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Activist Public Relations in Environmental Justice:
What Happened in Love Canal and Carver Terrace?

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Abstract

This research will focus on activist organizations as practitioners of public relations. Within this framework, two environmental justice case studies will be evaluated through the lens of public relations. These lenses include public relations models, strategies, and tactics. Power and legitimacy will be evaluated as factors which impact the public relations activities of activists. Finally, the case studies will be evaluated based on their success. The findings in this paper will be used to set a foundation for further research in the field of environmental justice activists and public relations.

Keywords: public relations, environmental justice, love canal, carver terrace

Activism

Defining Activism

Activism can be defined as, “the actions of a group of citizens, usually volunteers, who work together to try and redress what they consider to be an unfair or unjust situation” (“Activism”, 2013). This definition of activism focuses on the group dimension of an attempt to rectify a particular situation that is perceived to be unjust. Another definition, developed by Smith (2013) is, “Activism is the process by which groups of people exert pressure on organizations or other institutions to change policies, practices, or conditions that the activists find problematic” (p. 5). This description focuses on the process that activist organizations utilize to rectify identified injustices. This process can be meet a myriad of purposes, induce a number of methods and led to many outcomes. These characteristics explain why activism encompasses such a large group of organizations, coalitions and movements. For example, today some prominent activist groups include Greenpeace, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the World Fair Trade Organization (WFTO). These organizations have utilized a variety of tactics and strategies to address issues from animal abuse, to workers’ rights, to racism. This is a small snapshot of the many activist groups working to improve society.

Conditions leading to activism

Activism has a long and varied history particularly in the United States. There are several frames to understand and explain activism. The macro-level framework indicates that certain societal factors lead to the creation of activism. In the United States, “democratic values, freedom of expression, and a tradition of dissent” have helped to lay a unique backdrop for

domestic activism (Smith & Ferguson, 2001, p.157). Although activism may have been divided over socioeconomic factions in the past; there is has been a transition away from stratification. Activism has begun to draw participants from many classes, economic backgrounds and educational levels (Smith & Ferguson, 2001, p. 158).

Other perspectives on activism such as the publics perspective, suggest there is importance to the communicative processes that activist group formation emphasizes (Smith & Ferguson, 2001, p. 158). This process allows for a dialogue through which problems and solutions are defined, clarified, and adjusted to improve understanding and collaborative support. The publics engaging in the communicative process are considered active publics, and work to identify problems and then organize to correct or improve upon them. Active publics can be characterized by high problem recognition, low constraint recognition and high involvement (Smith & Ferguson, 2001, p. 158). Finally, the developmental perspective views activism as a “dynamic social phenomenon” defined largely by life cycle theory (Smith & Ferguson, 2001, p. 158). Life cycle theory helps to explain the process that allows an issue to rise in popularity and cycle out of popularity. This theory supports the idea that timing of activities is important to activism.

Significant periods of activism in the United States

Modern activism started in the late 19th century as the progressive populist groups in the U.S. sought to limit the power of big business. They were focused on monopolistic organizations. Activists and the press teamed up to reveal corporate abuses, fight for worker’s rights, women’s suffrage, and better food and drug practices (Smith, 2013, p. 5). They utilized the power of investigative journalism and earned the nickname, “muckrakers”. The 1950’s and

1960's bore witness to another wave of activism which focused on women's and civil rights, anti-war ideology, and environmentalism (Smith, 2013, p. 5). This group was able to capitalize on television media, unlike the activists of the previous wave. In the early years of 21st century there has been a phenomenon of institutionalizing activism. This means that the reforms from 1960's spawned government agencies which are now fighting to promote the rectification of certain issues with government funds. Examples of this include the Consumer Safety Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency. The institutionalization of these activist movements may have led to the perception that activism has been receiving less support; however this is inaccurate as government institutions continue to be monitored for effectiveness (Smith, 2013, p. 6).

The Environmental Justice Movement

Environmental injustice, also referred to as environmental racism, is a particular form of discrimination which involves the distribution of environmental goods. According to Shrader-Frechette (2002) this type of injustice, "occurs whenever some individual or group bears disproportionate environmental risks, like those of hazardous waste dumps, or has unequal access to environmental goods, like clean air, or has less opportunity to participate in environmental decision making." (p. 3). Shrader-Frechette explains that environmental injustice can appear in three distinct modes. The first is disproportionate risks, the second limited benefits, and the third is a denial of access to decision making. An environmental risk could be water, air and soil that has been contaminated by organizations that produce toxic chemicals, nuclear waste, or trash incinerators. Benefits such as public parks or bodies of water that are safe for swimming and fishing may be inaccessible in certain neighborhoods. Finally, denial of access to

decision means that communities are not consulted or even considered, when decisions about environmental burdens and benefits are made. Environmental justice is a response to this inequality. This movement seeks to even out the placement of burdens and benefits and gain access to the future decision making process.

Environmental Justice Ethical Frameworks

There are three frameworks for values that are prevalent in the broader, environmental activist movement. These values systems include, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and biocentrism. Each system emphasizes a different form of life. In some cases, “Environmental ethicists have claimed that problems of planetary degradation can be blamed on anthropocentrism, or human-centered values” (Shrader-Frechette, 2002, p. 5). This means that human life is valued above all other forms of life. The needs of humans are thus higher and take precedence over animal and plant life. One example of this value system at work is deforestation. This process involves the mass removal of forests to clear land for building, harvest wood for products, or gather resources like palm tree oil (“Deforestation”, 2015). Deforestation can have a negative impact on ecosystems and result in the release of greenhouse gases, loss of species, water cycle, and soil erosion (“Deforestation”, 2015).

On the other hand, some environmental activists have been charged with ecocentrism, or a valuing of the environment over human lives. Groups that fall in to this category have often been labeled eco-terrorists. The term eco-terrorist refers to radical groups that sometimes engage in extreme, violent and unlawful activities in order to promote their cause (Jarboe, 2002). One example of an eco-terrorist group is ELF, a group which promotes monkeywrenching (Jarboe, 2002). Monkeywrenching refers to arson, tree-spiking, and tampering with equipment used by

target organizations (Jarboe, 2002). These acts can and have caused varying levels of injuring to humans (Jarboe, 2002). ELF claims these are lesser evils than those performed by industries that cause environmental harm (Jarboe, 2002).

Finally, biocentrism is the value system which many environmental philosophers have called for (Shrader-Frechette, 2002, p. 5). This is a value system that places all forms of life on an equal playing field. Biocentrism is embodied in the efforts of the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission to reduce the number of dolphins killed during large-scale tuna fishing (“National Oceanic”, 2016). This action respected the ocean’s eco-systems by preventing the extinction of certain species of dolphins and also respected human life by finding a way for fishermen to keep their livelihoods (“National Oceanic”, 2016). Both biocentrism and ecocentrism are often coupled with holism, or an emphasis on valuing life as a whole (Shrader-Frechette, 2002, p. 5). Each of these frameworks can be applied to the environmental justice movement and can explain why certain decisions are made by different actors within the movement.

