), Burrell and Morgan (1979) suggest. The work of Guba (1990) and others concerning three inquiry paradigms — critical, social constructivist and post-positivist — shows the extent to which these paradigms not only condition inquiry but also the extent to which each is incomplete or imbalanced. While the very nature of paradigms tends to divide social theorists into different camps, as Gioia and Pitre (1990) suggest, this is counterproductive because it limits the extent to which a more comprehensive understanding of an inquiry issue can emerge.

The paradigm debate implicitly finds expression in PR as well and is apparent in the writings of Whyte (1991) and Fals-Borda (1991). It appears that inquiry in the First World PR stream is based primarily on the assumptions of the post-positivist inquiry paradigm and that inquiry in the Third World PR stream is based primarily on the assumptions of the critical inquiry paradigm. To a lesser extent both streams also show evidence of the assumptions of the social constructivist inquiry paradigm. It is also highly evident that there is a lack of productive communication between the primary proponents of each of these streams.

The case presented in this thesis clearly demonstrated that paradigms condition inquiry. For example, the way in which the problem of discrimination against and support for HIV/AIDS infected people was articulated by the collaborators, before the inquiry metaphors were introduced, revealed assumptions which reflected the concerns of the critical, social constructivist and post-positivist paradigms. There was a close correspondence between the concerns expressed by particular individuals and the inquiry

metaphor they subsequently identified with. Furthermore, after the inquiry metaphors were introduced and elaborated, the way in which each team of collaborators came to a decision about the purpose and focus of their inquiry and the methods they considered most appropriate, substantiates the claim that paradigms, even when they are expressed metaphorically, condition inquiry. It is also of interest that each team of collaborators became highly committed to its own perspective to the extent that its members questioned the validity of the other teams' perspectives. There was then, a divergence at the outset along paradigmatic lines. However, as proposed but not demonstrated, the final stage of paradigmatic triangulation allows for a more comprehensive understanding to emerge when these different perspectives converge and are critically juxtaposed.

It is apparent that paradigmatic divergence is inherent in the act of inquiry. While this issue has been examined in the social sciences, it is evident but remains virtually unexplored in the context of PR. It is an issue of some importance since, as each paradigmatic inquiry perspective is incomplete, the paradigmatic inquiry perspectives of the First and Third World streams can be considered commensurately incomplete. Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a PR context brings this issue into sharp focus because it is possible to observe simultaneously, the conditioning of inquiry from different paradigmatic perspectives. Moreover it allows for the development of understanding about how the divergence along paradigmatic lines emerges and further develops. Paradigmatic triangulation also demonstrates how these divergent perspectives can converge not only on a common problem with a common focus, but can be integrated through the process of critical juxtaposition. This represents a major challenge for the PR facilitator since it requires a solid understanding of the epistemological and ontological assumptions of different paradigms, a working knowledge of group process and the conceptual skill to systematically negotiate the inquiry process in a manner that constructively uses paradigmatic divergence and moves inquiry toward convergence.

Paradigmatic triangulation also raises the issue of the point at which this process generates integration and comprehensive understanding without conflating paradigmatic assumptions.

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to explore how the concept of social practices serves to focus inquiry.

Giddens' (1984) focus on human agency and how it is implicated in social practices presents a starting point for broadening the focus of each of the three inquiry paradigms to incorporate both the micro- and macro-level considerations without an explicit focus on either. For example, reframing intended and unintended consequences grounds the discussion of causal relationships in post-positivist inquiry in a framework that emphasizes the ability of people to create and recreate society, although in often unpredictable ways. By focusing on the intended and unintended consequences of social practices, post-positivist inquiry can be broadened in a way that is less deterministic since a consideration of human agency is included. Similarly, Giddens' understanding of interpretive schemes grounds the discussion of these in a framework that links abstract structures and social practices. As a result, social constructivist inquiry can be broadened in a way that is less voluntaristic since a consideration of the structural constraints on human agency is included. In addition, Giddens' reframing of agency and power grounds the discussion of power in a framework that balances the constraining and enabling aspects of power. As a result, critical inquiry can be broadened in a way that is less deterministic since a consideration of how power resources enable human agency is included. Consequently, the focus on social practices redirects social inquiry away from the experience of the individual actor or the existence of any form of societal totality and toward social practices ordered across space and time. According to Giddens, this is the basic domain of study in the social sciences. Furthermore, when the emphases of various inquiry paradigms are

reframed through structuration theory, this serves to provide a common ground for analysis and juxtaposition.

In PR, the issue of social practices is often assumed and not explicitly addressed. Rather, the social issues are often framed as local conditions and the discussion about these conditions often provides more of a description rather than an analysis of the social practices which are implicated. On the other hand, PR inquiry is also often conceptualized as praxis, or the union of theory and practice, and the discussion of praxis provides more of a description rather than an analysis of the implications of inquiry as a social practice. As Einsiedel (1992) suggests, an explicit focus on social practices is useful for the development of grounded theory based on practice.

