Changed Climate:
Networking, Professionalization, and Grassroots Organizing in U.S. Environmental Organizations

by

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation, "Changed Climate: Networking, Professionalization, and Grassroots Organizing in U.S Environmental Organizations," explores the efforts of four established U.S. environmental NGOs to change their organizational cultures and routine practices to develop grassroots activism for climate change advocacy. I find that although actors within and outside the environmental movement recognize a collective failure to influence the U.S. policy process on climate change issues, their organizations have been unable to adapt to the current political environment. My data derives from extensive participant observation, semi-structured interviews with organizational staff and experts, and statistical analysis of organizational efforts to recruit volunteer participants and develop their leadership over a two-year period. I follow four environmental organizations as they sought to create of a national climate-focused social movement. Working in collaborative partnership with other state- and national-level NGOs under the moniker of the "Climate Coalition," they initiated pilot organizing campaigns in June 2011 in three U.S. cities toward three intertwined goals of 1) building social movement power via local coalitions, 2) developing volunteer leadership capable of forging a social movement community, and 3) mobilizing the resources of that constituency in collective action to effect change.

In Chapter 1, looking first at the network of organizations that comprised the Climate Coalition, I show that the network's novel configuration – a third party network administrator both coordinated the activities of the participating organizations and worked with them to set the network's strategy – produced rather than diminished the tensions inherent in inter-organizational collaboration. Turning next to the organizations themselves in Chapter 2, I explore the challenges of integrating new types of experts and expertise into existing organizational structures. In particular, I suggest that the focus on involving volunteer expertise through community organizing disrupted existing organizational notions of expertise and prevented large-scale organizational embrace of the movement building work. Finally, in Chapter 3 I examine the experiences of the volunteers on one of the movement building campaigns, and argue that the role of the community organizer in cultivating and developing volunteer leadership is essential for understanding the long-term success of movement building work.

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Introduction

"Climate policy is gridlocked, and there's virtually no chance of a breakthrough… Climate change has become an ideologically polarizing issue." – Thomas Homer-Dixon (2010)

"Governments are acting as if they are oblivious to the fact that there is a limit on how much fossil fuel carbon we can put into the air… if [new carbon-based energy sources] are thrown into the mix it is essentially game over." – James Hansen (2010)

"Nature has a vote now. People can look out their window and see that the climate is changing." – Chris Lehane (2014)

While carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions worldwide continue to rise, public policies to address the resulting global warming and climate change are, at best, stalled (IPCC 1990; 2007). Why? One possible explanation for this policy logjam in the United States arises from arguments that the scientific data on global warming is too uncertain to serve as the basis for immediate action on climate change (Gore 2006; Callison 2010). The scientific community has shown such claims to be meritless, yet a substantial fraction of the U.S. public continues to doubt the urgency of addressing CO_2 emissions and global warming (Saad 2004; Oreskes & Conway 2010; Muller 2011). Improving the quantity and quality of climate change science has not broken the stalemate, nor have efforts to bolster science communication via media and improved scientific literacy (Durant 1993; Schudson 1998). Other potential reasons for the stall include the unwillingness of political elites to force policy action on climate change (Klein 2011), and the structural contentiousness of expertise and advocacy in the U.S. policy domain (Jasanoff 1998; Mooney 2005; Pielke 2010; UCS 2004). Historically, in the face of inaction around challenging political, economic, and cultural conditions, publics have mobilized to seek structural and political change (Andrews 2004; Morris 1984; Skocpol et al. 2000). These mobilizations – social movements – emerge as a result of citizens and organizations acting to assert shared values and "make moral claims based on renewed personal identities, collective identities, and public action"

(Ganz 2009a; 509). To date, however, such a mobilization around global warming and climate change has not materialized, and U.S. publics have been mostly absent from the process of making climate policy (Shellenberger & Nordhaus 2004).