Key Characteristics of the Environmental Justice Movement

Shrader-Frechette writes that environmental justice is “the attempt to equalize the burdens of pollution, noxious development and resource depletion” (2002, p. 6). This movement to spread out negative environmental factors is defined by societal characteristics such as race and ethnicity. The movement has most commonly been found in in urban centers of America, middle to low income neighborhoods and is often led by women of color. These factors have allowed the philosophies of civil rights and environmental activism to form the groundwork for environmental justice (Shrader-Frechette, 2002, p. 6).

Another factor in the fight for environmental justice is vulnerability. Shrader-Frechette writes, “Evidence indicates that minorities who are disadvantaged in terms of education, income, and occupation not only bear a disproportionate share of environmental risk and death but also have less power to protect themselves” (2002, p. 6). These populations are taking on burdens that impact human beings in areas such as health, lifespan and quality of life. Furthermore, they lack the opportunity and voice within society in order to prevent the unfair distribution of burdens from occurring.

The perpetrators of these injustices choose their victims strategically. Shrader-Frechette writes, “Often the sources of environmental injustice are the corporations and governments who site questionable facilities among those least able to be informed about, or to stop, them” (2002, p. 7). This implies that the organizations placing environmental burdens within communities, understand that those communities lack a number of resources necessary to fight against that placement therefore making those communities easy targets.

Institutional Attempts to Support Environmental Movement

There are two significant organizations at play in the environmental movement. The first is the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which was established in 1970 during the Richard Nixon administration. The agency was created, “to consolidate in one agency a variety of federal research, monitoring, standard-setting and enforcement activities to ensure environmental protection” (EPA, 2016). The EPA is often involved in any type of environmental movement. They are brought in to do research and evaluate the situation at hand to make recommendations to the federal and state governments.

Another government program is Superfund. This program was created in 1980 with intent of using funds to pay for the cleanup of sites of pollution. Funding was allocated to sites where the polluter refused to clean up, was bankrupt, or could not even be identified (Middleton, 2015). Polluter pay fees are the main source of funding in this program. These fees are paid by companies who were identified as having unacceptable hazardous waste sites. By 1995 Superfund had nearly \$4 billion (Middleton, 2015). Later, the George W. Bush administration did not reauthorize the collection of fees. Superfund decreased to a little over \$1 billion in 2013. Superfund has been responsible for the cleaning of over 1,400 sites and the identification of 47,000 potentially toxic sites (Middleton, 2015).

Vulnerable Populations

The issue of environmental injustice is pertinent to particular groups of people. Chavis (1993) writes that this movement is focused on the reality that upper and middle class people consume more energy and produce more waste than the poor who bear the burden of that consumption. The United Church of Christ (UCC) Commission for Racial Justice, performed groundbreaking research to better understand the relationship between toxic waste and race. The first findings proved clearly that ZIP codes containing the highest number of commercial hazardous waste facilities also had the highest averages of residents who belonged to racial and ethnic groups (Chavis & Lee, 1987, p. 13). Specifically, “three out of every five Black and Hispanic Americans lived in communities with uncontrolled toxic waste sites” (Chavis & Lee, 1987, p. 14). ZIP codes with no commercial hazardous waste facilities were found to have lower average numbers of racial and ethnic residents. The average value of owner occupied homes was

also found to be a significant indicator of hazardous waste facility placement (Chavis & Lee, 1987, p. 14).

Further research, *Toxic Wastes and Race at Twenty: 1987-2007*, was performed to build on the UCC's Commission for Racial Justice 1987 report. The more recent research states, "racial disparities in the distribution of hazardous wastes are greater than previously reported" (Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007, p. x). Businesses view the placement of these facilities as the easiest and lowest cost decisions (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii). They found that nationally, race is the strongest independent predictor of the locations of commercial hazardous waste facilities (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii). Neighborhoods containing commercial hazardous waste facilities are comprised of 56% people of color and neighborhoods without these facilities only contain an average of 30% people of color (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xi). People of color refers specifically to African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders who are particularly burdened with hazardous waste sites in the U.S. (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii). Furthermore, poverty rates are higher by a factor of 1.5 in neighborhood with these facilities (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xi). Witness Ministries found that across neighborhoods with clustered facilities, EPA regions, states and metropolitan areas, the national statistics were reflected.

Not only are these communities more likely to have hazardous waste site, they also receive different responses concerning remediation from the government (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii). The National Law Journal found that the Superfund program takes 20% longer to place minority communities on the list for Superfund cleanup. Even more troubling, the EPA imposes weaker penalties on business that pollute in minority neighborhoods than in non-minority neighborhoods (Chavis, 1993). The government has been slow to respond to toxic waste sites in communities of color despite the significant impact this can have on the health and quality of life

of individuals in these communities. Witness Ministries states, “government officials have knowingly allowed people of colored families near Superfund sites, other contaminated waste sites and polluting industrial facilities to be poisoned [with toxic chemicals]” (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii). The researchers compare the government’s actions in regard to communities of color exposed to toxic waste to, “an immoral human experiment” (Bullard, et. al., 2007, p. xii).

Case Studies

The two case studies that will be explored in this research are recognized by their geographical locations. The first case study is referred to as Love Canal, the name of the neighborhood in Niagara Falls New York where the incident took place. The second case study is called Carver Terrace, a neighborhood located in Texarkana Texas. The choice to study these two case studies came from four different motivations.

The first was that both of these cases occurred in the time period of formation for the environmental justice movement. These cases are foundational to the study of environmental justice and its growth in activism. The second reason I chose these cases is their status as landmark cases, makes this analysis a groundwork for future research on newer cases. Thirdly, these cases create an interesting dynamic in their similarities. The citizens faced similarities in environmental burdens but differed greatly in demographics. Finally, because these were some of the first cases of the environmental justice movement, they offer the longest timeline and thus the most opportunity to understand the long term consequences and effectiveness of these cases.

Love Canal

Located in Niagara Falls, NY, this neighborhood started growing in the 1890’s when an industrialist named William T. Love began work on a model city which was supposed to be near

a canal (*Love Canal*, 1995). This plan was terminated due to technological and economic factors that came to be. In 1942, Hooker Chemical and Plastics Company bought what was left from Love's venture which was a 3,000-foot-long basin (*Love Canal*, 1995). This site became the dumping ground for nearly 22,000 tons of chemical waste ("Love Canal", 1999).

The dump was then covered and sold to the Niagara Falls School District for 1 dollar in 1953 on the condition that there was a chemical dump underneath (*Love Canal*, 1995). The neighborhood began to grow into a predominantly white, lower-middle class area, as homes and two schools were built on the land. "By 1978 there were growing reports of birth defects, liver disorders, skin rashes and respiratory problems among the residents of Love Canal" (*Love Canal*, 1995). The New York Department of Health [NYDOH] (1981) discovered that waste included, chlorinated hydrocarbon residues, processed sludges, fly ash and other materials". Furthermore, it was discovered that houses next to the landfill had "oily coatings in their basement sump pits" and it was also proven that "underground chemical infiltration through cinderblock foundations" had occurred (NYDOH, 1981). These findings indicate that residents were physically exposed to the toxic and carcinogenic chemicals that should have been stored safely in underground containers.