The case demonstrated that when the social issues were framed in terms of social practices, both structure and agency were automatically taken into account by the collaborators. Furthermore, such framing allowed the collaborators to move beyond a consideration of specific instances of discrimination and support and to begin thinking about the general types of social practices that might be implicated in these specific instances. In addition, the focus on social practices provided a common ground for exploration of these problems from different paradigmatic perspectives.

It becomes apparent that a focus on social practices is useful for PR in several ways. This focus places PR within the framework of social science inquiry. It also provides a framework that moves an account of PR beyond description and into a broader analysis which takes both structure and agency into account. As well, it allows for the development of grounded theory. Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in PR brings the issue of social practices into even sharper focus because it is possible to observe the process of convergence when the research question is initially framed from the common perspective of social practices, the process of divergence when the social practices implicated in the research question are explored from different perspectives, and the

process of integration when the different perspectives on social practices are juxtaposed. This presents a challenge for the PR facilitator since it is necessary to have a good grasp of the concept of social practices in structuration theory. This entails an understanding of why and how Giddens reframes various theoretical emphases and an understanding of how the duality of structure operates. Since structuration theory is presented in a very recursive manner and since it integrates a number of concepts which may not be relevant here, it is not easy to selectively draw out the concepts that apply. Furthermore, structuration theory has been critiqued for not adequately addressing the more concrete and material aspects of structure, such as the social system, and as a result it is not considered complete. Nonetheless, the focus on social practices provides a valuable metatheoretical framework for the design of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry and it raises the issue of the extent to which a focus on the individual, society or social practices directs inquiry.

Participation

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to learn more about how democratic participation and solidarity are negotiated.

Dewey (1916) and Lewin (1946) proposed and developed the idea that inquiry should be democratized and demystified and that lay people should collaborate in the process. Habermas' (1984) concept of critical social science — which emphasizes the value of collaboration for critiquing, examining and evaluating dominant ideologies and the political will to take action — suggests that participation in inquiry serves to empower the people who collaborate. However, the people who collaborate must be able to communicate freely and democratically. Habermas' concept of the ideal speech situation suggests that participation involves true equality in accessing opportunities to speak, to question and to reason and a recognition that all speakers are legitimate.

The democratic participation of facilitators who have expertise in conducting inquiry and collaborators who have expertise in understanding their conditions, is the organizing principle of PR. This requires solidarity between the facilitator and collaborators entailing a mutual commitment to social aims and the project. Consequently, as Beausoleil (1990) suggests, the facilitator's interests are not privileged. Since the relationship between the facilitator and collaborators is viewed in terms of equality, participation becomes a matter of negotiation, according to Mayer (1990). However, this is not an easy relationship to negotiate since it involves risks for both sides, as Beausoleil suggests, including the risk of paternalism and manipulation, as Latapi (1988) suggests. According to Waters (1992), manipulation need not be a problem when the facilitator clearly puts the needs of the collaborators first.

The case demonstrated that democratic participation and solidarity were successfully negotiated through several means. The learning agreement formed the basis for negotiation about the expectations of participation. It clarified the ways in which my interests and the collaborators' interests could dovetail and assured the collaborators that my research interests would not be privileged. During the course of the project, I served as a catalyst rather than as a director. I used questions to encourage the collaborators to clarify their thoughts and experiences, make decisions about the research focus, methods and expected outcomes, and take ownership of the process. It became apparent that all those who participated experienced some form of empowerment. For the collaborators, empowerment meant gaining access to knowledge about doing inquiry. For me it meant gaining access to the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS. For many of those who contributed to our research, it meant gaining access to a forum which allowed them to tell their own stories about turning victimization into empowerment. Although I initially became involved as an outsider, establishing solidarity meant becoming personally involved in the lives of the collaborators. In so doing, I became perceived as an insider and as an equal. Moreover

it was important for me to actively demonstrate my membership by participating on each team and on the Committee even after my research was complete. The case also demonstrated that identification with the inquiry metaphors contributed to the solidarity of each team. However, it showed that the solidarity of members in a group with a particular perspective can lead to the denigration of groups with other perspectives.

It is apparent that a paradigmatically triangulated project brings the issues of participation and solidarity into sharper focus. Although the notion of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry has parallels in the world of experience, its uncommonness as an explicit method requires that participation and solidarity be carefully negotiated. This raises the issue of facilitating a triangulated project in a manner that does not compromise the interests of the collaborators, manipulate them in the interest of the process, or subject them to the paternalism that is often inherent in a teaching role. In addition, the participation of the facilitator, not only with the whole group of collaborators but also with each team, is both more intensive and extensive than in a project which is not triangulated, and this can be very demanding in terms of time and energy. As a result, it raises the issue of the boundaries of solidarity. Moreover, it is important for the facilitator to treat each team fairly and equitably. This raises the issue of presenting the different paradigmatic perspectives as equally legitimate and ensuring that they are perceived as such. Furthermore, a paradigmatically triangulated project demonstrates the dynamics of solidarity and participation at three stages, the first stage when the whole group comes to a consensus on the research problem, the second stage when each team develops and conducts its own research, and the third stage when the whole group decides how to evaluate each team's findings. This raises the issue of how participation and solidarity are affected when the context of collaboration changes at each of these stages.

