Carleton University

POWER TO CHOOSE: Collective Action Framing for
Citizens/Consumers in a Neo-liberal Context

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Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

Institute of Political Economy

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ABSTRACT

Electricity generation in Ontario has long been a contentious topic. Given the essential nature of electricity to industrial and individual existence in the Canadian climate, its production and delivery raise political, economic and social issues as well as environmental concerns. The announcement and pursuit of the sector's restructuring by the Conservative Party under Mike Harris has provoked many groups to voice concerns about risks and impacts of the province's agenda. Following a neo-liberal logic, the Harris government has dressed the restructuring in economic terms. Some groups have chosen to respond in kind. By examining the language and collective actions produced by six citizens' groups to gather public support and influence decision-makers, this study seeks to determine whether the consumer power of the individual is summoned over the political power of the citizen. In fact, the diverse collective action frames constructed by each group are the result of a complex process suited to the specific context of Harris' Ontario.

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INTRODUCTION

Power to Choose

On August 14th, 2003 the power went out in most of Ontario, parts of New York State and Ohio. It was the largest blackout in North American history. I was in the bath with my eight-week old son. It took only one hour in the dark to see how dependent on electricity we are as a society. It was rush hour in Toronto and people would be trapped or stranded by a disabled subway system. My 90-year-old grandmother and her fellow residents would be coping with the loss of their air conditioning on a hot summer day. Had I needed baby formula, I would be frantically searching for the camping stove to prepare bottles. A lengthy power outage, even in summer, could quickly become threatening to life. The event confirmed in my mind and probably in the minds of millions of others that for survival in the context of North America, electric power is as basic a need as drinking water. With our climate, our architecture, our cultural patterns,¹ our demography, we depend on a reliable, continuous and plentiful supply of electric power.

The restructuring of the electricity system in Ontario had been making the news long before the lights went out and critics of the Tory government's agenda cried, "we told you so".² Since its election in 1995, the government began to wrestle with the giant public utility of Ontario Hydro in the name of efficiency and competitive edge over other jurisdictions. But what will be under investigation here is not whether that agenda was right or wrong, what mistakes were made nor who was to blame. In fact, the restructuring debate acts simply as the issue context for studying

¹ Now, generations have grown up with watts and amps at their beck and call. Many of us lack the skills to improvise or problem-solve access to money, preparation of food, heating and cooling our homes.

an underlying dynamic between the government and those who seek to influence its agenda. As social activists work to bring change and guide the policy direction in the province's neo-liberal context, insight into the changing locus and nature of *political* power is revealed. This study seeks to examine whether the power available through the role of 'the citizen' has been overtaken by the power in the role of 'the consumer' in the marketplace, in terms of influencing government decision-makers.

Making trendy changes

As many western nations transform their governments in line with a market-supporting framework, reshaping government bodies into leaner, competition driven structures of governance, we can assume that their citizens are also in transition. Changes made to bring efficiency, reduce 'red tape' and 'serve clients better' by definition affect those who interact with governments on the receiving end. There is also an effect upon individuals or groups seeking to have input into the nature and scope of these kinds of changes, who are outside of the formal walls of power. Questions naturally arise for these activists, about the entitlements of citizens in this uncertain environment. Does influence continue to exist in the status of 'the citizen' or does power (if any) come from the role of the individual as consumer? Is it only through the capacity to exercise choice in the market that real input into the rules that govern society can be had? It is these types of questions that inform and shape this study of the activist's response to a shifting locus of 'power'.

Naturally, a major preoccupation in the fields of political science, sociology and political economy is to address the nature of 'power' and where it resides – in

² It should be noted here that the blackout is not solely the result of alterations to the electricity system. The failure is under investigation with eyes turned to some privately run operations in Ohio.

action and interaction or in the structures that shape and constrain those interactions. A solid definition of 'power' is an elusive concept as Dyrberg³ and Lukes⁴ make clear. However, for the purposes of this study, the power in action and interaction, the *power to*⁵ is of most interest as will be elaborated in Chapter One. This power is seen as lying latent in roles and identities that individuals may assume and activate. Also at hand is the play of perception of the power relations between identities such as the citizen and the state. In effect, power is a two-way street. With that in mind, collective action organisers charge themselves with mobilising specific identities to concentrate enough power to reach their chosen goals. To view this process in action, the context of electricity restructuring presents an ideal scenario.

The context of electricity

The government's decision to open the electricity sector to competition and bring market discipline to the once dominant public monopoly is an excellent example of the shifting locus of power. The details and complexity of electricity generation and delivery in Ontario are dazzling.⁶ The levels of regulation, the workings of the technology, the diversity of the generators, distributors and consumers and the needs of various groups in society make the timing, organisation and execution of change crucial. Added to the mix of factors can be the conflicting expertise on the issues of projecting demand and managing supply, the various

³ Dyrberg, Torben Bech, 1997. *The Circular Structure of Power: Politics, Identity, Community*. Verso, New York.

⁴ Lukes, Stephen, 1986. "Introduction". *Power*. Stephen Lukes, ed. New York University Press, New York. P1-18.

⁵ Dyrberg, 1997.

⁶ It mustn't be forgotten that the Energy sector in Ontario also includes the intricacies of Natural gas distribution to industry and home in the province. The layers of regulation that orchestrate the provision of what is daily taken for granted and yet crucial to survival is beyond the scope of this paper to fully decode.

economic models for investor reaction to different conditions, and the evaluation of the capacity for competition under government ownership. By no measure is restructuring a straightforward task, even in a province rich in energy resources. To be noted of course is the spectre of electoral correction that governs all decision making processes of this sort. The voters in the end decide if the plan is, for whatever reason, not to their liking. It simply depends at what stage of the implementation the government may be caught out. In short, politics and the market are both struggling over where control lies.

Some history

This struggle is by no means new to this utility. Looking back to 1906, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario (HEPC) was formed in partnership with municipalities in an effort to prevent the generation capacity at Niagara Falls from being held by three private companies. Two US companies were generating power at the time and exporting it to Buffalo, while a Canadian firm petitioned to generate power to service its other companies in Toronto. Municipalities and trade leaders engineered the move to a sort of public ownership and under the commitment and (cleverness) of Adam Beck, their efforts were formally/structurally realised.⁷ The mandate of the utility to supply power at cost has been a guiding principle for the last 97 years of operation and has been key to the province's economic development. In North America, Ontario Hydro⁸ grew to be a unique entity, the largest public utility of its kind. High voltage wire technology enabled power delivery over long distances to

⁷ An intriguing and thorough history of the relationship of the HEPC to government can be found in Neil Freeman's 1996, *The Politics of Power: Ontario Hydro and Its Government, 1906-1995*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

⁸ Restructuring in 1972 to update the utility's organisation into a more corporate-like body accompanied the name change.

rural and remote communities and the grid covered service for over 70% of the province's energy users. This worked well, all sides concede, until the 1980's and 1990's when nuclear mega-projects led to billions in debt for the utility. It was commonly acknowledged and widely accepted that something had to be done about the utility to bring it under control.

Remarkably, the process of decreasing Ontario Hydro's debt did not begin with the Harris Conservatives in 1995, but with the preceding Rae New Democratic government. The Darlington nuclear plant on Lake Ontario's edge turned out to be surplus supply in a time of economic recession, leaving the utility with few resources to cover the massive investment. The Rae government cancelled import contracts, employees were offered early retirement, and the utility's chairman Maurice Strong was instructed to look into restructuring possibilities. However, it was not until the Tories were elected in June 1995 that a concerted effort towards a revamped, open and competitive electricity market was undertaken.

Hydro under Harris

In 1995, the Conservatives under Mike Harris came to power and within months, appointed Donald Macdonald to head an Advisory Committee to investigate the reorganising of Ontario Hydro. Specifically, the mandate was to evaluate what was necessary to open the sector to competition.⁹ In the winter of 1996, the Committee accepted written submissions to the tune of 223 documents, 73 presentations during six days of public meetings, and 53 requested meetings with interested groups and experts from the public and industry, on the design of the new

⁹ Macdonald et al, "A Framework for Competition", p 2.

electricity sector.¹⁰ In terms of the consultation process, the Committee's Terms of Reference were to

Consult broadly, through public forums, written submissions and other means, undertake research and foster dialogue to ensure that the views and concerns of all interested stakeholders and citizens are incorporated into the Committee's recommendations.¹¹

In less than a year, the Advisory Committee submitted its report recommending the splitting of the company's generation and wires and transmission businesses.

Importantly, it also relayed the variety of messages and concerns received through the consultation process and listed those who participated. The majority of participants were municipal power companies, industry representatives, a small handful of consumer advocacy groups, First Nations' councils and environmental groups. Furthermore, from the perspective of this investigation, the Macdonald Report recognised the natural monopoly of the sector's transmission and distribution network that later became known as Hydro One. There was no mention of "privatisation" in early documents, which may account for the timing of the creation or activation of some citizens' groups.

Over a year later, in November 1997 the government responded with its own White Paper, outlining its plan for sector reform. Entitled *Direction for Change. Charting a Course for Competitive Electricity and Jobs in Ontario*, the document from the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology was just that, a direction for the restructuring process. According to Goulding et al.:

¹⁰ Macdonald et al, "A Framework for Competition", p3. A list of participants forms Appendix C of the paper.

¹¹ Macdonald et al, "A Framework for Competition" May 1996. P 116.

Despite its illustrious authors, little action was taken along the lines suggested in the Macdonald report. It was not until the crisis in Ontario Hydro's nuclear operations in late 1997 that a consensus for reform became evident.¹²

Whatever the reasons for the delay, the document states that "the plan provides greater certainty to participants in the energy industry – and more generally to the people and businesses of Ontario – so they can get on with their investment and job creation plans".¹³ To that end, a schedule for legislation and implementation was presented and within months, the first measures were taken.

Claiming consultation of its own, the Ministry included some responses to concerns over environmental protection, stating that "provincial environmental initiatives must be flexible enough to enhance competition, facilitate access for new generators, and spur more efficient and environmentally benign technologies".¹⁴ In addition, local municipal distributors were encouraged to reorganise with greater efficiency and all new entities and companies created from the Ontario Hydro break up were to have a clear *business* mandate. Thus, despite a perceived period of inaction by 1998, the wheels of restructuring to bring competition to Ontario were turning.

Response

The particulars of the shuffling – the division of Hydro's assets and the management of its debt – will be dealt with here at a relatively superficial level as it is not the researcher's agenda, nor expertise to evaluate the soundness of those "business" decisions. Instead, what is relevant are the general moves - the creation of new regulatory bodies, the opening of what was a monopoly to multiple players, and

¹² Goulding et al, 2001. "Dancing with Goliath: Prospects After the Breakup of Ontario Hydro" *Public Utilities Fortnightly*. March 1. p24.

the selling of particular assets - as the moments of exclusion and inclusion for non-government actors in the discussions of these changes. These moments of engagement or indirect non-engagement allow us to examine the nature of political dialogue in the current context from the citizens' group perspective.

Presented here, is the public mobilisation around electricity's political flashpoints that stems from what has been framed as an *economic* project from a neo-liberal government. The generating of energy at competitive, low prices while reducing the utility's debt and leading to development in Ontario, were cited as the motivating forces for splitting the near century old monopoly. A close look at the organised public response reveals that citizens' groups have been successful in highlighting environmental and safety concerns, as well as democratic issues while carefully challenging the government's economic arguments as false reckoning. In a time when media is full of anti-globalisation activism and protest against the transfer of control of essential services to the private sector, based on principled cases of rights and civil participation in decision-making, many groups are working within the government's framework of change to present sophisticated, economics-based arguments.

The election of the Harris Tories in 1995 is a favoured starting point for tracking activist group activities as the *Common Sense Revolution* brought discussion of privatisation to a head in Ontario. But, it is clear that the climate for reducing government size, bringing market discipline to the public sector and getting government out of areas where it "shouldn't" be, precedes their election victory.

¹³ Government of Ontario, "A Direction for Change" 1997 p 15.

¹⁴ Ibid, p 20.

However, despite the long history of some of our groups and organisations around general energy issues, their activities since 1996 will be our study material.

Engaging with the government

The Harris government's initial reaction to protest and criticism in its early days at Queen's Park was generally confrontational. Some rallies were greeted with increased security and riot squad presence. Nevertheless, public consultations on the part of the Macdonald Advisory Committee of 1996 were numerous and presentations varied in their sources. But several of the interviewed groups admitted to not paying much attention at that early stage of the game. Working outside of those venues, many groups engaged with the government at the bureaucratic level, through direct meetings with other ministries with energy-related interests and even through individual Members of Provincial Parliament. Depending on their character and their initial approach towards the restructuring issue, groups had an easier or more difficult time in dealing with the government directly. This became apparent through the selection process for the May 2002 Electricity Restructuring Forum, hastily hosted around the market opening. The government was highly selective in who could present to the forum, narrow in their definitions of the questions at hand, and downright hostile to certain presenters – Minister Chris Stockwell stormed out of several meetings. However, as will be seen from activist interviews, the formal channels of communication between government decision-makers and organisers were by no means the limits of engagement.

The questions

Intrigued by the change in political contexts from an activist's perspective, the researcher seeks to settle some fundamental dilemmas regarding the most appropriate

channels to funnel desires for policy change. But the real questions are these: accepting the presumption that governments are becoming more business driven, more economically minded, dealing away social and political entitlements of their citizens, are citizens aiding the process by responding in kind? Are activists selling out by accepting the government's motivating principles of efficiency and economic development? Is the principled stance a thing of the past?

Methodology

To answer these questions, this investigation focused on select groups that sought to engage and challenge the province's decision-making around electricity restructuring. Organising the study involved identifying a sample of those who worked within the government's limited channels of consultation and those who chose to work outside it (or were denied access) and analysing their arguments, status and more abstractly, determining whether consumers were summoned over citizens. Using a number of techniques, including media searches, web searches, government document analysis and referrals, six groups were identified as representing a variety of perspectives. Although some alliances included industry and business participants, as well as faith groups and other sector organisations, their participation was mainly through the alliance and so they were not included as separate actors.

Initial findings

On the whole, the actions of the groups selected have been multi-dimensional and cross-cutting, depending on their expectations and previous experience with the Conservative Party. Those actions were informed by the process of developing *collective action frames* that would have the most impact given the particular attitudes and ideology of the government. Focusing on each group's approach to electricity in

word and deed, allowed for insight into which identity was thought to bring the most power into play. These findings enable a discussion about suspected trends in collective action in the current political context. Have the neo-liberal features of governance and society been internalised or accepted for expediency's sake? Does the diversity of activities and tactics represent a re-conceptualisation of where politics happens? What impact will a predominance of 'consumer power' have on the citizen choosing to participate in the governance questions of the day? It is this discussion that this study, at the very least, hopes to spark.

What lies ahead

Chapter One reveals some of the key concepts employed in analysing the collective actions of citizens on the restructuring issue. After a brief discussion about the nature of power stemming from multiple identities or roles assumed by the individual when engaged with state and/or market, a sketch of the political context of the Harris Conservative government is made. In particular, the neo-liberal logic moving government responsibilities under the care of the market is revealed in terms of the electricity restructuring project. Seeking to break up the monopoly of Ontario Hydro and bring competition and market discipline to the sector, the Tories set the stage for collective action responses.

This chapter also sees the tools for studying this group activity laid out. Specifically, three concepts from social movement theory literature are presented as helpful in scrutinising the power relations that are the subject of this work. *Resource mobilisation theory* as sketched by McCarthy and Zald, in combination with *political opportunity* from Kitschelt help to further enlighten what Snow and Benford call the making of *collective action frames*. These interpretative schema are consciously

pulled together by action organisers to mobilise adherents to reach chosen goals. It is this framing process that may generate or at least indicate a shift in the locus of power of the individual.

Chapter Two presents the method used in the collection of data from six different citizens' groups along with the data itself. Through qualitative interviews, professional activists elaborated on their organisation's approach to the debate. Citing researched reports, specific tactics and general attitudes for winning the attention of government decision-makers, organisers explained their understanding of the issue context and the political challenges they faced. The majority of the six groups were driven by environmental concerns about air pollution in a competitive electricity market. The rest campaigned around economic development of Ontario communities and issues of local control. Generally, the activists selected a conciliatory attitude to increase and maintain access to decision-makers and presented 'practical', economically-minded research to support their arguments.

Chapter Three consists of the analysis of each group's activities in terms of the collective action frame they created to tackle the government's restructuring. Some shared ultimate goals (the phase out of coal-fired generation or economic development) but each of the six developed distinctive frames through which to interpret the issue context. Filing activities into categories of 'political' or 'economic', each group's campaign was weighed in terms of the identity invoked to establish whether these favoured the citizen or consumer as power holder. Also noted were those arguments or concerns that remained in the background in the name of expediency and impact for organisers.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarises the main findings of the study as well as suggestions for further research. Questions regarding the locus and potency of power sources will no doubt be the focus of study until the end of time. Nevertheless, the due attention to the status of the citizen, versus the consumer's power potential, must not be neglected in the debates of here and now.

CHAPTER ONE

Power and Choice

At the root of this discussion is power, of the non-electrical kind. The exercise of gaining and using influence to guide a policy direction is a primary occupation not only for those outside of the formal institutions of our society but arguably for those within it as well. And for researchers who study this constant choreography of power relations, questions like where power resides and how it is possessed and actualised, can quickly become epistemological quandaries. But, rather than fully air the ongoing debate about the character of *power*, what can be found below is a utilitarian definition and other conceptual tools used to explore its capture in the issue context. Alongside the social movement organisations active on the electricity restructuring project, is a majority government applying a neo-liberal perspective to governance, changing those power relations. In order to make sense of these groups' activities and answer the main questions of this study, some borrowing from social movement literature seems most appropriate – in particular the concept of *framing*. But first, a return to the subject of *power*.

Blood from a stone

In the selection of a useful definition of power or rather, the honing in on the power relations and their articulation that are being considered in this particular study, the choice has been made to forego extensive engagement with a more ontological approach¹ to the subject. While discussions about the possible latent, subversive, indirect and/or prohibitive nature of power are intriguing and worthwhile, the analytical approach taken

¹ Meaning, is it constructive or productive, direct, indirect, latent or manifest, subordinating etc? See Dyrberg, 1997.

here focuses on what Dyrberg describes as *power to*.² This side of *power* is “located in the relations between individual or collective agents that either gain or lose power in their attempt to pursue their intentions or goals.”³ Those relations are influenced and shaped by societal structures yet elude identification as ‘fixed’ or ‘external’ characteristics, neither knowable nor reducible. ‘Power over’ in contrast, is a zero-sum game. As Dyrberg points out, this side of power maintains “relations of superordination and subordination”.⁴ However, while we attempt to discuss *power*, its distribution and use by government structures and citizens’ groups, it would seem that such a view fails to capture the elasticity in action. It is also difficult to conceive of power as being *non-derivative* in nature as Dyrberg seeks to do. Instead, it appears that *power to*⁵ lies latent, infused in the identities and roles of engagement. In the invocation of those identities and the activation of certain roles, whether perceptual or actual, *power to* is at hand.

Studying power’s activation by collective actors through the invocation of identities leads to the question, what view do action organisers hold of power? Is it simply a one-dimensional view that Lukes describes as seeing power as the capacity to “prevail over the contrary preferences of others, with respect to ‘key issues’”?⁶ Is it a two-dimensional view that recognises the power holder not only prevailing but also in control of the agenda, “mobilizing the bias of the system, determining which issues are ‘key’ issues, ...and excluding those which threaten the interests of the powerful”?⁷ Or is it the three-dimensional perspective that considers in addition, that power modifies

² Dyrberg, 1997. *The Circular Structure of Power. Politics, Identity, Community* Verso Publishing.

³ Ibid, p 1.

⁴ Ibid, p 2.

⁵ Dyrberg states that a more communal conception of power finds ‘power over’ to be a parasitic, perverse version of ‘power to’.

⁶ Lukes, Stephen, 1986. “Introduction” *Power*. Stephen Lukes, ed. New York University Press, New York. P1-18. P9.

