

# Can community-based participatory research be conceptualized as social movement?

An innovative theoretical framework to assess the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project

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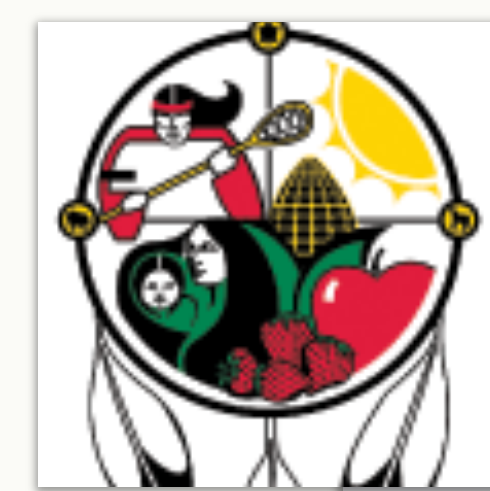
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## Background



- Community-based participatory research (CBPR) has become increasingly popular as an approach adding **relevance and value to health research** (1).
- Given the complex causal web linking a CBPR project and its health outcomes, it may be more relevant to **assess intermediate indicators of change**, such as system changes and group processes (2).
- Because it examines the conditions under which collective action emerges and develops to promote social change around an issue, we believe that **social movement theory** could provide a good theoretical apparatus in order to investigate social processes generated by CBPR.
- **Our hypothesis is that successful (sustainable) CBPR projects behave like social movements.**

## Objectives



- This communication aims to present a preliminary **theoretical framework based on social movement theory** that will be used to assess a CBPR project, the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project (KSDPP).
- KSDPP is a long-standing CBPR project running for 21 years and **aim to prevent Type 2 diabetes** in children and future generations in Kahnawake (Mohawk Territory, Quebec).
- Since the start of the project, many studies have attempted to evaluate the outcomes of the project on health and lifestyles of residents in the community. These studies have **shown mixed results** on physical activity, diet, weight and diabetes (3).
- Above and beyond these outcomes, a definition and an assessment of **intermediate indicators of changes**, such as system changes and group processes, are greatly needed.

## Methods



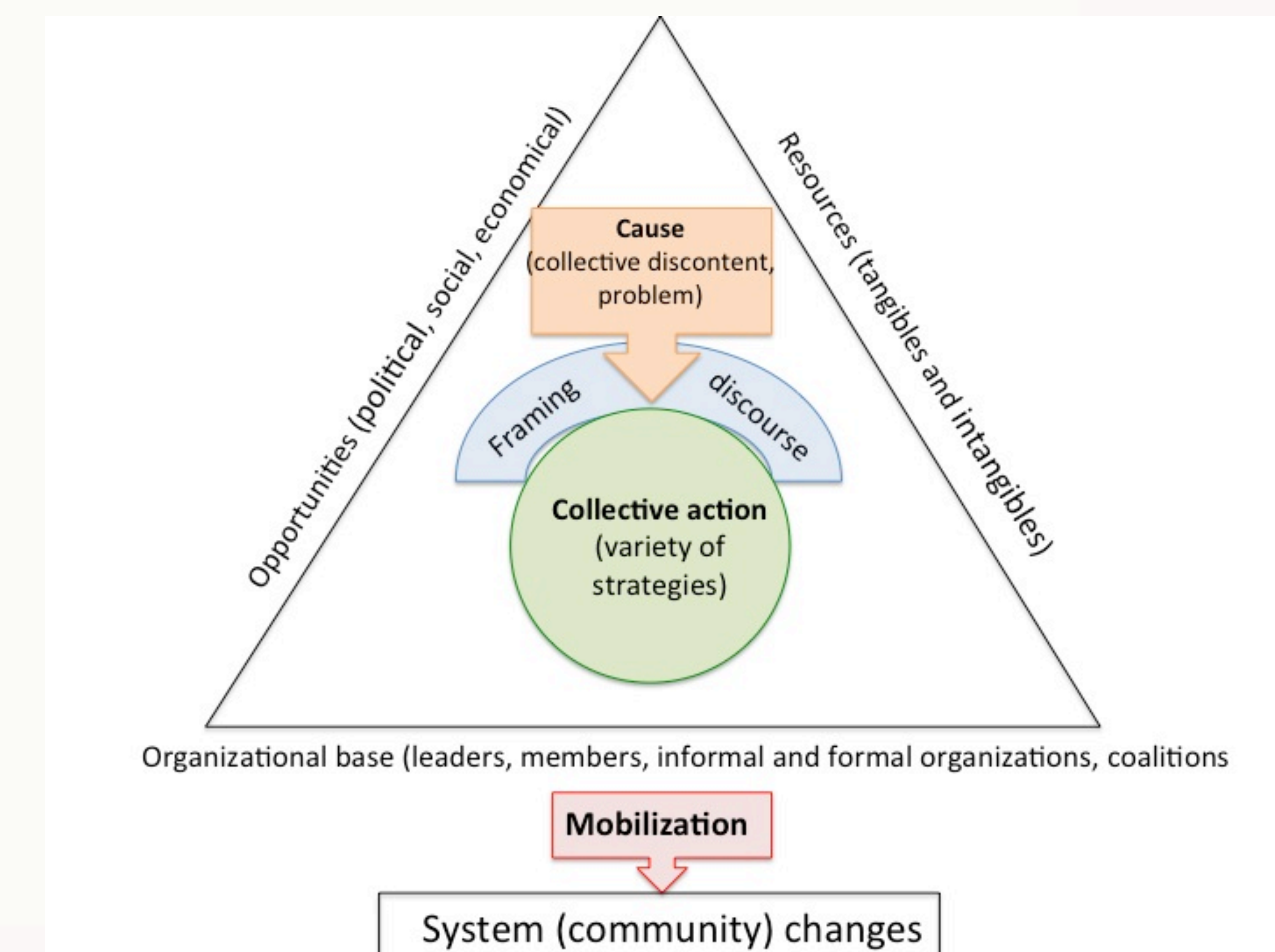
- Major literature and seminal works on **social movement theory** (especially resources mobilization and framing theories) (4-8) as well as literature on **CBPR** have been consulted to develop a theoretical framework that could be used to investigate social change processes in the context of KSDPP.
- **Similarities** between social movements and CBPR processes and characteristics have been identified from the literature. From these similarities, themes, properties and dimensions have been defined and developed in an iterative process.
- An preliminary theoretical framework has been developed from this work. This theoretical framework will be further developed and refined using **a framework synthesis** (a type of qualitative review) of successful CBPR projects (N = 9). This refined framework will then be **applied to the analysis of our case**, KSDPP.

## Results



- The framework developed emphasizes similarities between CBPR and social movements:
- They both pursue a political agenda or a **'cause'**, which is promoted in a **collective action frame** (interpretative discourse) to mobilize people.
- They engage in **collective actions** that are oriented toward clear targets and use a **variety of strategies** in pursuit of their goals.
- They develop in relation to **specific opportunities** (political, social, economical) and follow a long **life cycle** that retain some continuity over time
- They use tangible and intangible **resources** brought by individuals and groups (e.g. money, facilities, means of communication, knowledge, skills, expertise, labor and legitimacy)
- They have a strong **organizational base** (involving leaders, members or followers, formal or informal organizations and coalitions)

## Theoretical framework



## Conclusion

Using a social movement theory lens to assess CBPR projects could **provide innovative insights in order to evaluate and improve these initiatives.**

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