Communication

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to develop knowledge about the mediation of processed and experiential knowledge.

Giddens' (1984, 1987) concept of the double hermeneutic, or the process through which processed and experiential knowledge come together, presents a solid theoretical beginning for an examination of this issue. The double hermeneutic consists of the intersection of two frames of meaning, namely the meaningful social world as constituted by lay actors and the metalanguages invented by social scientists. Social scientists depend upon lay concepts to develop theories about social processes and lay actors regularly appropriate the theories and concepts of social science into their behaviour. Consequently, these two forms of knowledge are interdependent, interactive and mutually influential, and although there are major differences between them, there is no absolute dividing line.

The concept of mediation between processed and experiential knowledge is framed as mutual learning between facilitators and collaborators in PR and represents one of its major principles. Facilitators learn about lay actors, social conditions and social processes and collaborators learn about concepts and processes for conducting inquiry in their social context. Together, they learn about each other, local conditions and social action. However, the process of mutual learning is often taken for granted and it is usually framed in terms of the benefits to both the facilitator and collaborators. Some, like Whyte (1991), go further and suggest that PR can also create mutual learning between the PR and social science communities and contribute to advances in theory and practice since PR offers a site for examining theories and formulating new hypotheses about social action. Recent work by Elden and Levin (1991) begins to articulate the cognitive process of mutual learning by focusing on cogenerative dialogue which they describe as a process through which initial frames of reference are changed and new frames generated. They postulate that cogenerative dialogue represents a partnership through which the insiders or collaborators

become more theoretical about their practice and the outsiders or facilitators become more practical about their theory. Furthermore, they see dialogue as a process of exchange or negotiation between insiders and outsiders.

The case presented in this thesis demonstrated that mediation between processed and experiential knowledge about inquiry involved an exchange which could be framed in terms of negotiation. This involved continual movement or a spiralling communications motion between myself and the collaborators which led to mutual learning. Mutual learning was greatly facilitated through the use of metaphors, because they provided a common language which intersected both processed and experiential knowledge and because they generated a shared frame of meaning about how we could conduct our inquiry from different perspectives. However, metaphors were not unproblematic and extensive elaboration was required before they could function as a useful communications strategy.

It is apparent that PR presents a rich ground for exploring the mediation of processed and experiential knowledge and that this can be approached in a number of different ways. The challenge is to integrate both theoretical and practical concerns into a consideration of how communication as a social process mediates between processed and experiential knowledge. This is an issue that has not been systematically explored in PR and as a result it offers a site for the development of knowledge which has the ability to contribute to both the theory and practice of PR. Furthermore, the exploration of this issue in the context of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry brings it into sharp focus since the communication of complex sets of epistemological and ontological assumptions is required.

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to learn more about the relationship between metaphors and horizontal communication.

Beltran's (1980) idea of horizontal communication suggests that vertical forms of communication reinforce dependence, produce inequality, are disempowering and are

essentially paternalistic. While Beltran is referring to top-down flows of information from the First to the Third World, parallels can be drawn with the way people who have specialized knowledge often use specialized language to communicate with those outside their discipline. Furthermore, it can be inferred from the way that Morgan (1986) and Greene (1990) use metaphors to express and generate reflective dialogue about paradigms, that metaphors can operate as a communications strategy which does not privilege the specialized language of the social sciences. As Crider and Cirillo (1991) suggest, the use of metaphor can transform a perspective or a frame of reference and organize thinking about an issue without the use of specialized terminology.

In PR, horizontal communication is an important issue which is closely connected to the issues of democratic participation and knowledge empowerment. De Roux's (1991) account of the process of collectively and democratically producing knowledge draws attention to the importance of respecting the communication forms and conceptualizations of the collaborators. Communication which respects the knowledge of the collaborators, allows a new common ground to emerge and empowers the collaborators. Elden and Levin (1991) also address the issue of knowledge empowerment in PR through the notion of cogenerative dialogue. They raise the issue of how communication can allow for exchange between the facilitator and collaborators at the level of frames of reference and not merely at the level of information exchange. Exchange at the level of frames of reference assumes that although the facilitator and collaborators bring different forms of knowledge and expertise to the dialogue, they can express these in a conceptual language which is common to all.

The case presented in this thesis demonstrated that metaphors which are commonly understood greatly enhance horizontal communication. Through the use of metaphors, I was able to avoid imposing social science language about paradigms on the collaborators. Because we were using a conceptual language common to all of us, it was possible to enter

into a dialogue which did not privilege my knowledge and which was empowering for the collaborators. Furthermore, the metaphors did indeed organize the collaborators' thinking about paradigmatic implications. However, the metaphors had to be carefully developed, articulated and elaborated in order for them to operate in this manner. This process was difficult and only succeeded through trial, error, flexibility and persistence. It involved continually shifting between what I knew about about the paradigms and what the collaborators knew about the metaphorical expressions that were used.