⁷ Ibid, p9.

attitudes and beliefs to those that work against people's best interests for wellbeing? Lukes explains that "Power, on this view, may encourage and sustain attitudes and expectations that work against people's 'welfare interests' or subvert and thwart their pursuit of their ulterior, focal aims, or both".⁸ Each view appears to represent a different level of analysis of power relations that could obviously temper the manner in which an organiser forwards challenges. Collective action organisers certainly seek to influence the agenda and bring their interpretation of what is a 'key' issue to the fore as well as ensure their preferences are included in decision-making. Taking note of the influence of neo-liberal logic in multiple facets of societal life, the internalisation of some economic priorities and guiding rationales, organisers may be aware of this three dimensional view of power. Whether this insight is intuitive or acquired through theoretical debate, the recognition of power's modification of attitudes and beliefs might factor into the direction of the action focus. A study of collective activity then benefits from considering Lukes' contribution when analysing the tactical choices of various groups for two reasons. Organisers acutely aware of powerful trends at work may use this perception when constructing their action frames. Or, the researcher may detect that action choices have been informed by such trends without the organiser's awareness of their presence. In either instance, the three-dimensional view of power is an enriching concept.

At a less abstract level, power, even when institutionalised and legitimised by legislative processes and societal perception, does not solely reside in the halls of the judiciary and parliament of a democratic community. Although electoral exercises theoretically transfer power to both structure and agent of the state from the citizen, the amount of available power is by no means fixed. Agents and structures can be replaced

⁸ Lukes, 1986 p10.

and reformed, at the very least in four years time, by a dissatisfied populace. But outside of government and without venturing into culture, economic relations, specifically in the capitalist market environment, are also structures in which identities and roles can be activated. This is not to say that *power* lies about in pools that any actor or cause can ladle up in great amounts. Nor is it asserted here that identities and roles in relation to the state exist without connection and overlap to those in the economy. Rather, what is crucial to an understanding of power for the purposes of this project is that it resides in human interaction and is not restricted to a specific realm of institutions or issue arena but exists in multiple loci simultaneously. The two loci to be dealt with here are ‘politics’ and ‘the marketplace’ and the play of the actions of the ‘citizen’ and the ‘consumer’ identities within each.

Trends in ‘Politics’

As has been identified in current political science literature, there is a trend amongst many First World western nations towards a neo-liberal approach to government.⁹ This trend is characterised by a focus on deficit and debt reduction in government expenditures, a downloading of responsibilities to lower levels of administration and/or to outside providers and a heavy emphasis on maintaining the conditions for competitive economic growth as the route to social wellbeing. Governments obsessed with appearing attractive to investors, ‘trim the fat’ of their bureaucracies and programs in the name of efficiency and results – quantifiable returns on the capital entrusted to them by the hard working taxpayer. Part of this ‘fad diet’ is taking government out of the areas where government ‘has no business being’ –shedding

⁹ Larner, 2000; Handler, 1996; Strange, 1995; Albert, 1993; etc.

assets to pay down debts and allowing the private sector to 'do it right'. Privatisation and deregulation are the order of the day. Simply put here by Handler,

the ideological justifications for privatisation emphasise client autonomy. Large bureaucracies, it is claimed, are unresponsive to clients, consumers and workers. The private sector, in contrast, has to compete for consumers. Efficiency depends upon satisfied clients. Therefore, privatisation, by breaking the public monopoly and increasing private sector competition, enhances consumer autonomy.¹⁰

According to Jon Pierre, this process of 'marketisation' is leading to the employment of market criteria for resource allocation and measuring efficiency of public producers and suppliers.¹¹ In this context, "Neo-liberals, in particular, envision citizen actions as solely driven by market-oriented consumption".¹² The locus of power appears to be shifting.

Identity crisis

Naturally, when a government takes this kind of approach towards its 'business', the relationship between itself and its constituency is altered. The citizen's identity, structured by a set of entitlements and responsibilities, is dressed as a *client* or *consumer* deserving of certain treatment and quality because he or she is paying for it.¹³ Instead of responding to the citizen identity that has access to universal entitlements, is protected by a Charter of Rights, and finds recourse for unfulfilled obligations through the judiciary or the ballot, the focus shifts to servicing money-holders. Citizens or consumers, each category or identity comes with a set of relations and power sources.

¹⁰ Handler, Joel, 1996. *Down from Bureaucracy. The Ambiguity of Privatization and Empowerment*. Princeton University Press, Princeton. P78.

¹¹ Pierre, Jon, 1995. "The Marketization of the State: Citizens, Consumers, and the Emergence of the Public Market" *Governance in a Changing Environment*. B.Guy Peters and Donald J. Savoie, eds. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal. P56.

¹² Broad and Antony, eds. 1999. *Citizens or Consumers: Social Policy in a Market Society*. Fernwood Publishing, Halifax. p9.

¹³ Harris' *Common Sense Revolution* states repeatedly that taxpayers should be getting better quality for their money. 1994.

On some level, the citizen also agrees to participate in society according to the rules and norms of societal structures and institutions. For that citizen, there are both informal and formal channels through which the citizen can make their interests and discomforts known. In contrast, consumers are economic creatures who make their preferences known by exercising choice in the marketplace.¹⁴ Here Pierre again makes a sharp observation:

The common denominator between citizenship and the customer-based model is that both outline a model of exchange of goods and resources between the individual and the state. What essentially differs between the two models is the source of the individual's entitlements; citizenship in its traditional form can be described as an immaterial relationship between the individual and the state... Customers, on the other hand, derive their entitlements from purchasing power, some of which may be transferred to the state, some of which may come from other sources. Thus, while citizenship denotes a constitutional model of equal individuals' relationship to government made up of the collectivity of these individuals, customer-based models draw on market behaviour, which by definition is anonymous, unequal and individualistic.¹⁵

Nevertheless, each identity carries with it a set of power relations that can be activated by the activist. The question is, which identity is the most potent?

Another aspect of the consumer/citizen identity crisis is the potential power each has to mobilise to express desires and preferences. Presumably, in the efficient and responsive market-like relationship, consumers have a more immediate impact on their environment than citizens in between election periods. Dissatisfaction, theoretically, is effectively communicated through 'exit' – the client's departure from a relationship with the service supplier in favour of another. The numbers of buyers can also be significantly lower than the number of voters required to have the same effect. For example, one hundred people choosing to change their consumption habits, has more impact for a business than one hundred voters choosing a different party may have to a candidate. Of

¹⁴ Broad and Antony, 2001; Pierre, 1995

course, gauging the impact of consumers versus citizens is a tricky (and risky) quantitative exercise. Political power for the citizen is theoretically more universal whereas consumer influence is limited to those who have the means to purchase it. To show that one is more effective may lead to the eventual diminishment of the other.

Yet, for each identity there are different conditions that make it more or less powerful. Litigation strategies can be exercised most effectively in and around an election period – every four to five years. The results are legally binding whereas market choices are less restricted (or at least not so absolutely constrained). However, there are still many mechanisms of political expression that require certain conditions for access – the need for a professional intermediary, a certain amount of public support or a conciliatory attitude. Overall, neither identity is singularly more powerful than the other but neither can be ignored.

Indeed, political parties in power that support the belief that the market can always do it better, have a different gaze towards the population. Instead of *citizens* to whom they bear a certain set of obligations, there are *consumers* whose voices must be heard. The best way to bring market discipline and efficiency to an institution is to let consumers describe their needs and react to ineptitude in meeting those needs by exercising their power of exit. And of course, the ability to exercise choice will solve all the citizen/consumer problems.¹⁵ The assumption is that governments can serve their *clients* better with fewer resources, presumably with less complaint, by letting consumers get what they want for themselves. Everybody is happy, everybody wins and the market

¹⁵ Pierre, 1995. P64.

¹⁶ Of course nothing is said about the variation in means available to the consumer nor whether the options available represent real choices, both inequalities that Pierre notes well (1995).

regulates everything naturally. The Conservative Party of Ontario under Mike Harris was a firm believer.

To market

When the Tories came to power in 1995, they had done what few parties do: publish a relatively comprehensive guide to their beliefs and how policy would look from their perspective.¹⁷ They stated unequivocally that their 'Common Sense Revolution' would "have a significant impact on the way in which government and its employees do business on a day-to-day basis, because it will demand that government does business LIKE a business. In other words, in an efficient and productive manner that focuses on results and puts the customer first."¹⁸ While relatively little attention was paid to Ontario Hydro in this historic document, within eight months of their election victory it became clear that the utility would be remodelled to meet these criteria.

Regarding the electricity restructuring, the government took great pains to communicate that something *had* to be done. The utility that had been doing so well and was key to the province's economic development had fallen victim to bad management. The government pointed to growing debt, ageing assets and a heavy reliance on nuclear power and many experts in the field agreed that reform was imperative.¹⁹ The supporting rationale was different however, as the government and the Macdonald Advisory Committee appointed to look into competition, cited the risk of losing Ontario's

¹⁷ Conservative Party of Ontario, 1994 *The Common Sense Revolution*. Toronto. See John Ibbitson's 1997. *Promised Land: Inside the Mike Harris Revolution*. Prentice Hall. Scarborough, for an in depth view of the creation of the party platform and its implications for party's resurrection.

¹⁸ Conservative Party of Ontario, 1994. P21 emphasis in original.

¹⁹ See Mittelstaedt, Martin August 18, 1997 "Change 'unavoidable' for Ontario Hydro: lights out: giant utility's woes mean a competitive market 'is now inevitable'. *Globe and Mail* pA1. Also see McDonald, Marci. February 12, 1996. "Privatisation power play: Ontario Hydro moves towards a controversial sell-off of its assets." In *Maclean's*. vol 109 no 7. P30-1.

competitive edge over other jurisdictions²⁰ (as opposed to more environmentally focussed opinions). According to the Advisory Committee, pressures from the global market as well as a responsibility to *consumers* were creating a climate that only increased competition and efficiency would relieve.²¹ The government's response to the Committee's recommendations echoed the ideology of 'the market' leading the way back to prosperity: "the benefits of competition in electricity mean more jobs and opportunities, and a healthier economic future for the people of Ontario."²² Clearly, there was no choice for the government but to move ahead to a competitive electricity sector.

Stressing the economic benefits to change, the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology Jim Wilson, outlined the government's case for the sector reform as threefold: 1) to preserve industrial competitiveness over neighbouring provinces and states; 2) to bring market discipline to Ontario Hydro, thereby correcting its unsatisfactory business record; and 3) to break up the monopoly in order to allow for "new technologies, new services, and new ways of doing business".²³ The results, according to the government's model, would increase competition that would naturally lead to lower electricity prices and more choices for consumers. What would remain provincially-owned in the electricity industry would be returned to a condition of financial soundness, a project foremost in the Harris agenda. Given this evidence, there can be little doubt about the neo-liberal leaning of the Conservatives. The policy document of May 1994 entitled *The Common Sense Revolution* states outright that "many of the things that government does can be done cheaper, faster and better if the private

²⁰ See the Macdonald Advisory Committee's 1996 *A Framework for Competition*. Introduction and Ch. 3.

²¹ Macdonald Committee, 1996.

²² Jim Wilson, Minister of Energy, Science and Technology 1997, *Direction for Change*.

²³ *Direction for Change* p.vii.

sector is involved.”²⁴ Privatisation and deregulation were options being considered throughout the jurisdiction.

In response to the Macdonald Committee’s report in 1996, the government published a twenty-nine-page white paper called “Direction for Change” in 1997. In it, the government stated that Ontarians were expecting service that was “efficient, innovative, responsive, fair to its customers, and open and fully accountable”.²⁵ In no uncertain terms, the electricity sector had to be reformed as other countries, including the United States, were moving ahead. Ontario would soon be left behind. The answer to the utility’s woes was regulation by the market and the break up of the monopoly into new companies with a ‘clear business focus’.²⁶ To address concerns regarding environmental regulations during the public consultations of 1996, the government wrote that it would “be considering market-based mechanisms that would favour more environmentally preferred forms of generation and penalize those forms of generation with a more negative environmental impact”.²⁷ Finally opening the electricity sector to competition would allow consumers to exercise their power of choice.

Paving the way

In February 1998, the Market Design Committee (MDC) was created with a one-year mandate to make the government’s White Paper plan a reality. At the same time, the Ministry readied legislation to enable them to split Ontario Hydro into five different entities,²⁸ and make changes to the Ontario Energy Board’s role in regulating the sector. By October, the Energy Competition Act of 1998 (Bill 35) was passed. According to

²⁴ Conservative Party of Ontario, 1994.

²⁵ Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, 1997. *Direction for Change*. P1.

²⁶ *Direction for Change*, p8.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p20.

Goulding, et al, the Energy Competition Act established the legislative framework for competitive electricity markets in Ontario.²⁹ It enabled authority to be granted the Ontario Energy Board to license entities that produced, transmitted, distributed and sold electricity. In addition, the government thought it necessary to create the Independent Electricity Market Operator (IMO) to run the market without the influence of the legislature, ensuring fair treatment to all non-government participants in the market. Ontario Hydro was broken up into a generation business and a transmission company to allow other producers to access the grid. Hydro One held the transmission assets – all the wires businesses and some distribution. Ontario Power Generation (OPG) held the generation assets – 90% of the “installed capacity of the province”.³⁰ This move would make it necessary for OPG to compete along with other generators to supply power to the grid, rather than receiving preferential treatment.

Second term, second phase

With legislation in place by 1998, the Market Design Committee having generated ‘market rules’ by January 1999, and the IMO launched in April of 1999, the second phase of the restructuring process had begun. The government went into the June election with only two references to hydro in its re-election Blueprint –they had frozen average Ontario Hydro rates and were promising emission standards for any utility selling electricity.³¹ The privatisation of generation assets such as the non-nuclear facilities appearing in *The Common Sense Revolution* was absent. Successfully re-elected

²⁸ The five entities are the IMO, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation, Electrical Safety Authority and Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation. See Ontario Energy Board “Ontario’s Competitive Electricity Market FAQs” available at http://www.oeb.gov.on.ca:80/english/elec_deregulation_faq.htm as of Sept/02.

²⁹ Goulding et al. 2001. “Dancing with Goliath: Prospects After the Breakup of Ontario Hydro” *Public Utilities Fortnightly* March 1, 22-33.

³⁰ Goulding, A.J. et al, 2001. These authors argue that the restructuring scheme still allows OPG to maintain significant market share and thus exercise “strategic behavior”.

with a majority government on June 3rd, 1999, the Conservatives were free to implement the rest of their restructuring plans. A firm date of May 2002 was given for the market opening and in February of 2000, the government launched a \$1.3 million ad campaign to get information to the consumer on retail changes.³² Finally, after announcing his resignation as party leader in October of 2001, Harris put privatisation of Hydro One front and centre in the restructuring process. The new leader of the Conservative party would not only have the honour of wrapping up the largest privatisation plan in the country but also the potential chaos of a newly competitive energy market soon after taking office.

The summer of 2002

The summer of 2002 proved to be politically and meteorologically hot and sticky. Premier Ernie Eves was sworn in on April 15th and within four days, was thwarted by an Ontario court ruling about the sale of Hydro One. Launched by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Communication, Energy and Paper Workers Union (CEP), the court case stopped the province in its tracks. Judge Arthur Gans ruled on April 19th that the province had no legal authority to sell off its transmission and distribution company. The government regrouped, readied new legislation to allow it to sell its assets, launched an eight-day consultation process and invited alternatives to an initial public offering. By June 27th, new legislation³³ was passed allowing the government to sell the transmission end of the sector, however, by this time Premier Eves had publicly stated that the province would maintain a majority share in Hydro One.

³¹ "Blueprint – Mike Harris' Plan to Keep Ontario On the Right Track" p21-34 & 35-50 online version; "Hydro: Tiny Steps toward big mess" Toronto Star Nov. 11, 2002 – a chronology of the hydro issue.

³² Marketing magazine June 19, 2000.

Soaring temperatures increased electricity demands and triggered higher prices for energy in the new market. Consumers began to see grand bill increases while an apparently undecided government warned of a shortage in generating capacity as the summer turned to fall. To cope with the volatile situation, in November 2002, the government announced a plan to protect consumers, freeze hydro rates at 4.3cents per kWh and a rebate retroactive to the marketing opening date. Winter arrived in Ontario with below normal temperatures, again stressing the importance of electricity in the province. The Eves government continued to pursue a more inclusive process with another round of consultations in December of 2002.³⁴ However, with an election on the horizon, on January 20th, 2003 the government announced it had abandoned plans to privatise Hydro One entirely.³⁵ Election failure on October 2nd forced the Tories' direction for change to change course.

How to get ahead

Faced with a neo-liberal logic among the decision-makers of a jurisdiction, activists identifying the cracks and biases in such a world-view have choices of their own to make. Given this prevailing mentality of letting the market decide, how best can change be affected? When facing a majority government most interested in actualising a neo-liberal logic, how can citizens influence policy direction years from an election? What sources of power can be mobilised? For researchers, questions regarding how we study these choices and what their repercussions may be for identities of the citizen and the consumer quickly arise. A look at some of the social movement theory literature that

³³ Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act, 2002 serves as a consumer bill of rights and stipulates market surveillance powers for the IMO, the status of Municipal Electricity Utilities as well as Hydro One's position with respect to the government.

³⁴ The Ministry of Energy produced an Action Plan Consultation Paper for large commercial and industrial electricity users, looking for input on enhancing competition and supply.

has attempted to provide strategies for making sense of collective action can yield some useful concepts.

Power to...

Many authors have attempted to explain collective actions in societies by concerning themselves with everything from individual rationale to broader historical and cultural contexts. Looking for a theory to explain the success of one group over another, the spontaneity of some actions over the methodical plodding of others, and the categorical difference between petitioners and rioters, analysts have combed the past and the present for threads of connection. So far, no all-encompassing theory has evolved to account for the variety or intensity with which people come together to seek change. But, the attempts at theory making have offered new perspectives from which to review this kind of politics. None of the concepts seems to completely explain differences or successes amongst social movement groups but in concert, they can shed light on the activist's process. Of use here are the concepts of *resource mobilisation* from McCarthy and Zald (1977), to a limited extent *political opportunity structures* explained by Kitschelt (1986) and *framing processes* described by Tarrow (1992) and Snow and Benford (1992 and 2000). It is the latter concept in particular that is most enlightening for considering an organisation's choices for focus, and action.

...gain support

Resource Mobilisation theory (RM) was developed to explain certain questions about the capacity of organisations during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, to mobilise and survive. The approach, according to McCarthy and Zald, deals with "the

³⁵ Office of the Premier News Release "Eves moves to protect consumers, retains 100 per cent control of Hydro One" January 20, 2003.

dynamics and tactics of social movement growth, decline and change”.³⁶ It suggests that, assuming grievances are everywhere and constant, it is the structure of organisations and their ability to pull together support and access that explains the highs and lows of collective activity.³⁷ Focusing on the mechanics of holding the attention of diverse *adherents*, and the decision-making structure of the organisation, the rise and fall of SMOs and their relationship with authorities can be partially explained. Granted, McCarthy and Zald admit that theirs is a partial theory and their critics suggest why. Mayer and Roth(1995) and Piven and Cloward(1993) agree on one failing of RM: “This theory of social movements refrains from placing one social conflict on a higher order than another, and does not attribute to one social movement a more fundamentally challenging character than another”.³⁸ While McCarthy and Zald sought to generate analytical tools with which to account for the mobilisation process, – how conscience adherents are brought in and kept as SMO supporters among a sea of competing causes – their critics accused them of collapsing different types of collective action into the pile of ‘politics’.³⁹ Lumping violent protest into the same category with party politics and legal demonstrations is problematic to say the least but more specifically, Mayer points directly to the American origins of the resource mobilisation approach, and the assumptions about context that make the theory inapplicable to new social movements in Europe.⁴⁰ By applying a more economic model (as opposed to a sociological one), emphasis in the RM approach rests on “interaction between resource availability, the preexisting(sic) organisation of preference structures, and entrepreneurial attempts to meet preference

³⁶ McCarthy and Zald, 1977. P1212. “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 82, No 6. 1212-1241.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Mayer and Roth 1995, “New Social Movements and the Transformation to Post-Fordist Society”p300

³⁹ Piven and Cloward 1995.

demand".⁴¹ Unfortunately, this does not adequately explore the political opportunities constraining or supporting that interaction. Can the strategic choices for action, the framing of issues and the character of the organisation as well as the attitudes with which decision-makers are approached be so clearly reduced to a question of mobilising the most effective resources? Assumptions about the context that the theory was developed to describe keep this from being a generalised and whole concept with which to work.

