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The Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative: A Critical Realist Case Study

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Abstract
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ABSTRACT

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Chapter 1

Introduction

As nonprofit organizations (NPOs) have struggled to effectively

address social issues given the constraining reality of funding pressures,

shrinking economic resources and service accessibility (Mattessich,

Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001), one alternative NPOs have explored

includes different forms of working together to achieve goals associated

with significant social, political and economic change. This has been

illustrated over the past 15 years, where *working together* has meant

engaging in *collaborative* endeavors. As a purposeful form of NPO

engagement with other NPOs , has brought "together a wide range of

talents and resources to solve a problem, build a program, or create

something entirely new" (Wilson, 2000, p 3). The notion that

organizations coming together can effectively leverage possible outcomes

"…rests on the belief that the really important problem issues facing

society-poverty, conflict, crime and so on- cannot be tackled by any single organization acting alone. These issues have ramifications for so many aspects of society that they are inherently multi-organizational. Collaboration is thus essential if there is to be any hope of alleviating these problems" (Huxam, 1996, p 4). *Collaboration,* as a social science construct has been utilized across the social sciences as a term that captures the multifaceted nature of organizations working together and the individuals which compose them.

In the human and social sciences, the key factors of a collaboration's success has been the object of numerous "how to" books and empirical research studies. (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Gray, 1995; Walls, 2000; Page, 2003). It is not surprising that collaboration would capture the attention of research given the many dynamics which coalesce in the collaborative act. As an example, NPOs are largely funded by philanthropic foundations under the expectation that organizations must align their programs to other organizations providing similar services (Hasset and Austin, 1997). Mandated working together opens up another aspect of collaboration where NPOs must not only coordinate and but also integrate social services (Harbert, Finnegan, and Tyler, 1997, p. 84). Collaboration is also assumed to increase accountability and program outcomes in NPOs (Alaszewski and Harrison, 1988; Chrislip and Larson,

1994; Cooke, Reid, and Edwards, 1997; Austin, J.E.,2000; Page, S.,

2003). This "emphasis on collaboration between organizations reflects a

public concern that human service agencies are not effectively "working

together" at the national, state, and local levels" (Longoria, 1995, p. 124)

and thus a need to implement mandated accountability is necessary.

  As briefly illustrated above, the term collaboration can mean

different things given the lens of interpretation or mandate. It is no wonder

that over 300 empirical studies have been utilized to capture what

collaboration means (Mattesich, et al., 2001). In their meta-analysis

Mattesich et al. (2001) define collaboration as:

> *Collaboration* is a mutually beneficial and well-defined
> relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve
> common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual
> relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared
> responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and
> sharing of resources and rewards. (p 61)

  In Mattesich et al's (2001) review of the literature on the topic of

collaboration, six categories emerged as central to collaboration. These are

illustrated in Table 1.

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Table 1

Factors Influencing the Success of Collaboration

1. Factors Related to the **Environment**

   A. History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
   B. Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community
   C. Favorable political and social climate

2. Factors Related to **Membership Characteristics**
   A. Mutual respect, understand, and trust
   B. Appropriate cross section of members
   C. Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
   Ability to compromise

3. Factors Related to **Process and Structure**
   A. Members share a stake in both process and outcome
   B. Multiple layers of participation
   C. Flexibility
   D. Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
   E. Adaptability
   F. Appropriate pace of development

4. Factors Related to **Communication**
   A. Open and frequent communication
   B. Established informal relationships and communication Links

5. Factors Related to **Purpose**
   A. Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
   B. Shared Vision

6. Factors Related to **Resources**

Note. Adapted from *Collaboration: What makes it work* (2nd Ed.). By P. Mattessich, M. Murray-Close & B. Monsey (2001). pp. 7-9. Copyright 2001 by the Fieldstone Alliance.

These factors emerged after the authors had defined the parameters of what constituted a collaborative study worth including in the meta-analysis. The authors chose to include studies which had crafted a research question, studies which reflected the author's definition of collaboration, studies which addressed a topic of collaboration as embodying one of the above six categories, and studies translated in English. The last criteria to be met for inclusion in the analysis were studies which "include[d] some sort of specific, empirical observations. It could not merely represent the "thoughts" of an expert; nor could it merely contain generalizations based on "broad experience" (p. 64).

In the following paper, the author will argue the notion that the description and existence of collaborative phenomenon is inherently more robust than the factors defined by the Mattesich et al. (2001). Using a case study approach advocated by Yin (2009) as a framework that is applied to based the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCOC), the author r examines how collaboration does indeed embody many of the factors described above. But this paper moves further; by demonstrating how the factors can be extended by conducting the analysis using a critical realist philosophy of science. Rather than using the six factors to define the CCOC phenomenon from a static, objective stance, the author divorces this research stance. In its place, the author maintains that the agential

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engagement of participants within the group structure *becomes* the collaborative endeavor. In other words, collaboration emerges and is continually actualized by participation. In utilizing a critical realist ontological and epistemological stance to investigate the CCOC, it will become clear that the manifestation of what is most meaningful to the agents who *practice* with each other *is* collaboration.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. The first is to engage critical realism as a methodology in a social work research study as a manner of deepening our understanding of collaboration. The second is to reconceptualize collaboration from a critical realist stance. In performing both, the author will illustrate that the social work profession not only inherently embodies the meta-theoretical tenets of critical realism, but in practicing these tenants in research, the dualism attached to social work research is transcended. A brief description of this is as follows.

At the heart of social work practice and its subsequent research is the person and environment construct. Not only is the social worker engaged in working with/for persons, they do so based on engaging each

person's unique environment. This concept is reinforced by the Council in Social Work Education (CSWE) when stating:

> The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work's purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons. (2008)

In essence, social workers practice a unique ability to work with persons, while at the same affecting social change. Conceptually it may make sense that working with both dynamics are of equal importance to the social work act, stating this delineation in and of itself presumes that both human and environment possess unique powers and properties. As affirmed in the CSWE statement, this presumption becomes illuminated. This view is validated further when social work schools educate workers about these phenomenons in the classroom environment. Utilizing a clinical stance for persons and a community frame for the environment, the social work profession entrenches the distinctiveness of each.

In and of itself, the uniqueness of person and environment is not a negative dichotomy. The manner in which the dichotomy is currently framed in social work practice and research is at issue here.

As social work has become more specialized and professionalized, the focus of practice and subsequent research has begun to treat both as objects.   While CSWE alludes to the two concepts as inherently embodying dynamic powers, these powers have not been investigated in light of their co arising interplay. It assumed that they do so depending on what if any lens of interpretation is utilized.

While the social work lenses of interpretation will be further examined in Chapter 2, it is key to highlight the aforementioned critique as the starting point toward reframing social work research and the concept of collaboration. Not only will person be framed as "agent" from a critical realist stance, but environment will be understood as "structure" (Archer, 2000). Both will be equally explored as dynamics which give rise to one another and influence their becoming. No longer will collaboration be viewed from "successful factors", but will become challenged in light of the very criteria Mattessich et al's (2001) utilize for exclusion out of their meta analytical definition. From this perspective, the decision by Mattessich et al. (2001) to exclude studies which included thoughts from an expert or their experience was an error.

The claim to disallow thoughts from an "expert" and to extract the expert's experience of a collaborative event privileges structure and denies agency. With this denial, the authors have implicitly chosen to support

social theories favoring a structural account of collaboration. While many of the factors the authors highlight allude to an agential being behind the "membership characteristics" or "communication", this point is not made explicit. As will be investigated in Chapter 2, this conflation of agency and structure occurs all too often in social work research.

As Margaret Archer (1995) might have argued, collaboration- seen as a structure at any given moment in time- is the product of social agency but is not reducible to it. The structure is real and contains intended and unintended effects that emerge and condition each cycle of interaction. A the same time, agency (participant practice) is also transformed as a part of the process of social change. In each cycle of interaction, the participants act based on their moral commitments and on past experiences of intended and unintended effects. The focus of this paper will be to examine the intricacies presented by such cycles of interaction between agents and structure in the CCOC experience. The contribution of such an analysis would hopefully be an explanation of the critical emergent properties of the CCOC collaboration over different cycles of interaction that (a) does not conflate structure and agency and (b) posits a few of the causal mechanisms behind such collaborations in order to infer what may be the potential consequences of the use of collaboration in different NPO settings.

In conclusion, critical realism posits agency back into the collaborative endeavor and reframes how social work research can move beyond the traditional dichotomy of nomothetic or idiographic approaches to understanding person and environment (agency and structure). Both are not objects of study, but are active dynamics with distinct powers and properties. In this sense, social work embodies the core tenants of critical realism, but has misunderstood (or forgotten) the essence of person and environment. As an auxiliary component of this study, the social work profession is invited to become acquainted with agent and structure, through a critical realist case study on collaboration.

Research Questions

How did the cycles of interaction forming the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative involve agential and structural interaction? What are the implications of the research findings for the future of social work research?

Significance of Study

The significance of this study has far reaching consequences in the social work profession. Instead of utilizing the traditional paradigmatic quantitative and/or qualitative approaches guiding methodological

choices, critical realism exposes the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions upholding research in the social sciences. In doing so, this exposure reframes how the agential/social worlds (person and environment) can come to be known and why. It also directly links theory to method. To reveal the deep, underlying generative mechanisms which compose these two dynamics in collaboration could potentially further social work's practical reach.

This practical reach is one of the key definitive features of critical realism. As a meta theory, critical realism has the potential to become isolated to the realm of pure, abstract theory. This could not be farther from the case. To utilize critical realism as an epistemological and ontological stance in the social sciences means it must be strictly utilized to study a practically relevant social object and that "knowledge is useful where it is 'practically-adequate' to the world (Sayer, 1992, p. 70). Critical realism does not exist to belong in the philosophy of science; it exists to be actively applied in research activity. As Sayer (2000) states, critical realism should "…be conceived not only as a philosophy of the social sciences but also a philosophy for the social sciences, since one of the aims of critical realist philosophy and methodology is to advance social scientific research by presenting methodological prescriptions and models that can be in employed in social scientific research" (p. 32).

This study seeks to introduce the practical application of a meta-theory that has yet to be fully utilized in US social work research. As Moren and Blom (2007) state, "CR approaches in social work are not yet very common, but there is a growing interest in the mechanism theme in order to establish causality and arrive at explanation in processes of change" (p. 427). While there have been a handful of social work journal articles supporting the need to utilize critical realism in social work (Mantysaari, 2005; Anastas & Macdonald, 1994), the call has been purely theoretical. Even when the need to use critical realism in evaluation has been introduced to social work (Pawson & Tilley, 1997; Kazi, 2003; Moren & Blom, 2003), it has yet to be practically applied in the discipline. The need and desire for social work to embrace CR as research stance has been made (Blom, 2002), but it is now time to nurture the possibilities for social work research. As Moren and Blom (2007) state, because the research object in social work is both socially constructed and really existing, CR promises to become an important challenger both of resurgent empiricism and of the dominant constructionist approach in social work practice and research" (p. 427). For social work to move beyond the dualism which still frames the qualitative/quantitative methodological debate or the empiricism/ hermeneutic research distinction associated with social science (Tuukka, 2009), critical realism is the

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answer. The following paper will lead this charge in practically applying

critical realism to investigating collaboration.

Chapter 2

Critical Realism

Both agents and structures inherently possesses powers and properties innately their own (Bhaskar, 1975). This is illustrated in a human being's entrance into the world. When born, the agent possesses en potentia, the ability engage the world through her senses, reflect and commit to those things which are most important, gain knowledge of the stratified world through practice or doing, and oftentimes, unbeknownst to her, while in the doing-ness of living, she in constant interplay with society. This society (a static concept that is utilized to capture the dynamic powers and properties it possesses), already exists when the agent is born and from her first breath, inherits the life chances associated with these structures. (Archer, 2000; Sayer, 2000; Bhaskar, 1975). Together agency and structure co mingle and co-arise together, defining one another at the same time.

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Developing an understanding of how actors and actions engage as structure emerges and inter-relates within context has been the subject of earlier critical realist work by Marsh, Buller, Hay, Johnson, Kerr, McAnulla & Watson (1999) and has been called a "strategic relational approach by Jessop (1990). This approach was at the heart of critical realism (CR) . Efforts to establish a methodology, an effort taken further in this paper by applying the later, more robust work of Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen & Karlsson (2002) assists in understanding this relationality. And while there is much more to what defines critical realism as will be illustrated later, this relationship is one starting point of critical realist ontology. It is also the starting point of working with the social (social work). The case being made here is that critical realism *is* the philosophy of social work. The discipline itself, in worker's engagements with human and environment (agent and society), is the practice or "doing-ness" of critical realism. This argument will be made more explicit in the following discussion on the core tenants of critical realism and its fit in social work research. In Chapter 3, the critical realist fit for social work research methodology will be explored, leading ultimately to the practice of a critical realist case study on collaboration. By the author engaging a critical realist research orientation, not only does the author *herself* become the conduit for critical realism to unfold, she *is*

the practice critical realism espouses to be the growing point of theory (Archer, 2000). In essence, through the practice of social research, the author animates critical realism in practice while illuminating the agential and structural cycles of interaction composing the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative.

Critical Realism

"Critical realism is a philosophical position that examines how human agency (actors' choices, meanings, understandings, reasons, creative endeavors, intentions and motivations) interacts with the enabling and constraining effects of social structures (durable, enduring patterns, social rules, norms and law like configurations). To understand social life, it is argued, we must comprehend the interplay between these two, central spheres" (Houston, 2010, p. 75). At the heart of critical realism is the explicit notion that agency and structure can come to be known together, as co arising dynamics. This is a departure from traditional behavioral and social theories which assist social workers in separately understanding/working with human and environment.

Embracing agency and structure as a dynamic interplay giving rise to one another, breaks the theoretical bonds confining each. Rather than

agential power being directly linked to society's imprint (social constructionist theory) or agency being purely preference driven (rational choice theory), the agent is both influenced by and crafter of society. Agency is neither "society's being" or "modernity's man" (Archer, 2000) and social structure inherently exists with its own powers/properties outside of human perception. Conceptually, the distinction between both theoretical perspectives may be drawn apart, but all too often in social work research, terms to describe agential action or social structure are conflated together. This is an inaccurate description of the inherent powers/properties composing each and their engagement with one another.

While leading critical realist scholars accept the distinction between structure and agency and the powers/properties composing each (Bhaskar, 1975; Collier, 1994; Archer, 2000; Sayer, 2000) as a primary tenant in critical realism, it will be the work of Margaret Archer which will be drawn upon for this study. Archer's work in critical realism was chosen because of her elaboration on agency. This elaboration undergirds many of the dynamics explored in the study's results. The dynamics which will be described below are not just three foundational aspects of critical realism, but are intrinsic to Archer's theoretical expansion of the structure/agency interplay. These dynamics are: (a) reality is ordered (b) practice is pivotal (c) morphogenesis is transformative (Archer, 2000).