It is apparent that metaphors present a way of entering into a dialogue about complex concepts in a manner that is respectful of the principle of horizontal communication. The challenge here is to take the knowledge, social context and culture of the collaborators into account when developing the metaphors which express paradigms and at the same time take the principle of democratic participation into account. This raises the question of how the metaphors should be developed in order to maintain an appropriate balance between horizontal communication and democratic participation. Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry brings this question into sharp focus. On the one hand, if the metaphors are developed by the facilitator does this constitute an imposition on the collaborators? On the other hand, if they are developed collectively by the group is paradigmatic triangulation jeopardized if the metaphors do not adequately convey the paradigmatic implications? Furthermore, how are metaphors developed in contexts where the particular inquiry paradigms presented in this thesis are not evident or in contexts where there is a lack of plurality? These questions suggest that the use of language which is commonly understood is only one side of the issue. The other side concerns who produces that language in the first place and whose agenda it serves. This suggests that the issues of horizontal communication and democratic participation need to be explored in tandem and that paradigmatically triangulated inquiry is a challenging context in which to do this.

It also suggests that the facilitator must be critically reflective of his or her own communications practices.

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry presents an opportunity to learn more about systematic processes that generate critical reflection.

A consideration of critical reflection can begin with Dewey's (1916) notion that inquiry is a continuous self-corrective process, since every contention or knowledge claim is open to further criticism and discussion. Furthermore, as Lewin (1946) suggested, the inquiry process is characterized by cyclical elements of action-reflection consisting of analysis, fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, execution, more fact finding and evaluation. Habermas' (1984) view of critical science suggests that critical reflection also involves the juxtaposition, examination and evaluation of differing perspectives. These views of critical reflection indicate that it involves a relatively systematic process which moves among various considerations.

Beausoleil (1990) describes the process of critical reflection in PR as a continual spiral which passes from one theme to another and which includes the communication of convictions, values and commitments. On the other hand, de Roux (1991) emphasizes the importance of incorporating different perceptions and experiences to produce a collective reading of reality. While these processes of critical reflection are undoubtedly valuable for helping the collaborators to understand their local situation, they do not automatically translate into a broader understanding of critical reflection. As Cassara (1987) and Latapi (1988) have pointed out, systematic documentation and analysis are weak points in PR. It is also apparent that systematic documentation and the analysis of practice is required for the development of grounded theory. Einsiedel's (1992) suggestion for theory development — which involves combining action research's interest in the ways that research and reflection lead to social change with Habermas' critical perspective on the

action-reflection cycle as the precursor for organizing action — undoubtedly requires a systematic approach.

The discussion of the case presented in this thesis concluded with suggestions as to how paradigmatic triangulated inquiry could be systematically developed and could lead to critical reflection on different perspectives. It presents one way of learning more about the process of critical reflection. While the process of triangulated inquiry is similar to that of critical reflection in that it allows for the juxtaposition, examination and evaluation of different perspectives, it is different in that this occurs at the end of a systematic process at the level of findings which have been deliberately conditioned by different paradigmatic perspectives. As a result, it may allow for a systematic and long term study of the various influences and stages which are implicated in critical reflection. In some ways, it can be said that paradigmatic triangulation reveals the dynamics of critical reflection in slow motion since it shows how different perspectives become articulated over a period of time and how or whether they can then become integrated. However, it is also challenging to manage such a project in a PR context since it is very time consuming and may require more patience than the collaborators possess and greater systematization than they are willing to accept, especially during the inquiry planning process. Moreover it requires that the work of each team follow a parallel process both in terms of timing and stages. It must be remembered that while the outsider may see the value of systematic inquiry, the insiders may have more pressing social concerns which require immediate action. However, as the case demonstrated, the collaborators were willing to commit to such a systematic process because it offered them the possibility of a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand.

Paradigmatic triangulation brings the issue of critical reflection into sharp focus because it raises the question of whether critical reflection through this process primarily produces external critique at the level of findings or whether it can generate internal critique

at the level of the paradigms themselves. It is concluded that even if the critique is only at the level of findings about local conditions from different paradigmatic perspectives, this is valuable for PR because it provides a more solid and comprehensive base for organizing social action, which is the primary concern of PR.

Evaluation

This thesis has demonstrated that a paradigmatically triangulated inquiry process in a PR context is viable. However, this viability must be balanced against other considerations which were alluded to in the discussion of the case. While paradigmatic triangulation does offer a systematic process, it may be necessary to sacrifice flexibility in the interests of systematization. On the one hand, this sacrifice makes the process less creative; however, on the other hand, it makes it more possible to organize enlightenment. In a similar vein, spontaneity may be sacrificed in the interests of careful planning. On the one hand, this sacrifice may lead to lost opportunities; however, on the other hand, a more solid base for organizing action may be gained. Furthermore, immediate interests may be sacrificed to long term interests. On the one hand, this sacrifice may place the process above the collaborators' needs; however, on the other hand, the collaborators may gain a more realistic appreciation of the context of action. Finally, group solidarity may be sacrificed in the interests of paradigmatic team solidarity. On the one hand, this sacrifice may create fragmentation within the larger group; however, on the other hand, it may create a special sense of identity and individual purpose among team members.