What can be salvaged, however, from resource mobilisation and complemented with additional concepts, is its attention to the mechanics of organisation among groups that have chosen to work within the structures of governance instead of pursuing more confrontational approaches towards authority. Taking into consideration concerns for winning and keeping diverse adherents, as well as working with limited resources, may shed some light on the reasoning behind some tactical choices. In a sense, what resource mobilisation theory provides, segues into the political opportunity concept and the framing that organisers do to take advantage of both.

...work the system

McCarthy and Zald do consider societal contexts as both supporting and constraining social movement phenomena.⁴² While few would disagree with this observation, other researchers such as Kitschelt, Banaszak, Tarrow, Snow and Benford would say that specifically *political* opportunities have a strong influence on the choices that movement organisers and supporters make. This seems obvious, as most groups seeking to affect change do not exist in a vacuum. History both of the political and social environments as well as previous experiences of collective action are part of the

⁴⁰ Mayer, 1995; Mayer and Roth, 1995.

⁴¹ Piven and Cloward, 1995. p1236.

⁴² Ibid, p1213.

background that has both formed and informed activists. *Political opportunities* as defined by Kitschelt are:

comprised of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilisation, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others.⁴³

Kitschelt, in his comparative study of the anti-nuclear movement in four industrialised countries, identifies three ways that actions might be constrained or supported by the political context. First, there must be resources to be extracted and employed and he classifies these as coercive, normative, remunerative and informational. Second, access to political decision-making and the public sphere must be governed by institutional rules, thus allowing groups not represented some avenues of expression. Third, the opportunities for mobilising change overtime with the rise and fall of other movements. The degree to which each of these characteristics is in play leads researchers to classify political contexts as 'open' or 'closed' to new demands.⁴⁴

Indeed, the 'aperture' of a governance structure is important to activists seeking to bring about change. Again, turning to Kitschelt for the factors determining openness to collective action demands, four characteristics help to create a gauge. Briefly, they are: 1) the number of parties, factions and groups that effectively articulate different demands in electoral politics. To paraphrase, the higher that number, the less dominant the hold of established parties on interest articulation around election time. 2) The degree of independence of a legislature from the executive in terms of policy work and control allows for access. Elected agents form the legislature and are, out of necessity, more sensitive to public demand. 3) The patterns of intermediation between interest groups and an executive/cabinet indicate the degree of openness. If connections are fluid and

multiple, there is more access to the centre of decision-making for new demands. 4)

Evidence of new demands finding their way into policy compromise and consensus indicates mechanisms for amassing demands (through coalition building, for example).⁴⁵ In a government structure where these factors combine to allow access to decision-making, collective action has a greater possibility of success in claims-making.

However, as Banaszak points out in her comparative analysis of Swiss and American women's enfranchisement efforts (1996), opportunities may exist and be obvious, but do not make it into a group's action path. Most important then, are the *identified* and *exploited* political opportunities that a group selects. Furthermore, Tarrow is adamant that movements do not only play the cards they have been dealt but are also engaged in *creating* opportunities for their messages to get through.⁴⁶ While both good *comparative* tools, the RM and *political opportunity* concepts do not closely examine the choices of SMOs make regarding the perception and presentation of issues to affect change. For this, we turn to the concept of the *framing* that organisations consider not merely out of self-interest but to achieve their objectives.

Strategic framing

The concept of *frames* and *framing*, according to Benford and Snow's (2000) overview of literature on the subject, has received considerable attention and employment in the last thirteen years of research, in numerous fields. Simply put, frames are a

⁴³ Kitschelt, 1986. p58.

⁴⁴ Kitschelt, 1986.

⁴⁵ Kitschelt, 1986. p63.

⁴⁶ Tarrow, Sidney, 1998. *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. P72.

category of cognitive understandings.⁴⁷ They are socially constructed schemata for interpretation that “help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action”.⁴⁸ The frames generated during this process are distinguished from other framing attempts that occur within society, by cultural institutions for example, by the term *collective action frame*. It is this type of frame that Snow and Benford elaborate on, for its purpose is to mobilise. Specifically, in the study of social movements, the concept puts organisers in the position of pulling together ‘ideational material’ – symbols and meanings – from their environment and generating an interpretative frame through which to view an issue, actions and experiences.⁴⁹ Needless to say, this is by no means a simple cut and paste job. The process of frame generation is a dynamic and risky one.

Snow and Benford explain that there are three core tasks that frames must accomplish: *diagnosis* of the issue – what is the problem and who is to blame; *prognosis* – what is to be done about it; and *motivation* – moving resources to execute the plan. Of course, the way that a citizens’ group goes about constructing these frames is influenced by the societal and political context, including other citizens’ groups, previous experience and available resources. And naturally, variations in the frames constructed can be found amongst citizens’ groups working on the same issue as well as within a group itself. Picking up on experiences and symbols that have meaning to the SMOs audience, organisers can find issue resonance and mobilise individuals towards their chosen means of expression. They also may respond to *counterframing* attempts from opponents and

⁴⁷ According to Snow in Tarrow, 1992. “Mentalities, Political Cultures, and Collective Action Frames: Constructing Meanings through Action” in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. Aldon Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller, eds. Yale University Press, New Haven.

⁴⁸ Benford and Snow, 2000. “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment”. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 26. 611-39. p 614.

other groups.⁵⁰ According to Benford and Snow, a well-constructed frame, durable and successful, requires flexibility, inclusivity and credibility to resonate and mobilise its audience.

This is a delicate exercise, as while a cause may evoke strong mobilising feelings for the intended audience, the outlet for expression may be unappealing.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the construction of frames means making powerful choices, summoning certain identities to the foreground, channelling their energy and focus towards particular goals and making sense of the results. But what must be remembered when considering the framing process, is that there may be at least two audiences for such an exercise. There are those who are to be mobilised into a supporting, claims-making role and there are those who are the targets of those demands, for example, a government. Therefore, an assessment of the larger political, social and economic context is a key factor in hitting the right buttons and tapping the right power sources. Manufacturing or attaining credibility with decision-makers must also be part of the framing processes especially if due attention is to be gained for proffered demands.

Finally on the issue of frames, we consider the concept of the 'master frame'. These frames are defined as broader in interpretative scope and influence. Snow and Benford list the 'rights' frame, 'environmental justice' frame, 'culturally pluralist' frame, and 'return-to-democracy' frame among those others identified by their colleagues as sufficiently broad, flexible and inclusive to be non-movement specific *master frames*.⁵² Collective action frames are derivative from these types of master frame and as their generation is by definition a creative experience, it seems logical to positively consider

⁴⁹ Tarrow, 1998.

⁵⁰ Benford and Snow, 2000. Tarrow, 1992.

⁵¹ Tarrow, 1992.

Tarrow's assertion that social movement organisations contribute to *culture change*.⁵³

Tarrow insists that changes occur "from the assimilation into the general political culture of new frames of meaning from collective action".⁵⁴ In this study, we can consider that shifts in the master frame of collective action to favour the individual's identity as a consumer is a signifier of a broader cultural change in line with articulation of liberal thinking.

In short, the framing concept allows the researcher to focus on the dynamic aspects of a group's action campaign. The approach allows for the consideration of not only practicalities of resource mobilisation but also the tactical choices and goals selected in light of contextual obstacles. Later, on a macro scale, the impact of certain collective action frames can be gauged in terms of the evolution of a society's master frames. Given the growing prevalence of neo-liberal framing in our systems of governance, it is possible that the consumer's power in the marketplace could gain priority over the citizen's political power as a source of influence. Because a large part of power is perception, a look at the power relationships summoned by collective action groups would reveal if this shift has also taken place among the governed. Detecting how groups are viewing the political, social and economic context in which they are active and in turn how they are interpreting it to influence its direction, can perhaps help us gauge how pervasive neo-liberal ideas are.

Choosing the tools

In order to sketch the *frames* employed among social movement organisations working on a particular issue, some criteria for categorising their actions and language

⁵² Benford and Snow, 2000.

⁵³ Tarrow, 1992. "Mentalities, Political Cultures, and Collective Action Frames: Constructing Meanings through Action." In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*. Morris and Mueller, eds. Yale.

are required. Detecting to whom the activities and language are meant to appeal, it should become evident whether the trend of neo-liberal governance is affecting the individual, swaying them more towards a *consumer* identity and away from the identity of a *citizen*. A simple schema for this analysis puts SMO activities into two categories: *political* and *economic*. These categories are defined as follows.

A political activity:

- Includes the act of education of others by providing information with the intention of modifying the choices towards a specific position or action.
- Includes the interactions with the institutions of governance – judicial, legislative both formally and informally and at local, provincial, national and international levels, in conversation with decision-makers, responding to their actions and in turn pushing them for response.
- Includes speaking about the entitlements of citizens to equal treatment, protection of freedom to organise, and to express their will explicitly through the casting of ballots for elected representatives.

An economic activity:

- Includes the education of individuals with information about choices in the marketplace and encouraging individuals to activate their buying power.
- Includes the pressuring of government to create a favourable environment for economic activity with promises to invest or spend funds in that environment.
- Includes speaking about the entitlements of the consumer to choice and fair marketplace practices.

This classification is applied to both action and language in a number of ways. For example, the production of a given pamphlet to inform the public about the individual's power as a consumer is an economic activity. The pamphlet's content seeks to invoke the economic identity of the reader. The production of the pamphlet as an educational tool is a political activity but the power source that the content attempts to tap guides its overall

⁵⁴ Tarrow, 1992. P175.

purpose. Subsequently, weighing the combination of political or economic activities conducted by each group in this study should indicate whether a prominence of citizen power or consumer power is part of their collective action frame.

Assumptions

Before proceeding to the data, the main assumptions made prior to its collection should be laid out. With the considerable pressure by governments and on governments to proceed with an agenda of marketisation, in the name of increasing employment and furthering growth and economic development, the susceptibility of governments to other types of arguments would presumably be muted. This would be especially true when the government in question has shown itself to be particularly ideological or dogmatic when implementing its policy.⁵⁵ Furthermore, gaining decision-maker attention is a zero-sum game. Time granted to one group, issue or event is time taken away from another. It is assumed that groups hoping to achieve some influence would have to speak in similar terms as decision-makers. They would do this in order to: a) skip an educational phase, where new terms and factors are introduced and gain acceptance; b) remain focused on the context in question; and c) prevent confrontational relationships, which increase the risk of being shut out of processes. It is assumed here that professional organisers or movement actors with previous experience would understand this situation. Those seeking to engage the government directly in a non-confrontational manner would adopt conciliatory tones and action strategies.

Questions to keep in mind

Having laid out some underlying assumptions and the key concepts that make up the theoretical framework guiding this study, examination of the data is in order. Chapter

Two begins with an outline of the data collection method followed by the qualitative information gathered on each of the selected subjects. Recalling the main question of this study, -are citizens' groups choosing to argue from their consumer status and economic power and abandoning demands made on political or moral principles – we step into the world of the activist organiser to see what unfolds.

⁵⁵ Broad and Antony, 1999. Ibbitson, 1997.

CHAPTER TWO

Power to the People

Looking at citizens' groups in the Harris regime context raises many questions about the nature of political power and the source of individual power – whether from basic entitlements possessed as a citizen/resident or stemming from the identity of the consumer. In particular the electricity sector presents a unique context. Electricity use is a fundamental aspect of life in Ontario's landscape. Both urban and rural areas are dependent on a constant energy supply for survival and economic activity. The provision of that power has been a public endeavour for nearly 100 years. The decision in the early 1900's to keep electricity a *public* utility in order to ensure the economic development of the province is an irony that would not be lost on many today.¹ The vast resources tapped and technological advancements made in harnessing their power are a large part of the modern history of the region. Still, as much as history can teach us about our current situation, it is the last eight years, from 1995 to 2003, that bind the scope of this project. What follows is the method by which the study's parameters were further defined.

Method

The defining of 'social group' and its unique place in the realm of politics was a key step for this study. Decisions as to what constituted a 'citizens' or 'social' group and who represented other types of political activity were made with a strong leaning on common perceptions of social action groups. They work at grassroots levels with relatively open memberships, are non-profit with no direct business or economic interests in the cause they engage and do not maintain any affiliation with political parties. However, an ironclad typology of these political actors was not attempted as groups

necessarily evolve with the issues and contexts with which they engage. For our purposes, defining criteria included 1) lack of any party affiliation, 2) voluntary, relatively unrestricted membership, 3) activity in a public context, and 4) interest in protecting or pursuing benefits for societal members other than themselves. This last characteristic, was by no means exclusive to the 'citizens' group'. Many an organisation, including industry, business and even government attempted to stress the benefits of the restructuring they proposed to all Ontarians.² However, it could also be easily seen that the benefits of restructuring would affect those organisations more directly – either granting access to investment opportunities, or more security of position within the industry, or even greater freedom from public regulation. So their points of view, however noble, are arguably tainted by potential personal gains.

Even with these criteria, focusing on all the citizen action groups working in Ontario just over the last decade is a lifetime's work. The election of the Harris Tories in 1995 triggered what seemed like a tsunami of activism among groups not previously motivated to make their political positions publicly known. Keeping to the issue context of the restructuring of Ontario Hydro narrowed the field considerably, yet even then, the number of 'groups' attempting to influence the plans put this study project into the category of untenable. For this reason, groups were selected who would not be immediately amenable to the government's style or ideology yet chose to engage it to influence policy. As Harris defined his government as following a common-conservative-sense approach to policy, groups were sought that could be expected to make arguments not based on the bottom line – environmental groups, social policy groups, anti-

¹ For an interesting account of the actors involved in the system's unique creation see Neil Freeman's work *The Politics of Power*.

privatisation activists. Individuals, fringe groups³ or participants in one-time actions were not included simply for expediency sake.⁴ Out of the identifiable groups remaining, six were chosen as a sample of different approaches, support bases and views to see what kind of collective action frames they produced.

Finding the participants

Interview candidates were selected through a number of means. A media scan identified spokespersons of a variety of groups who either supported or refuted the government's claims and plans. Those that were clearly from civil organisations were noted in particular. Background research via the Internet located the groups and identified vaguely the type of activities or campaigns the groups were conducting. A somewhat representative sample was then chosen from those available, using the criteria of approach to the issue, visibility in the media, longevity with the issue or activism in general,⁵ and type of tactics employed. Smaller organisations receiving no press may have been captured in the larger coalitions that were contacted. Other groups representing population segments such as 50+ year olds and First Nations bands were not included as their concerns and tactics were represented by broader organisations.

The 1996 Macdonald Advisory Committee's report on the possibilities for competition in the sector⁶ also yielded information regarding participants that had been active in the government's early consultation processes (Appendix B). Of the number

² An overview of the submissions to the Macdonald Advisory Committee as well as the May 2002 consultations.

³ Meaning those who refused or made no attempt to interact with government at any level and instead chose to be active on electricity issues in personal ways...forming a buyer's co-op for example, or pursuing conservation at home or at work.

⁴ It is hoped that the views and actions of individuals mobilised by the restructuring project would be captured or represented by larger groups at work on the issues.

⁵ Both long standing groups and newer ones just created for this issue were selected.

⁶ Referring to "A Framework for Competition" May 1996 submitted by the Macdonald Advisory Committee to government.

interviewed for this study, only two had made a presentation to the Committee. Others that are included in the report's list of participants were researched and a few were contacted for interview but declined. Further Internet research on the electricity sector restructuring in general, turned up a number of participants in the 2002 public meetings that were conducted by the Minister in May of that year (Appendix C). A request under the Freedom of Information Act was submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for a full list of the presenters and the submissions from groups and individuals from those consultations.⁷

Out of the six, which will make their appearance shortly, one stands out as an odd choice – The Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Its members are joined together by their profession and are represented by a powerful lobby group looking out for their general interests. Thus their inclusion in a 'social group' category is sketchy. The organisation has greater access to provincial ministers, particularly the Minister of Agriculture. OFA has been active on restructuring issues with farming consumers in mind – challenging the government on the grounds of the plan's details and how they play out for small business and rural users. However, it could be argued that there is an underlying 'social' understanding here, one that benefits all Ontarians as farm produce consumers, but that prioritises the economic individual. The political and social well being of citizens is achieved here through maintaining economic development as opposed to direct care through legislation. To allow for diversity of political leanings among 'social' groups, OFA was included in an attempt to overcome traditional categories of contentious

⁷ See Appendix D – Methodological Appendix for full details.

political actors.⁸ Furthermore, their participation also serves to capture rural and small community concerns not always voiced by urban activist groups.

The other five participants in this study are the Ontario Clean Air Alliance, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, Hearthmakers Energy Co-op and Sierra Club Canada, Eastern Canada Chapter.

Choosing to interview

After selecting specific groups based on what they represented in the larger picture of the restructuring in Ontario's geographical and political landscape, individual interviews with key persons in the organisations seemed most appropriate. The people contacted were either the spokespersons for the group on the energy issue or had been key in the researching and framing of the issue for that group's campaign. These individuals were approached based on their public roles, their positions in representing the issue for their membership and to the public through the media (press and Internet). In a sense, they had already been selected by their organisations for such interviews.

The decision to talk with individuals was made to get past the sound bites and media scrums into the practicalities of putting together effective action to persuade a seemingly immovable force. Furthermore, interviews might reveal those tactics or activities tried and rejected, capturing a sense of the evolution of positions, rather than assuming instant success and brilliance on the part of our groups. Although the choice to interview individuals was made so that their responses would not be influenced by the presence of their peers, most of the organisations were limited in the number of people working full-time on the issue. In some cases, there was only one person who could speak

⁸ See Castells *The Power of Identity* (2001) for a reminder that not all social movement groups are interested in positive social justice goals. Tarrow in *Power in Movement* (1998) also reminds that there are many forms of collective action that occurs within institutions.

about the whole picture. Furthermore, it was thought that perhaps some personal reflection would surface on changes in “climate” over time that might highlight some trends not readily apparent from organisation literature.

The personal and the professional

Dealing with individual activists, as representatives of their organisations and activities, did not preclude personal reflections on their experience in working for change. Observations about working along with the province’s agenda, and effectiveness of the tools being employed, were peppered with personal attitudes toward decision-makers and processes as well as the political environment in general. Of course, this leads to questions about whether the separation of self from the action is possible. All but one of the people interviewed was a professional activist, sustaining themselves through their work in their organisation and not limited to the duration of the energy project they had undertaken (meaning they would not be terminated once the group changed its focus). The sixth person was employed and had made an energy project part of his work – which he was at liberty to define. Obviously, all of the interviewees felt passionately enough about activism to make it their main employment, but seemed to be able to sustain a professional demeanour when speaking about the work of their particular group. For this reason, the personal backgrounds of interview subjects were not investigated in depth. It was their participation in the restructuring issue that remained of central interest.

Engaging the government

The formal opportunities for directly participating in the restructuring process with the government were arguably limited. While it was in the 1996 Macdonald

Committee's⁹ Terms of Reference to 'consult widely' for the views and concerns of all interested stakeholders of Ontario, the timing of the consultations is perhaps something to consider – not all groups currently active on the electricity issue were ready to present in 1996. The Harris government was new in office and making the news daily with Minister Tsbouchi's infamous welfare shopping list in October 1995, Days of Action campaigns in December 1995 etc. Perhaps these captured the attention of many citizens' groups on major issues of social welfare in the province. Thoughts on an overhaul of the electricity sector for many may have been less of a priority, and some activists agreed that a reshaping of Ontario Hydro was not entirely uncalled for.