Why are individuals and communities in the United States not yet involved in advancing public policy to address climate change, given arguments for the potentially catastrophic impact of global warming on human societies? If social movements can foster public voice on climate policy, what would a climate change-focused social movement look like, and how would it form? Would this movement require collaboration between existing environmental organizations, or germination through the work of new organizations? Finally, taking participants in previous social movements as points of comparison, who might participate in a climate-change-focused social movement? How does participation in these movements impact citizens' views on climate, energy, risk, and expertise?

In this dissertation, I explore possible answers to each of these questions by following grassroots community organizing work undertaken in concert by four environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) between April 2010 and December 2013. In April 2010, these organizations – Texas NGO, North Carolina NGO, Ohio NGO, and California NGO[1] – began planning the creation of a national climate-focused social movement. Working in collaborative partnership with other state- and national-level NGOs under the moniker of the "Climate Coalition,[2]" they initiated pilot organizing campaigns in June 2011 in three U.S. cities – Austin TX, Charlotte NC, and Cleveland OH – toward three intertwined goals of building social movement power via local coalitions, developing volunteer leadership capable of forging a social movement community, and mobilizing the resources of that constituency in collective action to effect change. The four pilot campaigns aimed to force the closure of coal-fired power plants in each city as a short-term objective on which to build the base for a national climate movement. Does participation in these four

[1] I have anonymized the names of the NGOs, the collaborative network, and all respondents throughout the dissertation because several respondents (e.g, the community organizers) are easily recognizable through their organizational affiliation.
[2] I also refer to the Climate Coalition as the "Coalition" throughout the dissertation.

grassroots campaigns turn individuals into committed activists and volunteer experts? And what changes do U.S. environmental organizations need to make in order to support citizen activism in a climate change-focused social movement? By examining these emergent movement-building organizing campaigns, I sought to understand possible impacts of social movement participation on actors and organizations coming together to challenge risks posed by climate change.

I focus on these four NGOs in particular for several reasons: not only do they represent the diversity of U.S. environmental organizations by most metrics, but also they were the among the few environmental groups willing to made a substantive commitment to an organizing framework they had little recent experience with. The four organizations that are the focus of this dissertation vary substantially in terms of structure, resources, and expertise, though I can provide only general details about each organization in service of preserving the anonymity of my respondents within each organization. Each of the four works on different issues under a broad "environmental" umbrella: one has expertise in wildlife preservation, while another focuses on corporate environmental impacts and a third works primarily on fossil fuel extraction. Two of the organizations boast a federated structure, with a national office and a plethora of local chapters that blend paid and volunteer staff members. The third works on issues within a single state, and while it has a large base of contributors, it has no volunteer staff members. The fourth has deep expertise in online activism but no experience mobilizing and organizing in local communities. Financially, the four organizations varied substantially. One of the federated national organizations has an annual budget of approximately $90 million dollars, while the smaller, state-based organization spends less than five percent of that amount annually. Though each had substantial expertise in a variety of environmental issues, none of the four was working actively on climate change at the time they joined the Climate Coalition. In addition, though all four organizations employed staff members in an "organizer" role, none had recent experience with the movement-building organizing model that they agreed to use as part of the Climate Coalition.

This dissertation, then, captures the efforts of national and state-level environmental organizations to (re)learn local organizing and reach beyond their existing constituencies. The differences in organizational form, available resources, organizational capabilities, and institutional histories across the participating organizations in the Climate Coalition generated different constituencies for each campaign. These organizational differences also intersected with the cultural context of each location to shape the collective experiences and interpretations of movement volunteers regarding future energy and climate decisions. In brief, this dissertation makes the following three arguments as to how foundational both the organizations and volunteer participants found this movement building effort. Looking first at the network of organizations that comprised the Climate Coalition, I show that the network's novel configuration produced rather than diminished the tensions inherent in inter-organizational collaboration. Turning next to the organizations themselves, I explore the challenges of integrating new types of experts and expertise into existing organizational structures. In particular, I suggest that the focus on involving volunteer expertise through community organizing disrupted existing organizational notions of expertise and prevented large-scale organizational embrace of the movement building work. Finally, I examine the experiences of the volunteers on one of the movement building campaigns, and argue that the role of the community organizer as a professional recruiting agent is essential for understanding the long-term success of movement building work. In the remainder of this introduction, I explore the relevant theoretical frameworks and previous research on collective behavior and social movements, expertise, organizational collaboration, and political participation. After describing my two primary field sites and reviewing the research methods employed in this dissertation, I offer a longer summary of each of my three chapters.