Residents began to organize to gain the attention and support of the government in rectifying this issue. Residents formed the Love Canal Homeowners Association (LCHA) led by impassioned citizen, Lois Gibbons. Gibbons was the president of the association and main organizer for LCHA.

State officials detected the leakage of these toxic chemicals into the basements of residents ("Love Canal", 1999). They began evacuating those closest to the canal including one of the schools and several homes. Unfortunately, many remained in the area facing severe health

risks because the state did not evacuate them. The chemicals had continued to migrate underground and into houses in the area, so those residents not evacuated began to fight the federal and state government for the right to evacuation (*Love Canal*, 1995).

After much protest and several more pieces of research proving severe health risks, the rest of the neighborhood was evacuated. The land was then purchased by the state of New York and in 1980, the Love Canal Area Revitalization Agency (LCARA) was formed (*Love Canal*, 1995). The main goal of LCARA was to oversee the re-habitation of the Love Canal region after plans for clean-up were completed (*Love Canal*, 1995). In order to make the area safe for living, the canal was “capped and fenced off, and the buildings around it were razed” (“Love Canal”, 1999).

Litigation against Occidental Chemical Corporation, the organization that had purchased Hooker Chemical and Plastics Company in the late 1960’s, proved fruitful. The 1,300 former residents received a \$20,000,000 settlement (“Love Canal”, 1999). By the mid-nineties, New York state received \$98 million to compensate for contributions to the cleanup of Love Canal and the federal government received \$129 million for their contributions as well (*Love Canal*, 1995). By the 1990’s, homes in that area were declared safe and residents began buying property again.

Carver Terrace

The neighborhood of Carver Terrace was built in 1964 (Middleton, 2015). This neighborhood was one of two options for professional black families who were looking to purchase homes due to segregation during that time period. The land was purchased from an old creosote factory which had closed down in 1961 (Middleton, 2015). According to Middleton

(2015) “carcinogens and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons” were left behind and leached into the soil. The people of this neighborhood began to realize that fellow residents were experiencing serious illnesses such as kidney and thyroid dysfunctions, miscarriages, and cancers (Middleton, 2015).

One resident, Patsy Oliver, became the community spokesperson and spearheaded the effort to have this situation resolved (Middleton, 2015). Texarkana’s Friends United for a Safe Environment (FUSE) was the name of the community action group which represented the residents of Carver Terrace. FUSE was responsible for organizing protests in order to gain the attention of the Senator at the time, Jim Chapman. The group held meetings, led marches, and facilitated research to help support their cause. Oliver further helped by coining the terms, “environmental racism” and “toxicana” (Middleton, 2015).

In the December of 1980, the site was declared a Superfund site by president Jimmy Carter (Middleton, 2015). When the EPA came out and investigate the neighborhood, the researchers showed up in full bio-hazard gear. Later, when the official report created by the EPA was released, it downplayed the seriousness of the issue which irritated residents (Middleton, 2015). The EPA initially suggested that the best way to solve the issues was to remove the top few inches of soil, rinse it and then return it to the site. This fix would not be enough to prevent further damage to the residents as the source of toxic waste would still be deep within the ground, able to resurface.

Senator, Jim Chapman, continued to fight for this neighborhood. He received a position on the Senate Appropriations Committee (Middleton, 2015). Within this position he had the power to help pass a law in 1991, forcing the EPA to buyout and relocate the residents of Carver Terrace. The demolition of the neighborhood began in 1994.

In the nineties, the Koppers Company began sending lawyers into the neighborhood and offering buyouts to residents (Middleton, 2015). The buyout meant that they would not sue Koppers Company and therefore not received compensation from the Superfund relocation. The residents who took the buyout received \$5,000 and those who waited for the superfund relocation received \$30,000 to \$40,000 (Chavis, 1993). Koppers Company was bought by Beazer Company who then agreed to take over funding of Carver Terrace's cleanup (Middleton, 2015).

Today, FUSE had joined with other environmental groups nationally. This group continues work toward the restoration of polluter fees for cleaning up toxic waste sites. On the 35 anniversary of the declaration, of Carver Terrace as a superfund site, these activists participated in a campaign to help restore polluter fees. They partnered with the Center for Health, Environment and Justice to apply political pressure for legislative action.

Public Relations & Analysis

Public Relations and its Models

Public relations is a tool used by organizations in almost every industry to help manage relationships with their publics. This is essential because if these relationships are not properly managed they could result in significant negative consequences for an organization. Publics encompass any group of individuals that are effected by the organization. Current public relations literature, places an emphasis on communication strategy within the field of public relations. Organizations are encouraged to engage with publics and craft open and direct lines of communication. Furthermore, there is an expectation that relationships between the organization and its publics benefit both parties involved. This model was not always in place though, there is

a long history that led public relations to its current state. Grunig and Hunt established four models of public relations that are linked to different stages of history.

Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models have become foundational to the field of public relations (p.20). They were developed to understand the history of public relations which developed from persuasive communication, (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 20). The models are referred to as Press Agency, Public Information, Two-Way Asymmetrical, and Two-Way Symmetrical. Although these models correlate with specific periods of time, they have not disappeared from existence. These models are all still practiced in the Public Relations industry today. They may even all be practiced in a single public relations firm at once.

These four models comprise the Excellence Theory of public relations which helps to explain what the most excellent public relations should look like. These four discrete models can be found in various organizational settings an array of evaluation methods (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 20). The two variables that structure each model are direction and purpose (Grunig, 1992, p. 290). Direction is the extent to which the information consists of monologue or dialogue and purpose is whether the model is balanced between the needs of publics and the organization (Grunig, 1992, p. 290).

The first model was press agency and it was most commonly practiced in 1850-1900 and is referred to as the "public be fooled era" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 29). This model, "serves a propaganda function" and seeks to "spread the faith of the organization involved, often through incomplete, distorted, or half-true information" (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 20). This means that press agency is focuses on promoting the organizational perspective to the extent that truth becomes inessential. Communication is one directional from the organization to the publics (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 23). The only research done in this model is a non-methodical

media coverage review or “counting the house” to verify attendance or amount of product purchased (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24). The famous co-founder of the Barnum & Baily Circus, P. T. Barnum, has become the figurehead of this model. He was known for utilizing the press agency model to drum up interest in the newest attractions his circus was showing (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 29). He wrote in letters under ulterior names to the penny press which helped to corroborate stories about his attractions.

The public information model was developed by practitioners from 1900-1920 with a purpose of, “dissemination of information, not necessarily with a persuasive intent” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 21). The nature of this communication remained one directional with information flowing from source to receiver. Truth however, became an essential part of this model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 23). There was still little research into the needs of publics but, readability tests were incorporated into this model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24). Historical figure, and founder of modern public relations, Ivy Ledbetter Lee, called this the era of “public be informed”. AT&T is known for its early adoption of public relations and used its internal team to test rate increases on public opinion before making them official (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 36).