Furthermore, a paradigmatically triangulated inquiry process may not be viable in all PR contexts. The assumptions of this process are inherent in the values of western democratic society. It may not be viable in contexts which lack pluralism or where different perspectives are not accorded legitimacy. Furthermore, it may not be viable in contexts where people do not appreciate the value of developing a comprehensive

understanding and are primarily interested in substantiating or promoting one particular view of social conditions.

In addition, a paradigmatically triangulated inquiry process may not be appropriate for all collaborators. It requires a process- rather than a product-orientation and it may not be suitable if collaborators are unwilling to place their trust in a process where the outcomes are highly unpredictable. Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry also requires that the collaborators place a high level of trust in the facilitator and that they appreciate the value of processed knowledge. As a result, it may not be suitable in contexts where outsiders are viewed with suspicion or where social science knowledge is seen as a tool of domination and manipulation. Stable group membership is also a requirement of paradigmatically triangulated inquiry since it takes time for the collaborators to internalize the assumptions of their paradigmatic perspectives and plan their inquiry accordingly. Therefore, it may not be suitable in contexts where large numbers of collaborators leave and others join the process after the research has begun. Finally, paradigmatically triangulated inquiry requires that the collaborators are willing and able to conduct their research relatively independently and it may not be suitable for contexts where the collaborators expect the facilitator to do most of the research.

Finally, a paradigmatically triangulated inquiry process may not be appropriate for all facilitators. Even if the facilitator does not do most of the research, the facilitator is still required to carefully plan the process, help each of the paradigmatic inquiry teams stay on track and to attend to the needs of the larger group. As a result, it may not be suitable in contexts where the facilitator is unable or unwilling to devote considerable time or energy to plan and facilitate what amounts to several mini-projects within the context of the larger project. Furthermore, the process requires that the facilitator be able to continually shift between the requirements of the process and the needs of the collaborators without compromising either. Therefore, it may not be suitable for facilitators who are unwilling or

unable to distance themselves from the collaborators sufficiently to attend to the process or who are not sufficiently empathetic to the needs of the collaborators to ensure that their interests are not jeopardized. Finally, paradigmatically triangulated inquiry requires that the facilitator accord legitimacy to each paradigmatic perspective and it may not be suitable for facilitators who are committed to only one perspective or who are unable to present each perspective in an equitable manner.

Paradigmatically triangulated inquiry in a PR context represents an uncharted course. Therefore, neither the opportunities or challenges, possibilities or limitations can be fully appreciated until further theoretical or practical exploration occurs. While it is difficult and often treacherous to explore new territory, it can also be invigorating and highly productive. It is hoped that this thesis provides an impetus to those who are interested in pushing participatory research beyond its current boundaries.

Epilogue

Just over a year after the SAC project began and shortly after this thesis was defended, the Social Action Committee met to discuss the results, conclusions and recommendations of each research team. The brief account which follows is intended to provide some insight into the process through which the findings converged.

Shortly before the meeting, it became evident that there was a high level of excitement among the members and competition between the teams. This was reflected in concerns voiced by some members of each of the three teams that the other two teams might render better performances or offer more recommendations. There was also a concern that some of the more vocal Committee members might control the process. To alleviate some these concerns, I suggested several measures which were immediately agreed to by the key Committee members. For example, I suggested that only one person from each team make the presentation and that a one-page outline of each team's results,

conclusions and recommendations be prepared in order to facilitate comparison. I also suggested some rules for the meeting. For example, each presentation should only be 20 minutes in length, to be followed by a 10 minute question period during which members from other teams could ask that points be clarified or justified. This would be followed by an hour long discussion period. In addition, Habermas' conditions for democratic communication would be emphasized, thereby ensuring that all members would have equal opportunities to speak, listen and ask questions, that each of the three perspectives would be accorded legitimacy, and that each team would have to justify its findings. In retrospect, these measures were very helpful since they allowed the members to concentrate on the content of the reports rather than on the process and since they placed each team on an equal footing.

Each presentation was strong and persuasive, reflecting not only its particular paradigmatic perspective but also the strength of that perspective. For example, the anthropologist team report focussed on the interconnectedness between issues of support and discrimination and evidenced greater complexity than the other reports. The environmentalist team report focussed on institutional sources of support and discrimination and demonstrated a greater understanding of relationships between parts of the social system. The investigative reporter team focussed on the reasons underlying support and discrimination and demonstrated a deeper socio-historical level of explanation. It quickly became apparent that the reports were different but highly complementary, offering different types and levels of explanation.

The discussion which followed focussed primarily on the complementary nature of the explanations and the generation of new insights. The earlier competitiveness simply dissipated and each team was more interested in what the other teams had to say than in defending its position. One of the first comments concerned the extent to which the reports seemed to "dovetail". Referring to the complementary nature of the reports, one member

said she wished some of the original Committee members who had doubts about the paradigmatic inquiry process, but who were no longer on the Committee, could have been there to witness how well it worked. She also commented that the Committee's final report, incorporating all of the team reports would be perceived as more "valid" because each team had worked independently and because the reports were different yet mutually supportive. One person noted that different "levels" of interpretation were evident, with the environmentalist team findings the most shallow and the investigative reporter team the deepest. It was also interesting to observe that by this time, personal attachment to particular reports had also dissipated and critiques focussed more on the limitations of the perspectives and the ensuing results.