Nonetheless, there were contributions made or concerns expressed to the Macdonald Advisory Committee on Competition that are duly noted in its final report for the government.¹⁰ The participants in this stage of the process included a roster of associations, municipal utilities, electricity sector businesses, groups and individuals. Among them were environmental groups, consumer groups, labour associations and First Nations councils. The Macdonald report summarised the contributions of concerned presenters under a number of themes. Obviously, certain messages were delivered – the extent of their impact upon government decision-makers in the drawing of plans to proceed is up for debate. What was worth exploring here was how groups worked to ensure certain concerns remained at the forefront of the debate. When the Tories were elected to a second term and their plans for the sector moved forward, organisations began to mobilise more fully and used multiple avenues of expression to deliver their

⁹ The Committee's full name is the Advisory Committee on Competition in Ontario's Electricity System. Chaired by the Honourable Donald Macdonald, the committee was struck in 1995 and reported in 1996.

¹⁰ Also included in the appendix (C) of the final report is a list of participants who made submissions in various forms during the committee's consultations. Macdonald 1996. A Freedom of Information Act

views. Before exploring the selected groups and their tactics, a look at those concerns about electricity in the province is in order.

The issues around energy

Taking a brief look at the concerns reported by the Committee, they cover a spectrum of interests including some noteworthy assumptions about what private ownership might endanger. The privatisation of public assets was not explicitly on the table at the time of the Committee's mandate however, reference had been made in the *Common Sense Revolution* to the sale of some non-nuclear assets. Obviously, some participants presupposed privatisation to naturally be among the recommendations from the Committee to the government and expressed their apprehension towards such plans on two fronts:

Reliable electricity – Presenters to the Advisory Committee stressed the importance of reliable supply for economic development and that its interruption was a costly prospect. Any new system would need to guarantee flow to prevent shut downs of industrial processes among other things. In the same category, those fearing power outages saw *privately-owned* generation as being driven by the bottom line and likely to act according to profit-making behaviour. This was a special concern for rural and remote users who thought themselves particularly at risk as serving their needs is more expensive and the wire system much less robust.¹¹

Fairness, safety and reasonable rates – Submissions to the Committee also covered issues of environmental stewardship, nuclear safety, the promotion of renewable energy sources and fair treatment of customers. A belief that *privately-owned* companies

request garnered a similar list for the eight days of consultations in May of 2002. However, the list did not include all of those who applied to present during the restricted event and were rejected.

¹¹ In some cases there are single lines traversing rural areas to service electricity needs.

would be less diligent in these areas seemed to prevail. The need for regulation on a number of levels, the fair treatment of customers with different power needs, and fears about burdening taxpayers with the utility's debts while selling the tools to pay for them were also featured in the report. Nevertheless, some groups saw the restructuring as an opportunity for economic development in generation at a local level.

Outside of these categories of concerns, participants also voiced a desire for broad public consultation on the proposed changes to the sector. Public input was seen as extremely important and has been a point of criticism of the Tories' handling of the process. As plans progressed and the division of Ontario Hydro was executed, this became a louder speaking point for opposition parties and some presenters at the second set of public consultations in May 2002.

Despite limiting the research instrument to cover groups with a social mandate of sorts, most of the above concerns were represented by the groups interviewed. Yet only two of those groups were directly involved in the Macdonald Advisory Committee process - The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. Some members of the alliances and coalitions contacted did present as individuals and as we will see in the following pages, worked beyond this speaking opportunity to increase their influence.

In the execution of this study, a decision was made not to attempt to speak to government decision-makers or Ministry of Energy officials. As this study seeks to measure the response of citizens' groups to the neo-liberal logic and policy of the Harris government, it was not necessary to make contact beyond gathering the details of group presentations or participation on various committees. It was also assumed that

government interviewees would not tread much beyond what has been publicly stated. Instead the province's actions speak volumes.

Other formal inputs

Since the 1996 consultations by the Advisory Committee, public hearings on the issue of restructuring were conducted once more in May of 2002, on the week of market opening and then in January of 2003, on the concerns of large energy users. In 2001, a cross-legislative committee on Alternative Fuels¹² was struck to look at the sector in terms of its openness to new types of power generation. Its public hearings were held in August 2001 in three cities, and January and February in 2002 in four cities. In addition to these formal opportunities to contribute thoughts to government policy making, the OEB as a routine practice accepts submissions on regulations and invites interested parties through newspaper advertising to comment on generation licenses up for renewal – provided they file the appropriate submissions. Generally, access to this forum is achieved with the aid of a lawyer. All that being said, there seemed to be a consensus that the satisfaction gained from participation in these events was limited. Nevertheless, it could be argued that participation in such fora was important in many respects. A) The government was the decision-maker here and any direct engagement raised the odds of being heard; b) the campaigns of participants might appear more credible, thus strengthening appeals for public support; and c) making use of these channels of expression helps to keep them in existence. Of course, the data reveals that they were not the only arenas for debate and influence. As we shall see from our groups, avenues of expression have not been limited to those paved by Ontario's Tories.

¹² Select Committee on Alternative Fuel Sources, chaired by Doug Galt presented their final report to the Legislative assembly in June 2002. The Committee held 29 days of consultation with ministries, Federal departments, energy industry members, umbrella groups, environmental organisations and private citizens.

The data

As we now delve into the experiences of the six interviewees, several themes become clear. Firstly, formal participation through the government's mechanisms for engagement equates to neither influence nor necessarily to impact. Secondly, the character and perception of social groups are carefully managed to engage with different players in the political sphere, i.e. the public, the media, the politicians, other coalition partners etc. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, depth of understanding and research for argument making, targeted at the policy-makers, must be matched in effort outside the formal political arena.

As noted in Macdonald's "Framework for Competition", environmental concerns were considerable, especially if the restructuring led to more private ownership of generation. It was not the only issue, as we have seen, but since a number of our groups had chosen to mobilise around that topic in different ways, it seems the most logical place to begin our investigation. The largest and seemingly most influential on the pollution aspect of electricity production was the *Ontario Clean Air Alliance*.

Ontario Clean Air Alliance

The *Ontario Clean Air Alliance* (OCAA) is just that, an alliance of seventy-eight organisations from a variety of sectors and interests concerned primarily with the air pollution caused by coal-fired power generation. The secretariat for the Alliance was Pollution Probe and the spokesperson for the group was Jack Gibbons. The broad coalition was created in 1997 in direct response to the restructuring project:

We realised that if there weren't new environmental regulations, the move to a competitive market would lead to increased pollution. We wanted to bring in regulations that would ensure the move to competition leads to cleaner air.¹³

¹³ Interview, Gibbons, February 7th, 2003.

The initial goal for the coalition focused on ensuring the reduction of pollution from fossil fuels. Coal generation was considered a dirty and cheap fuel – generators already existed and could increase production while waiting for cleaner alternatives to come on line. Similarly, if sold by the province, the plants would be online more often to produce electricity for export south of the border. As the group did more economic research regarding the coal-fired generators, of which there are five in Ontario, they revealed that conversion to natural gas-fired plants would be a cost-saving measure as well as bring a reduction in harmful emissions. Their action target then became the closure and refitting of the five coal-fired electricity generators in Ontario by the year 2015. Having discovered and documented¹⁴ what they felt was an affordable, practical measure in addressing environmental concerns, the coalition building began.

Most of the Alliance's member organisations were invited in 1997 to be part of the broad-based coalition. City councils were approached and invited to join as were local utilities, faith groups, environmental groups, health organisations, industry, consumer associations and unions. In total the Alliance claimed to represent six million supporters for the coal phase out campaign. With such strong support, the group managed to acquire commitments from the three large political parties of Ontario to the coal phase out plan. Dates for accomplishing this differ. The ruling Tories agreed to 2015, the Liberals and the New Democratic Party to 2007.

While the Alliance did not make presentations to the Macdonald Advisory Committee of 1996, they were invited to participate in the May 2002 hearings conducted by Minister of Energy and the Environment, Chris Stockwell. Gibbons attributed the

Alliance's participation in the hearings to its non-confrontational character, its broad-based support and its economic research on a low cost solution. The strategy of a simple, focused message with viable solutions presented by a group seen as "reasonable" had shown to be effective with another organisation¹⁵ and so was copied by the Alliance to ensure their influence on the issue. Importantly, the Alliance chose not to challenge the main premise of opening the market and restructuring as a whole, but rather built support for opportunities to achieve environmental goals during the process.

The Alliance, according to Gibbons maintained a non-confrontational, practical stance towards government in its campaign – no beards, Birkenstocks or protests.¹⁶ Using media campaigns, radio commercials, pamphlets for general distribution, email bulletins, websites and reports, the Alliance has promoted the coal phase out campaign to a sympathetic public.¹⁷ Appeals were made to municipal councils and private companies to boycott electricity from coal-fired generators to make the fuel source less profitable.¹⁸ The group was fuelled by and concentrated its message around the public health crisis from air pollution for southern Ontario citizens. A report from the Ontario Medical Association,¹⁹ released in 1998, provided compelling evidence for the need to move towards emissions reductions. Gibbons admitted however, that being up against the Harris Conservative Government meant that it was more difficult for health and

¹⁴ Gibbons contended that no research on plant conversion had previously been conducted. While Pollution Probe might have been active on phasing out of coal prior to the restructuring debate, the plan to convert the plants to natural gas had not been advanced previously.

¹⁵ Gibbons referred here to the Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain. Interview, February 7th, 2003.

¹⁶ Interview, Gibbons, February 7th, 2003.

¹⁷ Public opinion surveys commissioned by OCAA showed public support for pollution reducing changes to the electricity system. March 2003. *Perceptions of Coal-Fired Electricity Generation in the 905 Belt, Niagara and London Regions*. Opinion survey by Oracle Poll, Toronto. Available at <http://www.cleanair.web.ca/marchsurvey.pdf> as of October 30th, 2003.

¹⁸ Mittelstaedt, Martin. "Fight air pollution with hydro choices, medical officer says". *Globe and Mail* April 3rd, 2002.

environmental arguments to find compassionate ears. Here, the economic research provided by the group, supporting their solution and showing savings to the government in the area of health, increased the plan's appeal. Nevertheless, Gibbons conceded that providing credible numbers was not enough to sway decision-makers:

If we just went to the government with good analysis, we wouldn't get anywhere. We had to have the analysis to make our case but we also had to build up the public support or nothing would have happened. That was absolutely crucial. You know the government, the Harris government had no inclination to do this. The only reason they're doing it is because we forced them.²⁰

In addition to public campaigns for coal phase out, the group continued with legal challenges to actions the sector or government was pursuing, including petitioning for environmental assessments and formal complaints to the Federal Competition Commissioner about misleading ads from OPG. Success also stems from the Alliance's transparency in its research, achieved by including OPG, other energy industry members and government on their research advisory committee. Having their economic models online and available to anyone who wanted them, Gibbons stated, was important in making their case credible.

Although Gibbons did not attribute the group's success to the change in Premier in the spring of 2002, he did feel that Harris and Eves were two different kinds of politicians. Harris was clearly an ideologue, while Eves was a more pragmatic politician, focused on being re-elected in 2003. Gibbons also felt that ideology had effected the entire process, leading to its chaotic state:

The government approached [the restructuring] in a very ideological fashion. They approached it from a right-wing ideological business point of view. They basically consulted with a very narrow group...For example, look at the Market

¹⁹ One report "Health Effects of Ground-level Ozone, Acid Aerosols and Particulate Matter" generated considerable attention through providing a number of pollution or smog related deaths at approx. 1900 a year in Ontario.

²⁰ Interview, Gibbons, February 7th, 2003.

Design Committee which is working on the details: it was basically industry dominated, big industry dominated. And the consultants were very right wing. They basically didn't try to think out how to make out electricity restructuring in the best interest of small consumers or of public health or of the environment. They ignored those two crucial factors - the consumers, the voters, public health and the environment and as a result the whole thing crashed.²¹

Nevertheless, the Ontario Clean Air Alliance did not consider its mission to be complete.

Although they were able to acquire an initial commitment from the Conservative government of coal-fired plant phase out by 2015, the group's energy stayed focused on drawing that commitment closer in timeline - to at least 2010 (if not 2007) - and then campaigning for concrete actions to realise that goal. No major shift in strategy or change in the character of the Alliance would likely be adopted after an election. However, Gibbons admitted that having another party in power would probably make life easier.

Toronto Environmental Alliance

Another coalition of a smaller scale and somewhat less "conservative" nature is the *Toronto Environmental Alliance* (TEA). Created in 1988, federally and provincially focussed environmental groups formed the ad hoc Alliance to tackle issues from a municipal level. Keith Stewart has acted as the main researcher and "manager" of the group's energy campaign as part of his role as the Smog and Climate Change Co-ordinator. As in the case of the OCAA, coalition building here was crucial. Specifically, TEA was able to secure funding to research and promote "green power" but signed on with a number of other coalitions to campaign against certain aspects of the restructuring beginning in 2001. Stewart admits that prior to that date, many groups had not really been paying much attention to the abstract notion of reconfiguring Ontario Hydro. When it became clear that the re-elected Conservative government was going to pursue

²¹ Interview, Gibbons, February 7th, 2003.

restructuring plans, TEA worked with unions and environmental groups to build the *Ontario Electricity Coalition* (OEC).

Timing for TEA and other environmental groups was a bit off Stewart admits, as many were not initially opposed to the idea of restructuring what they felt was a Goliath out of control. It was not until 2000 when the government began to break up Ontario Hydro that TEA got involved. Initially, working with Greenpeace and Sierra Club Canada, an environmental lawyer was hired to go through the government's promises and assess what they had actually done. The fall of 2001 was spent discussing and debating the terms of the Ontario Energy Coalition with other environmental groups. Many of the members were active on the anti-globalisation front and the coalition came down decidedly and openly against privatisation in the sector. Like the OCAA, the Coalition was very concerned with pollution from increased use of coal-fired plants due to their inexpensive nature. However, the Coalition also called for the immediate halt of all plans for deregulation and the closure of the electricity market. The maintenance of public power as protection against price hikes, increased pollution and the squeezing out of renewables was the key equation OEC saw for Ontario's economic survival.²² The coalition was launched December 5th 2001, just days before Premier Harris announced that Hydro One would be offered for sale.

Working with the New Democratic Party riding associations, the group organised at a grassroots level to hold over 80 public meetings in 2002 to speak about the restructuring and raise public awareness of the plans. Attendants of these meetings were asked to telephone the Minister or Premier and to organise other meetings to pass the information on. Other tactics included researching reports on other jurisdictions where

energy markets had been opened to competition and privatisation, doing broad public education with pamphlets, organising a demonstration in front of OPG and working with the province's opposition parties by supplying them with information for use in the House's question period.

TEA and Stewart had a different experience from OCAA in terms of the formal consultation processes of May 2002. The haste with which the consultations were organised and the chaotic fashion in which they were scheduled, left many groups without time to prepare presentations. Stewart's application to present on behalf of TEA was rejected by form letter and did not include a direct response to supporting documents included with the application. On the date the Electricity Forum went to London, ON, Stewart happened to be across the hall presenting TEA's "Greening Public Power: Protecting the public interest in electricity restructuring" in a press conference. Stewart recalls that being one of the days that Minister Stockwell stormed out of the consultation presentations in frustration. Nevertheless, representatives of the OEC were permitted to present to Minister Stockwell days later in Toronto. The presentation from John Wilson, former head of the Engineers Union, and Paul Kahnert's covered many of the key issues discussed in TEA's *Greening Public Power*.²² At the consultation, Wilson and Kahnert did not miss the opportunity to stress that a process of such proportion should involve Ontarians more directly in the decision-making.

Prior to the market opening, Stewart had focused on broad public education as the most effective strategy. He stated that when the changes he and the Coalition had

²² TEA's *Greening Public Power* and John Wilson's speaking notes on behalf of OEC to the Electricity Forum, May 7, 2002

²³ The presentation was not included in the package received from the Ministry of the Environment Freedom of Information Act request. The notes from the presentation were provided to the researcher directly by Mr. Wilson.

predicted would come with the market opening in May were realised, the public would see the government as being primarily at fault. Activity lessened for the Coalition during the summer of 2002 as the group waited to see the fallout. In the autumn, an “I told you so” press conference was organised as the supply crunch and price increases were clear for all to see. In addition to these public events, TEA had connected with academics - mainly Myron Gordon, an economist and John Wilson - to flesh out the plans for an alternative sector structure. Stewart, like Gibbons, acknowledged that good research and solid arguments were not enough when dealing with the Conservative government, stating “you have to show that you can hurt them. Then they’ll pay attention”.²⁴ By joining with other organisations, TEA was able to contribute its support base and research to other campaigns while continuing to focus on its funded mandate of promoting green power.

Sierra Club of Canada

As a bi-national environmental organisation, the Sierra Club generally launches campaigns regarding major changes to the Canadian and American environmental landscape. It also has a substantial subscriber or supporter membership and a reputation as a long standing, credible part of Canada’s environmentalist community.²⁵ Local issues are championed through the organisation’s regional chapters. As part of the Eastern Canada Chapter, Dan McDermott was brought in on the Ontario energy issue in 1998. He used the cross-border issue of pollution from coal-fired plants, as a focal point for influencing the direction restructuring would take in the province. Like the OCAA, Sierra Club Canada chose not to challenge the Conservative government on the principles of

²⁴ Stewart, February 10th, 2003.

²⁵ McKenzie, Judith, 2002. *Environmental politics in Canada: Managing the commons into the twenty-first century*. Oxford University Press, New York.

restructuring but rather made the most of the opportunity to advance on pollution in the region.

To achieve this goal, Sierra Club Canada worked with other Canadian organisations such as the David Suzuki Foundation on the pollution surrounding electricity generation, but also tried to activate mechanisms in bordering U.S. jurisdictions to reach both provincial and federal decision-makers. Rather than generating public awareness campaigns, most of McDermott's efforts focused on working with multiple layers of government on both sides of the border to tackle Ontario's contribution to fossil fuel emissions:

A lot of work has gone on with connecting the dots with advocates on both sides of the US- Canadian border as air pollution is a trans-boundary problem and trying to deal with Ontario's air pollution problem in isolation is doomed to failure.²⁶

In doing so, particularly in the negotiation of the Ozone Annex of the Canadian-United States Air Quality Agreement, federal commitments from Environment Canada meant Ontario would have to clean up its coal-fired operations to be compliant with the agreement.²⁷ McDermott gathered research and worked with news media to increase pressure for coal-fired phase out from outside and above the Ontario government.

McDermott and Sierra Club Canada also used the 1999 provincial election period to attempt to secure goal commitments from the leaders of the main Ontario political parties. On-camera signings to plans for closing the coal-fired plants, although not attained from all parties, added to the tools of the campaign. Despite the usefulness of these types of commitments, even when they come from the Minister of Environment (in

²⁶ Interview, McDermott, February 10th, 2003.

²⁷ Chen, Cliff et al. "A Clean Path to Ozone Annex Compliance: Phasing out Ontario's Coal-fired Power Plants" by Synapse Energy Economics Inc. for Sierra Club Canada. March 21, 2003. Available at www.eastern.sierraclub.ca/campaigns.shtml as of November 25th, 2003.

the case of Elizabeth Witmer promising the closing of Lakeview's coal-fired plant), McDermott was well aware of the additional work required in turning those commitments into reality. What might be said in light of an election could be retracted after the votes were counted.

Interestingly, this national organisation's angle on the subject of the coal-fired plants was slightly different from that of our previous groups. Here the emphasis was on the link to Canada's national commitment to the Kyoto Accord. At first, research was framed in terms of Kyoto ratification and since that had been achieved federally, was then framed in terms of making Ontario's electricity sector Kyoto compliant. While that discussion occurred at a national level, and was relayed to members and supporters of the Sierra Club, McDermott also focused locally with provincial decision-makers and municipal bodies to advance the coal phase out project.