The two-way asymmetrical model became more popular in public relations practice from 1920-1970. Grunig & Hunt (1984) refer to it as, “scientific persuasion” (p. 22). Practitioners of this model use social science theory and research attitudes and behavior to persuade publics into accepting the organization’s point of view and actively supporting the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 22). This model utilizes two-way communication however the effects are still imbalanced and favor the needs of the organization. The source sends information to publics and the publics can provide feedback however this feedback is unlikely to impart any major changes on the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 23). Formative research is used to plan activities

and choose objectives that publics will tolerate and accept. Practitioners of this model then use evaluative research to see if objectives have been met, measure attitudes and behavior to see if the campaign had the desired effect (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24). Edward Bernays, a prominent public relations figure of this time period, serves as a leader of this model. One of the companies he worked with was the Venida Hairnet Company to identify uses of the product. He then helped to strategically share them with customers thus helping the customer recognize a product they could use and helping the organization keep the product on shelves. This period is called the era of “public should be understood and its needs considered” (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 38).

Finally, the two-way symmetrical model is currently and continuously developing. Grunig & Hunt (1984) write that, “practitioners serve as mediators between organizations and their publics. Their goal is mutual understanding between organizations and their publics” (p. 22). This is a dialogic model in which both the organization and publics should be influenced after a public relations effort. Communication in this model should allow both publics and organizations to persuade and impact outcomes on activities and attitudes (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 23). This model of communication is group to group with no imbalance of power. Organizations using this model make use of formative research to understand how publics perceive the organization and what consequences the organization has on publics. Management then receives council based on these findings and the process results in suggestions to improve public policy. After a public relations effort in this model, evaluative research is utilized as a measure of whether the public relations effort has improved the understanding between publics and the organization (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 24). This model is still being developed in classrooms and textbooks (Grunig & Hunt, 1984, p. 39).

Two-way symmetrical public relations is a normative model, it describes what should be happening not necessarily what is currently happening. It is used to understand how to solve problems and should be an option that can be implemented to improve current practices (Grunig, 1992, p. 291). Grunig (1992) found that there is a positive correlation between formal education in public relations and the use of 2-way models in the organization (p. 300).

Furthermore, the excellence theory states that the two-way symmetrical model is both most ethical and most effective in meeting organizational goals (Grunig, 1992, p. 308). This model is considered ethical because it promotes social responsibility. The two-way symmetrical model encourages organizations to be open and honest with publics and to act in a way that meets the needs of publics. Another reason this model is ethical is the process itself. The process is ethical so it is believed to produce ethical outcomes (Grunig, 1992, p. 308). This model is also considered most effective not only because it can have positive impact on bottom lines, but also because it is one of the only models that can actually resolve conflict (Grunig, 1992, p. 308). It is also important to note that the dominant coalition within an organization is more likely to choose excellent public relations if managers have knowledge of the symmetrical model, possess feminine characteristics, or receives training in the two-way models (Grunig, 1992, p. 303).

Activism as public relations

In regards to public relations, activism was traditionally seen as a “catalyst for the growth of the public relations profession, because some of the most significant periods of development in the field have featured high levels of activism” (Smith, 2013, p. 5). Therefore, as public relations literature and research first developed, activism was seen as antagonistic rather than a sector that practices public relations itself. In reality it was activists who were the first to

practice public relations. In this research, activist organizations will be regarded as legitimate practitioners of public relations.

Activism literature emphasizes public relations strategies and focuses on communication as a mechanism for influence. Activism can actually be viewed as modern public relations, (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, p. 397). Practitioners of activist public relations follow a general pattern of identifying a problem, perceiving that they can take action to rectify that problem, seeking information, and communicating to each other and the target organization in regards to their goals (Smith, 2013, p. 5). Public relations activities can play a role in every step of that process.

Goals of Activist Public Relations

An important finding in Smith & Ferguson's research was the two major goals that motivate activist organizations and their public relations activity. They write, "The first, and most recognizable, goal is to rectify the conditions the conditions identified by the activist publics" (Ferguson & Smith, p. 294, 2001). Although this goal is an obvious one it is important to outline the fact that activists are issue driven. From one point of view, the activists may hope that the existence of their organization becomes null because the issue is resolved. Activities associated with this goal may include raising awareness, spreading information and changing attitudes toward the organization's proposed solution to the issue. It is important to note that not all issues are resolved in their entirety or the issue may morph into another issue. This leads to the second goal.

Smith & Ferguson write, "The second, and related, goal is to maintain the organization established to pursue the activists' purposes" (p. 294, 2001). This means that if the organization

expects to survive for any extended period of time, the activists must then maintain themselves in the same basic manner that other organizations do. This goal becomes more important in light of an organization transition from one issue to another or continuing to fight for an issue once the public perceives that issue to be rectified. This goal would include activities such as member retention, resource coordination and establishing themselves to the public as legitimate voices on the topic.

Love Canal Model

The Love Canal Homeowners Association (LCHA) is the organization that acted on behalf of the residents of the Love Canal neighborhood. It is clear from analyzing an LCHA document containing a timeline of activities performed by the association, that the prevalent model in this incident is two-way asymmetrical. Throughout the course of the Love Canal incident, the LCHA continued to communicate openly about the needs of the residents making the directionality two-way. Although it is important to note that the association was more interested in communicating their own needs than understanding the needs of the New York state government, federal government or the EPA. These interpretations indicate that the purpose of communication was skewed toward the LCHA and supporting their needs as opposed to supporting the needs of the other institutions involved.

For example, in 1978, the President of the LCHA actively provided the EPA with maps of stream beds (LCHA, 1980). This information was given to help them locate where the chemicals may have migrated so they could concentrate their research in the areas with the more likelihood of contamination. She also provided the names and contact information of families who had fallen ill and wished to be reviewed for evacuation (LCHA, 1980). All this information was provided without an explicit request from the EPA. It affirmed the needs of the residents of

Love Canal and it opened a dialogue with the EPA. The nature of the dialogue was however skewed to the perspective of the LCHA and its goals of safety for the citizens of Love Canal.

Carver Terrace Model

Carver Terrace utilized the public information model. They were concerned with disseminating information about their cause. They were not primarily concerned with receiving feedback from their target organization. The members of FUSE utilized a model that was balanced in their favor and promoted their needs. They did not attempt to negotiate or compromise on their needs.

The communication was one directional in an attempt to gain the attention that they desperately needed to get the buyout and evacuation they deserved. They utilized news media in order to share their message (Middleton, 2015). The media served to spread the message both locally in Texarkana and nationally in the U.S. It did not however, provide the opportunity for much feedback from the government or its agencies.