Theoretical Framings: Climate Change, Political Participation, and Collective Action

Why coal? Greenhouse gas emissions, public health, and a new approach

Because the greenhouse gas emissions – mostly carbon dioxide (CO_2) – that drive climate change emerge from multiple distributed sources and economic sectors in the United States and globally, one of the primary challenges facing environmental organizations and other groups seeking to mobilize publics on the risks of climate change is the choice of where to focus their limited resources and attention. After the failure of "cap and trade" legislation in 2009 – the most recent concentrated push by the U.S. environmental movement to influence climate policy – several environmental organizations turned their focus to one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions: coal-burning electricity generation. The electricity sector of the U.S. economy generates the largest percentage of the country's greenhouse gas emissions: 33% (EPA 2011). Of the fossil fuels most common to electricity production, coal combustion is generally more carbon intensive than burning natural gas or petroleum for electricity (IEA 2012). Although coal-fired generation produces approximately 42% of the electricity generated in the United States in 2011, it accounts for about 80% of CO_2 emissions from the sector (EPA 2011).

As of 2008, there were 522 coal-fired power plants operating in the United States capable of generating 343,012 mega-watts of electricity (Sierra Club 2012). Several U.S. environmental organizations initiated or expanded their efforts between 2007 and 2008 to target these existing coal-fired power plants, in response to plans by the Bush administration to expand the use of coal in the U.S. electricity-generation sector.[3] However, these organizations fashioned their coal campaigns to their existing constituencies and to best take advantage of their organizational strengths. As a result, each explained their focus on coal for reasons other than its impact on climate change. For example, of the four environmental NGOs I follow in this dissertation, one cites the impact of burning coal on

[3] For more on this political shift to coal, see: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122506399213970419.html. Accessed 8 April 2014.

"mining communities," another describes the impact of coal-fired power production on the health of low-income constituencies surrounding Ohio coal plants, and the two others describe the toxic coal ash and mercury byproducts of coal-fired electricity production. Thus, while some of the organizations comprising the U.S. environmental movement turned their attention to coal-fired power plants as promising levers to addressing climate change, they also leveraged the multiple impacts of coal-fired electrical production to broaden their constituent pool for a climate-focused social movement.

Why climate? Integrating risk, expertise, and collective action

Climate change is a fertile arena for exploring differential and contentious understandings of risk and expertise. A primary focus of the environmental consciousness that emerged in the United States following the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was the risk to human health and natural environments posed by toxics and pollution (Carson 1962; Davis 2004; Nash 2006; Rome 2001; 2010). Asserting an expansive vision of citizenship set local knowledge on par with scientific expertise (Wynne 1992; 1996), the local groups, coalitions, and organizations that organized in response to these risks also argued for a precautionary approach potential environmental harms (Brown & Mikkelsen 1990, 2007; Winner 1986). Looking forward to the present, while environmental health concerns that encompass toxics and pollution remain a focus of U.S. environmental organizations (Rootes 2004; Checker 2005)[4], energy production (Wylie 2011), transport (Hansen 2011), and consumption (Ehrhardt-Martinez et al. 2010) have emerged to become key sites of discussion and activism about environmental risk. Debates about risk – especially those focusing how risks are weighed and who participates in that process – intersect with questions of expertise and democracy in the project of thinking critically about a modern scientific future (Beck 1992; 2008; Collins and Evans 2007; Jasanoff 2002; Durant 2011).