A cross-fertilization of concepts occurred, generating creativity and allowing each team to gain insights into questions it had been unable to answer. For example, the environmentalist team had reported that most of the negative responses to HIV/AIDS infected people can be traced to their "intermediate sphere of contact", such as the medical and social service community and the church, rather than to the immediate sphere of contact consisting of family and friends, or to a more distant sphere such as government. A member of the anthropologist team found the concept of spheres of contact very helpful for organizing that team's interpretation of similar findings about the medical community. Another example occurred when the anthropologist team reported that the "empowerment" of an HIV/AIDS infected person could not be reduced to any single explanation and that although patterns could be discerned, the factors were interrelated and often highly individualistic. The other teams, who had not addressed the concept of empowerment, began to incorporate it into their contributions to the discussion. Yet another example occurred when the investigative reporter team reported that attitudes toward HIV/AIDS infected people were changed as a result of the "conversion factor". This concept proved highly interesting to the other two teams who began to talk about ways in which people

could be converted in order to demonstrate greater support of HIV/AIDS infected people. In retrospect, it appears that the process helped to organize creativity rather than to generate a debate or an internal critique of the different perspectives.

It is also of interest that of the Committee members who were present at the meeting, approximately a third were original members, a third had joined halfway through the project and the remaining third had joined while the reports were being compiled. The oldest members evidenced the greatest confidence in their findings and excitement that the process had "worked"; the middle group evidenced the greatest ability to synthesize the different findings; and the newest members evidenced the greatest ability to offer new ideas not previously considered. Each of these groups contributed something of significant value to the creative momentum that developed.

As the discussion drew to a close, the Committee members voiced concerns about organizing the numerous and diverse recommendations for action. I suggested that prior to the next meeting, three weeks later, each team should review their recommendations in light of the discussion and work to make these more mutually exclusive and specific. Each recommendation should then be written on one slip of paper. At the subsequent meeting we would place all slips of paper on a large surface and move them around until they became organized into categories and until a consensus was achieved. The Committee members were very pleased with this suggestion and expressed confidence that this procedure could work.

The meeting ended with a level of energy, sense of accomplishment and determination to take action that surpassed all previous Committee and team meetings and that surprised those who attended. The inclusion of the three perspectives appeared to give these lay researchers a great sense of confidence that they now had a very solid base from which to take action.

In reflecting on the year during which the PR project with the Social Action Committee of the AIDS Calgary Awareness Association was conducted, several considerations are noteworthy. As was initially hoped, paradigmatically triangulated inquiry does produce different sets of research results; however, as not anticipated, these results can also be highly *complementary*. Furthermore, the comparison of different results generates a considerable amount of *creative energy*. It appears that over time each team becomes entrenched in its own perspective; the comparison of different findings opens a horizon for the emergence of new insights.

Even more importantly, the paradigmatically triangulated research process is *empowering* for lay people. It was rewarding to observe the Committee members' confidence grow as they worked through the research process, and increase dramatically as they realized how comprehensive the combined results actually were. This sense of confidence was expressed through comments about the potentially increased credibility of the Committee's final report. Furthermore, the Committee members also felt empowered because they were gaining access to the knowledge production process — including the ability to understand research assumptions, organize research activities and develop new conceptual tools — which is often considered the exclusive domain of academics and research professionals. Following the comparison of the results, one person expressed the wish that more academics recognize the ability of lay people to do very good research. For the HIV/AIDS infected members of the Committee, empowerment appeared to be more related to their ability to make recommendations for action which could make a positive social difference in the lives of people in similar circumstances. Finally, for all of us, it was empowering to realize that despite the difficulties and uncertainties inherent in a paradigmatically triangulated research process, we had collectively succeeded beyond our expectations.

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Appendix I: Learning Agreement

This agreement outlines in broad terms, the expectations of the following parties:

1. Executive Director, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association.

2. Chairperson, Social Action Committee, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association.

3. Edith Gildart, Masters student at the University of Calgary, member of the Social Action Committee of AIDS Calgary and facilitator of the participatory research project for the same.

4. Members of the Social Action Committee of AIDS Calgary and collaborators in the participatory research project.

The agreement is guided by the following understandings:

1. The Social Action Committee of AIDS Calgary is interested in creating positive social change that benefits those who are or could be infected with the HIV virus.

2. The Social Action Committee of AIDS Calgary has identified five issues -- public perception, housing, embalming, transportation, Public Health Act --which need to be researched so that appropriate and effective action can be taken.

3. The Executive Director and the Chairperson have agreed that Edith Gildart will facilitate a participatory research project to assist the committee in investigating these issues.

4. The participatory research project must benefit both AIDS Calgary and Edith Gildart and compromise the work of neither.

5. Participatory research involves:
    - an assumption that the way people see their lives and formulate their own interests is of central importance;
    - a process of inquiry in which the PR facilitator and collaborators work together, contributing their knowledge, expertise and skills;
    - an educational process in which both the facilitator and collaborators are learning about one another as well as about conditions and the research process;
    - the aim of satisfactory action toward a better life for both everyone and for people who have been marginalized rather than the search for objective and scientific laws;
    - the researcher as a facilitator, not an expert consultant;
    - the identification of the facilitator with the needs and goals of the collaborators;
    - a concern with the ethics of social research and the unwillingness to use the collaborators and participants as guinea pigs in controlled experiments;
    - the active participation of collaborators in all phases of the research process, from issue identification to action.