Strategy

When an activist organization chooses a strategy to address either of these major goals, there are several factors that go into that decision. These factors include, “The organization’s resources including membership, money, and expertise, the perceived efficacy of various courses of action, the legitimacy of the problem, the proposed solution, and the organization advocating it, and the interaction with the target of the activists’ efforts (Ferguson & Smith, p. 160, 2001)”.

Organizational resources obviously dictate a lot of decisions however the rise of websites, email, and social media have all provided low cost ways to disseminate information.

Smith (2013) writes, “Internet and World Wide Web have revolutionized activism” (p. 6). This is not only a comment on affordability but also on the way that target organizations must now formulate responses to the online presence of activists.

The perceived efficacy of various courses of action also impact which options are chosen to get the organization closer to their goal. The legitimacy of the problem, solution and advocates, play a big role in how the public will perceive the organization therefore impacting decisions made on strategy. Finally, the interaction between the target and the activists is incredibly important. After all, a big part of what activists do is work to find solutions to problems with the target organization.

Love Canal Strategies

The strategy at Love Canal seems to be mostly motivated by the perceived efficacy of various courses of action and the interaction with the target of their efforts. For example, there was a lot of time and energy put into the evacuation of various groups of people at various locations within the neighborhood. The first wave of citizens who were evacuated were pregnant women and children under two years old on the outer ring (*Love Canal*, 1995). Citizens were also informed that they were found to have chromosomal breakage meaning that they were at higher risk for stillborn, miscarriages, and cancers (*Love Canal*, 1995). Many citizens began to feel trapped so they continued to fight for more evacuations. In the summer of 1980, the second wave of evacuations allowed for over 700 families to be relocated out of the Love Canal area (*Love Canal*, 1995). In this example, there was a low perceived efficacy of having only a small number of residents relocated. This information fed into the strategy decision of aiming for higher numbers of families who qualified for relocation. Furthermore, it is clear that the LCHA

strategy was adjusted as they interpreted the research findings and suggestions of the EPA. This reflects the interaction between LCHA and NY State government. When residents realized they were not getting the help they needed, they made the strategy more aggressive and explicit.

Carver Terrace Strategies

Within Carver Terrace and FUSE, the most significant motivating factors were the proposed solution, and the organization advocating that solution. The initial proposed solution was simply a remove, rinse, and replace method for cleaning the soil (Middleton, 2015). This method did not advocate for residential removal either. The introduction of this suggestion was a powerful factor in the continued strategic fight for complete relocation of all residents. Furthermore, the organization which proposed the initial solutions, lacked the support of the residents. The EPA did a poor job researching the area because they never once talked to residents which is clear in the reports (Middleton, 2015). They also did a poor job of communicating findings and listening to the community after the findings were made public. Due to the proposed solution and the organization which proposed it, FUSE was forced to take on a much more active strategy in the latter half of the movement.

Tactics

In public relations, strategy informs chosen tactics. Jackson (1982) has identified several categories of tactics that activists often utilize. The five categories include informational, symbolic, organizing, legalistic, and civil disobedience activities. Informational activities are interested in gathering pertinent information such as interviews and focus on media relations.

Symbolic activities can include boycotts which are intended to send a particular message to the target organization.

Organizing activities utilize activities such as distributing leaflets, networking, and holding meetings. These activities reinforce the activists as an organization which is necessary to maintaining its resources. Other tactics include regularly produced internal publications as well. The success of overall activists efforts, may also attract members as they see the effectiveness of the activist organization. Websites, the internet and email newsletters perform similar functions. (Ferguson & Smith, p. 161, 2001).

Legalistic activities include as petitions, lawsuits, filing legislation, and testimony at hearings; all aimed at engaging the target organization in legal action. Civil disobedience such as sit-ins, blocking traffic, and trespassing might be the most recognizable of activist activities.

According to Smith & Ferguson, tactics can occur along a continuum (p. 161, 2001). This means that the tactic can take on various levels of intensity and meaning for activist organizations. Some of the tactics explained in Jackson's five categories are confrontational in nature however, the most fruitful interactions for both the activists and the target organization emphasize negotiation and compromise (Ferguson & Smith, p. 161, 2001). Another caveat of activist tactics is that they do not always receive fair media coverage. Media coverage matters to activists because it is an essential channel through which they spread information about their purpose and goals. It was found that local coverage was often favorable to activists however, "media coverage is not unilaterally favorable to activists" (Ferguson & Smith, p. 161, 2001).

Love Canal Tactics

The tactics utilized at Love Canal encompass a broad range of categories. Informational categories were utilized when they invited and aided Dr. Beverly Paigen in her research to understand what impact the carcinogens had on the environment and people (*Love Canal*, 1995). This was information that could be used to educate the activists target audiences about the impact of chemical exposure. The LCHA also utilized a symbolic tactic called, “Horror Story of the Day” (*Love Canal*, 1995). This series involved a daily media release to tell the story of someone within the community who was very sick or who had died from exposure. They made sure to attach the governor’s name to the tragedies. They wanted to gain media attention and reminded viewers that the governor was allowing this to happen to the people. LCHA also held regular meetings to plan and discuss internal agendas (*Love Canal*, 1995). These meetings are an example of organizational tactics. The activists also performed some civil disobedience tactics when they held two EPA officials hostage. In 1980 two EPA officials visited Love Canal to assure residents to stay calm. Upon entering the house which headquartered LCHA, they were barred in by residents who were furious that the government was ignoring them (*Love Canal*, 1995). Finally, there are also legal tactics such as when residents attended and testified at a senate hearing in 1979 to fight for more evacuations (*Love Canal*, 1995).

Carver Terrace Tactics

FUSE utilized many different tactics in the fight for a clean home. Informational tactics are seen in the many newspaper appearances that Patsy Oliver had as the face of Carver Terrace (Middleton, 2015). She used this platform to educate other citizens about what was happening in Texarkana and how FUSE was planning to respond to it. Symbolic tactics became apparent through the use of signage. For example, one resident put up a sign, similar to a common

welcome sign placed along the roadside on the edges of towns and counties. This resident's sign read, "toxic waste death valley enter at your own risk" (Jetter, 1997, p. 91). The sign was a reaction symbolic of the reality that homeowners in Carver Terrace were facing every day. They believed they had finally begun to settle down, only to find that they had bought homes in an area that was severely lowering their quality and length of life. FUSE also utilized traditional civil disobedience tactics when they marched on EPA offices in Dallas causing the offices to shut down for the day. These marches interrupted the normal flow of the day for the EPA office and were very irritating for the agency. One important organizational tactic which was utilized was the training of leaders within FUSE. Oliver attended summits and seminars and worked to build a network of environmental groups (Jetter, 1997, p. 92). These activities were aimed at organization and effectively utilizing every resource that the activists could procure. Finally, there were many legal activities involved in filing lawsuits, which were won, against Koppers Company.

Organizational Reactions to Activism

Oliver (1991) developed the five types of organizational responses to activism. These include, acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, and manipulation (p. 152).