[4] Environmental organizations and activism on toxics and pollution highlight a perceived if not real split between organizations focused on environmental justice and others advancing a more "holistic" if not elitist perspective on environmental advocacy and activism (Agyerman 2005; Sandler & Pezzullo 2007).

These debates about the potential harms of existing energy systems in terms of global and future climate realities suggest the need for an active role for citizens and publics. This dissertation focuses on the role of the "public" – individual participants in civic life that consider themselves part of a broad, common whole (Habermas 1964) – in public policy, addressing at the most general level how citizens' experiences and interpretations of energy, environment and climate shape policy decisions on those very topics. Individual decisions about energy use, when scaled nationally and globally, have the potential to play a key role in reducing CO_2 emissions that drive global climate change (Friedman 2001; NRC 2009a; 2009b). But linking individual action to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Goldstein et al. 2008) has not yet produced the global reductions of carbon dioxide that climate science shows to be necessary to limit the effects of global warming (McKinsey 2009; Ehrhardt-Martinez et al. 2010). And individual action on climate change does not take place in a social vacuum, but is instead mediated and made meaningful through the commitments, understandings, and networks of their social groups (Callison 2010). Thus, this dissertation examines social movements as a mechanism for scaling citizens' action to challenge the present and future risks posed by climate change. Specifically, I follow and describe the implementation of a grassroots movement-building framework around coal plants and climate change to explore the ways in which citizens mobilize against policy inaction on the existing risks of coal plants and the possible future implications of global warming.

Citizens into social movements

Social movements have historically entered the U.S. political system as individual voices made influential by aggregation. Structural theories of social movement mobilization focus on the ways in which movements take advantage of available resources (McCarthy & Zald 1977) and favorable political contexts (Kriesi 1995; Kitschelt 1986). Meanwhile, cultural studies of mobilization highlight the ways that movements and their participants construct and mobilize collective identities (Polletta 2001; Polletta & Jasper 2000) and framing processes (Evans 1997; Snow & Benford 1988; 2000) to effect particular goals. Social

movements have sought to directly impact public policy decisions through mass mobilization and by altering public preferences on specific issues (Gamson 1992; Burstein 1999). But prior to such action, social movements recruit actors to participate and build consensus on goals and strategic capacity (Ganz 2009). Researchers have shown that actors join movements not because they identify strongly with the goals/mission/values of the movement, but rather because their social networks bring them into contact with other movement participants (Klandermans 1993; Diani 2004; Munson 2009; Callison 2010). Grassroots movement building campaigns like those I follow in this dissertation rely heavily on both of these processes, as they must build a citizens' collective "from scratch" rather than merely socializing actors into existing movements.

The narrative, dialogue, and discourse of movements and their participants offer another area for examining social movement mobilization. For example, Francesca Polletta (1998) describes the stories that civil rights movement protesters told about their participation in sit-ins around the South. She argues that the ways in which these stories did and did not align with other accounts of the movement led to mobilization in advance of most collective action frames and organizational efforts. Faye Ginsburg (1998) echoes these links between personal narratives, group-level frames, and collective action in her account of an abortion clinic in Fargo, North Dakota. Drawing on life histories of activists from both sides of the abortion debate, Ginsburg highlights the connection between *personal* narratives and collective narratives while observing generational differences between the actors in her ethnographic portrait. Put differently, the stories people tell about problems in the world and how to act on it come from experiences in their own life histories (Ewick & Silbey 1995). But these narratives simultaneously produce the foundation on which their mobilization takes place, sometimes leading to collective action that could be seen as changing the course of these life histories! Finally, citizen narratives can also act to subvert wider cultural norms. Brian Wynne's (1992) account of Cumbrian sheep-farmers highlights the ways in which the expertise and narratives of everyday practice served as the basis for sheep-farmers to question the dominant scientific explanations of radioactivity risk.