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Explication of these three dynamics will provide the critical realist

grounding necessary for later viewing the object of this study; the agents

who participate in the Colorado Community Organizing Collaboration and

the structure which composes the collaborative event.

Before exploring the three dynamics to Archer's critical realist

frame, it is key to first define the critical realist ontology. To do so, will

provide the meta-theoretical auspice of critical realism and the

epistemological grounding for social work research.

Critical Realist Ontology

The ontological description of the nature of reality from a critical

realist worldview is, "the world is essentially real; that is, there are real,

social structures and actors apply their social constructions and their

meaning making activity to their experience when confronted by these

structures" (Houston, 2011, p. 75). In essence, the real, lived world

embody three stratified levels; the empirical, the actual and causal/real. On

the empirical level, agents *experience* life events. Through sense and the

ability to sense-make, agents are in constant interaction with the world. At

the level of the actual, are events that occur whether or not there is

agential perception. These are factual events which occur in day to day

life.. At the level of the real, or causal, are unseen mechanisms which exist

and generate events in the world. It is imperative in defining critical realism's ontology to emphasize this last point.   "Even though the causal level of reality may not be open to direct perception, it is nevertheless real because it produces discernable effects. We cannot see the mechanism inherent within magnetism, for instance, but we can observe their effects in the patterns of iron filings when a magnet is applied to them" (Houston, 2011, p. 75).

This is a key distinction made in critical realism; the intransitive and transitive dimensions of reality. Bhaskar (1975) states, "a transitive dimension, in which the object is the material cause or antecedently established knowledge which is used to generate the new knowledge, and an intransitive dimension, in which the object is the real structure or mechanism which exists and acts quite independently of men and the conditions which allow men to access it " (p. 17). As noted above in the real/causal level of reality, there may exist mechanisms inherent to the person/place or thing that can or cannot be seen. These generative mechanisms are "what makes something happen in the world" (Danermark, et al., 2002, p. 206) whether they are actualized or not. Agents or social structure both innately are predisposed toward becoming in the world, but may not empirically manifest itself. This analysis comes in the form of the transitive dimension of reality.

In this dimension, agents utilize their own perceptions and theoretical orientations about how a person/place/thing "works." "The transitive dimension is a human construction- it is only a picture of the governing reality….As our theories and perceptions become more sophisticated over time, so does the transitive view become closer to the intransitive world but it will never be in direct correspondence with it" (Houston, 2011, p. 75). It is the task of the social work researcher to reveal

The key aspect of this discovery is that the researcher's theories about the social world act as a lens to interpreting what occurs there. In its very essence, the researcher's transitive nature necessitates the discovery and rediscovery of the social world. The social work researcher can empirically witness events, but she must realize that there are powers innate to the intransitive dimension of reality which may or may not emerge given the lens she utilizes. As an example, in researching the phenomenon of collaboration, the researcher must be keenly aware that there exists generative mechanisms which are unfolding from agents and structure she may not be able to empirically identify. It is only through the use of theory (transitive nature) whereby interpretation may be made.

In critical realism, these three domains are also stratified. This means that agential composition can be broken down into the physical,

chemical, biological and psychological stratum. The social world (social structure) can be broken down also, with its own stratum and properties (Danermark, et al., 2002). These properties are the multifaceted nature of the social world. These can be "personal, familial, institutional, to name a few- each with their own particular generative mechanisms" (Houston, 2011, p 75).

These generative mechanisms can be investigated because there is an overarching postulation in critical realism that all objects possess causal powers. As stated above, even in the causal or real level of reality objects have innately the power to cause or not cause a reaction that can manifest in the actual or empirical world. As an example, Danermark et al. (2002) state, "A person is capable, for example of lifting a particular weight, remembering things or loving somebody. Sometimes this power is exercised and generates events, sometimes it is not exercised" (p. 198). In both human and social stratum, this is the case.

Stratum and the human/social objects which compose reality operate in an open system. This means, that human generative mechanisms interact with social generative mechanisms to either cause or not cause an outcome. As Danermark et al. (2002) state," Researchers in social science always work in an open system, that is to say, the generative

mechanisms, which either cooperate with or work against the mechanism in question. Our alternative is instead to reduce in thought the complex empirical reality, by means of abstraction" (p. 199). The role then, of the social work researcher is to reveal "the combined effects of these complementary and sometimes countervailing mechanisms [which] makes for a rich tapestry of cause and effect at the empirical level of reality where it becomes problematic to predict with certainty what will happen…The best we can do, argues Bhaskar, is to look for *tendencies*, not certainties" (p 75).

Three Orders of Reality: Natural, Practical and Social

Building upon the ontological basis of critical realism, Margaret Archer (2000) injects into stratified reality, the natural, practical and social orders. These orders detail agent's engagement with reality on three unique levels. Beginning first as an agent's entrance into the world, the relational experience with nature and others progressively cultivates knowledge within the embodied being, thus becoming transformed and elaborated within the world. Metaphorically, in an agent's very essence of being in the world, he/she becomes a mirror of and the elaboration of reality in which he/she exists. This mirroring is progressively cultivated during one's life course and the longer an agent's relational engagement

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with the natural, practical and social orders unfolds, the more an agent's

knowledge informs "doing" or practice in the world. Agent's dialectic

with the three orders and the subsequent knowledge gained from each

order are identified below in Figure 1

Figure 1. Three Orders of Reality and Their Respective Forms of

Knowledge
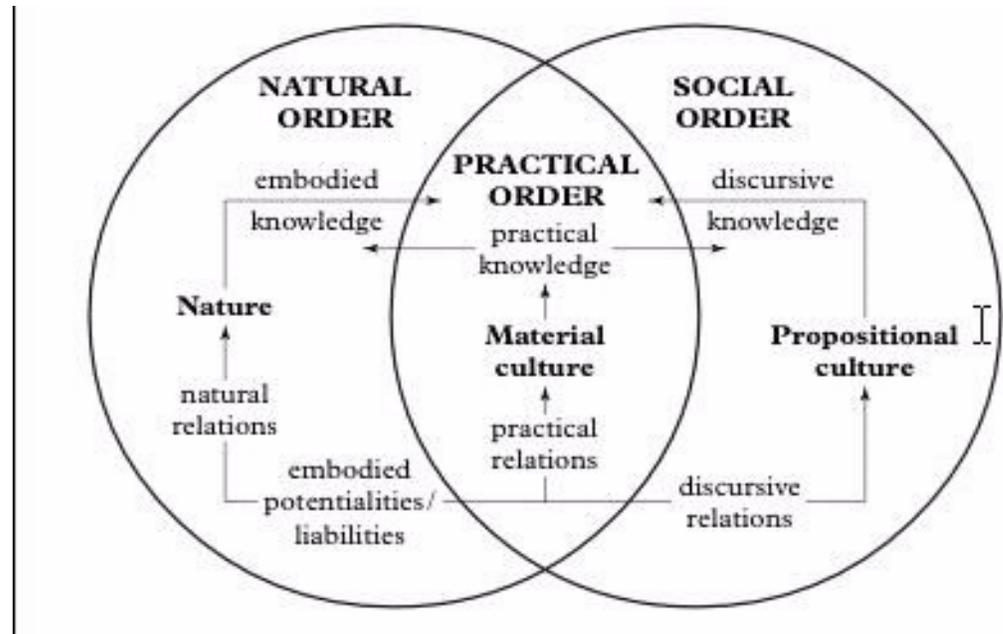
Figure 1. Adapted from Being Human: The Problem of Agency by M. Archer (2000). Copyright 2000 by Cambridge University Press.

Defining these orders provide the foundation for examining agent's

being in the world. Because Archer (2000) posits that agents inherently

possess their own powers/properties and ability to reflexively engage the

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world, each order of reality informs one's active commitment to specific doings. In researching the object of this study, it is key to specify this engagement. While a "collaboration" of agents may come together to commit to a specific practice or doing in the world, each coalesces with one another about what matters most to them. These concerns have become informed by each agent's own life course and may be viewed differently. It is in the "coming together" in the social order to discursively elaborate on these concerns.

This elaboration then informs how agents choose or not choose to apply their shared knowledge in the practical order. Again, being informed by agent's own embodied knowledge and their relations with the natural world (in the natural order), assists them in deciding to commit further to discursive engagement with others, thus advancing an elaboration of their initial commitment. These movements will be developed further in Chapter 4, but is worth noting that the three orders of reality are integral for agential practice and reinforcement/negation of structure. In other words, what is the agential action/practice which constitutes collaboration and what are the structural properties/powers of the collaboration itself which imprint upon the agents? This is the core of the research question: how does the event of the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative facilitate agential and structural interaction?

Practice is Pivotal

In Chapter 5, questions posed above partially lies in interfacing the second key critical realist dynamic with the object of study. For this reason, it is key to stress that the practical order is pivotal because agents *become* the conduit for the knowledge gained from all orders (Archer, 2000). In this becoming, the agent is informed by the natural and social orders to practice or "do" in the world. It is in this doing whereby agents are able to elaborate further in the social order what one applies in practice. From this application, the agent gains further practical knowledge which becomes incorporated back into an agent's embodied knowledge. This incorporation becomes demonstrated in practice/doing in the practical order and thus continues the cyclical activity of being in the world. This action is illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Relations Between Embodied, Practical and Discursive

Knowledge

Natural Order	Practical Order	Social Order
Demonstration		*Application*
	Practical Knowledge	
Embodied Knowledge		Discursive Knowledge
Incorporation		*Metaphor*
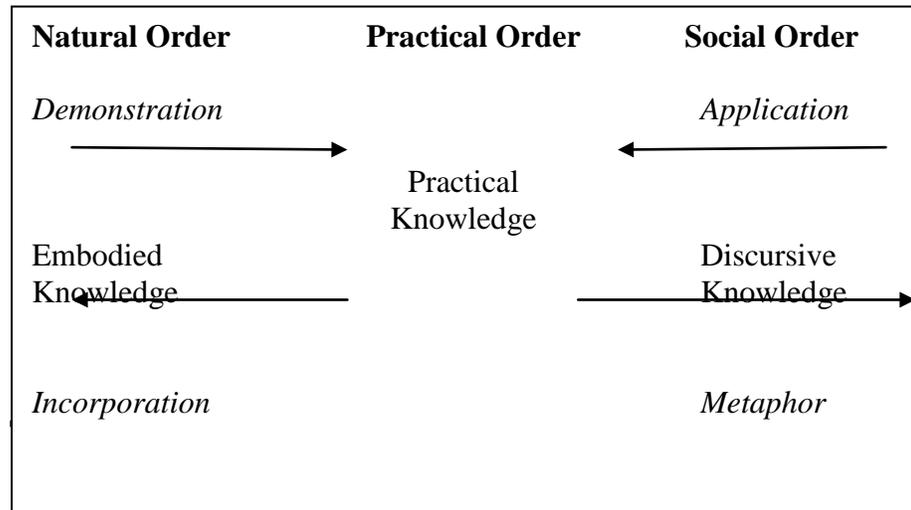
Figure 2. A pictorial representation of the dynamic interplay of the three orders of reality. Adapted from *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* by M. Archer, 2000, p. 179. Copyright 2000, Routledge.

To analyze the agents which compose the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative means to reveal how practice is defined by the members and what it is about what they do as   informed/defined by the natural/social orders. Investigating how agents discursively apply their practice in the social order assists the researcher in understanding how the collaboration itself may be a means to encourage/discourage further practice. The collaboration may also be viewed as the collective action of multiple agent's commitment to a shared practice. This point will is elaborated further in the next dynamic illustrated by Archer (2000).

Morphogenesis is Transformative

Walter Buckley (1967, 1968, 1998) was the first to introduce sociology to the use of terms from general systems theory, one of which was *morphogenesis*. As he points out, morphogenesis refers literally to the *creation of form-* social processes that create social structure, alter it, or elaborate it in some manner. Morphogenesis is a fundamental, intrinsic capacity of relational agents. Archer (1995) points out that:

> The practical analyst of society needs to know not only what social reality is, but also how to begin to explain it…An explanatory methodology, which is indeed pivotal is [ed.]called the morphogenetic approach . (The 'morpho' element is an acknowledgement that society has no pre-set or preferred state: the 'genetic' part is a recognition that it takes shape from, and is formed by agents, originating from the intended and unintended consequences of their activities (p. 5).

At the heart of morphogenesis, is the agential practice of transforming society based on a commitment to their ultimate concerns and thus becoming transformed by the very structure they assist in crafting. As Archer (2000) states, "Agents transform themselves in the process of pursing social change" (p. 268). When agents actively engage one another through a coordinated, group interaction,, they seek to strategically transform "structure in order to make it a better place within which to live" (p. 269). Archer elaborates this point by highlighting the activity of collective action. When an agent decides upon a concern worth

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investing one's self, the power of collective action gains appeal. This is illustrated in the following description by Archer (2000):

> …Agents have a vested interest in acquiring the powers of collective action in order to ameliorate the subordinate position in which they find themselves and to improve upon their inferior life-chances assigned to them there. Only in this way can they aspire to become active participants in society's decision-making. Only if they do, can they hope to re-design the social array of roles, such that the positions available to them are ones in which they willingly invest themselves, and thus become the kinds of 'social selves' with whom they can voluntarily identify (p. 169).

This action or mophogenesis is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The Morphogenesis of Corporate Agency

Social-cultural conditioning of groups

_____

T1   (Corporate Agency and Primary Agency)

        Group Interaction
_____
       T2   T3
       (Between Corporate Agents and Primary Agents)

               _____
                                    T4
               (Increase of Corporate Agents)
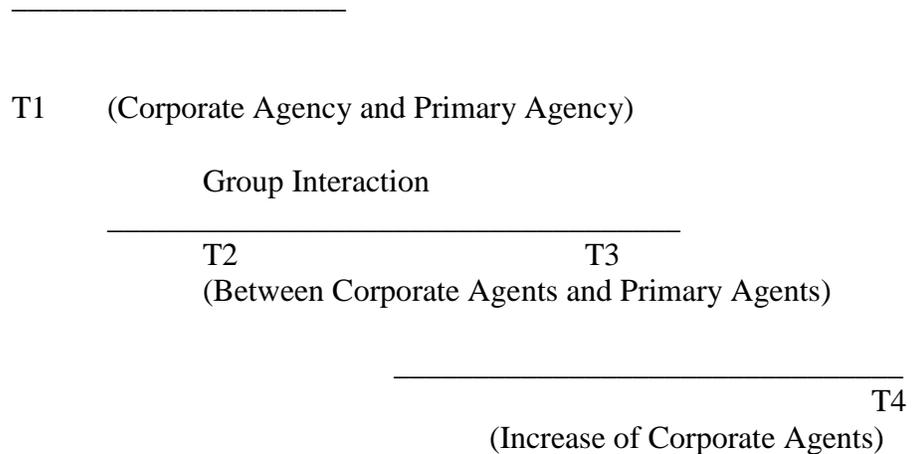
Figure 3. A pictorial representation of the dynamic interplay of culture and structure with agents and collective agents (corporate agents). Adapted from *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* by M. Archer, 2000, p.268. Copyright 2000, Routledge.

