Reviewer's report

Title: How does community context influence coalitions in the formation stage? A multiple case study based on the Community Coalition Action Theory.

Version: 2 Date: 26 June 2009

Reviewer: Frances Butterfoss

Reviewer's report:

This excellent manuscript addresses an important question related to coalition research that has had limited attention. The literature review and relevant findings are well detailed. The methods are appropriate and well described and the data appear to be sound using accepted analytic methods for qualitative data. The results, discussion and conclusions are well derived and the use of tables is helpful for the reader. Limitations are clearly stated. The writing is excellent and I only have a few revisions that would be discretionary on the part of the authors:

1) Avoid use of passive voice - p. 3, para 2, sentence 4; p. 11, para 11, sentences 1 and 3; page 15, sentence 2.
2) p. 4, sentence 1, insert "that" after "suggest"
3) p. 5, para 1, edit last sentence to: Similarly, Nezlek and Galano found that most of the teen......relationships." Para 3, sentence 2, substitute "difficult" for "hard"
4) p. 13, para 2, sentence 2, use "collaborating" instead of "collaboration"
5) p. 14, para 2, sentence 1, edit to "Participants described that engaging people with lower educational levels was difficult due to..." Sentence 3, insert comma after "again". Para 3, sentence 2, edit to "This was most noticeable in rural areas where having a full range of community sectors represented sometimes was not possible simply because....
6) p. 15, para 2, sentence 2, use comma after "communities" - also shouldn't it be participation "in" coalitions not "on" coalitions?
7) p. 16, para 1, sentence 4, insert comma after "in one community". Omit first paragraph of discussion - redundant
8) last sentence - rewrite to "...facilitate building an evidence-base...."
9) In order to facilitate reading, please use underlines for contextual factors within construct subheadings to make them stand out and easily distinguishable from italicized citations.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

The only competing interest I have is that I helped co-author the Community Coalition Action Theory (related to content of this paper) with the third author, Michelle Kegler.