

ABSTRACT

ETHICS AND CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS: CONSIDERATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

This study explores the ethical implications of confrontational organizing strategies, such as direct action and civil disobedience. These tactics are powerful and effective tools for social change, as evidenced by many notable figures and the social movements in which they participated. Yet confrontation, even when nonviolent, has potential consequences for participants. The process of selecting and implementing confrontational tactics is explored through qualitative interviews with local community organizers and activists. These interviews shed light on the complex nature of such a decision, and what factors influence respondents' thought processes. Though all respondents expressed the importance of group based decision making and a careful examination of environmental factors, they also reflected variation in their conceptions of when, where, and why confrontational tactics are appropriate and emphasized the subjectivity of ethics.

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