Through the morphogenetic lens, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative may be analyzed. It is through morphogenesis that structure (the social world of the collaboration and the collaboration itself) and agency (the members/participants of the CCOC) can be elaborated upon. How the interplay between the two analyzed is the essence of this dynamic. Analytically, structure and agency may be separable, but both inform one another in a temporal sphere (Archer, 2000). Describing this interplay and whether or not an elaboration of change has occurred is an imperative aspect of this study's analysis. In Chapter 5, morphogenesis will be described further.

Summary

Introducing critical realism to US social work research promises to expand the discipline itself. In reframing how theory is utilized in the research process and the usage of a meta-theoretical lens in reframing ontology/epistemology, captures the essence of the profession. Human agency and social structure can be examined as co arising dynamics which coalesce in the empirical, the actual and the real domains. Utilizing critical realism to research the human and social worlds is the very practice described by the theory itself. It also becomes the very essence of social work. Not only do social workers work with the social, they are also

agents actively *doing* in the social. In practicing research, the investigator (social worker/researcher) herself utilizes her own natural, practical and social orders to elaborate upon/research the social/structural world in which she exists. In doing so, morphogenesis is analytic tool to explore the object of this study. Morphogenesis may also be the professional result of this study's efforts. In utilizing critical realism as an ontological foundation for social work research, the possibility of a morphogenetic elaboration for the social work profession may begin. At the very least the social worker group interaction may be instigated further potential elaboration. In this sense, critical realism is unfolding; through the research study and through the social work researcher.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter will introduce a description of current research methodologies influencing social work research. In doing so, the paradigms or worldviews influencing methodology will be exposed. This exposure is key to illuminate given that critical realism will be posed as a paradigmatic shift regarding method. Rather than method dictating the possible ontological influence toward investigating the agential and social worlds, critical realism fundamentally shifts this structure. As a meta-theory, critical realism's explicit ontology and epistemology reframes the use of method.

Upon completion of the current climate defining social work research, a methodological pluralistic research framework infused by critical realism will be promoted. This infusion will be a description of the research study, the choice to utilize a case study design, a narrative of the case study design itself and the critical realist data analysis strategy.

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Contemporary Method: Mixed Methodology

      In response to the post positivistic, constructivist and participatory paradigms which have historically influenced social work research, pragmatism has become the current worldview dominating research. As illustrated below in Table 2, in "Elements of Worldviews and Implications for Practice" from Creswell & Clark (2011), it is clear where the evolution to an ontology and epistemology based on the pragmatic paradigm was born.

Table 2. Elements of Worldviews and Implications for Practice

Worldview Element	Postpositivism	Constructivism	Participatory	Pragmatic
Ontology (What is the nature of reality?)	Singular reality (e.g, researchers reject or fail to reject hypotheses)	Multiple realities (e.g., researchers provide quotes to illustrate different perspectives)	Political reality (e.g., findings are negotiated with participants)	Singular and multiple realities (e.g., researchers test hypothesis and provide multiple perspectives
Epistemology (What is the relationship between researcher and that being researched?)	Distance and impartiality (e.g., researchers objectively collect data on instruments)	Closeness (e.g, researchers visit participants at their sites to collect data)	Collaborate (e.g., researchers actively involve participants as collaborator)	Practicality (e.g., researchers collect data by "what works" to address research

Worldview Element	Postpositivism	Constructivism	Participatory	Pragmatic
Axiology (What is the role of values?)	Unbiased (e.g., researchers use checks to eliminate bias)	Biased (e.g., researchers actively talk about their biases and interpretation)	Negotiated (e.g., researchers negotiate their biases with participant)	Multiple stances (e.g., researchers include both biased and unbiased perspectives)
Methodology (What is the process of Research?)		Inductive (e.g. researchers start with participants' views and build "up" to patterns, theories, and generalizatios		Combining (e.g researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data and mix them)

Note. Adapted from *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, (2nd Ed.) by J. Creswell & V. Clark, 2011. p. 42. Copyright 2011, Sage Publications.

As the current meta-theory influencing social work research, pragmatism has been identified to be the best worldview for social science research (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2011). This assertion is based on the following key points:" (a) both quantitative and qualitative research methods may be used in a single study (b) the research question should be of primary importance-more important than either the method or the

philosophical worldview that underlies the method (c) the forced-choice between post positivism and constructivism should be abandoned (d) the use of metaphysical concepts such as "truth" and "reality should also be abandoned (e) practical and applied research philosophy should guide methodological choices" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 44).

It is the assertion of this study that a pragmatic world view to researching the agential and social worlds denies the inherent powers associated with both dynamics. As illustrated in Chapter 1, agential and structural factors defining collaboration have been conflated together. While identifying collaborative factors may be a pragmatic orientation to answering a research question which is "of primary importance-more important than either the method or the philosophical worldview that underlies method" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 44) , it denies many of the core tenants of critical realism; tenants that move beyond ontological/epistemological frameworks identified above; those which pragmatism continues. In essence, pragmatism has become the most current iteration of the same traditional paradigmatic foundations and the vernacular associated with them.

While pragmatism and mixed methodology have dominated social science, questioning the use of critical realism as an alternative has

emerged. As Creswell and Clark (2011) state, "the critical realist perspective is also being discussed as a potential contribution to mixed methods research" (p. 44). This discussion is being influenced by reinstituting key perspectives negated within the pragmatist worldview. Calling upon the "integration of a realist ontology (there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions) with a constructivist epistemology (our understanding of this world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint)" (Creswell & Clark, 2011, p. 45) marries the metaphysical concept of truth/reality with theory being a useful tool in coming to know the world. Critical realism also posits back the philosophical influence on method. In doing so, the implicit ontological influence of methodological choices becomes explicit. Method is utilized because it is a tool for understanding the real, stratified world, not answering a research question which may not mirror this world.

Utilizing a critical realism ontological stance influencing methodology is not grounded in a "what works" or nebulous notion of practicality, but one that is influenced by methodological pluralism. As a point of departure from the traditional quantitative and qualitative distinctions toward investigating the human and social worlds, critical realism posits a reformulation of "mixed methodology." This is a

departure from the pragmatic use of method to embody "what works" (Creswell & Clark, 2011) to methodological pluralism.

 Methodological Pluralism

How the social work researcher investigates structure and agency is the heart of a methodologically infused research approach influenced by critical realism. It is key to stress that critical realism is not a method or methodology, but a meta theory which links what reality is and how one comes to understand/know it. In this respect, "critical realism constitutes a 'third way' in the scientific debate between, on the one hand empiricism/objectivism, and on the other hand relativism/idealism. However it is not a conflation of or, a compromise between, these perspectives; it represents a standpoint in its own right" (Danermark, et al., 2002, p. 202). As a methodological standpoint, the ontological and epistemological foundations of the meta theory itself frame method.

These foundations, referenced above, influence how data about the stratified world can come to be known and the role theory has in its application. As a framework, Danermark et al. (2002) state this in 5 key starting points:

1. We can never understand, analyze or categorize reality without using a theoretical language of concepts.
2. These concepts are constantly being developed
3. The development of concepts presupposes an (intransitive) reality independent of these concepts.
4. The relation between theories/theoretical concepts and the properties or objects the concepts are referring to is not unambiguous and simple; nor is it arbitrary. All theoretical descriptions are fallible, nut not equally fallible.
5. Theories and theoretical concepts are developed in relation to the experiences we obtain when we use them to understand reality (p. 116).

.   At the heart of utilizing theory to assist in framing the research question is the critical realist orientation that the research event is not data driven, but theory driven (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Because critical realism does not promote the notion that reality can be reduced from particular social/agential events to the general and vice versa, what is of utmost importance is revealing a description of a phenomenon (collaboration) to inform a description of what types of conditions produce the phenomenon (Sayer, 1992). Again, reality is stratified and the conditions/structures which exist in each level can or cannot be witnessed empirically, theory assists the researcher in framing "where" to look. Aided by the research question and the theories which assisted in framing it, the researcher can then posit the underlying question of what deep level structures and mechanisms exist for a phenomenon to occur (Houston, 2010).

As has been stated, while these mechanisms are "not unknowable, although knowledge of them depends upon a rare blending of intellectual, practico-technical and perpetual skills" (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 47), the researcher can extract meaning and tendencies by utilizing a pluralistic, methodological frame. Because theory focuses inquiry, it opens the door for an alternative methodology to be utilized. Since critical realism acts as third way in social research, method also follows. As Pawson and Tilley (1997) state, " It is high time we looked again at the potential for an application of 'theory' to settle the issue by focusing and prioritizing inquiry. Only when we know what precisely it is that we are studying, can we reach into the toolkit for the appropriate instrument" (p. 159).

Crafted by the work of Danermark, et al. (2002), mixed methodology in social science research has been reframed through critical realism. The authors stress that:

> Critical realism is a meta- theory, which enables us to understand the importance of methodologies in a new way. That is also the significant difference between our view and the pragmatic one. The decisive question is how different methodologies can convey knowledge about generative mechanisms…mechanisms are regarded as tendencies which can be reinforced, modified or suppressed in complex interaction with other mechanisms in an open system. The result may be that they cannot always manifest themselves empirically (p. 163).

Guided by the research question influenced by the theoretical lens specific

to the object of study, methodology is utilized to reveal the generative

mechanisms which may or may not manifest themselves in a specific

context. Again, critical realism moves beyond the social scientific research

approach grounded in empiricism, where data may be captured empirically

or only in the empirical stratum. Because the world is viewed as an open

system, where interactions between agency and structure co-create

action/inaction, the methods utilized to examine this interaction must

always deny that the social world unfolds within a closed system. This

would assume that agential and social events can be isolated for

examination. Experimental design and quantitative methodology typify

this research orientation. Critical realism objects to the very notion that

social and agential generative mechanisms can be captured in a vacuum.

The activity of exploring the social and agential world through critical

realism necessitates exploration within an open system; one that can never

be manipulated by the researcher.

Method must also embrace that human beings are active agents in

the social world. The essential component of this stance lies in what

Danermark et al. (2002) state as:

> What characterizes most empirical social science studies is that
> they involve individuals who act consciously. Human beings act

with intention and purpose, and they assign meaning to phenomena. The intentions must therefore be regarded as causes and be analyzed as tendencies (p. 164).

The individual and the meaning making which is inherent to an agent must then always be considered in identifying generative mechanisms. Stating this distinction clarifies a misnomer attached to current social science research. In order to capture individual phenomenon, the researcher typically utilizes a hermeneutic lens for guidance. While this methodological orientation is beneficial in capturing agential tendencies, it must regard that agents are a part of a stratified world; a world where social phenomenon inherently generates mechanisms and emergent powers with and among humans. Agent and social world engage one another. This co mingling of emergent powers and mechanisms becomes the condition through which the critical realist researcher utilizes method.

Given the differentiation inherent to a critical realistic meta theoretical orientation, the utilization of method is uniquely employed to investigate the empirical world from an alternative stance. Theory being linked to method reframes how empirical procedures unfold and why they are used. While the "explicit use of realist perspectives in mixed methods research is still relatively uncommon" (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2011, p. 160) researchers have instigated its use in multiple disciplines. The fields of accounting (Brown, 2007; Modell, 2009), nursing (McEvoy &

Richards, 2003; Lipscomb, 2006) and economics (Fleetwood, 1999; Downward & Mearman, 2003) have animated critical realism. It is one of the goals of this research study to provide an option to social work in practically applying its use in research.

Description of Research Design

This study sought to utilize critical realism as a meta theory for the ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings of social scientific inquiry. The foundational aspects upholding social work research aligned quite differently than has been traditionally framed. In this study it did not become a question of whether or not a qualitative or quantitative methodological approach would be utilized to answer a research question or whether or not an experimental design or phenomenological study was to be performed; it became a question about how the nature of reality (ontology) impacts the researcher lens when applying method. This lens assisted the researcher in investigating how this reality came to be known (epistemology). As opposed to utilizing an experimental design or a case study grounded approach utilizing a possibly implicit positivistic or hermeneutical lens, this research study acted as a point of departure from this line of inquiry. Method became a tool for critically understanding reality, not as a distinction influencing a qualitative and/or quantitative design.

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Clarifying the above is key to understanding that "there is no such thing as a method of critical realism….critical realism offers guidelines for social science research and starting points for the evaluation of already established methods" (Danemark, et al., 2002, p. 73). In this respect, choosing an already established social science method became the framework undergirding the guidelines inherent to critical realist ontology and epistemology. For this study, a case study design was chosen. The rationale for this choice stemmed from the flexibility the case study design allowed for a critical realist epistemological stance. This is illustrated in the definition of case studies by Yin (2009) as an empirical inquiry that: "(a) investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when; (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p.15). The case study inquiry must also "(a) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result; (b) relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result; (c) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis" (Yin, 2009, p. 18).

This framework allowed the researcher to structure an investigation into the object of study without being tied to an already pre-

established epistemology. There is "room" for the researcher to explore the emergent powers that exist within members of The Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative and the social context in which members subscribe.

Case Study Design

As a methodological structure, the case study identifies five key components composing the design. These are: (a) a study's questions, (b) it's propositions, if any, (c) it's unit(s) of analysis, (d) the logic linking the data to the propositions, and (e) the criteria for interpreting the findings (Yin, 2009, p. 27). Identifying these components for this research study provided the foundation for "explanatory research based on critical realism" (Danemark, et al., 2002, p. 109). It also furthers the notion that "strategically selected case studies are a very important feature of a social science founded on critical realism" (Danemark, et al.,2002, p. 106).

As a guiding framework, the above five key components of case study design will be illustrated below, providing the methodological foundation for this research study. The following subheadings provide this outline.

Study's Questions

The research questions for this study are: How did the cycles of interaction forming the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative

involve agential and structural interaction? What are the implications of the research findings for the future of social work research?