Like OCAA, McDermott's idea of the OntAirio Campaign was also sparked by the Ontario Medical Association's report of 1998 on air quality:

After reading that report I came to the conclusion that we were close to a societal consensus on the need for rigorous action on air pollution, both in terms of that which we're producing and in terms of what needs to be done in terms of leveraging emissions reductions in terms of the pollution coming at us from other jurisdictions. The only problem was that the decision makers hadn't entirely caught on to this consensus. So developing the consensus of the decision makers has been a significant part of the work I've done and in a political sense we're getting really close to achieving that.²⁸

Playing with federal levels of governance and the province on these issues indicated change for McDermott in the type of relationship he had with decision-makers. In his opinion, the fact that Federal Environment Minister David Anderson had been vocal on Ontario moving away from coal-fired power meant a less adversarial relationship for

²⁸ Interview, McDermott, February 10th, 2003.

McDermott and Environment Canada. Co-operation had also come from the municipal level, particularly as Toronto suffered the affects of air pollution. Gains made in attracting attention of decision-makers at various levels of government and the increased level of communication were two impacts of McDermott's work. Nevertheless, certain doors remained closed. According to McDermott, access to the bureaucracy was good, but access to the provincial Minister of the Environment had been difficult, depending on who held that cabinet position.²⁹ Furthermore, the channels of information beyond government-issued press releases had closed in some areas,³⁰ making it more challenging to keep an eye on what was happening behind the scenes.

Nevertheless, communication had also increased and improved among environmental groups working on the issue. While McDermott did not suggest that there was a definite co-ordination amongst the activist community, with certain groups efforts were made to compliment each other's work. For example, McDermott met with Jack Gibbons of OCAA and others once a month so "at least we're not blind-siding each other".³¹

Gathering credible research by strategically selected experts was a key part of McDermott's efforts for the Sierra Club:

The study that I commissioned that was delivered on February of 2000 was conducted by Synapse Energy Economics based in Cambridge Massachusetts and Synapse energy had been introduced to me by a number of people... We also thought that having an American firm address this issue would probably result in some notice being taken of this on both sides of the border. And indeed when we tabled the report that said Ontario needs to clean its hands in terms of making a

²⁹ McDermott suspected that a surprisingly attentive Tony Clement was quickly shuffled from the position because he might be motivated to act on coal-phase out based on health care savings arguments. Interview, February 10th, 2003.

³⁰ McDermott mentioned the OPG's membership in a collective of energy producers from Canada and the U.S. The producers were committed to disclosure of information that was available through their website. OPG later withdrew from the group.

³¹ Interview, McDermott, February 10th, 2003.

reasonable case to American jurisdictions on trans-boundary pollution and moving away from coal-fired generation was the best way to do that, we essentially found a ready ear from most of the media.³²

As echoed by Gibbons however, credible research was only one aspect in a campaign to sway the government to a group's point of view. And while a different ruling party might change the effects of a lobbying effort, McDermott warned that by no means could those efforts be lessened:

In the wake of the [2003] election, pushing them to actually implement what they've promised becomes job number one. Now that theoretically is an easier task than trying to convince someone who's promised you next to nothing and promises to deliver less than that.³³

On the whole, Sierra Club Canada and Dan McDermott attempted to make the most of the opportunities that arose from any restructuring through institutional mechanisms with a keen eye on media. Rather than oppose the project completely, the organisation chose to lend its voice to those calling for pollution reduction and conservation efforts.³⁴

Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy

The Institute (*CIELAP*) itself is a research and education body, founded in 1970. The research is purposeful and used to further sustainable environmental law and policy in the public interest, through litigation in some instances. Like most of our other groups, CIELAP had chosen not to confront the government's desire to restructure the electricity sector on principle. Instead, the goal was to influence the details of the plan and its execution in order to make the generation market accessible to "green power" technologies. Seizing opportunities to reduce the dependence on traditional, harmful

³² Interview, McDermott, February 10th, 2003.

³³ Interview, McDermott, February 10th, 2003.

³⁴ www.eastern.sierraclub.ca.

fuels, CIELAP conducted research on the capacity for green power in the province³⁵ and then proceeded to investigate the regulatory barriers that exist within the sector.

However, to be clear, there were parts of the restructuring plan that CIELAP opposed. Senior Legal and Policy Analyst Christine Elwell explained that the selling of transmission grid, the price capping and the continued subsidising of traditional fuels were aspects to be challenged. The Institute supported, with a few provisos however, the opening of the generation side of the sector to competition. Working with the David Suzuki Foundation and the Toronto Environmental Alliance, CIELAP circulated the trio's joint report widely, insisting that Ontario could reduce its energy waste and increase its green power capacity enough to eliminate its five coal-fired generators.³⁶ The report also included a set of five demands for the remodelled sector, one of which became the main hammering point of CIELAP's campaign – the *Renewable Portfolio Standard* (RPS). Simply put, a RPS requires generators and retailers to offer a percentage of green power to customers. Elwell explained “that when the market restructures again it's the cheapest fuels, or historically those fuels that have been subsidised the longest that take most of the market that's open. So an RPS is a mechanism that allows [for] the emerging technologies”.³⁷ The other four demands – for emissions standards, a systems benefits charge,³⁸ a unit price that reflects full costs and full information for customers about the fuels in their retailer's mix – while crucial to an open market friendly to green power, were set aside as longer term goals.

³⁵ Elwell, 2002. *Green Power Opportunities for Ontario* was the report released including this research and the recommendations to the province for a more “green power” friendly sector.

³⁶ Elwell and Dyck, 2002. *Ensuring Green Power Supplies in Ontario: Responding to Perverse Subsidies and Other Market Inequities*. Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, Toronto.

³⁷ Interview, Elwell, February 11th, 2003.

³⁸ This is a compensation or payback that is linked to the positive contribution a producer makes in terms of environmental quality. In a sense it is a compensation for making profit-taking alterations that lead to reduced emissions or similar effects.

While recognition of certain initiatives or solutions in the Alternative Fuels Committee report was a notable success for CIELAP, the scope of the Institute's plans did not stop there. Elwell built a coalition of support to challenge the province's actions with the federal Competition Bureau.³⁹ Although certain that the Federal complaint would not be resolved in their favour, Elwell was sure that the challenge had forced the Federal government to bring attention and scrutiny to the situation.⁴⁰ The use of multiple jurisdictions as a strategy moved beyond national borders. International relationships with activists in the US were also critical to CIELAP's green power strategy and the echoing of the Sierra Club's initiatives was not coincidental. Elwell was also an active member of the bi-national organisation and planned to use membership networks to influence policy in Ontario via a NAFTA trade complaint. Confident that she would locate a green power generator interested in entering the Ontario market, Elwell was set to bring international pressures to bear.

As Elwell worked the formal litigation angles, other softer approaches also forced decision-makers to respond to the Institute's research and initiatives before the public eye. For example, reports were released at press conferences in the halls of Queen's Park, where media could quickly turn to officials for comment. But as a research institute, the types of 'appropriate' activism were limited for CIELAP, according to Elwell, especially during elections. The Institute favoured more educational, non-partisan approaches such as preparing notes, citizen's guides and questions for all candidates meetings to solicit

³⁹ Part of this coalition was the Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative. CIELAP Press Release October 24, 2002. Available at www.cielap.org/oc2402.html.

⁴⁰ Interview, Elwell, February 11th, 2003.

promises from the runners.⁴¹ Other more radical or “spectacle”-driven approaches were left to other groups.

Another project championed by Elwell served to influence decision-makers at all levels (inside and out of government) by showing the economic viability of green power, building networks among generators, consumers and government and increasing demand from the public for energy alternatives – the Green Power Trade Show. Running for three years, the Trade Show built momentum according to Elwell and made more policy inroads than possible through simple lobbying and research reports: “because at the end of the day, none of these barriers will get removed unless you show there are people that want something different”.⁴² Each year the show hosted more presenters/booths, drew more attendees and received more media coverage, all key aspects of the Institute’s larger campaign to open the market for green power

In terms of attributing success or influence to certain kinds of tactics or approaches, Elwell cited speaking the appropriate language with decision-makers as having considerable impact. Elwell stated that using the same economic terminology⁴³ as the government in order to get points across could even win agreement from the Minister on certain issues. Also, litigation was key, forcing decision-makers to do the right thing instead of waiting for them to be convinced to come around. Furthermore, coalition building with a broad spectrum of groups also brought power to policy arguments. A challenge Elwell identified in that respect lay in not alienating base support, especially when calling for changes that might cost individuals as consumers for their environmental principles. Clearly, for Elwell and CIELAP to achieve their goals, multiple parallel

⁴¹ See www.cielap.org/citizensguides.html regarding green power.

⁴² Interview, Elwell, February 11th, 2003.

approaches in a number of jurisdictions and at a number of levels had to be pursued. Like many of our other activists, Elwell saw the future of this issue as a long-term project in which her voice was only one of many. Being critical was crucial but to succeed in a challenge, being heard was imperative.

Hearthmakers

Stepping away from the pattern of groups we have considered thus far, *Hearthmakers* represents yet another approach of concerned citizens to the province's restructuring process. As opposed to being a lobby, research or activist organisation, *Hearthmakers* is a co-operatively owned, community-based business focussing on renewable energy and environmental services in the greater Kingston area (Lennox & Addington).⁴⁴ The co-op was formally incorporated in 1999 however, its founder Brian Hart, puts its roots in the 1997 decision by the government to restructure. Since then, the group had not only conducted educational workshops, energy audits and presented to municipal councils on conservation, but it had attempted to navigate the province's new regulatory structure to build a wind turbine on Wolfe Island. *Hearthmaker's* approach and hands-on experience made it a group that other groups were following intently.

As a priest new to the parish of Erinsville,⁴⁵ Hart investigated the needs of his region to determine a useful project through which to connect to the community. Unemployment and increasing heating oil prices surfaced as two major concerns. After researching the co-op movement in the United States, Hart proposed an energy-buyers group that would enable members to collectively negotiate lower oil prices. A year and a half was spent gathering support and writing a business plan to bring oil more cheaply to

⁴³ Examples of "perverse subsidies", "market inequities" and "inflated returns" pepper the Institute's report *Ensuring Green Power Supplies in Ontario*, 2002.

⁴⁴ www.hearthmakers.org Accessed September 4th, 2003.

the region. However, several obstacles including geography and confusion among members kept the co-op from achieving its initial goal.⁴⁶ Hart and Hearthmakers turned to renewables and the model developed by the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative.

Hearthmakers' project evolved into an effort to build a co-operatively-owned wind turbine that would allow the community to control its own energy supply and bring some economic development to the region. While Hart's efforts to bring the plan to fruition exposed many of the *provincial* regulatory obstacles discussed by other groups,⁴⁷ the majority of his lobbying was directed at *municipal* councils as decision-makers on the front lines in the process. The need for a lawyer to effectively access the Energy Board's mechanisms, the fact that environmental assessments were more rigorous for smaller renewable energy projects than large scale nuclear plants, and the lack of staff at the IMO working on the issue of connecting small projects to the grid, making development cumbersome and less attractive, were only part of the co-op's story. As the province attempted to buy up local utilities, Hart presented to municipal councils on the benefits of sustaining local control. He admitted however, that such pleas were hard for cash-strapped councils to embrace and the majority sold their utilities rather than spend the time and resources to conform to the province's new billing arrangements.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the lobbying efforts were successful on other fronts. Presentations to local city councils garnered motions to condition the sale of the Lennox generating station to only burn natural gas – an initiative of OCAA of which Hearthmakers is a member. In addition, support was gathered from the Canadian Federation of Municipalities and the

⁴⁵ Erinsville is in Lennox and Addington County west of Kingston, Ontario.

⁴⁶ The group was unable to secure the deal as the geography of the counties and coop members made distribution rates uneven.

⁴⁷ CIELAP's report, *Ensuring Green Power Supplies in Ontario*, cites numerous obstacles to small-scale generators joining the grid.

Toronto Better Building Partners to help the City of Kingston retrofit buildings to be more energy efficient.⁴⁹ In this way, Hearthmakers has not remained entirely outside of the broader action and coalition building undertaken by those hoping to influence the restructuring process. On the whole, the group remained committed to local concerns and initiatives but Hart also kept the bigger picture in mind. He kept himself well aware of the broader implications of the restructuring project to international trade agreements, the future of community control of resources and services and the changing path of decision-making.⁵⁰

Like our other groups, Hearthmakers' goal was never to oppose restructuring per se, nor was it to oppose big industry. Unlike our other groups, while supporting the environmental benefits of conservation, pollution reduction and the entry of renewable energy sources into the electricity mix, Hearthmakers was initially an economic project and at its core, remained one. Hart maintained that job creation and economic development for an area where unemployment was high, was the key objective of the group. Activities were focussed at the community level to inform others about the possibilities of co-ops for development, the importance of local ownership, and the need for conservation.⁵¹ Furthermore, Hart was not a professional activist although he had made community activism part of his work as a parish leader. Nevertheless, Hart was able to share similar insights about interacting with government and gaining support from the public.

⁴⁸ Interview, Hart, March 4th, 2003.

⁴⁹ www.hearthmakers.org/news/ Accessed November 26, 2003.

⁵⁰ Interview, Hart, March 4th, 2003.

⁵¹ See www.hearthmakers.org/about/membership.php for basic principles of cooperative ownership. www.hearthmakers.org/news/ lists workshops on energy conservation and household energy audits.

One of the obstacles faced by Hart was the need to educate people not only about electricity use issues and cost saving measures but also about the nature of co-op arrangements and the economic benefits they could bring to a community. Hart cited powerful marketing influences throughout society as making it more difficult to persuade people about the community support value of a co-op. Hart also felt that getting in the door to Ontario Energy Board hearings to make presentations required professional assistance. Here Hart cited moneyed opponents as having easier access and also the capacity to delay the progress of smaller projects by tying up limited staff of the IMO.

Hearthmakers has the unique experience among our groups of attempting to navigate the new regulatory structures of the electricity sector with its wind turbine project. The co-op's efforts have produced a body of knowledge of what it means for this kind of electricity producer to interact with the new mechanisms for competition that the government has put in place. In a sense, that is why *Hearthmakers* is being watched and supported by many of the groups involved in the restructuring debate.

Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Tilting the scale the other direction, we come to the *Ontario Federation of Agriculture*. OFA is a formidable lobby group representing approximately two thirds of the province's sixty thousand farmers and argues a different perspective than the groups previously discussed. While many farmers also belong to "commodity" associations, OFA covers areas that are common to all producers, no matter the size or product. Electricity is one of those issue areas. Naturally, their membership is rurally based on the whole and thus experiences the energy sector in a different way than Ontario's mostly urban population. As significant users of electricity – members use as little as \$1000 worth per year up to \$1 million worth per year for their farming operations– their physical

distribution and their relation to the transmission grid has focused their views on the distribution and administrative workings of the system as opposed to health, pollution or alternative fuels concerns. They also had a different experience of engagement with the government than most other groups but nevertheless used multiple tactics to ensure their opinions were heard.

Ted Cowan, a Farm Policy Researcher having done much of the work on the electricity front, admitted that in 1996 the organisation and members were celebrating good grain prices. It was not until the plans were drawn for dividing Ontario Hydro into five different entities, with the debt load distributed amongst them, that OFA felt the need to speak to the plan:

We were particularly disturbed by that [debt distribution]. We just felt it was very dishonest and that's roughly when we got involved, when we began to smell a rat. And we looked at it and reached the conclusion that, while we had been celebrating good grain prices, roughly 1500 repair people had been let go from Hydro One and two-thirds of the forestry crew of Hydro One, the people who trim the trees on the rural lines, had been let go. And we then asked around and we noted that outages had gone up in rural areas, just a little bit and we believed that that was not just a fluke. That was because of maintenance was down. So we complained about that.⁵²

Strongly activated by the experiences of their members as particularly vulnerable customers,⁵³ OFA became involved in hearings about transmission and distribution standards. While Cowan stated their arguments were extremely sound for keeping distribution and transmission managed by Public Utility Commissions (PUC's), OFA's protests came late in the day to shape central policies. In their talks with the government, along with more technical suggestions for dealing with rural power needs, OFA campaigned for customer-responsive PUCs to maintain local accountability for the

⁵² Interview, Cowan, February 11th, 2003.

⁵³ Many rural areas are serviced by a single transmission line. With maintenance cutbacks, outages take longer to repair.

distribution of electricity.⁵⁴ Requests for fairness in rate caps and price protection rules for the various sizes of farm operations were also communicated directly to the Minister of Energy.⁵⁵ For OFA, a practical and fair approach to sector changes was the most appropriate way for the group to support the opening of electricity to the free market with the consumer as the central stakeholder.

In terms of working to make the organisation's views heard, OFA encouraged its members to be active and vocal in their local ridings. "Courteous and professional" requests for meetings with Ministers, including key points, were followed up with phone calls and when necessary persistent presence in riding offices until the demand for time was met. Cowan also made use of the fact that ministerial office aides were often tuned into local talk radio stations and received county newspapers. Radio phone-ins helped to get points across and trigger responses for the lobby. Nevertheless, Cowan was clear that OFA was privileged to have access to Minister's limited time to meet with groups and that their views had to be competitive with all others demanding attention from decision-makers.

We probably get the better part of 50 hours a year with the Minister of Agriculture. Maybe 10 hours a year with some of the other ministers. And the main reason we can get that time isn't so much tactics, it's substance. We can get a half hour on tactics once or twice but you've got to be able to deliver the goods in terms of quality advice and a clear sense that it comes from committed people and a significant number of committed people. And so our lobbying success comes from having our people involved in their communities and helping them with that and from clear rational effective view points, both from a business point of view and from a socially concerned point a view.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Dec. 5, 2002. "Ontario Federation of Agriculture Hydro Policy". Available at www.ofa.on.ca/policyissues/issues/OFA%20hydro%20policy.pdf. Available as of November 27th, 2003.

⁵⁵ Letter to Energy Minister John Baird, January 30th, 2003 from OFA President Ron Bonnett. www.ofa.on.ca File found under "Policy & Issues"> "Fast Facts"> "Hydro rates – OFA Letter to Ontario's Energy Minister. January 2003. Available as of November 25, 2003.

⁵⁶ Interview, Cowan, February 11th, 2003.

One obstacle Cowan noted was the power structure within the cabinet. The Premier had a tight rein on Ministers and so most decisions or commitments would not be made without him. Also the Minister, in Cowan's opinion, was interested in the financial returns of the restructured sector rather than whether the service had been delivered well. Viewing the structure as one that should deliver returns to shareholders rather than to customers was going to result in higher prices and poorer service. OFA's "views then have been 1. To improve rural service, 2. To prevent the sale of Hydro One and cause it to become PUCs, 3. Whatever else happens, to have customers in charge".⁵⁷

Unlike our other groups, OFA had not undertaken broad coalition building on the electricity issue nor had it focussed efforts on the public at large. It had instead represented those not covered by other citizens' groups or initiatives. Similarities did exist in that OFA was in favour of opening generation to market forces and keeping local distribution public with all the social benefits that come from community control. However, OFA was clearly engaged with on-going discussions with decision-makers, weighing in on key points as changes in the government's tactics or decisions came to light.

On the whole, Cowan believed OFA had been able to obtain political commitments towards keeping Hydro One intact and public. The group had also been able to ensure a fixed electricity rate for farmers that would help money stay within their communities. Yet Cowan, like our many other activists, was well aware that the accompanying action was still pending. Continued vigilance both at the local constituency and ministerial levels was key no matter how many people were convinced by their calculations, or how close their plan was to the pronounced goals of the province.

⁵⁷ Interview, Cowan, February 11th, 2003.

Energy Probe and CEP

There are two other groups that beg mention here and they are Energy Probe and the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP). The initial research design included these groups whose contribution to the restructuring debate has been sizeable.

Energy Probe as an industry watchdog for the last thirty years, brought its considerable expertise to the forefront not only through presentations to government but also to the public through its continued media presence. The CEP with support from CUPE had also made a big splash on the issue with its successful legal challenge in April of 2002.

Effectively bringing a halt to the province's plans to sell Hydro One by pointing out the lack of authority to sell transmission businesses, the Union was able to raise the profile of the privatisation plan in the public eye. Despite the fact that legislation was soon enacted that enabled the province to proceed with the sale, the plan's unpopularity swelled significantly with the help of our groups and their coalitions. However, the Union's membership and their direct interest in the changes in structure of the sector put it in a different category from our six groups and are not investigated here. Their contribution as group is covered through their participation in the Ontario Clean Air Alliance.