Acquiescence can take several forms including habit, imitate, and comply (p.152). Habit involves following norms that have always been followed by an organization (p. 153). Imitation is the mimicking of successful organization in similar situations or taking advice from a consulting firm (p. 153). Finally, compliance is a conscious obedience to norms in a strategic move to follow administrative requirements (p. 153).

Compromise can take the form of balance, pacify, or bargain. Balance is when multiple constituencies are appeased in conjunction with each other (p. 154). Pacify consists of actions that meet the minimum requirements placed on an organization while at the same time going against norms to the extent they can get away with (p. 154). Bargaining is an active attempt to change the expectations that an external constituent has placed on the organization (p.154).

Next, avoidance takes on three forms including concealment, buffering, and escape. Concealment occurs when an organization is not conforming but they attempt to hide it behind an image of acquiescence. Buffering is when an organization reduces the scrutiny it receives by disconnecting itself from external contact (155). Finally, escape is when an organization exits the domain in which pressure is exerted on it.

Defiance can appear as dismissing, challenging, or attacking. Dismissing is when an organization decided to ignore rules placed on them because they perceive enforcement of those rules to be low (p. 156). Challenging is when an organization dismisses norms and mandates but goes a step further to prove the positivity of this break from norms (p. 156). Attack is a tactic of defiance which aggressively denounces institutionalized values that have been perceived as having a low cost of departure (p. 157).

Manipulation tactics include co-opting, influence, and control (p. 158). Co-opting is the attempt to invite a constituent, from within the source of pressure, to join a leadership team (p. 158). Influence involves the manipulation of belief systems through efforts such as lobbying, which can impact the perception of norms and values (p. 158). Finally, controlling tactics, take form when organizations establish dominance over external constituents (p. 158).

To understand which of these tactics were utilized and how they impacted both Love Canal and Carver Terrace, it is best to study a specific interaction between the activists and target

organizations within the case studies. These specific interactions may reveal important information about how activists and target organizations respond and relate to one another. It will also be valuable to see how these reactions delay or support the goals of activists.

Love Canal Interactions

In Love Canal one of the most pivotal moments of the entire movement occurred when the EPA officials were barred into the LCHA headquarters. The officials were told they would not be harmed and that they would be held at most for 48 hours (*Love Canal*, 1995). They were released after 5 hours and an extraordinary amount of media attention. The EPA officials had come to reassure residents about their safety following the unexpected leakage of the chromosome report. This report showed that there were significant health risks that were higher in this population of individual.

This event falls into the category of manipulation. It was extremely aggressive and sought to force the state and federal government make a decision in their favor. The tactic utilized was attack. LCHA was sending the message that if Love Canal is so safe, then the officials can remain here as well. They did this to force the government to admit that this area was not safe and left no opportunity for negotiation. This proved to be effective as the rest of the residents were evacuated shortly after this incident.

Carver Terrace Interaction

One interesting interaction between the residents of Carver Terrace and EPA workers involved signage. In 1984 Texarkana was placed on the Superfund list. Before the next steps could be taken EPA officials stated that they needed more information to proceed. Both the EPA and Koppers Company, the owners of the dumpsite, began extensive research on the

environment of Carver Terrace. They took samples to determine the quality of the land, water and air in the neighborhood. One company in the neighborhood was shut down and wire fencing was placed around it. It read, "SOIL CONTAMINATED WITH TOXIC WASTE: KEEP OUT." Supposedly the soil on that side of the fence was contaminated and on the residential side it was fine. One resident, Leroy Davis, nailed a sign to his tree before leaving town. It read, "WELCOME TO TOXIC WASTE DEATH VALLEY ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK" with the image of skull and cross bones above it (Jetter, 1997, p. 92). This resident was recently declared to sick to stay in Carver Terrace. His doctor feared further exposure to the chemicals to be extraordinary harmful to his health (Jetter, 1997, p. 92).

In this situation the activists were responding to the target organization. This response was defiant but not manipulative. The community member who put up the sign was attempting to assert his view but not explicitly trying to convince the EPA or Koppers Company of his viewpoint. Furthermore, of the three tactics associated with defiance; challenging seems most appropriate to this situation. Mr. Davis hanging the sign was not simply a dismissal of institutional norms, it went a step further to challenge them. The sign poses a challenge to the EPA and Koppers Company to the extent that it attempts to showcase a different reality, an accurate reality. He reinforces this point by then leaving the neighborhood to seek refuge in a nursing home despite the claims that the neighborhood was safe to live in. He did not go so far as to attack though. Attacking would involve some sort of aggressive demonstration aimed at undermining the EPA and Koppers Company and their values or scientific findings.

Power

Power is an important aspect of activist public relations. The use of power to support and suppress goals is an important factor in interactions between activists and their target organizations. Target organizations often seek to marginalize activists; this may be one reason that activism has not been treated as a legitimate practitioner of public relations. (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, 402). Furthermore, the targets of activist public relations often have more financial resources which translates into more influence and power. (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, 402). Also, societal structures generally support and favor target organizations as opposed to activists (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, 402). This means that activists may have to fight harder to gain the upper hand against their target organization.

Activists have ways to exert power as well. For examples they can utilize "Chains of Influence". This term refers to the process of activist organizations linking together and utilizing joint resources to become a more formidable force (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, p. 402). Activists organizations can also gain power by aiming their messages not just at target organizations but also at groups related to the target organization. They can disrupt the relationships on which the target organization depends (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, 402). Often, activists will attack the positive image of the brand to assert power. A large portion activist power comes from the relationship that exists between supporters and activists. Supports give power to activists to the extent that activists now have influence over them. It is important for activists to maintain these relationships and for target organizations to recognize the influence of activist groups (Smith & Ferguson, 2010, 402).

Love Canal Power

The activists associated with the LCHA did vie for power during the height of their

movement. One of the tactics they used, was the barring of EPA officials into the LCHA headquarters in 1980. This tactic was used to assert power over the federal government. When speaking to the media, activists were explicit in tying the event to President Jimmy Carter, who was currently running for reelection. Leader Lois Gibbs stated that activists were told to say, “We are holding Jimmy Carter’s people, because Jimmy Carter is responsible for killing our children, and Jimmy Carter is responsible for evacuating the neighborhood”. Gibbs’ language was designed to remind the federal government that they had a responsibility to the people and that the United States president was expecting these same people to vote for him for a second term. The language reinforced the concept that the people still had some power.

Another time that the use of power was explicitly recommended was by Gibbs in an interview concerning the movement to put families back in homes in Love Canal. She suggested that if residents were going to move into the community, they needed to have some guarantee that developers would cover the costs of clean up, buyouts and relocations. She recommended asking for both a fund to be opened and a legal document to be created stating these preliminaries ahead of time. This indicates how complex the power structures were between activists at Love Canal and their target organizations. The recommendations Gibbs makes are geared toward transparency and ease of remediation for residents. These are clearly not luxuries that LCHA experienced as they fought for power throughout the entire campaign.