Study's Propositions

While propositions are used in case studies to direct a researcher's attention to specific areas of evidence and to narrow the researcher's focus in data collection, in this study no such propositions were outlined. The rationale for this choice was that "some studies may have a legitimate reason for not having any propositions. This is the condition in which a topic is the subject of "exploration" (Yin, p. 28). Since this study is considered an exploratory case study, seeking to reveal the deep underlying powers of agency and structure composing the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, limiting specific evidence to be considered would unnecessarily define what data could become illuminated during data collection. Utilizing the units of analysis and the proposed kinds of data as starting points to be explored, this was foundation enough to provide rationale and direction in this study.

As an alternative to the propositions recommended under the traditional auspice suggested by case study design Yin (2009), identifying "some of the central starting points of critical realism" (Danemark et al., p 116) will be outlined instead. The rationale for this documentation is to highlight how the relationship between critical realism and method are

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defined. These starting points acted as directives informing this study's exploration. These propositional starting points defined by Danemark et al. (2002) are: "(a) all science should have generalizing claims, (b) methods for acquiring knowledge of the general and for examining the validity of generalizations are fundamental for all social science research. Generalizing may, however, mean different things, (c) quite essential for scientific methods are various modes of inference….in a science based on critical realism, abduction and retroduction are two indispensable modes of inference besides induction and deduction, (d) an overall aim in social science research is to explain events and processes" (p. 116). To explain something implies (from the perspective of critical realism) first describing and conceptualizing the properties and causal mechanisms generating and enabling events, making things happen, and then describing how different mechanisms manifest themselves under specific conditions. This kind of investigation requires a methodological approach based on abduction and retroduction (Danermark, et al., 2002, pp. 73-74). A description of this analysis process will be explicated further in the data analysis section of this chapter.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis for this study was the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCOC). The embedded units of analysis were

the nine nonprofit organizations which compose the CCOC and their

executive directors (See Appendices A and B for units of analysis).

Logic Linking the Data to the Propositions

"The fourth and fifth components have been increasingly better

developed in doing case studies. These components foreshadow the data

analysis steps in case study research" (Yin, 2009, p. 33). While case study

research has begun to hone the focus of linking data to propositions, the

key aspect in case study design is for the researcher to be aware of what

data will be collected and what general strategies will be used in data

analysis. To answer the research question guiding this study, multiple

sources of evidence were gathered from the unit of analysis and the

embedded units of analysis (purposeful samples). The rationale for

utilizing multiple data sources such as: five years of CCOC archival

records and documents, face to face, unstructured interviews and

observations (participant and direct) assisted in triangulating data and the

convergence of evidence. (See Appendices C and D for data sources).

The multiple data sources also support the tests required for

validity and reliability in case studies. As a useful tool in case studies, Yin

(2009) has outlined the tests for validity and reliability, the case study

tactics (evidence) and the phases in the research process where each tactic occurs in order to meet these tests. As a framework, the researcher utilized these tests during data collection and was mindful of trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and data dependability (Yin, 2009, p. 40).

Criteria for Interpreting the Findings

As a component of the case study design, this aspect of the method is the least defined. As Yin (2009) states, "Analyzing case study evidence is especially difficult because the techniques still have not been well defined…The analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies" (pp. 126-127). While this feature of case study design may not be as well defined as the aforementioned four components, it opens up the possibility to build upon general analytic strategies promoted by Yin (2009) and inject an analytic process specific to critical realism.

Data Collection and Analysis

Yin (2009) suggests that "relying on theoretical propositions" (p. 130) not only assists the researcher in organizing a case study design, but also aids in data analysis. As defined above under "study's propositions," this research adhered to a critical realist ontological and epistemological stance. Data collection was initially guided by these propositions and

reflected in the analysis using Danemark et al. (2002) "stages in an

explanatory research based on critical realism" (p. 109). These stages are

meant to aid the researcher in "guidelines for how to relate in research

practice the concrete to the abstract and the abstract to the concrete"

(p.109). These stages are highlighted in the subheadings below.

Stages in Explanatory Research Based on Critical Realism

Stage 1: Description

In this stage, the researcher explored the CCOC from multiple data

sources. Qualitative data were collected which included: five years of

CCOC meeting minutes, all emails sent from the CCOC coordinator to

members, participant/observation notes on seven three hour CCOC

meetings, notes on all strategic brainstorming sessions (four two hour

meetings), and face to face interviews with nine CCOC members.

After granted IRB approval from the University of Denver in

January 2011, the researcher collected the data described above. The

researcher also contacted all 9 of the executive directors composing the

CCOC for face to face interviews. After gaining consent from CCOC

members to be interviewed and audio taped (See Appendix E for consent

form), the researcher asked CCOC executive directors to describe their

experience within a collaborative. While the interviews were unstructured

in nature, the researcher prepared interview questions for possible use. It was found that these questions were used in three of the interviews to assist in probing for deeper understanding. The interviews ranged in 30 minutes to 1.5 hours and took place at a location chosen by the participant. Interviews were transcribed and stored as a wave file on the researcher's computer.

Stage 2: Analytical Resolution

At this stage, the researcher began to "separate or dissolve the composite and the complex by distinguishing the various components, aspects or dimensions" (Danermark, et al.,2002, p. 110). In distilling the specific components of the CCOC, the agential and structural powers underlying/defining the collaborative began to emerge. It is in this stage where the research process moved from the concrete, real phenomenon as experienced by the participants and shared in data collection to the abstract. The researcher began to separate participant's knowledge *about* their experienced reality in the CCOC to an *interpreted* knowledge abstracted by the researcher.

Stage 3: Abduction/Theoretical Redescription

During abduction, the researcher interpreted and described the components identified in stage two from various frameworks and theories. In this study, mid level organizational theories, inter organizational

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theories and/or leadership frameworks were utilized to describe the structural and relational components of the CCOC. During this stage, the unit of analysis began to be reframed as it became viewed through different theoretical lenses. It is imperative during this stage of abduction that "several different theoretical interpretations and explanations can and should be presented, compared and possibly integrated with one another" (Danermark, et al., 2002, p. 110). It was also key during abduction that the researcher began to discern connections and a reformulation of new ideas about the phenomenal event (CCOC).

As Danermark, et al. (2002) state, "Abduction is more associated with a way of viewing the relation between science and reality, implying that there are no ultimately true theories, and therefore no rules either, for deciding what is the ultimate truth…redescriptions can provide a deeper knowledge about the particular case under study" (p. 94).

Stage 4: Retroduction

One of the particularly unique aspects of a research study based on critical realism lies in this stage. In retroduction, not only is it a reframing of how the researcher can come to know social reality, it is grounded in the critical realist meta theory about how observable events and the deep, underlying structural properties of events and phenomenon can come to be known. During this stage, the knowledge gleaned during stage three about

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the CCOC, moved on to the researcher asking questions about the 'transfactual' conditions inherent in the phenomena of study. As Danemark et al. (2002) state, "Retroduction is about advancing from one thing (empirical observation of events) and arriving at something different (a conceptualization of transfactual conditions)" (p. 96). These transfactual conditions are based on a critical realist ontology that notes that there are three domains of reality- the empirical, the actual and the real. In retroduction, the researcher investigates experienced phenomena (the CCOC or the empirical), whether the researcher is experiencing the CCOC or not (the actual) and seeking to come to understand "that which can produce events in the world, that which metaphorically can be called mechanisms" (Danermark, et al.,2002, p. 20).

An aspect of retroduction included the use of counterfactual thinking. The researcher utilized questions such as "How would this be if not…..? Could one imagine [a specific dynamic in an agent's experience] without….? Could one imagine [the CCOC] including this, without [the CCOC] then becoming something different?" (Danemark, et al,2002, p. 101). From these lines of inquiry, the researcher was able to utilize her experience and knowledge about the object of study in abstraction.

Guiding the procedural elements of abstraction was the use of coding and pattern coding suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).

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Using coding assisted the researcher in "reducing large amounts of data into a smaller number of analytic units [and to] elaborate a cognitive and an evolving, more integrated schema for understand local incidents and interactions" (p. 69). While this analytic procedure is not highlighted in the critical realist explanatory research stages, it is posited that coding and pattern coding embodies the level of abstraction needed for this stage. Coding became an active tool in researcher abstraction.

Stage 5: Comparison between Different Theories and Abstraction

In completing the stage defined above, the object of study became an abstraction of the agential and structural powers/mechanisms defining it. The researcher then began to describe the structural and functional conditions of these mechanisms through the use of various social theories. During this stage, specific theories emerged as best describing CCOC structure and function. "In other cases the theories are rather complementary, as they focus on partly different but nevertheless necessary conditions" (Danermark, et al., 2002, p. 110). In comparing different theories with the data, the researcher synthesized and elaborated the abstractions of retroduction.

Stage 6: Concretization and Contextualization

Defining the final stage of a critical realist research frame, it must be noted that the stages documented above are not meant to be followed in

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chronological order. They were a model for the researcher to utilize in a time series appropriate for the study. In this regard, the researcher spent more time in certain stages rather than others and reverted back to stages already passed. In doing so, even when entering stage 6, the researcher consulted other stages in order to reexamine how different structures and mechanisms became concrete. As mentioned in stage 1, an object of study is examined as it manifests in the real, concrete world. Once the researcher began to condense and abstract the mechanisms of the object of study through retroduction and theoretical comparison, in the final stage, the researcher completes the research process by grounding structure back in the concrete world. As Danemark et al. (2002) state, "This stage of the research process is of particular importance in an applied science" (p. 111) because once the deep structural and generative mechanisms of a particular object of study are revealed, they must become practically useful for those in the social sciences. As will be illustrated in Chapter 5, the discussion and practical application of the results of this study will provide just this.

<p align="center">**Summary**</p>

This chapter represents the initial step in social work research to provide the foundation for an empirical study based on critical realism. As represented in the methodology, this is also the first time a social work

research study has utilized Danermark et al's (2002) framework for data

analysis. It is the hope of the researcher by introducing both a critical

realist infused methodology and data analysis strategy will provide an

option to US social workers an option in research.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter will share the qualitative results gathered from the unit of analysis, the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, its embedded units of analysis, the nine member organizations and their executive directors. Data were collected during ten months of intensive face to face interviewing, participant observation of seven CCOC member meetings and five years of CCOC archival documents. In gathering these data, the researcher kept detailed case notes on the face to face interviews, meetings and a personal reflection journal. Because the researcher was utilizing the data analysis framework designed by Danermark et al. (2002), it was essential for the researcher to capture any reflective thoughts which may have emerged. As stated in Chapter 3, the fluid nature between data collection and data analysis (as highlighted specifically in Stage 1 Description and Stage 2 Analytic Redescription) require the researcher to document these primary stages.

The following chapter will utilize Danermark et al.'s (2002) Stage 1 and Stage 2 as an explanatory framework based on critical realism to document this study's results. In providing a description of the history and membership of the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, the foundation for Stage 1(Description) will be met. This description will then be incorporated as an Analytic Redescription by the researcher. These analytic redescriptions are captured in the chapter's subheadings and represent the culmination of Stage 2. These subheadings illustrate four key themes which emerged during data collection. The subheadings represent the researcher's redescription of collaboration as four phenomenonal stages.

In Stage 1, description of the history (emergence) of the CCOC and the members which compose it will be provided. This description illustrates "collaboration" as an external mandate. The second theme describing the collaboration is one of relationship and trust. The third theme which emerged was individual sharing to define CCOC activity. The fourth theme to emerge was a current redefinition of member commitment to the collaborative.

In documenting the themes which emerged in data analysis, the researcher will build upon these descriptions in Chapter 5. In the discussion, the result of retroduction and abstraction will be shared.

Stage 1 (Description) and Stage 2 (Analytic Redescription)

Collaboration as External Mandate

Drawing upon the archival documentation of the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, the CCOC came into existence when , a program officer at the Piton Foundation and an executive director of Metro Organizations for People (MOP) crafted a name for a group of nine Denver based nonprofit organizations (see Appendix B for list of nonprofits). The naming of this group became critical for the financial endeavor both were seeking to embark upon for their organizations.

In order for Bailey and Kromley to jointly apply for a one million dollar Ford Foundation grant a comprehensive organizational scan of NPOs within the Denver/Metro needed to take place . This scan was seeking to identify NPOs to become members of the CCOC. These potential member organizations must embody specific characteristics The Ford Foundation was seeking to fund. These NPO characteristics were:

- Whose activities seek to reduce social, educational, economic and/or political inequality, and encourage active participation in public decision-making (public policy, budget allocation, elections, etc.);
- Engaged in at least two of the following issues and/or constituencies: immigrant and refugee rights, human rights in the U.S., children and family issues, economic development, communities of faith, youth development and empowerment; education reform/equity, racial justice, women's rights;
- Mature (4-5 years or older) local organizations;

- With an annual budget of less than $1,000,000 (S. Moss, personal communication, January 7, 2005).

It was with the help of the Chinook Fund and Metro Organizations for People, where a list of forty-five community organizations were identified in the northern front-range that appeared to be engaged in community organizing either as the organization's mission or a core strategy. A letter was sent to these organizations telling them about the initiative and advising them that someone would be calling them to schedule time to talk. At least two attempts were made by phone to schedule interviews. In the end, interviews found that twenty six community organizations met the criteria of being engaged in organizing as either the organization's mission or a core strategy (S. Moss, personal communication, January 5, 2005). The interview questions for the community scan and results of this community organizing scan are listed in this study. (See Appendix E and F).

With the organizational scan complete, nine nonprofit organizations were targeted to join CCOC. While the NPOs individually existed to fulfill their missions/visions toward social change, the nonprofits did not actively participate as a collective in this endeavor. It was in name alone when in 2005, the Ford Foundation awarded one million dollars to the CCOC and the member organizations which composed it.

One of the most defining features in scanning archival data during this time period of CCOC's emergence was an external mandate from the Ford Foundation. While not overt in CCOC documents, it was an "understood" condition that the CCOC must meet face to face, once a month. Archival documents illustrate the "process and structure" (Mattessich et al., 2001) of these meetings, but when CCOC first started to meet face to face, the physical, relational space that each member organization occupied *was* the collaboration.

Collaboration as Trust

In analyzing emails sent from 2005-2008 by the CCOC coordinator, SM, to the executive directors of the nine nonprofits comprising the CCOC, the organizations were initially meeting to satisfy the Ford Foundation requirement. Based on meeting minutes from this time period, the nine nonprofits would meet for two hours a month and would share organizational information with one another. This information would range from orally sharing with one another (as captured in later meeting minutes) what campaigns were being lodged by specific nonprofits to who was the most trustworthy bookkeeper in the Denver/Metro area.