Energy Probe has also played a role in the restructuring scene and is more akin to our citizens' groups as a non-profit industry watchdog. Energy Probe has not only commented on the regulation side of the restructuring, calling for an independent body with significant powers, but also called for a phase-out of nuclear generation. Tom Adams, the group's Executive Director was vocal in print and television media, criticising the government's plan and process. To that end, he worked to expose the government's indecision on the Hydro One sale as a bumbling of the restructuring process as a whole. Working with other coalitions and maintaining 'expert' status in the press, Energy Probe

tried to keep the issues fresh in the minds of the public.⁵⁸ Correspondence from Mr.

Adams expressed frustration at the government's lack of coherence and consistency with its changes as well as the lack of consultation with groups like his which have gathered significant expertise. The group's contributions were also registered through membership in the OCAA.

What does all this mean?

In summary, all six organisations have used a combination of strategies to express their concerns to the community at large and influence the direction of the restructuring process. All seem to agree that simply making it to the table with solid research was no guarantee of impact. Coalition building, using media to capture government attention and maintaining clear campaign targets have proven crucial to organising effectively around the electricity issue. However, what do the actions and language of these citizens' groups tell us about the nature of power in our society?

Having presented a portrait of some groups active on the issues surrounding the restructuring of Ontario Hydro, we must now move to put their perceptions and conduct in context. In the next chapter, an attempt will be made to analyse our groups on a number of levels. We will identify the collective action frames that each group has constructed to interpret the electricity context and motivate action towards change. We will examine closely the types of power sources that are summoned both implicitly and explicitly in these framing attempts by classifying group activities into the categories of 'political' or 'economic' in nature. And finally, we will answer the question of whether frame makers are favouring a particular source of influence over another.

⁵⁸ The presenter in this case expressed in an email his feeling that this effort was fruitless and that the government was unwilling to seriously consider expertise from some sector watchdogs.

Chapter Three Power Play

Considering the data

In order to begin the analysis of the material in the previous chapter, we must refer back to the main questions that first informed this study. The project to reduce debt, and bring choice and market discipline to what has been a monopoly for over ninety years has been plainly dressed as *good economics* by the province's government. In the ruling party's view, making way for competition ensures an environment conducive to continued economic development and growth for the future – making good sense as Ontarians compete with neighbouring jurisdictions to attract investors.¹ The political agenda of 1906, that the province's electricity sector would produce and deliver power at cost to Ontarians, is no longer the guiding mantra. Is the assumption true that citizens' groups keen on influencing the restructuring process have voiced demands more from their position as *consumers* with economic power, in response to the market-oriented agenda of the province? And, given the government's interest in cost-saving, conservative approaches to policy direction, have these groups found easier access or increased influence among decision-makers? Are more 'socially' or 'politically'-based statements and claims being abandoned in favour of neo-liberal economic rationale? Examination of the arguments voiced and actions taken by group organisers suggests that a careful balance has been struck to maintain access and summon the combined power of the citizen and the consumer. Considering the results of the framing process for each group, as they took into account the possibilities for resource mobilisation and available political opportunities, allows the researcher to identify the perceptions of where power resides.

¹ Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, 1997. "Direction for Change. Charting a Course for Competitive Electricity and Jobs in Ontario". Queen's Printer, Toronto.

Tapping resources

Towards answering the above questions, an examination of the collective action frames formed by each group reveals much. Activists are shaping perceptions of access to influence and change. They are involved in the construction of an interpretative framework for viewing the electricity issue and the place of the engaged individual in it. Among the tools for analysing these frames are the criteria for characterising actions as 'political' (summoning the power of the citizen) and as 'economic' (calling upon the power of the consumer). Briefly, *political* activities in this study include educating and organising others to exercise choice in favour of certain outcomes. Naturally, interactions with institutions and mechanisms of governance at any level, both formally and informally, are considered *political* and draw on the rights and entitlements of individuals to expression, representation and participation. *Economic* or *consumer-powered* activities include making use of buying power in choices or the promise of future choices of the consumer. Consumer entitlements to choice and 'exit' are the guiding influence for competitors, the enticing factors for investment and the ultimate regulator in the marketplace.² The balance, or lack thereof, between the citizen and consumer identities within the strategic frame constructed by the activists of this study, should reveal a prominence of one power source over the other. With these concepts in hand, evaluation of the actions and intentions of the study groups can proceed.

As seen in their work, many of the organisations have focused mainly on the polluting emissions resulting from fossil-fuel electricity generation. Spurred by a report from the Ontario Medical Association in 1998³ on pollution-related deaths, the OCAA,

² Of course this would be the case if there was perfect competition and good information for the 'rational' actor in the marketplace.

³ OMA "Health Effects of Ground-level Ozone, Acid Aerosols and Particulate Matter" 1998.

CIELAP, TEA and Sierra Club of Canada have dedicated considerable energy to seizing the moment of change to make headway on phasing out coal-fired plants in the province. Yet each group has adopted a slightly different position, calling upon different sources of power in order to gain influence and advance the phase-out plan. Meanwhile, OFA has pursued an amenable structure for the sector that neither forgets nor penalises rural users and keeps Utility Commissions working for the consumer. And finally, Hearthmakers Energy Co-op has sought to generate the economic development the government claims to support, and has campaigned to maintain local control. Looking closely at their strategies and tactics, their language and actions, it is clear that each group is using economic research and rationale to support social and political arguments to influence the government's plans. Simultaneously, the groups play with their multiple roles as citizens and consumers to invoke both sets of entitlements. Tapping into the buying power of the consumer to manipulate available choice in the market and the political power of the citizen to access institutional mechanisms and exercise choice at the ballot box, the groups have capitalised on the 'agency' of the individual's dual identities. Again, first addressed are the environmental concerns voiced by the majority of groups in this study, as common perception would expect from them impassioned political statements of universal rights to healthy landscapes.

Campaigning to breathe

The Ontario Clean Air Alliance's campaign has made the closure of coal-fired plants a key focal point of the restructuring debate and an election issue. Clearly, here the claims of citizens as human beings to clean air, and the responsibility of government to ensure that pollution does not reach levels that threaten life, are political and social in nature. There is an expectation that when the production of electricity by the provincially-

owned utility contributes significantly to the poor health and even death of citizens, those in office must work towards a solution. Presented with a solution that is “practical” and not cost prohibitive, action must be taken or elected decision-makers risk losing their position at the next voting opportunity. The Alliance has worked hard to ensure both government and public were aware of the fact that the conversion from coal to gas was both desirable and affordable. The support of six million members of the Alliance has been enough to acquire public commitments from the three largest provincial political parties to phase-out the use of coal in the province by at least 2015.

To gain this ‘commitment’, the group conducted research to show the cost and savings of converting the plants to natural gas. Figures on savings to the Health Ministry were part of the group’s artillery - savings they perceived the government to appreciate as the ruling mandate continued to address the province’s expenditures in health and education. In addition to this research, the Alliance conducted a series of public opinion polls to show support for the initiative, thereby establishing a growing electoral pressure with which to influence government decision-makers. A review of the survey questions⁴ shows that cost considerations for consumers was a major focus – people were asked how much they were willing to pay in order to ensure their electricity came from cleaner generation methods. Questions also focused on the influence of the issue on participants’ voting behaviour. Clearly, the Alliance found the dual identity of citizen/consumer important to the cause.

The collective action frame constructed by the organisers of this seventy-eight member Alliance could be classified as a ‘health-crisis frame’. Uniting diverse member

⁴ Ontario Clean Air Alliance, March 2003. *Perceptions of Coal-fired Electricity Generation in the 905 Belt, Niagara and London Regions*. Oracle Poll, Toronto <http://www.cleanair.web.on/marchsurvey.pdf> October 30, 2003.

groups under the common concern of pollution related deaths and diseases, the Alliance targeted the most visible generators of air emissions as the most likely to be exploited in a renovated system. The OCAA was able to present its simple coal generation phase-out goal as both a cost and life savings, backed by medical evidence as well as the everyday experience of Southern Ontario residents with bad air. Continued air quality alerts through the summer and fall of 2003 increased the public awareness of the growing pollution problem.

In addition to the powerful resonance of health issues generally, OCAA's maintenance of a single goal as well as the provision of solutions that required minimal lifestyle change, led to its broad support. Furthermore, the group's research on the costs of plant conversion was conducted with transparency and inclusion of both Hydro One and the government as advisors.⁵ Throughout OCAA's activities, the group maintained a 'rational', 'reasonable' posture, sustained by non-radical mobilisation within the existing institutional mechanisms for expression. By the size of its support base, this appears to have been a successful framing exercise.

Examining more closely the actions of the group, both political rights and consumer power are being exercised explicitly. The group's website, *ElectricityChoices.org*, was meant to inform the *consumer*, enabling and encouraging the individual to mobilise their power as an electricity buyer in the marketplace. Appeals were also made to municipalities and private companies to boycott the use of coal.⁶ At the same time, the Alliance made use of the formal avenues of litigation available to curb poor environmental practices by Hydro One, to ensure environmental regulations were

⁵ Gibbons explained that both Hydro One and the government provided information necessary for the group's conversion research.

respected, and even Federal competition laws were adhered to. The political self was far from forgotten despite the group's interaction with government as a 'conservative', 'practical' non-confrontational body with sound *economic* solutions in their hands.

From this action, it is clear that the OCAA considered two sources of power, each with its own persuasive capacities but neither strong enough to support their goals alone. By choosing to appeal to the public and the government they balanced the perception of power that each audience holds. But, part of the success of gaining the amount of support that made the Alliance a significant voice in the restructuring project was their appeal to the consumer. An essential part of the case for the conversion of the plants was that the option did not promise to be a financial burden on taxpayer nor consumer.⁷ Prices would not rise significantly, nor would the implementation drain the provincial coffers. Had the persuasive powers of political and social rights to breathe clean air proven insufficient for either audience, the group's economic research provided the backbone for the phase-out project. Yet, the facts and figures were only part of a political agenda to work "for cleaner air through strict emission limits".⁸ While activists were in agreement that impassioned pleas proffered without the dollar signs attached would fall on deaf ears, with the Tory government in particular, and limit their appeal to individual citizens, on the whole, the group stood on more *political* grounds.

Conducting campaigns of public education using pamphlets, billboards, email newsletters and print media, the OCAA informed the citizen about avenues of access to influence. A prime example in an email newsletter explained how citizens could play the

⁶ Mittlestaedt, Martin. "Fight air pollution with hydro choices, medical officer says" *Globe and Mail*. April 3, 2002.

⁷ Email newsletters from the Alliance counter cost arguments by dispelling myths circulated in the media. Sept. 03/03 "Canada has the gas to phase out coal". & Sept. 30/03 "Cost of a coal phase-out".

⁸ From the signature line of all email newsletters sent from www.cleanair.web.ca.

role of whistle-blower with the Secretariat of the Commission for Environmental Co-operation, to hold Canada accountable for environmental standard enforcement regarding Ontario's plants.⁹ These were fundamentally *political* actions, directing the power of the citizen to participate in the policy-making process. Clearly, OCAA recognised the power of consumer choice but the group's action choices sought to also mobilise the political powers of citizens to meet their phase out target.

Framing solutions

For the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, the framing exercise was perhaps less complex given the organisation's years of work prior to the restructuring issue. Founded over thirty years ago, the character of the group was previously defined as an "independent, not-for profit research and education organisation".¹⁰ To keep within those institutional parameters, framing efforts were aimed less at amassing a broad support base and more at gathering and disseminating credible research about the path to 'green' power. The collective action frame generated here could be classified as a "problem-solving" frame. The group chose to highlight the existing obstacles to a truly competitive system in electricity generation that had a lesser impact on the natural environment.

The environmental concerns that motivated the organisation in general explained the focus on removing barriers to alternative energy sources. In fact, the benefits of such a project were taken for granted while the group focused on presenting mechanisms to assist in reaching its goal of a cleaner system. With a non-confrontational approach to decision-makers, CIELAP provided plausible solutions for reaching the government's

⁹ Ontario Clean Air Alliance, Sept 22, 2003. "CEC requests response from Canada to the Ontario Power Generation Submission".

¹⁰ See group mandate on website www.cielap.org accessed Sept 4, 2003.

goal of a competitive sector and economic development. Working with the vocabulary of economics and systemic pressures voiced by the government, CIELAP managed to maintain access and transmit ideas to decision-makers. Similarly, by appearing willing to compromise by forwarding five demands but pursuing the single issue of the Renewable Portfolio Standard, CIELAP presented a conciliatory yet strong attitude. Connections with other organisations, including OCAA, added further strength of public support to the group's efforts.

For Christine Elwell of CIELAP, the balance of the *political* and *economic* mix was slightly different. As a research institute, CIELAP did not cater directly to the public as the OCAA had chosen to, but indirectly generated information to assist in the framing efforts of other groups looking for plausible solutions.¹¹ Efforts were concentrated on pressuring government to accept and incorporate certain mechanisms into the restructuring plans that would allow environmentally positive energy sources to be real options for consumers.¹² Again, the social benefits were taken as understood and focus lay on the economic rationale that the government itself professed. If they were serious about opening the sector up to competition and allowing alternative energy sources into the marketplace, measures needed to be taken in order to level the playing field.¹³ Political credibility lay in the balance and politicians were forced to respond to research findings and offered solutions by the strategic use of timely media events.

Of course, credibility was also an issue for CIELAP which, as a non-partisan organisation providing sound research, could not call upon the individual's role as a voter directly. The group's mandate was to inform decision-makers and the public rather than

¹¹ Still Elwell is well aware that pursuing a truly cost-reflective electricity rate could alienate less well off environmental supporters.

¹² Interview Elwell, February 11th, 2003.

make or break party careers. Instead, by using the formal channels of expression available to the organisation, including litigation, it defended certain political entitlements to participation by making use of them. Nonetheless, CIELAP did employ the informal channels of expression through its membership in the Ontario Clean Air Alliance and by generating supporting documentation for other organisations.

CIELAP's *economically* focussed activities were more prominent in the electricity restructuring campaign. The group's five demands of the new system structure stress economic incentives for, and the removal of obstacles to, 'green' power's inclusion in the grid. Elwell tackled the opportunity to advance environmental goals of cleaner air and greater access to renewable energy sources using the language the government's decision-makers would understand. 'Perverse subsidies' and 'market inequities'¹⁴ gained ministerial agreement on the need to reduce barriers to green power:

if I talk about barriers to competition or market entry, these are words that business, government know and understand. So I didn't offend the Minister [of Energy] when I talked about this. If I talked about killing babies with asthma, I would have gotten (sic) way less interest. But because I co-opt their language he was agreeing with me, saying: "you know what, there really are too many barriers, we really should do something."¹⁵

In addition, Elwell sought to instigate a NAFTA challenge from green power producers in the United States to force accommodation of alternative fuel sources in Ontario's power mix. Arguing that Ontario's practices prevented the entry of green power generators into the competitive market, US companies could succeed in forcing the province to change its systemic favouring of nuclear and coal generation. Naturally, as CIELAP was dealing with the government, action requests demanded legislative remedy. Here, the economic

¹³ Interview, Elwell, February 11th, 2003.

¹⁴ Elwell, 2002 "Ensuring Green Power Supplies in Ontario: Responding to Perverse Subsidies and Other Market Inequities". CIELAP, Toronto.

¹⁵ Interview, Elwell, February 11, 2003.

argument was political in its focus and realisation – indivisible in the abstract and in reality.

The consumer identity and source of power were invoked more substantially in CIELAP's *Green Power Show*. Organised to bring together industry, business, government, and consumers, the Green Power Show called upon citizens as consumers with growing interest in spending on eco-products, when available. As 'the market' was something that government prioritised, the event provided the proof that suggested environmentally friendly changes were appealing and economically viable. Not only did the marketplace/vendor structure of the show allow decision-makers and business interests to see a growing market and product potential, it also informed citizens about the influence of their buying power on affecting change in the system. Elwell was clear that in the three years the *Green Power Show* has been presented, more policy inroads had been made than as many research papers could possibly have forged. The economic power of concerned individuals in the marketplace had impact in the formal political arena.

Traditional opposition

The actions of the Toronto Environmental Alliance have also tapped into this consumer power by encouraging individuals to join buyers clubs and become more informed about the power they purchase and the impact that privatisation would have on their electricity bills.¹⁶ In addition, the official funding arrangements for TEA asked that Keith Stewart focus on the promotion of 'green power' in any revision of the system structure. Despite this limitation, TEA, and the Ontario Electricity Coalition it helped to

¹⁶ A pamphlet produced by the Electricity Coalition of which TEA is a part stresses higher rates and economic instability as well as an added burden to the economically vulnerable. "Can you afford to pay double for electricity?"

construct, have challenged the government on the economic merits of opening the market to competition and reject the project entirely. Unlike any of the other study groups, the collective action frame identified here is one of “opposition”, despite the organisation’s participation in more conciliatory coalitions.

As a grassroots environmental organisation with limited resources, TEA had chosen to mobilise supporters through an educational campaign. Individuals were encouraged to conserve electricity, inform themselves about how their energy mix was generated and consider the broader implications of the public losing control of the power system. Research conducted by Stewart focused on the experience of other jurisdictions going through the same process and, together with OEC, rejected the project based on his findings. Seeking to stop the marketisation of the utility entirely, TEA and OEC voiced discontent with the government’s consultation process, called for a cancellation of ‘deregulation’ and vowed to defeat “the private power attack altogether”.¹⁷ Research documents published by the Toronto Environmental Alliance explained the downfalls of a privatisation plan and promoted environmentally friendly *public power*.¹⁸ To communicate these views, the group made use of some traditional collective actions such as a public demonstration, local information meetings, letter-writing and pamphlet distribution.

In addition, TEA and OEC made use of another mobilising tool in their collective action frame – fear. Pamphlets and speaking notes stressed the urgency of action, the potential for a worsening crisis, risks of blackouts and loss of sector control to private companies. The groups’ called for a moratorium on the sale of Hydro One and OPG’s

¹⁷ Ontario Electricity Coalition backgrounder “Eves retreats on Hydro One – but Ontario is still at risk” January 22, 2003.

plants, framing any privatisation as an environmental catastrophe in the short and long term. While their campaign to keep power public warned of increased costs and risks of unemployment, the groups' pleas also considered the NAFTA implications once power was out of government hands. The political concerns of the citizen losing control over decision-making on electricity production and the enforcement of environmental regulations remained immediate.

Furthermore, TEA's organisational activities as part of the OEC used political party tools - NDP riding associations and the preparing of opposition members in the House for question period- to get their main points out to the public. Concerned citizens were encouraged to write and phone their Members of Provincial Parliament, send a pre-made message to Premier Eves and pass the word on to a friend. The political implications of opening the electricity market to competition triggered some of the traditional organising strategies of challenging groups. But on the whole, the group's public education efforts have had the most effect. Again, calls on both economic and political power sources were intertwined to advance this group's concerns. Clearly, the dual identity was present for these organisers but the push to keep power public tilted the balance in favour of the citizen's power base.

Working the system

Sierra Club Canada in Ontario however, chose to focus entirely on the environmental opportunities available through formal political avenues locally, nationally and internationally. Here, the framing process produced a "compliance" frame. McDermott approached the coal-fired generation phase-out objective through a combination of treaty mechanisms and cross-border agreements. As a bi-national

¹⁸ Stewart, 2002. "Greening Public Power: Protecting the public interest in electricity restructuring".

organisation focused on the ratification of protective legislation for the environment on a national and international level, the group's *compliance* frame was well suited to their general approach and attitude. For this particular restructuring debate, Sierra Club Canada–Eastern Chapter applied their frame towards emission reductions through the coal plant closures sought by the OCAA. Using institutional channels and regulations, as well as some media coverage, McDermott maintained a non-confrontational attitude towards decision-makers. Essentially, the organisation made use of the restructuring as an opportunity to hold the provincial government to its previously stated obligations.