Carver Terrace Power

In the Carver Terrace activist movement, the EPA put a big emphasis on the need for testing. When the 1988 EPA report was finally made public, it concluded that the best option for Carver Terrace would be removing, washing and replacing the topsoil. This conclusion was not

acceptable to residents so they looked to the report to understand how this decision had been made. The report was not provided with assistance in understanding the report and contained highly scientific vocabulary. The report itself was four volumes and had to be carried in two armloads. Upon reading the report, Oliver discovered that the researchers had made a huge mistake in not interviewing residents. The researchers found that the creeks, soils, and vegetables grown in that soil were all dangerous to the population. The problem came when they assumed that no one ever swam in the creeks, ingested soils while playing outside, or ate vegetables from their gardens. These were all common actions for the residents of Carver Terrace. Therefore, the report not only lacked pivotal information from interviews, it also was delivered without assistance in comprehension.

After reading this report the residents realized they were lacking power in the face of a life or death scenario. Officials made the specific claim that this situation was different from Love Canal (Jetter, 1997, p. 93). It became apparent to residents that one of the biggest differences between what happened at Love Canal and Carver Terrace was the demographics of the populations. Race was now explicitly playing a factor in the community's ability to advocate for their needs. Up until this point, the broader, environmental movement was primarily a white movement (Jetter, 1997, p. 93). Furthermore, this was the first time the term environmental racism was being used.

The EPA not only had power in the form of funding but also had the backing of the federal government. They were much more connected to major decision makers than FUSE was. The difference in ability to influence added to the imbalance of power that was exacerbated by race relations in the United States at this time. Eventually, through media attention and the support of Senator Jim Chapman, the residents were able to gain back some power (Middleton,

2015). Congress awarded \$5 million toward the purchasing of Carver Terrace and residential relocation (Middleton, 2015). Throughout this scenario there is a constant struggle for power and influence. It seems that more often than not, the EPA and federal government were holding much more power than FUSE was. Even after congress appropriated funds for the neighborhood buyout, residents felt their houses were being undervalued. For example, the homes at Carver Terrace were valued at thirty to forty thousand dollars which was below the cost of replacement. In Mountain View Mobile Homes Community in Globe Arizona, the residents faced similar health risks and yet they received eighty thousand dollars for relocation (Chavis, 1993).

Legitimacy

In public relations research, legitimacy refers to how the organization is perceived. A legitimate organization is seen as group that has valuable skills and expertise and can offer insights into the solution of the problem. They become a respected spokesperson for the issue as their legitimacy grows. An organization lacking legitimacy may be seen as incapable of contributing in a meaningful way to the discussions surrounding the issues they have become involved in. Smith and Ferguson (2010) found that activist organizations must work hard to establish the legitimacy of their own organization while, at the same time undermining the legitimacy of the organizations or values they are fighting against (p. 401). Another tool that activists may use is the legitimacy gap. The legitimacy gap is the perceived difference between an institution's performance and society's expectations for right performance. Widening this gap means that this divide through strategic communications could effectively cause the organization to appear less legitimate (Ferguson & Smith, 2001, p. 401). Another related tool is called incremental erosion. This process occurs when the activist organizations chip away at the premises needed by business to sustain current means of generating revenue (Ferguson & Smith,

2001, p. 401). This process could include diverting customers to a competitor who has better practices on the issue that the activists are concerned with. Target organizations may also utilize legitimacy to undermine the target organization, its proposed solution, and its understanding of the issue at hand (Ferguson & Smith, 2001, p. 401). Finally, some activists get labeled as terrorists or eco-terrorists which is a label which hold legitimacy itself.

Love Canal Legitimacy

The LCHA gained legitimacy as the course of the incident took place. The association became increasingly legitimate as they began to gain more media attention. For example, after the EPA's chromosome report was leaked, and EPA officials were held in the LCHA's office, LCHA was able to challenge the legitimacy of the EPA and NY state. Their message was clear, if it is safe to live here, then the EPA officials can live here too. The standoff was only five hours long and resulted in the mass evacuation of 700 families. This situation undermined the legitimacy of the government institutions involved because it was clear that the area was not safe to live. The quick removal of the officials also sent a message that the government did not want their own people spending an extended period of time at the site which suggested that they had fears about chemical exposure as well.

Legitimacy – many citizens express a lack of trust for government organizations now

The Occidental Chemical Company, the target of LCHA's efforts, actually undermined the legitimacy of Dr. Beverley Paige, a cancer researcher who had been assisting the LCHA to gather information and understand the cancer risks in the area. The LCHA then had to deal with the decreased legitimacy that their relationship with Dr. Paige created for the whole association. They responded by placing more pressure on the government for answers from their researchers

about the risk associated with where they were living. The more information they received, the more they realized how essential evacuation was.

Carver Terrace Legitimacy

Carver Terrace was dealing with an EPA which sought to undermine the legitimacy of the community activist group FUSE. When FUSE attempted to argue against some of the initial EPA studies that were made public, the EPA quickly suggested that the people just did not understand the research. This assertion, gave credence to the perception that this community did not know what they were talking about.

One of FUSE's leaders, Oliver, took matters into her own hands. She began to develop legitimacy the best way she knew, by learning from other environmentalists. She addressed a Greenpeace summit, attended seminars in the same center where Martin Luther King Jr. was trained in community organizing, and attended the Earth Summit on behalf of regional environmental groups (Jetter, 1997, p. 92). Her efforts resulted in the building of stronger networks and also gave her the legitimate skills to help her community and FUSE achieve the goal of relocation. Becoming a national and international figure within environmental circles allowed her community and its issues to gain legitimacy.

Criteria for Measuring Impact of Activism

One important part of activism involves measuring how successful it is. It is important to set standards on which to measure this success because there are activist groups supporting many different ideas. Ferguson, Smith & Efirid (2016) established three major criteria to identify the success or lack of success for an activist organization (p. 87). These three criterion include, "the impact on the public policy process", "participation and influence", and "organizational maintenance" (Ferguson, Smith, Efirid, 2016, p. 87).

Impacting public policy process can be measured by taking into account, “the extent to which a public policy is adopted that rectifies the problematic conditions identified by the activists” (Ferguson, Smith, Efird, 2016, p. 87). This criterion contains two dimensions including an analysis of how well the proposed policy reflects the proposed solution of the activist group, and the way the policy proceeds through the proposal process. (Ferguson, Smith, Efird, 2016, p. 87). These facets of public policy process are important because of the nature of the policy creation system. Policies that are enacted often reflect compromise between the many constituents involved in the creation process. To measure this criteria, waypoints are used which track progress toward the desired rectification. Waypoints can be when policy is adopted for committee consideration, passed through a committee, or proceeds to full assembly (Ferguson, Smith, Efird, 2016, p. 88).