Finally, social movement mobilization has a clear affinity with the social networks of movement participants. Klandermans & Oegema (1987) suggest that movements primarily mobilize the set of a population that already shares their core beliefs. In this framework, mobilization follows two stages: movement organizations and participants identify existing attitudes in a target group, and second, they generate collective action of citizens in that group. From his study of the anti-abortion movement, Munson (2009) suggests a different underlying explanation for mobilization, arguing that the core beliefs and attributes of activists do not necessarily precede participation and mobilization. Rather, he shows that beliefs crystalize as a result of movement participation, which is often facilitated through social networks as personal contacts produce mobilization. For some movements, at least, it seems that reality falls somewhat between these two positions. For example, Aldon Morris's study of the sit-ins of the Civil Rights movement highlights the ways in which existing organizational networks – specifically, those between religious institutions – publicized and facilitated rapid mobilization. However, looking at the public discourse of charismatic movement leaders, Morris also suggests that internal organizational networks were both necessary and limiting to mobilization and action. But much of the literature focuses on how citizens have joined existing movements, rather than looking at how new movements are created (McAdam & Boudet 2012). How has mobilization of new movements happened in the past, and what can those experiences tell us about the climate movement building efforts today? One place to look is the role of organizations large and small in social movement mobilization.

Organizations and movement infrastructure

Social movements are not monolithic blocs of mobilized actors, but rather a dense constellation of citizens and organizations working not necessarily in concert but with common goals of affecting policy change. Put a different way, social movements are relatively diffuse and unbounded collectivities "acting with some degree of organization and continuity outside of institutional or organizational channels" (Snow et al. 2006) that may but do not necessarily incorporate the resources of formal organizations. Tarrow

(1998) describes several forms of this combination of movement structures: "[movements] can either be controlled by formal organizations, by coalitions of organization, or by no one in particular," going on to argue that effective movements "are based on partly autonomous and contextually rooted local units linked by connective structures, and coordinated by formal organizations" (124). Social movement organizations (SMOs) collect and distribute resources to support movements (McCarthy & Zald 1977), often insulating movements against unfavorable cultural and political contexts (Morris 1984; Andrews 2010). The initial formation of an SMO requires a variety of strategic choices about the goals, structure, and forms of collective actions that its organizational structure and activities will embody (Edwards & McCarthy 2004). In organizations with more formal structures, such choices are governed in part by organizational rationality (McCarthy & Zald 2002) and by mimetic and normative institutional processes (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

There are several established frameworks for examining social movement organizations. Macro-organizational analysis, which borrows from organizational ecology (Hannan & Freeman 1977) to study linkages between a population of SMOs and changes in their external environment, offers a broad understanding of external pressures on social movement mobilization but without a rich examination of the roles of intra-organizational practices (Minkoff 2002). Looking at "movement infrastructures" shifts the focus to the organizational structure and resources of movements (Andrews 2004). As Andrews emphasizes, "leaders and organizations often carry particular repertoires of action and ideologies" (2004; 22) that align and intersect with existing institutions within a community. The resulting embedded, "indigenous" networks (Morris 1984) of volunteer leaders can serve as a bridge between formal institutions and the community targeted by a movement for mobilization (Andrews 2004). Trusted members of an organization or a network are able to "translate" unfamiliar knowledge claims across what might otherwise be structural impediments to movement building, making them essential to any consideration of movement infrastructure (Callison 2010). More importantly, looking at infrastructure moves beyond examining tactics of disruption (Piven & Cloward 1977; Morris

1984), persuasion (Burstein 1999), and negotiation (Burstein 1999; Diani 2004) to look at the complex relationships between movements and organizations supporting them. It also allows for the consideration of allies and the "complex, multi-organizational field" in which each movement takes place (Klandermans 1993; Clemens & Minkoff 2004; Rucht 2004).