Research documents commissioned as part of the campaign, focused on Ontario's responsibility to clean up its fossil fuel operations in order to be compliant with national commitments to the Kyoto Protocol and the Ozone Annex to the Canada-United States Air Quality agreement.¹⁹ McDermott's activities at all levels of political jurisdiction pointed to consensus building among decision-makers that pollution was a critical issue to tackle, one that society had already come to recognise as a health concern. Lobbying for provincial party commitments in public to a coal phase-out timetable gave Sierra Club Canada more ammunition to use against the 2003 provincial election victor. Although admitting to the limited currency of campaign promises, McDermott attempted to make use of every political opportunity available to make headway on this issue.

On the surface, it would seem that the consumer appeared in this scenario not at all. Only indirectly through the financial contributions which Sierra Club Canada members make to fund the organisation's activities did the economic power of the individual lend its weight to these efforts. National campaigns did encourage conservation and environmental consideration in purchasing decisions, but the specifics of the Ontario

Toronto Environmental Alliance.

electricity campaign were largely political in their nature. Sensing a societal consensus to deal with pollution, what remained was the task of building or forcing an institutional consensus towards change. Pressure from above and outside of the province, to honour its commitments and meet its environmental obligations, stemmed mainly from political power sources. The citizen, together with other citizens, had expressed their will. It was up to organisations like Sierra Club Canada to push government into line.

Building community

In contrast, Hearthmakers set its sights at a less formal level than international agreement compliance. The energy co-op was founded as a direct response to the economic needs of a community and sought to mobilise constituents to help themselves through tough times. Hart's initiative to help people and the area's churches cope with rising fuel costs was also an effort to build a sense of community. Employing a "self-reliance" frame, Hart sought to empower community members, including municipal councils, to form a co-op to operate a wind generation unit. As opposed to petitioning the provincial government directly to stimulate economic development, the audience for this collective action frame was entirely local. Appeals to municipal councils and public utility commissions focused on keeping control, recycling money through the community and employing as many local people as possible in the process. Public education workshops as well as free home energy audits were clearly aimed at showing individuals the power in their hands if they would simply come together.

Clearly, Hearthmakers Energy Co-op chose to tap into consumer power to deal with the changing energy landscape in the province. In response to the pressures of limited income and high oil costs, Brian Hart attempted to gather consumer support to

¹⁹ McDermott February 10th, 2003 and www.eastern.sierraclub.ca

bargain for affordable energy. After failing in that endeavour, spending power was directed towards an investment in a community's economic future. Hart's efforts in the building of an effective electricity co-op have relied on community members recognising the influence they collectively wield as consumers. The environmental and educational services that the group supplies were aimed at transforming the economic reality of the participants and eventually bringing employment to the region.

Unlike the other organisations, Hearthmakers has been engaged with the government on electricity only through the regulatory mechanisms governing new generation projects. As a supporting member of the OCAA, it could be argued that the co-op was wielding political power at the provincial level, however, Hart's direct political interactions were focused on municipal targets. Direct appeals to local councils not to sell their public utility commissions and to adopt energy conservation measures marked the extent to which Hearthmakers made use of formal political channels. Nevertheless, in the act of organising and attempting to realise the wind turbine project, political power was exercised in the *use* of existing institutions, rules and regulations. Still it cannot be denied that the goals and aims of the project were economic in nature.

A fair shake

While the interests of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture were also ultimately economic in nature, a different type of collective action frame was found in their efforts. Even with a more direct line of access than most of the other activists, the lobbying group employed a few somewhat traditional tactics to keep those lines of communication open. Through that access, OFA presented their position based on a "fairness" frame. Analysis of the government's breakup of the Ontario Hydro monopoly as well as the debt distribution amongst the five resulting companies, led OFA to challenge the Tory's

execution of the restructuring process. Initially, the group was not opposed to competition in the generation side of the sector, but objected to changes to transmission and distribution and who would ultimately shoulder the \$32 billion dollar debt load. However it was to be paid, equity of responsibility was key.

OFA organisers pulled together facts and figures to show government decision-makers the faulty logic of their plan. Recognising that other lobbyists and activists were vying for time and access, OFA's strategy was to have convincing numbers to explain where the government was going wrong. The attitude of the group was a 'reasonable', 'rational' one, not challenging the need for restructuring or the introduction of competition to the system but rather checking over the numbers and wanting to ensure that the consumer would not be left out in the cold.

OFA asserted the political rights of its membership when it engaged the government on rate issues and the cost of privatising the transmission and distribution arms of the sector. The lobbying strength and direct access to the province's ministers was nonetheless aided by the group's 'rational' arguments and 'convincing arithmetic'. Their appeals for fairness to rural consumers and rate protection were based on their perception of their role in the economy of the province as well as the importance of their electoral support in upcoming elections.²⁰ There was also the very real experience of the farmer attempting to plan crops with fixed resources – unpredictable electricity rates would make this difficult. But the organisation's actions mainly followed formal political channels – no boycotts or protests surfaced on the OFA agenda. They encouraged their membership to pressure MPPs to hear what the group had to say. Letter writing and constituency office visits as well as statements in the local print and radio media were the

more traditional tactics employed. The substance of that communication remained focused on consumer service, market fairness and public accountability. Though their actions may have been supported by their political power, their content was all about the cost.

Quiet concerns

Among some of the arguments challenging groups were expected to make regarding citizen's rights, the issue of access to decision-making was secondary for those in this sample. Public consultation opportunities in 1996 and 2002, as previously mentioned, were limited and not all groups had the chance to be heard. This is not to say that the right to participation in decision-making went entirely undefended. The process by which the government pursued its mandate did not go unnoticed and criticism was voiced at those opportunities provided as well as in the press.²¹ Yet none of the six groups made this their primary speaking point and most likely this was due to the relative success of their tactics for being noticed. Instead, the call for the electorate's views to be heard came from political parties in opposition, eager to tap into the public's desire for holding onto Hydro.

The opposition parties vehemently opposed privatisation of Hydro One outright. While there was little disagreement that the ballooning debt of the sector was a problem that needed attention, the public vs. private debate was somewhat muted amongst most of the groups despite them having clear positions. Competition in the generation side of the

²⁰ OFA is a non-partisan group and Cowan claims that the distribution of support for the three main parties is roughly the same proportion as in the province.

²¹ The lack of transparency and consultation was noted in the press – “Hydro One, take two”. *Globe and Mail*, April 24, 2002. The speed at which the May 2002 hearings were orchestrated was highlighted in the some of the presentations to the Minister - The Thunder Bay-Superior North Green Party President Carl Rose, Councillor Alex Cullen, Bay Ward for the City of Ottawa, and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association to name a few.

business was promoted. Distribution and transmission as natural monopolies were off-limits.

Somewhat expectedly, none of the groups sought special, permanent status as a consultant to the government. No one demanded a partnership as political actors representing specific stakeholders. Instead, they claimed the right to be heard and worked to ensure that their approach would win attention long enough to have their reports read by decision-makers, at the very least. The granting of opportunity or access was a secondary issue for most of these groups because it existed for them...they had been able to gain it though formal and informal means and were thus able to move ahead with focusing on their demands.

Finally, an overtly rights-based frame was not expressed. Instead, the right to clean air, the right to participate in decision-making, the right to a fair system equitable for those who wanted to advance green power initiatives, and right to service/resources before other jurisdictions based on ownership remained subtexts to the groups' collective action. These rights were in the background of the framing efforts, almost intuitive, assumed characteristics of a responsible government plan. While each group could easily have constructed convincing arguments with a rights-frame, it appears that they chose to construct different frames with potentially greater appeal, or at least less repelling, to Tory ears.

The Savvy Activist

Attention must now turn to why these groups formed their approaches in the manner in which they did, as the management of argument framing and action choices by these six organisations is the main focus of this study. On the whole, organisers were well aware of the implications of changes to the electricity sector beyond simple rate increases.

As mentioned above, they were professional activists, save one, and well educated, articulate and informed. Examination of the groups' courses of action, and language indicates that each group considered the political opportunities available to them, the character of the decision-makers they were hoping to influence, the audience from whom they sought to gain support and the kind of goals most achievable given the above. With this in mind, each group constructed a unique collective action frame even when they shared the same end goals and had similar takes on the context in which they were active.

Know thine enemy

As stated early, the neo-liberal approach of the Harris Tory agenda was made clear before the party even took office in 1995. *The Common Sense Revolution* and the first few months in Queen's Park also made it clear that the majority government would follow its ideological program with little room for outside comment. Its hold on the legislature made compromise unnecessary. Furthermore, strong shows of repressive force at Queen's Park during demonstrations communicated the government's reception of confrontational challenges.²² In order to overcome this type of obstacle (selective hearing), any message would have to be very persuasive and make economic sense in terms of savings.

Taking these 'personality traits' into consideration, OCAA, CIELAP, OFA and Sierra Club Canada selected a conciliatory approach, seeking dialogue with the government as opposed to radical contention. Accepting that restructuring was necessary and that the move towards competition would proceed, each group chose to provide conditions as well as solutions that they felt should be included in the plans. Although

²² See Eye weekly's column, The Park - "Harris Revolution off to Rough start" October 5th, 1995. And Tom Fennell in Maclean's "Opening shots in the Harris Revolution (austerity measures by Ontario Premier Mike Harris)". Vol. 108, No.41:24. October 9th, 1995.

remaining critical, each group presented itself as rational, reasonable, open to negotiation yet determined to reach selected goals. Hearthmakers, working at the community level, also accepted the market opening and chose to work within the changing regulatory framework of the sector to reach its goal. TEA, on the other hand, was more confrontational in rejecting the plan of opening the market to competition outright. Less direct contact with the government is evidence that such an approach did not generate more political opportunities for this group. At the very least, the other groups managed to keep doors of access open with their 'reasonable' attitude.

Nevertheless, as told by the variety of institutional mechanisms used by the majority of the six groups, Ontario's is a relatively 'open' political system. Litigation efforts by OCAA, appeals to the Federal Competition Bureau from CIELAP, activation of international agreements by Sierra Club Canada and presentations at public hearings by OFA, are evidence of these groups clearly making use of the many political opportunities available to them. However, the intolerant character of the Conservative government should not be understated as a constraint on movement choices. The power to make legislation remained available to reverse displeasing judicial decisions. Still, strategic use of news media allowed for the creation of further opportunities and kept the debate visible in the public arena.

The six activists astutely observed that the right to voice perspective was available to numerous others also attempting to sway decision-makers to their point of view. Similarly, they were not naïve about the willingness of the ruling party to follow its own agenda, nor the trends towards balanced budgets, debt reduction and efficiency flavouring the climate in which they operated. OCAA, CIELAP, and OFA chose to use the government's own language of economic development, cost benefits and fair competition.

Coupled with credible research and concrete solutions, these groups appear to have been able to win the ear of Tory decision-makers. While this did not *always* guarantee agreement, action or dominance in the debate, these organisations remained on the scene as prominent players and in some instances have had their demands met.

The activists also recognised that pressure from a variety of sources including outside jurisdictions increased the chances of a message reaching the appropriate ears and forcing a response. Engaging in coalition building allowed them to lay claim to broad-based public support and show the electoral consequences for inaction. Even Hearthmakers, with its community focus, connected with other organisations to lend strength to appeals for change. Clearly, activists were well aware that ‘politics’ was not limited to the formal proceedings of elected officials nor bound to the geographical frontiers of the province. The Tory government, while appearing to be an impenetrable fortress, could still be influenced by institutional mechanism, rational economic arguments and eventually electoral process.

Activists, in their interaction with the government, in the use of available tools, litigation channels, news media coverage and grassroots organisation, have actively exercised their rights as citizens to guide decision-making. Regarding these six organisations, it appears that all these elements informed their tactical choices for approaching the restructuring issue. But the persona or the attitude projected by the organisations was also a careful choice. In choosing to maintain credibility by having transparent processes, commissioning research from outside institutions, conducting orderly meetings with government officials, these groups maintained a demeanour of professionalism and reason. Also choosing not to boycott hastily orchestrated public consultations and encouraging peaceful actions amongst grassroots supporters prevented

alienation from formal and informal government processes. Essentially, all groups made the most of the opportunities available to them and even created a few more.

Know thine audience

As stated, in order to bring pressure to bear on decision-makers, it had not escaped the attention of the groups that a less radical collective action frame of issues potentially bore the most fruit. The same seemed to hold for the audience of supporters. None of their proposed actions or strategies required a dramatic change in lifestyle or re-sculpting of the political process and power balance. Disruptive action was not amongst the tactical choices of the groups. Making the building of broad-based coalitions easier, this aspect of frame construction allowed for municipal councils and faith groups to become involved along with research groups, environmentalists, cottager associations, etc.

Findings

Returning to the main questions, it appears that on the whole, these groups refrained from fully negating the power of the citizen in favour of the consumer. Up against a neo-liberal government and a persuasive societal myth of the benefits of fiscal restraint²³, groups made strategic choices to maintain access and impact by calling to both identities. Those groups who chose to speak in the language of the 'market' and adopt a non-confrontational demeanour were able to gain access more easily (relatively speaking). And yet, while there is some comfort that certain political statements and claims continue to be exercised and mobilised by activists, there are some underlying principles of a neo-liberal economic rationale that have permeated societal perceptions of government responsibility. Few of this study's activists seemed to question the beliefs that debt is a bad thing, that governments are responsible for being proactive in the

cultivation of an environment conducive to economic growth, that choice in the marketplace is better than monopoly.

What becomes clear through this evidence, is that the identities of citizen and consumer cannot truly be separated into two autonomous categories. The exercise of consumer choice in this context serves a political agenda. Activists asking or calling on individuals to 'consume with a conscience', ensures that separation of the political and economic self is impossible. Using the citizen's actions as a producer or consumer, someone engaged in economic activities, to change a policy direction is by definition political. Making use of the litigation avenues both at the provincial, federal and international level, no matter how creatively, as well as organising others, and exercising the right to contribute to government decision-making process are all important to the maintenance of political rights and freedoms.

Nevertheless, the economic individual is given a certain prominence as a strategy where it is appropriate. A profession-based lobby group is expected to have benefits to business in mind. Similarly, a research institute with an agenda to bring environmental options to a market would be expected to consider the obstacles and inequities of the marketplace for new alternative source projects. And a co-operative designed to assist with employment and energy costs is clearly concerned with the economic well-being of its members.

Selling out?

This analysis reveals that these groups have not assisted in speeding up the marketisation of the state by participating with more figure-focused proposals and consumer powered campaigns. Instead, they have recognised and operationalised the

²³ See Larner and Walters, 2000 "Privatisation, governance and identity: the United Kingdom and New

network of power relations that exist in the decision-making around policy and its implementation. Where they were able, they balanced the political and economic identities that co-exist within the individual and groups of individuals in order to further their cause. Politicising the market-minded process maintained connections between politics and economic activity. Most importantly, each group recognised that their arguments and direction of research were specific to the political ideology with which they were engaging. A different party would mean a different story, different tactics and different terms of access.

Furthermore, the experience of these activists with regard to the weight that their reports and 'consumer' actions hold suggests that the economic rationale of the government does not yet reign supreme in their decision-making processes. The threat or concern of electoral correction remains a significant factor.²⁴ Still, there is a clear recognition of the impact that balance sheets have on policy options no matter what the political leaning of the ruling party. Organisers seem to accept that there are certain pressures that are very difficult for governments to resist. Likewise, there are common conceptions about economics that will always influence the understanding of 'economic frames'. First, business and industry will always be interest in profit above all else. And second, consumers will always opt for the lowest cost, except if they feel strongly about the benefits of spending more money (health risks decrease, cleaner environment, conservation of resources, etc.). Sensitivity to these conditions and perspectives and their resonance in various power relations is by far the frame-maker's greatest tool.

Zealand compared". *Policy & Politics*. Vol.28, No.3: 361-377.

²⁴ See Paul Pierson 1996. "The New Politics of the Welfare State" for an interesting study of the impact of Thatcherism on England's institutional landscape.

In closing

The frame making conducted by these six citizens' groups made use of the dual identity of the citizen/consumer to access multiple sets of power relations. The consumer occasionally gained prominence where it seemed most appropriate, given the groups' ultimate goals. The citizen was never far behind. By using multiple institutional avenues of expression along with a few informal routes, the citizen's power to access the system in this political context remained present and prominent. Dealing with government and organising others naturally classifies or calls upon the political powers. Still, given the impact of consumer choice in a time when market ideology is of growing influence or market behaviours (whether correctly understood or not) are applied to public endeavours, it would be foolish of the activists not to have considered consumer-focused activities as part of their available repertoire. Political opportunities were both exploited and created strategically, catering to the personality of the Conservative government while maintaining distance for credibility. Each group mobilised resources suitable to their organisational character. And most of the groups balanced political and economic activities to make the biggest impact while maintaining some sort of access to decision-makers.

It is either in the action or in the intent that all the work of these groups could be considered 'political'. In the abstract, the organisation of others towards a transformation of conditions or structures is political. There is however, the potential to forget to mention the principles behind choices of marketisation and its meaning for governance or the process of consultation and accountability. Expediency and effect for collective action efforts can be powerful reasons for choosing some arguments over others. Framing choices for a public audience and for an audience of decision-makers was guided by the

circumstances or the terms set by this particular government. While the world is focusing on larger, more dramatic and definitely more photogenic protests of the anti-globalisation movement, or the property destruction by those against genetically modified foods, a world of strategic actions within the system is also leading culture change. Careful attention should be paid to these 'internal' struggles as identities are defined and reshaped and societal perceptions of power – who has it, how to get it and what to do with it – are modified.

Conclusion

What has been attempted here is an examination of the power sources of the individual citizen/consumer from the perspective of collective action groups. As actors in the sphere of politics, collective action organisers play an important role in constructing interpretative frames for understanding and mobilising around key issues. Part of that framing process is the invoking of power sources latent within the individual's multiple identities in society. Frames that accent the individual's power of choice in the market or the citizen's power to access institutional mechanisms of correction (including electoral) are important indicators of where the most effective source of power to change is seen as lying. The prominence of one identity over the other may suggest some fundamental changes of where the decisions about policy are really taking place, or at least thought to be.

Tools

The analytical tools borrowed from social movement literature were particularly useful for detecting what activists perceived as the most power rich identities to be mobilised towards selected goals. The concept of collective action framing shed significant light on the main questions regarding the power of citizen and the consumer. By considering the interpretation of organisers as to where power could be garnered and how it could be presented to realise the best results, the researcher had the tools to peer into the perceptions of power among activists and the activated. Conveniently, Benford and Snow's conception of the framing process allowed for factors brought to the fore by resource mobilisation theory and political opportunity structures, to be recognised and weighed in the choice of actions made by organisers.

As all six organisations were in some way or other engaging structures of governance at multiple levels of jurisdiction, the concept of political opportunities highlighted the array of institutional mechanisms available in a political climate often seen as closed. The Conservative government of Mike Harris, and to a lesser extent Ernie Eves, presented activists with an intransigent foe. Finding ways to persuade or sway decision-makers to modify their ideological project was no small feat. Still, the creative use of external channels for expression, often overlooked by a rigid interpretation of the political opportunity structure concept, in combination with institutional mechanisms of input, showed that even the most intolerant of opponents was not impervious to challenge. By examining what existing opportunities for influence were employed, as well as those that were created, we gained further insight into each organisation's underlying assumptions of the potency of dual identities.

The frame selection and action choices by group organisers maximised the available resources. Each campaign played to the strengths that each organisation could claim in terms of expertise, membership, organisational structure, media appeal or access to decision-makers. Coalition building broadened the network of potential adherents. And indeed, the weather even provided a little extra persuasive material. Although the theory of resource mobilisation may not stand apart as a comprehensive lens for thorough analysis of collective activity, when coupled with political opportunity as part of the framing process, its usefulness becomes clear. The results gleaned from this combination of concepts moved the researcher closer to answering the study's guiding questions.

As we have seen in this particular study, the challenge of effectively communicating with the Tories on electricity restructuring was a substantial one.

Although the institutional political opportunities for pursuing demands in Ontario would classify it as an 'open' system, the legislative majority of the Conservative party enabled its leaders to remain true to its ideology. As Ontario Hydro was divided and the date set for market opening, it seemed there were few ways to reach the Harris regime with alternative plans for the process. Bringing competition and market discipline to the largest public utility on the continent would ensure economic development and success for the province. However, with carefully constructed collective action frames, activists around the province took on the challenge.