From the face to face interviews, the theme of trust building emerged during this time period. While the archival documentation does

not explicitly state that trust was the reason for the monthly meeting, it was ultimately what CCOC members stated as being what was "built" during the early meetings. Because the nonprofits composing the "entity" of the CCOC had not worked with one another before, the meetings directly after Ford funding stripped away what members identified as "turf issues." Since many of the nonprofits had known "of" each other through their work addressing the same or overlapping social issues, there was still an ideological distance maintained.

This distance is illustrated in the mission statements of two nonprofits composing the CCOC. For example, Rights for All People's (RAP) mission states on their website www. , "…to bring the voices of immigrant leaders and their allies to the struggle for equality, mutual respect, and justice in the metro Denver area through education, community, organizing, and successful campaigns." Similar, yet different in their stance toward working with immigrants is the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition's (CIRC) mission statement. Their mission statement is identified on their website at----that CIRC is, "… a statewide, membership-based coalition of immigrant, faith, labor, youth, community, business and ally organizations founded in 2002 to improve the lives of immigrants and refugees by making Colorado a more welcoming, immigrant-friendly state." While both nonprofit organizations seek to

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work with immigrants and allies toward the improvement of immigrant lives in Colorado, both exist separately as organizational structures.

This individual, organizational distance was further entrenched when the nonprofits prior to CCOC funding would compete with one another for the same local funding. The nonprofits had maintained their "turf" in this manner. As individual nonprofit organizations, much of the funding needed to maintain their practice was drawn from foundations, grants and philanthropic endeavors. Often this led to nonprofit organizations seeking the same funding streams as the others (Edwards, Cook & Reid,1996). In the case of MOP and CIRC, their "turf" is similar in this regard. Seeking funding to serve the individual financial needs of the organization overrode any collective desire to serve the same demographic. In this respect, the need for resources outweighed any working together and maintained distance between nonprofits.

In this respect, when all nine nonprofit organizations began to collect funding from the Ford Foundation and was mandated to "come together" for three years, not only was there an inherent alleviation of financial competition among the nonprofit organizations, they began to talk to one another about it. For the three years, dialogue among the nonprofits about shared funding necessitated trust building among each other. As members shared in interviews with the researcher, talking about

what to do with "our" money created an environment where the nonprofits had to share where they wanted money to go. It was in collectively defining where money was to be designated that members clarified to one another what mattered most to them and their organization.

Collaboration as Concern

During the course of the three year funding the Ford Foundation had allocated to the CCOC, members met to define the efforts on issues and campaigns which each had agreed to be a mutual concern to them. These efforts and issues are stated below in subheadings. CCOC member organizations are also listed as being the active participants within each concern. These data also include partners in the extended Denver/Metro community who CCOC agreed to engage in their practice.

Health Care Reform

- FRESC, CPC, MOP, 9to5 are actively part of the Colorado SCHIP Coalition.

Immigrant Rights

- CIRC is the unifying statewide coalition around immigrant rights in which all of CCOC are members and active at that table. Related to this, Ya es Hora Coalition is working on citizenship for immigrants in Colorado, and includes RAP, CIRC, Latina Initiative, ACORN, and Mi Familia Vota.
- El Centro, Padres Unidos, RAP, CIRC, CPC, and 9to5 are working to create a Human Rights Center in Aurora which will also be a place for day laborers, training, and other meetings

- Padres & Jovens Unidos, CIRC, MOP are working on immigrant student rights – instate tuition and access to higher education.
- Padres & Jóvenes Unidos, CIRC, RAP and MOP are working on passage of the DREAM Act and Comprehensive Immigration Reform.

Economic Justice
- The Payday Lending Coalition is driven by the Bell Policy Center and the Center for Policy Entrepreneurship with strong involvement from ACORN, CPC, 9to5, and many other groups from CCOC and beyond. 9to5 and CPC co-chair the EITC Coalition's Grassroots Committee.
- FRESC's Campaign for Responsible Development also includes 9to5 which negotiate and organize for community benefits at Union Station.
- FRESC and El Centro Humanitario are working together on Worker Misclassification policy change as many workers are misclassified as contractors to avoid being paid as employees.
- 9to5 and CPC lead the Earned Income Tax Credit coalition.
- 9to5 is leading the Paid Sick Days coalition that FRESC and CPC participate.
- FRESC headed up a collaborative faith effort including MOP, approaching Hyatt management who negotiated for UNITE HERE's hotel workers' first union contract.
- The Economic Self-Sufficiency Coalition includes 9to5 and others from CCOC.
- 9to5, CIRC and RAP are active members on the Colorado Women's Agenda, working on pay equity issues.

Criminal Justice
- CPC, RAP, CIRC, and El Centro work together on the statewide Racial Profiling and Police Discrimination Hotline and Police Accountability Campaign to document abuse.
- CIRC, RAP, CPC and ACORN are working to stop the expansion of the Aurora detention center.

Education Reform
- Padres, CIRC and MOP are three of many partners in the Higher Education Access Alliance who co-lead efforts to provide higher education access for undocumented students in Colorado.

- Education: Padres and MOP are the two anchor organizations in CPER working on district-wide and statewide education reform (S. Moss, personal communication, November 7, 2007).

Referencing Chapter 1 and Mattessich et al.'s (2001) identification of one of the factors related to successful collaboration is that of purpose (p. 25). As the authors state, "*Purpose* refers to the reasons for the development of a collaborative effort, the result or vision the collaborative group seeks, and the specific tasks or project the collaborative group defines as necessary to accomplish. It is driven by a need, crisis, or opportunity" (p. 25). While the CCOC illustrates this factor in the above list of specific concerns and tasks associated with them, the researcher found that in clarifying the purpose, the narrative attached to each of the subheadings described *purpose* as a personalized experience.

These personalized experiences were documented in many of the emails sent back and forth between CCOC members and the CCOC coordinator during the past five years. The deep, personal investment of each area whether it was economic justice, health care reform or one of the other focus areas, had attached to it a personal *concern*. Members expressed this concern when defining how each member and their organization was to actively engage in animating practical activity. How members were to *do* in the community expressed this concern. This embedded, agential activity of being personally committed to a concern

was a precondition for *purpose* and became the core emotive movement in

CCOC's collective (collaborative) action.

Collaboration as Commitment

Each member organization composing the CCOC inherently

brought to the collective physical space, a personal concern to animate the

collective "doings" and purposes of the CCOC. Within a historical

context, the CCOC members in their collective engagement gave rise to an

ongoing *commitment*. This individual commitment was illustrated in

archival documentation when the CCOC described what "house" meetings

embodied. An illustration of what "house" means to the CCOC is stated in

the following narrative described by a CCOC member:

> *In anticipation of the Ford Foundation funds coming to a close in December 2007, the concept of the "House" infrastructure was borne out of a steadfast desire to continue with the collaborative work, sustain the relationships that had been built, and maintain the momentum of the drive toward social change. With a self-imposed requirement to both continue with its good work and achieve tangible, measurable outcomes, the House is the collaborative's new "home" in the post-Ford funding era.*
>
> *The House symbolizes many different things to different members of the collaborative. But it is most simply described as a place where members can come together, gain and share information and skills, talk about the campaigns and issues and how they're connected to each other, and identify long term strategies that are needed to promote big-picture movement building. Members can "opt-in" to participate according to the relevance of the topic to them. Each year, four House meetings on key issues are planned.*
>
> *The first House meeting centered on affirmative action, as Colorado faces a proposed anti-affirmative action ballot initiative*

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*that has the potential to affect all of the group's core issue areas.
Policy and research groups – the Latin American Research and
Service Agency and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Education Fund – joined the meeting to educate members about
the topic and the impact such legislation would have on
organizations and issues of interest to them. Future House topics
will focus on efforts to boost working families from low-wage into
middle-class jobs, higher education initiatives for immigrant
students, and other immigrant rights and health care access efforts
led by CCOC members and their labor, research and advocacy
partners.*

*House meetings have already bred discussions and action toward
larger movement building. Having identified a collective need for
tools and resources, the groups use the House as a platform for
finding ways to work together and share strategies related to
messaging, communications, leadership training, succession
planning, capacity building, and overall strengthening of the field.
Finally, the House has become a venue for engaging other
organizations in the movement, and an incubator for deeper
exploration of relationships with policy and research groups and
local and national funders. These relationships bring data and
analysis, intellectual capital, political connections, and other
influences to the House in support of large, multifaceted,
collaborative campaigns.* (S. Moss, personal communication,
November 7, 2007).

While the above narrative could frame the "house" dynamic as a

membership characteristic, the researcher documented this ongoing

"space" which is inhabited by members as an individual and

organizational commitment. By virtue of the very name assigned to this

commitment, "house", the CCOC collectively engaged one another in a

familial manner (through trust) about what personally concerned them

most. The co-arising nature of the "house" entity and inhabitance of

CCOC member concerns moves beyond the membership characteristics

identified in Chapter 1. As Mattessich et al.'s (2001) identify, one of the key factors in collaborative success are "Membership Characteristics." The authors defined this factor as, "*Membership characteristics* consist of skills, attitudes, and opinions of the individuals in a collaborative group, as well as the culture and capacity of the organizations that form collaborative groups" (p. 14).

Summary

While trust, concerns and commitments emerged as themes when the researcher coded qualitative data, these dynamics will be further described in Chapter 5's discussion. As a closing in Results, it is worth noting that Mattessich et al.'s (2001) descriptions of purpose and member characteristics as key factors in collaborative success, conflates the agential action or practice of group members (skills) with the structure (culture). This is problematic given that within a critical realist frame, both agency and structure consist of their own powers. To conflate the two dynamics together under one auspice of purpose and/or member characteristics, defines both agency and structure in terms of one another.

"Purpose" and "Member" become the definitions of collaboration without identifying the agential activity or powers inherent within each member. Conversely, the structure in which each member exists within is

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pronounced only when identified in relation to the collaborative endeavor. The definition inherently denies that there is a structure and culture "outside" of the CCOC which is also in dynamic interplay with the members and the organization. These structural and cultural powers also directly influence agency and collaborative unfolding. To conflate all of these dynamics co-arising with one another, exempts the powers innate to each. Chapter 5 addresses and discusses the need to describe agency and structure as separate powers as collaboration.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This chapter will discuss the implications of this case study's results in light of the collaborative literature defined in Chapter 1, the results in Chapter 4 and will culminate with a redescription of collaboration through a critical realist theoretical lens as defined in Chapter 2. It is through redefining of collaboration where the agential and structural powers/properties inherent within the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative endeavor will be detailed. The agential/structural powers which emerged during this case study when the researcher utilized the latter stages of Danermark et al.'s (2002) analytic framework stated in Chapter 3. The results of these stages are highlighted in the following discussion.

In closing, future thoughts and implications for the social work profession and the research which drives investigating the social world

will be provided. This study will illustrate to the discipline that it is possible to move beyond the traditional meta-theoretical worldviews of positivism, constructionism and pragmatism to the use of a practically applied meta-theory validating both agent and structure. Rather than conflating the powers and properties inherent to both structure and agency as being one and the same, both dynamics as they co arose in time *became* and shaped the collaborative phenomenon. It is the description of both dynamics which will illustrate that the event of the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative does indeed facilitate agential and structural interaction *and* vice versa.

Agency: The Three Orders of Reality and Practice is Pivotal

When defining what *is* the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative, members often shared with the researcher that "it" was a conglomeration of "doings." While the CCOC does not exist in a temporal sphere as an isolated entity *doing* something, the individual members which compose the collaboration and the activities performed in the real world *became* the collaboration. This was illustrated in the early meetings when members were mandated to meet with one another.

To fulfill the designated once a month meetings initially imposed by the Ford Foundation, members physically met for two hours in a shared space. Members would utilize this time to describe to one another how

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they viewed funding to be allocated. It was in these descriptions where members defined a potential collective *doing*. At the same time, in these descriptions, the catalyst for trust began to emerge between the agents. As identified in Chapter 4, the activity of shared discussion built a relational exchange between agents where trust manifested within the members. While not initially the modus operandi of the group meeting, the trust cultivated during this early time period became the foundation for member's individual concerns to emerge.

From a critical realist theoretical lens, it is key to identify the agential and structural powers which emerged during this time period. It is essential to clarify this point because the researcher actively chose to utilize a critical realist ontological and theoretical lens to interpret the structural and agential powers/properties which emerged. As identified in Chapter 3, through the use of retroduction (Danermark et al., 2002) the researcher identified how the three orders of reality became manifest in members sharing time and space with one another.

As stated in Chapter 1, rather than conflating that the emergent trust between members as a "factor," variable or byproduct attached to "working together" (Walter & Petr, 2000) the researcher sought to illuminate agential power contributing to a collective practical "doing" or relationality. Instead of validating that the CCOC exerted structural

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powers upon the members to "work together" or as Winer and Ray (2000)

describe a collaborative endeavor as "cooperation and coordination," it is

imperative to state that the CCOC did not "have" these powers/properties

yet to exert. The members themselves, as agents, were yet to fully engage

one another in the physical, practical and social orders for power to

emerge from a CCOC structure. The only structural emergent property to

impose upon the members was that from the social order; the Ford

Foundation.

In the Ford Foundation imposing a mandatory monthly meeting,

the inherent powers associated with this cultural system constrained and

enabled member nonprofit organizations. As a social and cultural

emergent property, the Ford Foundation constrained member agency by

propositionally mandating the member project. This was manifest in

members not being initially allowed to define how they were going to

practically engage one another; it was dictated to them via the imposition

of a face to face meeting. As Archer (2000) states, "subject and object

relations have to be distinguished throughout their interplay examined"

and in this manner, the Ford Foundation structurally imposed how the

nonprofit members were to engage one another. The interplay between the

structural emergent properties manifest in the Ford Foundation constrained

agential emergent properties. Members were not able to apply their own

practical relations with the natural/practical orders to initially engage one another, it was defined for them.

While the constraining powers of the Ford Foundation initially defined for the members how they were going to relationally engage one another, it must be highlighted here that in the members *accepting* this constraint, allowed the inherent emergent powers of the Ford Foundation to flourish. It also validated in members meeting face to face, the dominance of the social order (the Ford Foundation) in defining what would be a member's ultimate concern during this time; to receive funding.

In accepting that funding was a primary concern, members not only accepted the initial conditions for meeting with one another, they also validated the culturally emergent properties associated with social order. By (agents) members agreeing to meet and become "funded" by the Ford Foundation, they also validated the cultural power of a capitalist economy. The existing cultural property defined by capitalism exerted "its" power by the nonprofits needing to seek financial resources in the first place. Not only did the cultural property and power mandate nonprofits to fulfill their inherit need for financial support; it exerted the constraining power and dominance innate to it. While this dynamic was not made explicit to the researcher in interviews or archival documentation, it was again

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through abduction whereby the researcher was able to redefine the dynamic interplay of agency and structure.