6. Edith Gildart agrees to participate on the Social Action Committee of AIDS Calgary as a participant/observer. As a participant, she agrees to be a member of the committee for no less than one year and will facilitate the participatory research project on one or more issues for no less than six months after which time the committee may decide to continue investigating the issues in the same manner or select a different manner. As an

observer and thesis researcher, she will document her observations about how the process works.

7. The work of the Social Action Committee on this project will take place primarily outside of regularly scheduled monthly meetings and ideally, collaborators in the research should be prepared to devote at least four hours a week to their research.

8. The Social Action Committee will be divided into three teams of collaborators and each team will study a common set of issues, which have been identified and prioritized by the committee, but from three paradigmatic perspectives: post-positivist, social constructivist and critical. The findings of each team will then be consolidated for a final report. Edith Gildart will be a member of each team and provide any advice or assistance as required.

9. All products of the participatory research project (excluding the thesis of Edith Gildart) belong to AIDS Calgary.

10. The requirements for Edith Gildart's thesis necessitate the completion of at least one cycle of the participatory research project -- the definition and prioritization of issues, selection of research methods, investigation using the methods and the final written report on one or more issues -- by approximately July 1, 1992.

11. The thesis research document is separate from the research project in that it analyzes the process of using paradigmatic triangulation in participatory research and belongs to Edith Gildart. As such, she will be free to present it at conferences or allow for its publication.

To ensure that the project is mutually beneficial, productive and that it stays on track:

1. Edith Gildart agrees to:
   - place the interests and needs of AIDS Calgary and the Social Action Committee above her academic interests;
   - encourage committee members to take ownership of the process to the extent they are able and willing;
   - inform the Executive Director and Chairperson of any problems or potential problems in the course of the research process as soon as they become apparent;
   - communicate honestly, openly, directly and continuously with the Executive Director, committee Chairperson and committee members and conduct herself with personal and professional integrity;
   - share and discuss, prior to its presentation, the contents of the thesis with the Executive Director and the committee Chairperson, if they so wish;
   - make available to anyone who wishes, a copy of the thesis research;
   - respect the confidentiality agreement at all times and keep the results of the research project confidential unless otherwise agreed;
   - apprise the Executive Director and committee Chairperson of any intentions to make the thesis research public (i.e., conferences, publications) and the contents of such, in order to ensure that the work of AIDS Calgary or anyone connected with it is not compromised.

2. The Chairperson of the Social Action Committee agrees to:
   - communicate his commitment to the research project to the committee members;
   - encourage members to co-operate and sustain their commitment to the project;

- communicate honestly, openly and directly with Edith Gildart and the Executive Director about any problems or potential problems as they arise;
- work closely with Edith Gildart in an a supportive manner.

3. The Executive Director of AIDS Calgary agrees to:
   - communicate his commitment to the research project to the board of directors;
   - communicate honestly, openly and directly with Edith Gildart and the Chairperson of the Social Action Committee about any problems or potential problems as they arise.

4. The Members of the Social Action Committee agree to:
   - collaborate on the participatory research to the best of their ability;
   - communicate honestly, openly and directly with Edith Gildart and the Chairperson of the Social Action Committee about any problems or potential problems as they arise;
   - challenge Edith Gildart if they feel she is not responsive to their needs, concerns, ideas;
   - co-operate on the research project for the period of at least six months;
   - be available for meetings and research work outside committee meetings.

Signed   Date
at Calgary Alberta

Dan Holinda, Executive Director, AIDS Calgary Awareness Association

Tony Melle, Chairman, Social Action Committee

Edith Gildart, MA Student, University of Calgary

Members of the Social Action Committee

Appendix II: Environmentalist Team Questions

Survey Questions

From your experience, how have the following PEOPLE generally responded to the knowledge that you are living with HIV? (Each question had 7 possible answers. Respondents were asked to check one answer only. On the negative side of the scale, there were two choices, *very negative* and *somewhat negative*. On the positive side of the scale there were also two choices, *very positive* and *somewhat positive*. In between positive and negative was a *neutral* choice. If the types of people mentioned did not know did not know the respondent was HIV/AIDS infected, he or she was asked to check the *not aware* category. If the respondents had no contact with particular types of people or if certain policies were not applicable they were asked to check the *no contact* category.)

at work
1. supervisor
2. co-workers

extended family
3. parents
4. siblings
5. close relatives

partner and friends
6. close friends
7. acquaintances
8. partner

church
9. clergy
10. church-goers

caregivers
11. doctor (s)
12. dentist(s)
13. nurses
14. paramedics
15. social workers
16. counsellors

where you live
17. landlord
18. neighbours

law enforcers
19. police officers
20. prison workers
21. remedial workers

22. other (please list)

Please list in order of severity the three types of PEOPLE whose response has impacted on you most negatively:

23. Most negative response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

24. Second most negative response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

25. Third most negative response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

Please list in order of supportiveness the three types of PEOPLE whose response has impacted on you most positively:

26. Most positive response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

27. Second most positive response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

28. Third most positive response was from:
    Briefly describe the nature of the response.
    Briefly describe the impact it had on you.