According to Ferguson, Smith & Efird, (2016) participation and influence encompasses, “the extent to which the activist organizations are allowed to participate in the public policy debate and influence public opinion” (p. 87). Legitimacy plays a big role in the level of involvement granted to activists. They must not only prove that they are a legitimate voice as an advocate for the issue they represent but also prove that their position on the issue is legitimate. There are several ways to measure this type of success such as media coverage of the issue, number and tone of articles including the issue or activists, and interviews with leaders from the activist organization (Ferguson, Smith, Efird, 2016, p. 88)

Organizational maintenance can be defined by, “the extent to which the activist organization can sustain itself” (Ferguson, Smith, Efird, 2016, p. 87). Organizational maintenance is highly dependent on internal resource management. Membership, donations, support and participation in initiatives are all measures of this criterion (Ferguson, Smith, Efird,

2016, p. 90). This information can be found in, “annual reports, financial records and reports on an organization’s owned media platforms, such as the Web site or newsletters” (Ferguson, Smith, Efir, 2016, p. 90).

Outcomes in Love Canal

Love Canal is widely considered the first successful environmental justice campaign. Judging their success on the criteria above it becomes clear that they meet each of the three facets described. There were several points at which the residents of Love Canal were called upon for testimony suggesting that they were involved in the process of policy making. Although their goals were not met immediately, they were met after a few years of strong communication between the activists and the target organizations. Eventually, this incident led to the founding of Superfund which is certainly in line with the goals of LCHA. Furthermore, the LCHA was able to maintain itself and its resources in order to accomplish its biggest goals of being relocated.

One unfavorable outcome for many former residents is the fact that the site has now been declared safe to live in and homes have been sold. New residents may not be aware of the health risks and, even if it is safe now, the technology for cleansing the air, soil and water may become outdated and runs the risk of causing more issues for the community.

Outcomes in Carver Terrace

Carver Terrace was successful in gaining public policy that met their goals and rectified the situation at hand. They fought hard to receive a full relocation and buyout as opposed to the rinse and replace solution the EPA initially proposed. There was some compromise involved in this process such as the undervaluing of homes. Overall this can be counted as successful to the

extent that public policy was enacted to assist this community.

Also they were successful in participation and influence. The most documented opportunity for influence was through the media. Oliver had many local opportunities to be featured in newspapers like the *Texarkana Gazette* and television news. On a national scale, she was invited to be a part of a Greenpeace video being produced by VH1, a television station owned by MTV that is geared toward young adults. In the video she was given the opportunity to discuss injustice in her community and urge others to take action.

Finally, this case was successful when considering the criterion of organizational maintenance. Not only did the organization remain effective while fulfilling the first goal of rectifying living conditions in Carver Terrace, they were successful in keeping the organization alive after this goal had been met. FUSE activists have partnered with other national environmental groups to reinstate polluter fees. The organization morphed into a related field which the activists had experience in.

Toward Recommendations

Overview of Findings

There are several significant findings of this research. It has illuminated some of the basic ways in which environmental justice activists used public relations as the very concept of environmental justice was still evolving. Neither of the groups used the two-way symmetrical model, both used models that were slightly less effective and efficient. This may also be due to the fact that two-way symmetrical public relations was still being developed during the period that these events took place. For both groups strategy seems to be motivated by the interactions they have with their target organizations. They seem to have both adjusted their strategy to be

more aggressive after the EPA initially offered them plans which they felt did not properly address their needs.

They both utilized nearly every category of tactic and in reality the use of tactics may even be more broad because some of them may never have been recorded. Both organization strived to gain power and legitimacy in the face of the government, its agencies and polluter companies. It seems that power was more difficult to procure than legitimacy. Carver Terrace however, faced an even greater challenge to gaining power when race is taken into account. Finally, it appears both movements were successful according to all three criteria. Both Love Canal and Carver Terrace left positive precedents for future movements. Love Canal inspired the foundation of Superfund and Carver Terrace produced a group of individual who continue to fight for Superfund funding.

Recommendations

The three major recommendations that come from this research involve tactics, legitimacy, and persistence. It is clear that symbolic and civil disobedience tactics are better documented. This is likely due to the fact that these tactics are deemed newsworthy and thus there is much more news coverage of the tactic. Also, it is more likely that journalists will take statements both from the activists and spokespeople of the target organizations. Having more statements means that there is a broader range of context to the action. All these factors mean that it activist groups will likely be identified or remembered by these types of tactics. This means that messaging within these tactics should be especially clear, as it will be funneled through multiple spokespeople and the journalist. It is important to note that all categories of tactics are extremely valuable and a good mix of tactics is necessary to keep the activist

organization moving in the direction of their goals.

Legitimacy should be understood in terms of not just short term but also long term goals. Love Canal and Carver Terrace set precedents for current and future environmental justice movements. This means that audiences will be more familiar with these terms, the type of harm that community members are exposed to and most importantly, a successful solution will be present in the audiences' minds. The recognition of past events creates legitimacy to the extent that those targeted with messages will be more likely believe this can and does happen which gives a foundational level of legitimacy to every environmental justice movement that post-dated Love Canal and Carver Terrace.

Finally, persistence is key in these movements. The federal government, state government and EPA is not quick to offer buyouts and cleanups of communities effected by hazardous waste. In both scenarios the residents were offered initial solutions that would simply Band-Aid the problem. It was only through persistence that these communities were able gain the results they truly were seeking. This is particularly true for Carver Terrace. As Koppers Company offered buyouts to residents it became clear that these companies were going to seek out the lowest cost solution to the problem. It is only through repeated attempts to achieve set goals, that these organizations were able to succeed.

Limitations

One area that may have limited my research was the perspective of some of the frameworks I utilized. For example, the Excellence Theory developed the four models of public relations for organizations that needed to respond to activists. They did not treat activists as

organizations practicing the four models. This means that the research may be biased. The viewpoint of a target organization is much different than that of an activist organization. Research focused on the target organization fails to recognize and incorporate the caveats of activist public relations.

A second limitation of this project was access to information. There was a much greater breadth of information which discussed Love Canal than there was for Carver Terrace. The reasons for this may be that these were grassroots movements and there may not have been time or concern for highly detailed records. Further, the records may exist however, they might be held by the activist leaders and are not available to the public. Also, Love Canal is considered the very first of the environmental justice movements in the United States so that status has most likely drawn many researchers and reporters to the group. Finally, it is important to consider race when thinking about why one movement was covered more frequently than another. Carver Terrace was a predominantly black neighborhood in the rural south. This could have impacted coverage, interest in research and release of research.

Further Research

One area of research that would be valuable to pursue would be a longitudinal study that looked at the evolution of public relations activities along a time line. This type of study could take into account the issue media cycle and organizational responses to unpack and understand the various decisions made by groups like LCHA and FUSE.

Another study that may be interesting is the interplay between ethical public relations practices and an ethical goal. If environmental justice activists are truly fighting for justice it can be inferred that they believe their goals to be ethical. It would be valuable to research how

activists view ethical public relations. Furthermore, this study could look at how ethical models, strategies and tactics are used by activists.

Finally, it would be pertinent to perform for research on environmental justice and race. Although there is research stating that racial minorities are consistently given more environmental burdens, there is not a large body of research which compares the outcomes of environmental justice activists across racial categories. It would be beneficial to see if there is a correlation on a larger scale of race and outcomes for community activists.

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