In doing so, the very cultural properties which exist in the social order became illuminated. Those power and properties which constrained the members were so ingrained in each member's day to day practice, that they had not "seen" that they were co-creating a reality in which they were beholden. In this sense, collaboration was not as Mattessich et al. (2001) described in Chapter 1 as " A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards" (p. 61), but a "collaboration" of a different sort; one that strengthened the structure and culture which constrained member agency.

At the same time, whereby constraints were imposed upon agential power, there also emerged structural enablements. In constraining the agents to meet face to face, the Ford Foundation also "opened up" a time and space for members to physically meet. As stated in Chapter 4, it was in the first three years of meetings where trust manifested and turf issues associated with competitive local funding dissolved. This dissolution of competitive funding and leveling of financial compensation enabled

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increased nonprofit transparency to emerge. Members began to share with one another what mattered most to them and where their individual concerns drew them in practice.

For Archer (2000), the agent who shares their own primary concerns and commitments to others enters into a voluntary and/or involuntary collective practice. During the first three years, the nine nonprofit members voluntarily shared their concerns (for some nonprofits this meant clarifying their dedication to the alleviation of social problems which constrained specific populations, others described their desire to understand how base building could be strategically mobilized and others sought to understand statewide policies impacting member organizations). As Archer (2000) states it was, "Through interacting with others in the same collectivity, Agents become more articulate about their interest and thus better able to reflect upon the role positions which will further their realization" (p. 284). This very active sharing became the first pivotal point in the collective's (CCOC) practice.

Influenced by each member's own agential power/properties, this sharing became the starting point of active "doing" within the CCOC. It was also in this communicative sharing whereby the relations between agent's embodied, practical and discursive knowledge began to unfold within a collectivity (CCOC) . As illustrated in Chapter 2, a key tenant in

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Archer's (2000) critical realist perspective, is the relationship between the

three orders of reality. For members, in sharing their concerns about what

each "does" within their organization (as stated in Chapter 4) such as

defining what community organizing means to them and what mattered

most to them in "doing" community organizing animated each agent's

personal commentary on the how each applied their practice in the world.

As Archer (2000) states, "we are dealing with those emotions emergent

from people's necessary labor, from performative relations, from practical

imitation and curiosity, from involvement in all doing" (p. 210) where

agents share with one another how each maintains "peformative

achievement." Again, this interplay between the three orders of reality are

illustrated below Figure 4.

Figure 4 Relations Between Embodied, Practical and Discursive Knowledge

Natural Order	Practical Order	Social Order
Demonstration →		← *Application*
Embodied Knowledge	Practical Knowledge	Discursive Knowledge
← *Incorporation* →		← *Metaphor* →
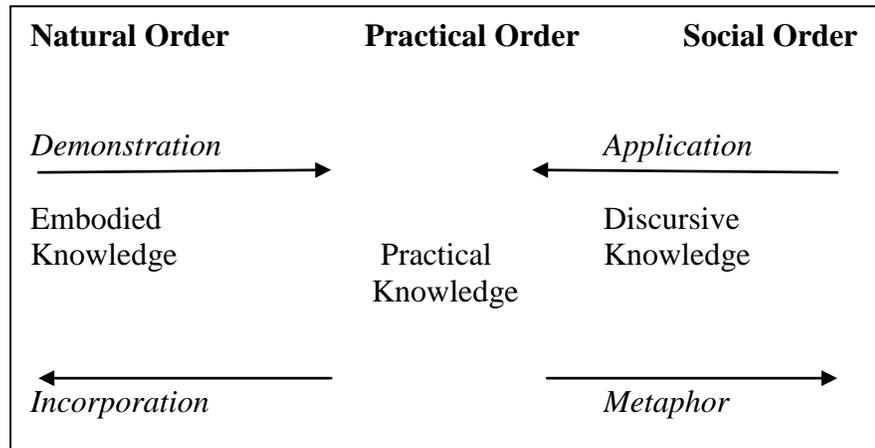
Figure 4. A pictorial representation of the dynamic interplay of the three orders of reality. Adapted from *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* by M. Archer, 2000, p. 179. Copyright 2000, Routledge.

In essence, agents came together with their own experiences shaped by the natural order (one's lifelong and developmental engagement with nature), practical order (praxis, doing, engagement with objects) and the social order (language, culture, structure). Each specifically have shaped and have been shaped by the powers inherent to each order. When the members came together to form the CCOC and thus began sharing with each other their ultimate concerns, these concerns necessarily were a culmination of all three orders coalescing within and reflected upon by the agent. It was only in the discursive, communicative activity shared within the group structure whereby these concerns became apparent. Rather than

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being an "inner conversation" or inner commentary (Archer, 2003) of concern, they became voiced.

This communicative action of sharing validates an aspect of one of the factors defined by Mattessich et al. (2001) in Chapter 1 as contributing to successful collaboration. "Communication" as identified by these authors was stated to mean "collaborative group members interact often, update one another, discuss issues openly, and convey all necessary information to one another and to people outside the group" (p. 9). While communication was addressed as a contributing factor to successful collaboration, the presence of agency is not identified. This "communication" may be "updating one another", but the content and process of "updating" were very much an aspect of the unfolding nature of the collaborative phenomenon. In sharing one's concerns not only were the agents becoming invested in the trust building process and overcoming the structural/cultural issues surrounding financial "turf" it was the activity of agents which co-created the collective (collaborative) phenomenon.

As stated in Chapter 1, oftentimes definitions of collaboration conflate agential powers and properties to being a "gift" of an already existing collaborative structure. The researcher denies this conflation by injecting that agency existed first before the collective/collaborative act. In agency sharing and voicing concerns, the CCOC collective began to

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emerge as a structure. Communication , while defined nebulously by the literature appears to be an activity of an already existing collaborative phenomenon, clarifying the content of this communication illuminates two dynamics; that agency gave rise to communication prior to collectivity and in the sharing of agent's concerns, the collective CCOC began to unfold.

Furthering this point, it is key to clarify that while communication was an essential component contributing to the unfolding powers of CCOC structure, it is was the active *doing* by agents which created it. The inherent powers agents possesses are not lost in the static definition of communication but the "do-ers" of this activity. It may be stated in the research literature that communication is critical to collaboration, it cannot be overemphasized enough that agents, in their own experience within the three orders of reality, ignited the CCOC. This is a much different lens to interpret communication and reframe how social work defines "human behavior" in the social environment (Schriver, 2010).

During the three subsequent years of CCOC meetings, agent activity began to define the CCOC structure. As stated above, communication of ultimate concerns was the locus of this unfolding and began to instigate active, collective doing. In this respect, agents sharing concerns led to defining what collective projects individuals were willing to devote themselves. The practice of agency devotion became the pivotal

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point of practice and where the CCOC became a structure with powers/properties of its own.

Corporate Agency: Morphogenesis is Transformative

As Archer (2000) states:

As an emergent stratum, Corporate Agency has powers proper to itself. This is the other reason why this notion of Agents, cannot be rendered by any formula of the sort 'individuals plus resources'. Its typical powers are capacities for articulating shared interests, organizing for collective action, generating social movements and exercising corporate influence in decision-making. Corporate Agents act together and interact with other Agents and they do so strategically, that is in a manner which cannot be construed as the summation of individuals' self interest (p. 266).

Archer (2000) states that agents interact and engage with one another in collective activity not based on individual self interest or via the "resources" which each may intrinsically own, but through a collective desire of shared interest. This collectivity, as she states, is Corporate Agency and cannot be reduced to individual rationality alone. This proclamation is a denial that humans, in their engagement with the world and one another act only from a rational, preference ordering. Human agency is more than what rational choice theory promotes and extends beyond what constructs human agency.

In the case of the CCOC, agents collectively contributed to the structural power composing it by coming together and sharing concerns. This illustration reflects Archer's claim that agents who interact together,

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reinforce, build and transform with one another through collective action. In doing so, not only are the members themselves transformed, but the structure of collectivity and greater social/cultural powers are transformed. The *relationality* between agency becomes the transformation.

Building upon the previous section declaring that practice is pivotal, this dynamic became further illuminated to the researcher in witnessing collective action. The practice of defining and redefining what constituted the activity of community organizing and social justice strengthened each agent's dedication to collectively working together. In defining this with one another, members shared that they were transformed by the way other members framed similar social issues impacting their individual organizations. They also began to rethink how they would actively *practice* addressing issues. This was illustrated when members strategized with one another on how to collectively mobilize action (practice) during the 2008 Colorado elections. As Archer (2000) highlights, it was in the agents "articulating collective interest" (p. 267) whereby the collective (CCOC) mobilized itself as collective decision-maker. Together, the agents who embodied the CCOC and the CCOC itself co-arose and defined one another in practice.

As a critical component of this specific instance where collective (Corporate) agency began to unfold, the cultural and structural

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powers/properties of the political stratum must be illuminated. Again, because not only agents possess powers and properties, at the same time, so do structure and culture. When agents collectively joined in practice, it was in response to the political structural and cultural powers emerging within Colorado. In response to the Colorado Civil Rights Initiative, Amendment 46 which stated:

> Colorado constitution concerning a prohibition against discrimination by the state, and, in connection therewith, prohibiting the state from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting; allowing exceptions to the prohibition when bona fide qualifications based on sex are reasonably necessary or when action is necessary to establish or maintain eligibility for federal funds; preserving the validity of court orders or consent decrees in effect at the time the measure becomes effective; defining "state" to include the state of Colorado, agencies or departments of the state, public institutions of higher education, political subdivisions, or governmental instrumentalities of or within the state; and making portions of the measure found invalid severable from the remainder of the measure" (electronic resource) , the CCOC

identified a mutual concern to address.

As described by CCOC members, this ballot Amendment could potentially impact each agent's concerns and dramatically alter member's personal and organizational commitments. When CCOC members identified with one another how the imposed structure in the passing o f Amendment 46 would negatively impact them, members began to define collective practice. Specifically, when Ballot Initiative 46 was to be voted

on, CCOC met and ultimately decided to "develop a joint message,

coordinate a group canvass, and outreach to 140,000 Colorado voters"

(S.Moss, personal communication, October 2009). In this sense, the

possible constraint of the passing of Amendment 46, enabled the CCOC to

further define their practice with one another. Together, the collective

action of the CCOC both defined Corporate Agency and unfolded double

morphogenesis.

The morphegentic movement is described by Archer (2000) as

being:

> Corporate Agency thus has two tasks, the pursuit of its self-declared goals, as defined in a prior social context, and their continued pursuit in an environment modified by the responses of Primary Agency to the context which the latter confront. At the systemic level this may result in either morphostasis or morphogenesis, depending exclusively upon the outcome of interaction, but since social interaction is the sole mechanism governing stability or change, what goes on during it also determines the morphostasis or morphogenesis of Agency itself (p. 267).

Morphogenesis is documented as a historical process taking place in time

as documented in the following Figure 5.

Figure 5. The Morphogenesis of Corporate Agency

Social-cultural conditioning of groups

_____

T1   (Corporate Agency and Primary Agency)

            Group Interaction
      _____
            T2   T3
            (Between Corporate Agents and Primary Agents)

                        _____
                                                        T4
                        (Increase of Corporate Agents)

Figure 5.2. A pictorial representation of the dynamic interplay of culture and structure with agents and collective agents (corporate agents). Adapted from *Being Human: The Problem of Agency* by M. Archer, 2000, p.268. Copyright 2000, Routledge.

Identified by the researcher, the CCOC embodied the double

morphogentic cycle of agency and structure. The historical moments of

these dynamics will be described below.

The historical moment(s) of T1 in the emergence of the CCOC

have already been documented. This emergence arose with the agential

relations of trust building and communication. This three year time period

represents the social-cultural conditioning of the group (CCOC). This

social-cultural condition of the group arose when members met monthly

and began to engage with one other about the potential doings of the

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collective and sharing agential concerns. This is the time period between T2-T3 of group interaction. Again, it must be noted that culture and structural powers were also present during this time period not only societally, but as group power began to emerge in and of itself. This became more clear when members were confronted by the potential impact of Amendment 46.

In confronting the potential structural and cultural limitations of Amendment 46 on the members, their grouping with one another became more profound in their practice orientation. In the CCOC identifying their collective or Corporate agential practice in overcoming Amendment 46, the group began to seek out other agents to strengthen their practice. As seen above in the diagram between points T2-T3, the CCOC increased their group interaction to others who had a similar interest in defeating the Amendment.

Archival documentation shows that the group interaction included engagement with students, the Higher Education Access Alliance, Payday Lending Coalition, Worker Misclassification, Paid Sick Day Coalition, Economic Self Sufficiency Coalition and Fiscal Roundtable. These are but a few of the many vested interest groups which were seeking to defeat the Amendment. Through the growth of these new corporate agents interacting with the CCOC, the cares of each collective began to emerge.

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While each collective had a distinct historical emergence of its own, during the 2008 electoral cycle, a common ideology against affirmative action became the ultimate concern. As Archer (2000) states, "The groups have mobilized, ideas have helped them to do so, and assertion will not fade away because the material interests it seeks to advance do not evaporate. In turn the co-existence of a plurality of Corporate Agents, seeking to push and pull the systemic or institutional structure in different directions, has profound effects on re-shaping the context for Primary Agents" (p. 278).