From your experience, how have the POLICIES of the following industries, organizations or institutions impacted on you?

29. Employment
30. Insurance
31. Social Services
32. Mental Health
33. AIDS Agencies
34. Education Centres
35. Travel
36. Housing
37. Hospitals
38. Law Enforcement
39. Corrections/Police
40. Funeral Industry
41. Church
42. Other (please list)

Please list in order of severity the three types of POLICIES which have impacted on you most negatively:

43. Most negative policy:

    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

44. Second most negative policy:
    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

45. Third most negative policy:
    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

Please list in order of supportiveness the three types of POLICIES which have impacted on you most positively:

46. Most positive policy:
    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

47. Second most positive policy:
    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

48. Third most positive policy:
    Briefly describe the nature of the policy.
    Briefly describe the impact it had or has on you.

Appendix III: Anthropologist Team Questions

Interview Themes, Topics or Questions

1. Please share your story.

2. How did people close to you respond to the news about your infection, eg. family, lover, friends? (Look for examples of positive and negative responses.)

3. What was your own reaction to the news?

4. Ask about work situation. How did your employer/co-workers respond to the news about your infection? (Look for examples of positive and negative responses.)

5. How have health care professionals and social services workers responded to you? Look for examples of positive and negative responses. What health care professional dealt with you in the best manner? What did they do that made them better than others. Who was the worst and if so why? What have the medical professionals done that made you feel that you are dealing with a chronic illness rather than a death sentence?

6. What would you like to be doing with your life?

7. Where have you found the most support?

8. Where have you experienced the least support?

9. Do you think your infection background has made a different in the responses to you?

10. What do you think would make things better for you right now?

Appendix IV: Investigative Reporter Team Questions

Interview Questions

A. Re: People Infected with HIV - Discriminatory Practices

1. Are you aware of any of social practices which have discriminated against HIV infected people?
> If yes,
> a) Briefly describe a type of discrimination of which you are aware.
> b) Provide an example(s).
> c) Describe the impact on the person.
> d) Why do you think this type of discrimination occurs?
> e) What do you think are the social consequences of this type of discrimination?
> f) What would it take to reduce or eliminate this type of discrimination?

2. Are you aware of any OTHER discriminatory social practices? (If yes, do a, b, c, d, e, f for each example.)

3. Of all the types of discriminatory practices you have mentioned, which has had the most negative impact?

4. Have you ever taken any action on behalf of a person infected with HIV who has been discriminated against?
> If yes, briefly describe your action(s) and the outcome.
> If no, what has prevented you?

B. RE: Yourself as a Caregiver/Advocate - Discriminatory Practices

1. Are you aware of any of social practices which could be considered discrimination against you?
> If yes,
> a) Briefly describe a type of discrimination of which you are aware.
> b) Provide an example(s)
> c) Describe the impact
> d) Why do you think this type of discrimination occurs?
> e) What do you think are the consequences for society of this type of discrimination?
> f) What would it take to reduce or eliminate this type of discrimination?

2. Are you aware of any OTHER discriminatory social practices? (If yes, do a, b, c, d, e, f for each.)

3. Of all the types of discriminatory practices you have mentioned, which has had the most negative impact on you?

4. Have you ever taken any action to counter discrimination against you?
> If yes, briefly describe your action(s) and the outcome.
> If no, what has prevented you?

C. RE: People Infected with HIV - Positive Responses

1. Are you aware of any positive responses toward HIV infected people?
    If yes,
    a) Briefly describe a type of positive response.
    b) Provide an example(s).
    c) Describe the impact.
    d) Why do you think this type of positive response occurs?
    e) What do you think are the consequences for society of this type of support?
    f) What would it take to enhance or increase this type of support?

2. Are you aware of any OTHER positive responses? (If yes, do a, b, c, d, e, f for each.)

3. Of all the positive responses you mentioned, which do you think has the most positive impact on HIV infected people?

4. Have you ever taken any action on behalf of people infected with HIV to increase support for them?
    If yes, briefly describe your action(s) and the outcome.
    If no, what has prevented you?

D. RE: Yourself as a Caregiver/Advocate - Positive Responses

1. Are you aware of any of positive responses toward you?
    If yes,
    a) Briefly describe a type of positive response.
    b) Please provide an example(s).
    c) Describe the impact.
    d) Why do you think this type of positive response occurs?
    e) What do you think are the consequences for society of this type of support?
    f) What would it take to enhance or increase this type of support?

2. Are you aware of any OTHER positive responses? (If yes, do a, b, c, d, e, f for each.)

3. Of all the types of supportive practices you have mentioned, which has had the most positive impact on you?

4. Have you ever taken any action to increase the support given to you?
    If yes, briefly describe your action(s) and the outcome.
    If no, what has prevented you?

E. Do you have any further information that would be helpful?