Six groups, six frames

Using the contentious topic of the restructuring of Ontario's electricity sector as the setting in which to view framing in action, six citizens' groups were selected for examination. While the majority of the groups mobilised to achieve similar environmental goals, each of the six organisations had a different approach to influencing policy and a different mixture of citizen and consumer power in mind. The Ontario Clean Air Alliance's 'health-crisis' frame resonated not only with the six million supporters it claimed but also, in modified form, with other collective action organisers. The human health costs of pollution caused Sierra Club Canada, the Toronto Environmental Alliance, and the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy to mobilise towards the phase-out of coal-fired generation. CIELAP produced a 'problem-solving' frame to make the most of the government's restructuring scheme to advance alternative 'green' power sources. Sierra Club Canada used a 'compliance' framing to force the altered system to meet international agreement targets for pollution reduction. TEA, on the other hand, chose to maintain an 'oppositional' frame, rejecting the move to marketisation entirely and demanding instead energy conservation and the advance of green power

technologies. Pollution reduction in the name of health factored into all of these framing processes with diverse results.

Alternatively, the collective action frames from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative prioritised economic development as a product for changes to the electricity system. OFA exercised its lobbying skills with a frame of 'fairness' in place. A new system had to treat consumers fairly with accountability at the local level and the utility's debt divided equitably. Hearthmakers, on the other hand, was built with a 'self-reliance' frame in action, working to help a community help itself by making the most of the move to competition in generation.

Expectedly, each of these framings informed the kinds of action options available given the organisers' analyses of the issue context, the political opportunities in existence, and the opportunities that could be created to ensure access to government decision-makers. Five of the six groups chose to work in concert or at least not in direct confrontation with the government's desire to move the sector towards the market. That meant making the most of institutional mechanisms such as legal challenges, voter education, and public consultation opportunities, and informal pressure mechanisms such as public opinion polling, focusing media attention and co-opting decision-maker language. These collective action frame makers carefully considered each tactic, each aspect of the debate and the character of the government they faced. Each action chosen and taken invoked an identity within the individual, calling upon supporters to activate the latent power in their roles in politics or in the marketplace.

Scope and scale

The power relations between citizens and governments are a vital area of study. As pressures increase within Western nations to govern according to a neo-liberal

rationale, the status of the individual is also subject to strain. With the change in a government's obligations to its citizens as well as the jurisdiction over which it has control, the nature of the citizen's power source is changing too. A trend towards individuals finding themselves increasingly engaged in 'market' activity where once there was only the state, favours the buying power of consumers over the citizen's rights. Nevertheless, citizens' groups organising to influence the direction of public policy are maintaining an identity balance.

Necessarily, this study limited itself to groups that were engaging the government on some level. An institutionalist approach in activism was favoured in the selection of groups, as it seemed most appropriate given the issue context and the questions to be answered. Not only were groups of this sort more easily identified and explored, their activities revealed an array of political opportunities for influence in a somewhat hostile environment. Nevertheless, expansion of the research instrument to include less visible groups mobilising powerful identities towards a non-government audience would be a worthy direction of inquiry. The approach toward decision-makers and the audience of supporters speaks volumes about the engaged citizen's understanding of the political and economic context in which he/she lives. Finding those activists who framed an entirely different interpretation and course of action would surely provide researchers with more data to ponder.

Naturally, a continuation of this study, following the same groups under the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty might yield further insight into the evolution of collective action frames. A comparison of tactics and actions devised to deal with the new leadership of October 2003 may reveal the extent to which neo-liberal logic

transcends party boundaries and permeates public debate. In addition, some subsequent theoretical questions provoked by this study warrant investigation. Could the power of the citizen truly be transferred to the marketplace if the marketisation process is completed or is a pendulum-like shift in the opposite direction to follow? Secondly, if there is an increase in research of economic models by citizens' groups, will government agendas towards privatisation be reconsidered? What will the years of experience in organisation and framing processes bring to the definition of the sphere of 'politics'? Needless to say, the subject of collective action efforts is bountiful in research potential.

No matter what the preferred direction of inquiry, questions of the status of the power of the citizen must continue to surface on the research agenda. Amidst changes in the world of the political at all levels – personal, territorial, global – the rights gained for the individual to participate in and challenge the decision-making taking place around him/her are more vulnerable than ever. As in the restructuring of Ontario's electricity sector, there are opportunities to advance new and improved ideas that will benefit all and there are also great risks in terms of losing control of tools key for survival.

In closing

The ultimate goal of this study was to draw attention to the impact that the invocation of certain identities may have on the locus of power. Focusing on the power of the consumer in the marketplace to exert pressure or influence change in systems of governance is a risky proposition. Although expediency in dealing with a powerful neo-liberal program may demand such a route, activists must not neglect to make use of the institutional mechanisms that exist for citizens to assert challenge. As the division of collective activities into 'political' or 'economic' categories reveals, such a typology is untenable, at best an abstract exercise. Even actions consistent with an economic framing

were political in their execution, further affirming the linkages between politics and the market.

The themes highlighted in this thesis will continue to be important topics for discussion in the immediate future. Not only will it be crucial to watch what occurs in post-election Ontario with respect the restructuring process, but the importance of energy sectors in general will be ever more pronounced in the days to come. Development both here and abroad is already determined by the politics of control of existing sources of power and the technologies that aid in the discovery of new ones. Similarly, the evolution of political structures and citizen participation will demand closer attention as the existing categories and divisions are challenged and transformed. Who will make policy, who will focus citizen attentions, who will chose the directions taken by communities, cities, corporations, provinces, nations, regions and continents? What powers will societies grant or have wrested from them for the institutions that structure everyday lives? Whatever the answers to these questions may prove to be, without doubt, the engaged citizen will find some way to mobilise a challenge.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Due to the open-ended, qualitative nature of the questions, a complete questionnaire is not available. However, the following topic areas can be outlined as my research instrument.

Description of Organization –

Here participants are invited to describe their organization in general terms, including self-classification as a consumer advocacy group, or a group for social change, an environmental organization or a citizen's group etc.

I also hope to discover the parameters of their activity – whether they are strictly local, issue-specific, ad hoc or long established.

Approach to the Issue –

As these groups have been selected due to a connection with the Electricity Restructuring issue in Ontario through their own actions, they will be invited to elaborate on their position in relation to the debate.

Here I also hope to determine what kind of action the group has pursued – has it been focused on legal challenges?; presentations directly to government?; is it public education oriented?

This will lead into a more in-depth discussion about the group's choice of tactics.

Tactical Choices in the debate –

Here participants will be invited to discuss their tactical choices in more detail. They will be asked to reflect on the influencing factors in decision-making as well as the process for determining their mandate as a group with regards to this issue. (Did they conduct their own research, did they contact experts, did they make alliances with other groups, did they change their tactics at any time and why?

Reflections on formal participation options –

Next the participants will be asked to reflect on the Ontario government's consultation process during the past year with regard to Hydro issues. Then they will be asked to comment in relation to their own activities – would their tactics or mandate choices have been different if the party in power had been other than Conservative?

Other reflections, comments or suggestions –

At this point in the interview, the participant will be asked to contribute or comment on anything they felt they needed to add to the interview data. As part of the wrap-up they will also be invited to revisit any of their comments, strike anything from the record or suggest other avenues of research.

APPENDIX B

From "A Framework for Competition"
May 1996 – MacDonald Committee's final
report – 'PARTICIPANTS'

"The following individuals and organizations participated in the consultation process of the Advisory Committee on Competition in Ontario's Electricity System."

Ajax Hydro-Electric Commission	Brown, Paul
Alcan Rolled Products Company	Bureau of Competition Policy, Industry Canada
Algonquins of Golden Lake First Nation	Caledon Hydro
Almonte Hydro	Cambridge Energy Research Associates
Amherstburg Public Utilities Commission	Campbell, Robert
AMTIM Management Consulting	Cambridge & North Dumfries Hydro Electric Commission
Anderson, Donald	Canadian Association of Energy Service Companies
Andrew, Stephen	Canadian Chemical Producers Association
ARA Consulting Group Inc.	Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance
Association of Major Power Consumers of Ontario	Canadian Institute for Environmental Law & Policy
Atikokan Hydro	Canadian Niagara Power Company Limited
Atomic Energy of Canada Limited	Canadian Nuclear Association
Bayliss, Frank	Canadian Nuclear Workers' Council
Belleville Utilities Commission	Canadian Petroleum Products Institute
Blenheim Public Utilities Commission	Canadian Solar Industries Association
Blohm, Robert	Canadian Union of Public Employees, Ontario Division
Blue, Ian	Carter, Cyril
Bobcaygeon Public Utilities Commission	Carvalho, Viviano
Bracknell Corporation	Cassidy, Michael (The Ginger Group)
Bradford/West Gwillimbury Public Utilities Commission	Chalk River Hydro Electric Commission
Brampton Hydro	Chatham Hydro
Brantford Public Utilities Commission	Chiefs of Ontario
Brantford Township Hydro Electric Commission	Churley, Marilyn, NDP MPP
Brockville Public Utilities Commission	CIBC Wood Gundy
Page 2	Citizens for Renewable Energy
Clarington Hydro Electric Commission	Fergus Mill Inc.
Clifford, Bill	Ferguson, Paul D.
Collie, Dave	Frey, Charles
Collingwood Public Utilities Commission	Gananoque Light and Power Limited

Committee for Competitive Electricity in Ontario
 Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)
 Consumers Association of Canada
 Cook, Stephen
 Cornwall Electric
 Cummings, Kealey
 Cunningham Gregory + Company
 Cuthbert, Doug
 Daniels, Ron
 Deseronto Public Utilities Commission
 Deutsche Morgan Grenfell Canada

Dresden Utilities Commission
 Drinkwalter, David
 Dunnville Hydro Electric Commission

East York Hydro
 Electrical Contractors' Association of Ontario
 Energy Action Council of Toronto
 Energy Advantage Inc.
 Energy Cost Management Inc.
 Energy Probe
 Environment Canada
 Essex Public Utilities Commission
 Etobicoke Hydro
 Exeter Public Utilities Commission
 Falconbridge Limited
 Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Association Limited
 Fenelon Falls Board of Water, Light and Power Commissioners

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Industrial Gas Users Association
 Ingersol Public Utilities Commission
 Innisfil Hydro
 Integrated Energy Development Corporation
 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
 Jean, Jerry
 Joore, T.H.
 Joskow, Paul
 J.P. Morgan Securities Ltd.

Gananoque Steel and Forging/Manchester
 Plastics Limited
 Garner, Mark
 Gibson, Alan
 Gloucester Hydro Electric Commission
 Goldman, Sachs Canada
 Gordon, Myron
 Goulbourn Hydro
 Grand Bend Public Utilities Commission
 Gravenhurst Hydro Electric Commission
 Great Lakes Power Limited
 Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce
 Green Energy Coalition
 Grey Bruce Labour Council
 Grimsby Hydro Electric Commission
 Guelph Hydro
 Haavisto, Fred
 Haldimand Hydro

Halpern, Paul
 Halton Hills Hydro Electric Commission
 Henney, Alex
 Hopcroft, Grant
 Howse, Robert
 Hunter, Ron
 Hunter, Vivian
 Hydro Mississauga
 INCO limited
 Independent Power Producers' Society of Ontario
 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Millbrook Public Utilities Commission
 Milton Hydro Electric Commission
 Moore, Bill
 Moose Cree First Nation
 Morgan Stanley & Co. Inc.
 MPR Associates
 Municipal Electric Association
 Municipal Electric Association, District 1
 Municipal Electric Association, District 3

Kanata Hydro
 Kehoe, Frank
 KEMA-ECC Inc.
 Kingston Public Utilities Commission
 Kingsville Public Utilities Commission
 Kitching, Jim
 Klohn-Crippen Consultants Ltd.
 Kroeger, Arthur
 Lawler, Wes
 Leamington Public Utilities Commission
 Limebeer, John
 Lincoln Hydro Electric Commission
 Lindsay Hydro-Electric System
 London & District Labour Council
 Makivirta, Taisto
 Marcello, Carmine
 Markham Hydro Electric Commission
 Marsh & McLennan Limited
 Mathewson, Frank

McVey, Elmer

Merrill Lynch Canada Inc.
 Middlesex Federation of Agriculture
 Midland Walwyn Capital Inc.

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Ontario Federation of Labour
 Ontario Forest Industries Association
 Ontario Hydro
 Ontario Mining Association
 Ontario Ministry of Economic
 Development, Trade & Tourism
 Ontario Ministry of Finance
 Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and
 Housing
 Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources
 Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General
 and Correctional Services
 Ontario Natural Gas Association
 Orillia Water, Light & Power Corporation
 Ottawa-Carleton Economic Development
 Corporation
 Ottawa Hydro
 Palmer, William K.G.
 Paris Public Utilities Commission

Municipal Electric Association, District 8
 Municipal Electric Association, District 9
 Murdock, Claire
 Nanticoke Hydro Electric Commission
 Napanee Hydro Electric Commission
 Natural Resources Canada
 Nepean Hydro Electric Commission
 Nesbitt Burns
 Newbury, Roger
 Niagara Falls Hydro
 Nishnawbe-Aski Nation
 North York Hydro Commission
 Northumberland County
 Novacor Chemicals – Canada
 O'Dell, Peter
 Omemee Hydro
 Ontario Cable Association
 Ontario Chamber of Commerce
 Ontario Coalition of Integrated Waste
 Management
 Ontario Electrical League Contractors'
 Committee
 Ontario Energy Board
 Ontario Energy/Environment Caucus
 Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Reed Consulting Group
 Remiz, Frank
 Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
 Richardson Greenshields of Canada Ltd.
 Ridgetown Public Utilities Commission

Robb, Gordon
 Roman, Andrew

Round, Leonard
 Rudd, Dave

RUN Community Task Force
 Sam Horton Consulting
 Sarnia Hydro

Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce
 Scarborough Public Utilities Commission
 Scharfenberg, Roland

Pelham Hydro Electric Commission
 Pembroke Hydro Electric Commission
 Perth Public Utilities Commission
 Peterborough & District Labour Council
 Peterborough Utilities Commission
 Petro-Canada Products
 Petrolia Public Utilities Commission
 Pickering Hydro-Electric

 Point Edward Public Utilities Commission

 Port Hope Hydro
 Power Workers' Union
 Power Workers' Union, Division 9
 Prescott Public Utilities Commission
 Pugh, Randy
 RBC Dominion Securities Inc.

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St. Mary's Paper Ltd.
 St. Thomas Public Utilities Commission
 Stein, Amy
 Stirling Public Utilities Commission
 Stratford Public Utilities Commission

 Sudbury and District Labour Council
 Sudbury Hydro
 Technology Applications Inc.
 Tellus Institute for Resource and
 Environmental Strategies
 Tembec Inc.
 Thamesville Public Utilities Commission
 Thessalon Hydro Electric Commission
 Thorold Hydro Electric Commission
 Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
 Thunder Bay Hydro-Electric Commission
 Tilbury Public Utilities Commission
 Tippelt, Robert
 Toronto District Heating Corporation
 Toronto Dominion Securities Inc.
 Township of Tay Hydro Electric
 Commission
 TransAlta Corporation
 Trebilcock, Michael
 Trent University
 Tweed Hydro Electric Commission

Schrama, Peter
 Scott, P.J.
 Scugog Hydro
 Seethapathy, Ravi
 Simcoe Hydro Electric Commission
 Simms, David
 Simonsen, Peter
 Société de Transmission Électrique de
 Cedars Rapids Limitée
 Society of Ontario Hydro Professional and
 Administrative Employees
 Sole, Fred (Huron Consultants)
 Somerville, Bill
 South Bruce Impact Advisory Committee
 Southern Electric International
 Springwater Hydro Electric Commission
 St. Catharines Hydro-Electric Commission

Union of Ontario Indians
 Wabaseemoong Independent Nations
 Wallaceburg Hydro-Electric Commission
 Wasaga Beach Hydro Electric Commission
 Waterloo, Wellesley and Woolwich Hydro
 Electric Commission
 Welland Hydro Electric Commission
 Wells, Thomas
 West Lincoln Hydro Electric Commission
 West Lorne Public Utilities Commission

Windsor Utilities Commission
 Winchester Hydro Commission
 Woodstock Public Utilities Commission
 Woodville Hydro Electric Commission
 Whitaker, Lynne
 Whiteside, Robert
 Whittaker, Donald
 Wilson, Hamish
 Winter, Ralph
 York Hydro
 Young, Rev. Gordon

Zurich Hydro Electric

APPENDIX C

HYDRO ONE CONSULTATIONS (may 2002) ATTENDEES**"LONDON**

Bruce Power
Energy Probe
Citizen
Ontario Federation of Agriculture
Union Gas Limited
Erie Thames Power Corporation

THUNDER BAY

Thunder Bay Hydro
Seine River Power Inc.
Green Party
Thunder Bay – Superior North Green Party
Mayor

NORTH BAY

North Bay Hydro
Fabrene
Dynea
Greater Sudbury Utilities Inc.

ARNPRIOR

Citizen
Enbridge Consumers Gas
Ottawa River Power Corporation
Citizen

OTTAWA

Ontario Energy Association (OEA)
Ottawa City Council
Citizen
Communications and Information Technology Ontario (CITO)
Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board

WINDSOR

Elecsar Engineering Ltd.
Citizen
CAW Local 444
Enwin
Union Gas

NIAGARA FALLS

Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA)

Independent Power Producers' Society of Ontario (IPPSO)
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Niagara Chapter of the Electricity Coalition
Niagara-On-The-Lake Hydro

HAMILTON

Ontario Forest Industries Association
Hamilton and District Labour Council
Canadian Alternative Energy Corporation
Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus (CARP)
Mountain Cable Vision

TORONTO

The Honourable Donald Macdonald
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE)
Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP)
Power Workers' Union (PWU)
Stakeholders Alliance For Electricity Competition and Customer Choice (SAC)

TORONTO

The Toronto Board of Trade (BoT)
Citizen
Ontario Electricity Coalition (OEC)
Ontario Clean Air Alliance (OCCA)
Toronto City Council
Enersource Corporation

SUDBURY

Falconbridge
Sudbury and District Labour Council
Greater Sudbury Utilities Inc.
Citizen
Great Lakes Power Limited.

APPENDIX D

METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

SELECTION OF 'SAMPLE':

The social movement groups or citizens' groups selected for this study were identified through a series of media searches, including newsprint, television and Internet. In addition, the list of participants in public consultations (printed in the Appendix of the Advisory Committee on Competition in Ontario's Electricity System's final report - *A Framework for Competition* May 1996 (Appendix B)), were combed for citizens' group that met the qualitative criteria. These defining criteria included 1) lack of any party affiliation, 2) voluntary, relatively unrestricted membership, 3) activity in a public context, and 4) interest in protecting or pursuing benefits for societal members other than themselves.

Individuals listed as presenters in May 1996, were checked for group affiliation via an Internet search. In addition, a Freedom of Information Act request was filed with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to obtain a list of participants from the May 2002 public consultations on Hydro One, as well as any presentation notes that were filed with the Ministry. (Appendix C).

From these steps a list of fifteen possible interview candidates was generated. A combination of national and local groups was chosen, some whose origins predated 1995 and others that were newly created specifically to deal with the electricity restructuring issue. Three were eliminated because of financial investment interests. Three more were excluded due to overlap in issue approach or coverage or similar membership. The remaining nine were sent interview requests. Two yielded no response, a third request was rejected.

DATA COLLECTION

The Interviews – Four of the six interviews were conducted in person in the organisations' offices in Toronto in February of 2003. The interviews were captured with an audio cassette recorder and later transcribed for the writing process. The two remaining interviews took place over the telephone. Point form notes were taken during the interview and used during the writing process.

Reports and documents, press articles – Many of these documents were collected during face-to-face interviews or were available over the Internet at the organisations' website or other media outlets. Government documents were also collected online as print copies were not always available at provincial government bookstores.