In the multiple groups joining to collectively define a stance against Amendment 46, two dynamics were at play. Not only were multiple groups coming together to solidify a position against the Amendment, the very activity of them doing so strengthened and defined their own agential powers. It also led to a regrouping of agents outside of the CCOC and vested interest group interaction. The cultural and structural powers which crafted the Amendment in the first place also became further defined. This morphogenesis or movements are illustrated in the following Figure 6

Figure 6. The Double Morphogenesis of Agency and Structure

Shrinkage   Vested Interest Groups

Of
Primary   Material
Agents   Promotive   Interest
           Interest   Groups
           Groups

                                 Ideal
                                 Interest
                                 Groups

                Participants   Promotive
                               Social
                               Movements   New

                                               Corporate

                      Defensive   Agents
                      Associations

                     Residual Primary Agents
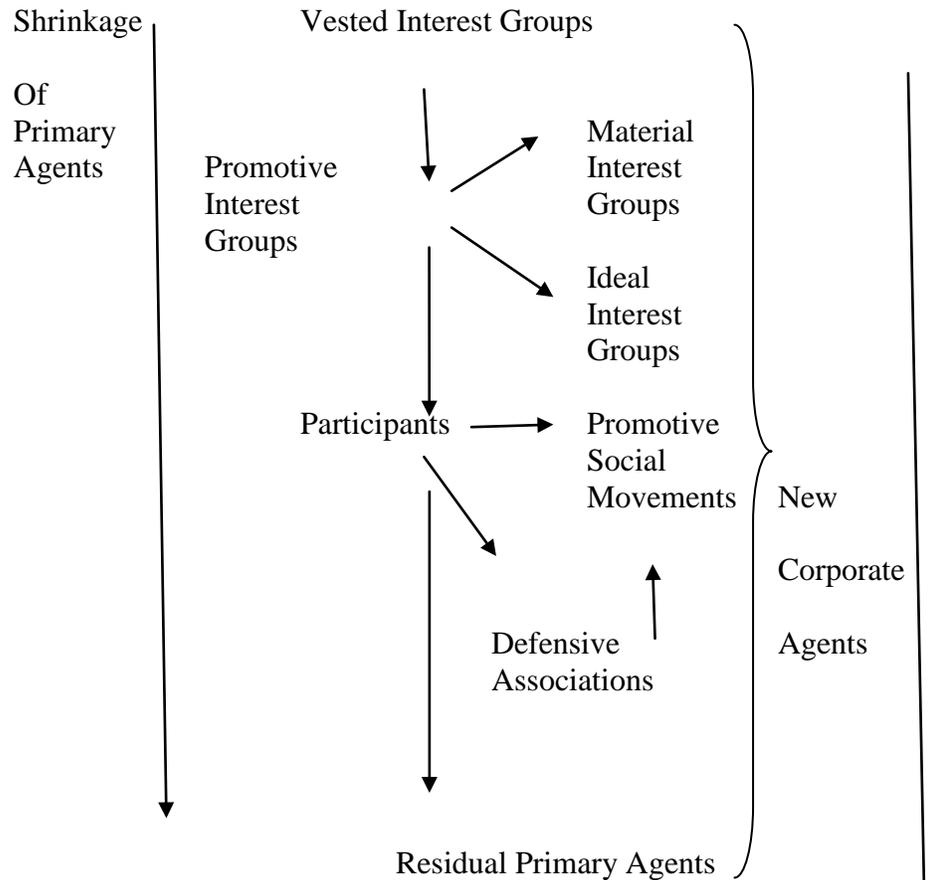
          This is the double morphogenesis of agency and structure.

Because the powers and properties of the cultural and structural stratum

emerged as an impending threat to the CCOC and subsequent corporate

"allies", the regrouping to *actively practice together* was instigated. The

practice of defining the ultimate ideological concern to negate

Amendment 46's charge, set in motion a continued collective practice.

Sharing videos with faith based organizations, dialoguing with nine

statewide campuses of higher education, working together on voter

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registration, receiving eight Chamber of Commerce endorsements and

fifty elected official endorsements of the CCOC's ideological stance (S.

Moss, personal communication, November 2010) became the pivotal point

of practice ; again, reinforced by the three orders of reality as experience

by the agent and transforming society in the process.

Discernment, Deliberation and Dedication

As a reflection of the researcher's utilization of Danermark et al.'s

(2002) critical realist infused analytic process, the previous sections are

the product of retroductive thinking and abstraction. Delving deeply into

the explanatory power of mechanisms and structures provided the

foundation to understanding how the event of the Colorado Community

Organizing Collaborative facilitated agential and structural interaction. In

a sense, the research question posed should be shifted to reflect how

agential and structural interaction *together facilitated* the CCOC itself.

Without the presence of prior member agency coming together with their

own power and properties and the structural mandate of the Ford

Foundation and a capitalist economy, the CCOC could not have emerged

as a collective or "collaboration." It was in the co-arising and dynamic

interplay of both agency and structure where corporate agency (the

collaborative) took root. While the sharing of member's ultimate concerns

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assisted in crafting a relational trust among members, it also laid the groundwork for the strengthening of an ideological stance. Through the emergence of Amendment 46, CCOC members morphogenically transformed themselves by solidifying their stance on an issue impacting individual agency power, it also transformed other corporate agents and society; Amendment 46 did not pass.

The Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative is currently at a critical juncture in their collectivity. Since the Ford Foundation funding has ceased since 2008, the CCOC has continued to meet, but is struggling to define its current "doings." In many of the interviews, the researcher heard that perhaps the CCOC should cease. It was shared that because trust has been built between members and their subsequent organizations that they can now take this trust into the greater Colorado community. Comments also have posited that perhaps the CCOC should not let funding be a priority to the group functioning. To do so, would allow the funding structures that exist to dictate how the CCOC should focus their practice. To negate funding pressures would be to reclaim the purpose of their community organizing focus.

In essence, the CCOC, as a collective (Corporate) entity is beginning to discern and deliberate what is of ultimate concern to them as a group. While Archer (2000) notes that there are "three significant

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moments" (p. 231) to an agent's commitment to an ultimate emotional concern and their subsequent practical activity attached to this commitment, it is the stance of the researcher that these moments are also a collective moments as well. This is illustrated above in interviews when the researcher heard different perspectives from members on how the CCOC should proceed in the future. Also, in the last CCOC meeting the researcher participated in on May 27, 2011, discernment and deliberation were the two themes which emerged. Together, the members were deliberating among each other for three hours on what the collective practice of the CCOC should be in the upcoming year. Responses ranged from "putting the CCOC on ice" to doing "base building," "capacity building" or "civic engagement" (CCOC, personal communication, May 27, 2011). It was in this deliberation where members shared again what meant most to them as agents, but also extended this concern into the shared CCOC space. It is when members began to discern with one another what the activity of community organizing was to them that the question of where to go or "dedicate" themselves to as a group emerged.

As of the writing of this case study, this dedication to a practical activity or practice has yet to emerge for the CCOC. The only dedication which has been made was to meet for another year to continue discernment and deliberation.

Implications for Social Work and Limitations

What are the implications of the research findings for the future of social work research? In answering the second research question of this case study, it is imperative to inject the voice of the researcher in a response. As the researcher /social worker who in the very activity of researching a social phenomenon, *became* a *pivotal point of practice* . Not only were my own natural and social orders informing my practice orientation or practical knowledge, they were essential. It was impossible for me to not rely on the embodied knowledge I inherently possess and the social/cultural properties which I inhabit and co-mingle with in existence. These informed my research practice and subsequently aided in the identification of agential/social emergent properties influencing/becoming the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative. It became clear to me as the process of collecting qualitative date unfolded, that I too was an agent with emergent properties and my engagement with an open system (other agents/social/cultural structures) required acknowledging my agency. If I was to utilize a critical realist ontology and epistemology, it became necessary to inject myself into the research process.

Abduction and retroduction as a part of analytic process utilizing critical realism, inherently necessitates the researcher to embody agency. In order to critically reflect about the possibilities of agency and structure

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influencing the emergence of the CCOC, the powers associated with the researcher being able to *do* this reflection becomes a necessary and sufficient condition of research. In the future, if social work chooses to utilize critical realism as a meta-theory influencing research, I feel that acknowledging researcher agency and how the three orders unfold within the researcher is essential.

As a social work researcher, I am not positing that social work should necessarily utilize only qualitative methodology since the researcher inherently posits herself into the research process (as illustrated in ethnographic, phenomenological studies), but that the researcher exists within an open system herself and is influenced by the three orders in which she exists. Also, the researcher should become aware of the corporate agency she embodies. The identification and subsequent action which unfolds within corporate agency influences practice and the research which unfolds within it.

Given the above reflection, I contend that in order for social work to truly work with the social that the discipline must begin to research the two dynamics which compose our work (research) in a more relational way. Human and environment are not just constructs and objects of study, but are analytic tools to describe the powers and properties composing two dynamics giving rise to one another. It was found in this case study

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that agential and structural interactions do indeed emerge influencing one another. As an empirical study utilizing critical realism, it my hope that the social work profession may witness the meta-theory's usage in research.

In closing, Sayer (1992) eloquently describes the sentiment of the researcher and the hope for social work research in the future. He states:

> [T]he point of all science, indeed all learning and reflection, is to change and develop our understandings and reduce illusion. This is not an external and contingent sociological condition of learning but its constitutive force, which not only drives it but shapes its form. Without this universal necessary condition, none of the particular methodological and ethical norms of science and learning in general has any point. Learning, as the reduction of illusion and ignorance, can help to free us from domination by hitherto unacknowledged constraints, dogmas and falsehoods (p. 252).

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Appendix A

An Embedded, Single-Case Study Design (Yin, 2009)

Context- Data external to the case

Case- Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative (CCOC)

Embedded Unit of Analysis- CCOC partner organizations (nine nonprofits composing the collaborative)

Appendix B

Colorado Community Organizing Collaboration Member Organizations

9 to 5	655 Broadway, Suite 400 Denver, CO 80203	303-628-0925
Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition	3131 W. 14th Ave. Denver, CO 80204	(303) 893-3500 ext 101
Colorado Progressive Coalition	1600 Downing St, Suite 210 Denver, CO 80218	303-866-0908
Colorado Unity	1600 Downing St, Suite 210 Denver, CO 80218	303-866-0908
El Centro Humanitario	2260 California St. Denver, CO 80205	303-292-4115
FRESC: Good Jobs Strong Communities	140 Sheridan Blvd. Denver, CO 80226	303-477-6111x11
Metro Organizations for People	1980 Dahlia Street Denver, CO 80220-1239	303-399-2425
Padres Unidos	3025 W. 37th Avenue, Suite 209 Denver, CO 80211	458-6545/937-3799
Rights for All People	3131 W. 14th Ave. Denver, CO 80204	303-893-3500 ext. 102

Appendix C
Data

Unit Being Characterized	Historical/ Archival Data	Colorado Political History Data	Interviews	Survey
CCOC as a whole	Ford Foundation Grant	Political/social issues addressed in meetings	CCOC community organizing strategies employed during collaboration	
	Mission/vision			
	Meeting Minutes			
Member organizations	Mission/vision, social issue addressed by org., history in CCOC	Political/social issues affecting member orgs of the time	Community organizing strategies employed during collaboration	
			Open ended interviewing	
CCOC subcommittees	When subcommittees were formed, what orgs composed the subcommittees, length of time and addressing what issue(s)	Subcommittees crafted in response to politics	Community organizing strategies employed during collaboration	
		"House" Meeting Minutes in response	Structured and open	

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		to political atmosphere	ended interviewing	
		"Bus" Meeting Minutes in response to political atmosphere		

Appendix D

Colorado Community Organizing Collaboration Member Consent

Form

Inter-organizational collaboration is an important aspect of social work practice. As a member of the Colorado Community Organizing Collaborative you are invited to participate in a social work doctoral study focused on identifying the efficacy of CCOC. The study is conducted by Shawna Margesson, MSW from the University of Denver's Graduate School of Social Work (303-870-0743, smilbaue@du.edu). Study purposes are to learn your role in the implementation and collaborative dynamics within the CCOC. This project is supervised by Dr. Jean East, Graduate School of Social Work, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208 (303-871-2870, Jean.East@du.edu).

Your participation in this study would allow the researcher to observe your activities at Collaboration meetings and subcommittee meetings. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not participate will not influence services in your organization.

All information gathered for this study will be confidential. Notes that might describe particular activities with colleagues or clients will not be shared with anyone except the Doctoral Advisor, Jean East, Ph.D. who will assist in this study. You will not be identified by name in any material that results from the study. It is possible that the activities from Collaborative meetings could be used as examples in the dissertation. A final report on the dissertation findings will be provided to the CCOC. There are two exceptions to the promise of confidentiality. If information is revealed concerning suicide, homicide, or child abuse and neglect, it is required by law that this be reported to the proper authorities. In addition, should any information contained in this study be subject of a court order, the University of Denver might not be able to avoid compliance with the order or subpoena.

There are no direct benefits to you for being a participant in this study. Indirect benefits of being involved in this study include the ability to contribute to an understanding of interoganizational community organizing collaborations. You may also enjoy the ability to provide information about your own experiences.

Potential risks of being involved include that possibility that it feels intrusive to have a researcher listening and watching at meetings or during the face to face interview. Again, if you wish to stop the observation at

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meetings or the face to face interview, the researcher will do so immediately. The researcher will leave the meeting and/or stop the interview.

If you have any questions about this research or about your rights during the process of participating in it, please ask them now. If you have questions later, please contact Shawna Margesson, MSW at smilbaue@du.edu.

If you have any concerns or complaints about how you were treated during the research sessions, please contact Susan Sadler, Chair Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, at 303-871-3454, or Sylk Sotto-Santiago, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 303-871-4052 or write to either at the University of Denver, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 2199 S. University Blvd., Denver, CO 80208-2121.

You may keep this page for your records. Please sign below if you understand and agree to participate. I have read and understood the above descriptions of this research study. I have asked for and received a satisfactory explanation of any language that I did not fully understand. I agree to participate in this study, and I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty. I have received a copy of the consent form.

Signature_____
Date_____

___I agree to be audiotaped.
___I do not agree to be audiotaped.

Signature_____Date_____
_____

_____I would like a summary of the results of this study to be mailed
to me at the following postal or e-mail address

Appendix E

Interview Questions

Introduce Self   Interview_____

Consent Form   Date_____

Audio Taping   Time_____

Questions:

1. Please tell me how your relationship with CCOC started? How
    long have you been with them?

2. How would you define what CCOC does?

3. Would you define CCOC as a collaborative? In what way?

4. Community organizing is part of the CCOC description? In what
    way is this the case?

5. What keeps you being a part of CCOC?

6. It seems that CCOC is in a period of transition? Is this the case? If
    so, how would you describe it?

7. Is there a difference between your experiences with CCOC now than when you started?

8. What do see the future of CCOC is?

Appendix F

Community Organizing Scan

[Fill in contact information from file]

Organization: _____

Name of contact person: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____   Fax number:

Email address: _____   Website:

1. What geographic area does your organization serve?

2. What issues does your organization focus on?

3. What kinds of activities does your organization engage in?

4. What kinds of training or technical assistance might help your organization be more effective?

5. Do you sometimes partner with other groups or organizations? If yes, what groups or organizations?

6. How long has the organization been in existence?

7. What would you say have been the organizations most important successes or achievements?

8. Does your organization have paid staff? If yes,
   How many? _____
   What are their roles? _____
   _____

9. Does your organization have members? If yes,
   How many? _____
   How does your organization define membership? _____
   _____

10. In your organization, who makes decisions about what your organization is going to do?

11. What's your annual budget?

12. In general, where does your organization's income come from (foundation grants, fees, gifts, dues, events)?

13. What's the one thing your organization is doing or planning that you are the most excited about?

14. I would like to verify the contact information we have for you. [read and note changes above]

Fund for Community Organizing
Scan of Community Organizing in Colorado's Northern Front Range
Summary - January 7, 2005

Background: The Piton Foundation received word in the fall of 2004 that it had been selected to participate in the Fund for Community Organizing, an initiative of the Ford Foundation. One of the first tasks undertaken was a scan of organizations engaged in community organizing in the 9-county northern front-range to learn more about the issues groups care about, types of activities underway, and the kind of help and assistance organizations needed to be successful in their work. From this information, we hoped a picture would emerge that would help us craft an initiative response that would be helpful and not intrusive, collaborative and not competitive, and that would provide sufficient early guidance to the local philanthropic community interested in community organizing.

In addition, the scan is useful for comparing the characteristics of organizations along the northern front-range to Ford Foundation criteria for the re-granting of Ford funds. Those criteria include organizations:

- Using grassroots community organizing as a primary strategy, with a strong preference for self-governing, membership-based organizations;
- Whose activities seek to reduce social, educational, economic and/or political inequality, and encourage active participation in public decision-making (public policy, budget allocation, elections, etc.);
- Engaged in at least two of the following issues and/or constituencies: immigrant and refugee rights, human rights in the U.S., children and family issues, economic development, communities of faith, youth development and empowerment; education reform/equity, racial justice, women's rights;[1]
- Mature (4-5 years or older) local organizations;
- With an annual budget of less than $1,000,000.

Organizational Attributes:

Geographic area served
Denver	8
Denver Metro	8
Northern Front Range	*4*

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Statewide   6

Discussion: Many organizations name a geography as the focus of their work that is actually larger than the area in which they currently have a presence. For example, of the 8 organizations serving Denver, 5 actually serve only certain neighborhoods or schools within Denver and are not operating citywide. Similarly, 5 organizations that name the Denver metro area as their focus are at present primarily in Denver though some may also have a committee or members outside Denver (for example, in Aurora or Commerce City). And the membership of three of the statewide organizations is exclusively or primarily located in Denver. For those organizations serving the northern front-range (defined here as Boulder, Broomfield, Larimer and Weld counties) none served all four counties. The result is more of a geographic patch work with scant coverage in the northern front-range, and only marginal attention to metro counties outside Denver.

Age of organization
    1-3 years   7
    4-9 years   12
    10+ years   7

Discussion: The organizations run the gamut from relatively new to older more established organizations. One might expect newer organizations to be less established and operate on smaller budgets but of the 7 organizations in existence for three or less years, three had operating budgets of $50,000 or less; the other four had budgets of greater than $100,000. Most of the organizations in existence for four or more years (12 out of 19) had budgets of more than $100,000.

Staffing
    0   2
    1-2   14
    3-5   7
    6-9   2
    10+   1

Discussion: Two organizations are staffed entirely by volunteers. There are a total of 82 paid staff in the remaining 24 organizations, the majority organizers (44) and directors (23). Twenty of the staff are part-time. Only 5 of the paid staff provide administrative support (3 of whom are part-time). The remaining 10 are a combination of things like volunteer coordinators, outreach coordinators, fund developers, research, etc.

Budget
    Annual Budget: < $10,000   1

$10-49,999	4	
$50-99,999	4	
$100-199,999	6	
$200,000-499,999	7	
$500,000+	4	

Source of Funding:	Majority grants	21
	Majority dues/donors	3
	Half and half	2

Discussion: Most organizations have annual budgets in excess of
$100,000; four in excess of $500,000. Most organizations are grant
dependent though of those, 14 indicate at least some of their income is
from other sources. Only two organizations have achieved a balance in
income from grants and other sources and two others pull their income
primarily from dues and donations. All four of these organizations have
annual budgets of at least $100,000.

Membership

Individual membership	15
Organizational membership	6

Discussion: All but one with organizational members also has individual
members leaving a total of 16 membership-based organizations out of the
26. The definition of membership varies and most membership
organizations have multiple ways that individuals can be members. For
example, an organization may define membership as dues paying but
will provide scholarships for large numbers who do not pay dues, or
members can actively participate in lieu of paying dues. Or there may be
tiers of membership. For example, an organization may have a smaller
number of members who serve on leadership committees of some sort
but also define as "member" those individuals who come to events even
if they aren't on the leadership committee. Eight organizations use
paying dues as their primary way of defining membership, six define
membership primarily as active participation, two rely on the number
who have asked to be on the organization's mailing list as a definition of
membership. Another three organizations that are not currently
membership-based volunteered that they are interested in exploring
becoming a membership organization.

Decision Making

Given the diversity in structure, member definition, and other defining
characteristics, the processes used for making decisions about issue
priorities and campaigns is equally diverse. Those that define themselves
as membership organizations rely primarily on organizing committees or

something like an organizing committee to make decisions. For example, youth, church, or parent organizing committees decide what issues they will work on and what they want to win as a result of their actions. Those that define themselves as collaboratives of organizations rely on formal partnership processes to make decisions. While the partners are organizations, they have equal voice much like members would in an organizing committee. Sixteen of the 26 organizations fall into one of these two categories. Most of the other organizations rely on their boards of directors to make decisions about issues and actions though in most instances, their boards include individuals that are either members or represent the groups that are the subject of the organization's work (e.g., youth, persons with disabilities, etc.).

Issues and Activities

Primary Issues

8	Worker's Rights – Temporary worker issues (5), affirmative action (3), job creation (2), union organizing (2), welfare to work, pay equity, family friendly policies, child care, unemployment, self-sufficiency standard, worker's rights education
7	Economic development – Community benefits agreements (2), community economic development, transparency on tax increment financing, regional equity and growth, micro-enterprise development, local currency barter project, nonprofit cooperative job initiative
7	Health – Tobacco tax (2), Medicaid cuts to immigrants, health disparities, bulk purchasing of prescription drugs, urgent care availability, access to public/private insurance, health education and advocacy
6	Education – Cole Middle School conversion (3), school finance, North High School reform, institutional racism in schools
5	Immigration – Driver's license legislation (2), consumer fraud practices of people asking for help with legal status, police policies asking immigration status
5	Justice System Reform – Use of private prisons, restorative justice, prison and jail expansion, sentencing and parole policy, family/ex-offender services or lack of (e.g., parenting rights, jobs, housing, how to find way through system), Cole Community Court
4	Racial Justice – Police reform (2), racial profiling (2), police accountability
3	Environmental Justice – Remediating Superfund site, air quality, Asarco litigation, clean up of Rocky Flats

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3	Housing – Inclusionary housing ordinance, low-income housing, loss of Section 8 housing stock
3	Juvenile Justice – education/not incarceration (30% juvenile tickets generated in schools with mandatory suspension policies for ticked students) (2), race disparities
3	Peace and Justice – Anti-war in Iraq (2), nonviolence training
2	Corporate Accountability – Car insurance costs by zip code correlate with race and income, CRA campaign against redlining, action against commercial tax preparers
2	Neighborhood Improvement – Community safety, increased police control, alley improvements
2	Tax Policy – TABOR reform (2)
2	Transportation – I-70 redesign, FAST TRACKS development
2	Voter Rights – Education and outreach (2), get out the vote campaign (2)
2	Youth – After school program, youth center
1	Gay and Lesbian Issues – Issues of concern to Latino/a gays and lesbians
1	People with Disabilities – Alternatives to nursing home care, waivers for community based services, consumer control of decisions, transportation

Discussion: These represent the current priority issues of the organizations interviewed. They may have been engaged in other issues in the past and may decide new issues in the future. The organizations are equally split between those that focus in a single issue area (e.g., health, immigrant rights) and those that are multi-issue. It should be noted however, that even the single issue organizations are almost always engaged in multiple campaigns at the same time that come at the issue through multiple lens. For example, one organization works on temporary worker issues, child care, and affirmative action all at the same time. Another focuses on tax reform, equal pay, expanding health insurance access, and the self-sufficiency standard.

Routine Organizational Activities

14	Public policy and legislative change
11	Research and analysis
10	Outreach (door knocking, one-to-ones, etc.)
10	Public education (PSA, media campaign, speakers, email bulletins, story bank, newsletters, phone bank)
9	Regular convenings and forums
8	Training
7	Leadership development/organizing training
6	Networking/coalition building
4	Youth organizing
3	Congregation based organizing

3	Legal representation or litigation
2	Fund development
2	Protest/civil disobedience
1	Consumer hotline

Collaboration

9	Colorado Progressive Coalition (CPC)
8	Padres Unidos
7	Metro Organizations for People (MOP)
5	Front Range Economic Strategy Center (FRESC)
4	9 to 5
4	Rights for All People (RAP)
4	Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center/CO Communities for Justice and Peace Network
3	American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)
3	Churches (in general, no individual church named)
3	Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
3	Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
3	Colorado Fiscal Policy Center
3	Colorado Immigrants Rights Coalition
3	El Centro Amistad
3	El Centro Humanitario
3	Greater Denver Ministerial Alliance
3	Save Our Section 8 (SOS8)
3	SEIU

Discussion: Only those organizations named at least three times are listed above. For a complete list of groups of organizations named, see attached. All organizations report that they regularly collaborate with other organizations. For some, the collaborations are formal partnerships though for most, they represent regular relationships with other groups and organizations that they may call on or be called on by depending on the issue or activity at hand. With the exception of the Colorado Fiscal Policy Center listed above, not many organizations partner with think tank and public policy advocacy-type organizations like the Colorado Children's Campaign (named twice), the Colorado Center for Law and Social Policy (named once), or the Bell (1). A number of labor unions were listed though only SEIU was named more than once. Six of the organizations named one or more labor unions as collaborators in their work.

Achievements and Future Plan

Discussion: Organizations were also asked what they viewed as their most important achievements and whether there is anything new coming up that they are most excited about. These responses do not lend themselves to counting but are worth discussing. Overwhelmingly the

responses to both questions were in two areas: organizational development and policy. When asked about achievements, nine organizations listed achievements in building their own organization. The building of a successful collaborative structure was listed the most often but also mentioned were things like managing growth, and leadership development. In response to the question about future plans that they are most excited about, again the most common response was organizational development (by ten organizations). Three plan to expand to new geographic areas but also listed were expansions in membership, staff, and issue areas. Policy successes were the second most common response when asked about major achievements. These included things like fighting back attacks on affirmative action, obtaining child care funding, police reform, obtaining a living wage ordinance, expansions of affordable housing, and litigation. While some of these were successes at the state legislative level, most were not. But when asked about exciting future plans, the most often mentioned policy response was a general feeling that the new legislature provided many opportunities for action at a state legislative level that had not been present before (mentioned by six of the organizations interviewed). Included in the list of possible policy targets were restructuring TANF, making the state EITC permanent, implementing tax fairness and TABOR reform, school financing, and juvenile justice reform.

Technical Assistance Needs

16 Fundraising:
- o Diversifying funding to reduce grant dependency (5)
- o Funds to hire fund development staff or consultant (5)
- o Help reaching and educating local funders (3)
- o Fundraising training (3)

13 Organizational Development:
- o Board development (4)
- o Executive director development (accounting, budgeting, coaching) (3)
- o Strategic planning (3)
- o Staff development (2)
- o Managing growth (1)

9 Training:
- o Organizing (one requested organizing training specifically for youth) (5)
- o Leadership (4)
- o Anti-racism (1)
- o Facilitation (1)
- o Community advocacy (1)

8 Technology:

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- o Database development (3)
- o Website development (2)
- o Hardware/software (2)
- o Training (2)
- o Interpretation/translation equipment (1)
7 Collaborations:
- o Building effective collaborations (4)
- o Network facilitation (3)
5 Communications:
- o Messaging (3)
- o Reaching members (who have different levels of access) (1)
- o Working with the media (1)
5 Policy change:
- o Understanding legislative process (2)
- o Understanding rules of lobbying (2)
- o Building better connections with think tanks (1)
- o Substantive expertise in economic development (1)
- o Substantive expertise in education reform (1)
- o Access to legal experts (1)
- o Building relationships with city officials (1)
3 Research funding
2 Mobilizing members
1 Building and sustaining a volunteer base
1 Help in achieving sustainability and institutionalization when part of another organization
1 Movement building

Concept:
Working collaboratively across issues to explicitly promote the values of our social compact.

Outcomes:
Supporting each others' work
Broadening our and our members' perspectives
Strengthening community organizing in Colorado
Moving us out of our issue silos to strengthen a progressive movement in Colorado
Building power to make concrete change

What it might mean:
  ➢ Deeper understanding of each others' work so that in each issue area we can identify factors that will help us connect to other struggles. Factors we should be clear on could include root causes of the issue, constituents, constituent interests, political context, important forces at play, targets, vision for change.

  ➢ Deeper discussion and exploration of each others' work would elevate cross issue work to a more relational level, avoid a 'utilitarian' approach to each other as resources, and help us make analysis and connections that will strengthen a movement approach among our bases, between our organizations' bases, and consequently among our allies and funders.

  ➢ An opportunity for each organization to explore the differences in our constituencies and their interests, as well as the way political context and targets are affected by different issues. This seems to be necessary to build the deeper levels of solidarity (at our bases) that we have talked about previously.

  ➢ Joint targets across different campaigns??

  ➢ An understanding that different interests and targets may sometimes conflict, so work to do no harm.

  ➢ Working to understand the levels of unity necessary to affect change.

> Those organizations leading work in an issue would take leadership in presenting the issue to fellow organizations.

How to implement:
> House/bus meetings assume a desire to work together

> Information at house/bus meetings is provided with an eye toward incorporating it into a collaborative analysis and plan of action

> Providing information beforehand can bring folks to a baseline level of understanding

> Presenters can present the information with an eye toward identifying points of intersections for other groups. This can be through working with possible allies in advance of the presentation, and developing a role for participation at the house/bus meetings.

> We can ensure that there is time at house/bus meetings to allow groups to honestly consider the implications for their groups. There will also need to be time after the house/bus meeting to reflect within organizations and then at a future meeting discuss implications.

> We want to identify the key times that all of us coming together would make a difference. We can identify criteria for this and ask the collaborative for commitment to these key events.

> We will develop a joint campaign timeline that will show the critical points of our campaigns.

> Base leaders should present their campaigns to provide clarity about whose needs drive the campaigns, who is most affected, to represent their interests and voice, to respond to allies suggestions or ideas.

Organization
9 to 5
ADAPT
African American Voter Registration and Information Project
ALAS (part of Family Resource Centers)
Center for Justice, Peace and Environment
Cole Neighborhood Organizing Alliance
Color of Justice, Inc.
Colorado ACORN
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
Colorado Progressive Coalition
Colorado Women's Agenda
Congregations Building Community
COPEEN (part of Cross Community Coalition)
El Centro Humanitario
Front Range Economic Strategy Center
Jobs with Justice
La Gente Unida
Metropolitan Organizations for People
O-N-E (One Nation Enlightened)
Padres Unidos
Project Renew/Denver Inner City Parish
Rights for All People
Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center
Save our Section 8 Coalition
Youth Zone Steering Committee