To create a national movement infrastructure around climate change, the Climate Coalition draws explicitly on a framework of grassroots community organizing. First articulated by Saul Alinsky in the 1930s, this model of community organizing demands an organizer or organizers work directly in a community to empower members of that community to create their own change (Alinsky 1972; Osterman 2003; Warren 2010). Put succinctly, community engagement organizing aims to develop leadership, build community around that leadership, and mobilize community power for the resources of that community (Ganz 2009). The ideal type of the model envisions the development of citizen leaders from within communities through campaigns organized to take on an issue or set of issues that the community finds most important to tackle. These volunteer leaders then take ownership of the campaign: planning the strategy, deciding on and implementing tactics, and recruiting and developing new volunteers. As a result, when the campaign ends, it ideally will have produced not just the desired victory but also a group of empowered citizens with the skills to continue organizing on emergent issues in their communities. This framework for organizing grew out of an integration of Ganz's and others' experience in the Civil Rights Movement, organizing farm workers with Cesar Chavez in California, and more recently, on the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama (Ganz 2000; Skocpol et al. 2000). Though national environmental groups like the National Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, and others may be familiar with the potential of grassroots community organizing and have deployed some forms of it in the past (Ganz et al. 2008; Rome 2010), none have deployed it in a systematic way to build a base of committed volunteer activists out of local environmental campaigns.

The U.S. environmental movement: from national to local

The environmental movement in particular is best characterized as a complex multi-organizational field comprising large NGOs, state-level citizen action groups, and local coalitions, each with different relationships to the politics and structure of the movement. National and international environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, and EarthFirst! have historically been credited with supporting the emergence of the "modern environmental movement" (Shaiko 1993; Brulle 2000; Herring 2001; Rootes 2004). The mobilization of communities around local environmental harms – combined with a strong discourse of citizenship and citizen action of the 1970s that saw a prominent role for "citizen environmentalists" to drive environmental action and policy at the local level – also contributed to the emergent environmental movement (Cotgrove & Duff 1980; Longhurst 2011). Of course, the constellation of organizations large and small that comprises the environmental movement includes both these local groups established to address localized environmental harms as well as national environmental groups that focus on shaping environmental policy at the federal level. Despite the varied locational and political terrain each of these groups navigates, each seeks to mobilize a particular constituency to advance its normative perspective on environmental concerns (Andrews & Evans 2004; Bosso 2005). This mobilization does not occur in a vacuum, but most often in an adversarial process of some type. As Jasanoff summarizes, "in America's decision-making culture, founded on the common law's adversary system, information is typically generated by interested parties and tested in public through overt confrontation between opposing, interest-laden points of view" (Jasanoff 2010; 135). Environmental groups large and small, local and national have found themselves at the forefront of these confrontations with opposing interests – e.g., state and federal government agencies, multinational corporations and small businesses – but often drawing on very different constituencies and arguments along the way.

Bridging the gap between local groups working at a community-by-community level on justice-related environmental issues and national environmental organizations has proved a consistent challenge. Though many large U.S. environmental organizations have reached out to local environmental groups around specific events and issues – and have taken organization-wide positions supporting environmental justice concerns (Sandler & Pezzullo 2007) – the strategies, targets, and tactics of large and small environmental organizations remained fundamentally distinct (Andrews 2005; Corburn 2005). Perhaps expectedly, the most effective interactions between local grassroots campaigns and national environmental organizations successfully blended the varying expertises of professional staff and volunteers (Andrews & Edwards 2005). But large U.S. environmental organizations have struggled to integrate environmental justice activism with their existing modes of advocating for environmental issues. And beginning in the mid-1980s, mass media and policymakers began to characterize local grassroots environmental groups as uninformed and un-knowledgeable about the "true" risks and costs of local development, tagging their perspective as NIMBY or "not-in-my-backyard" (Kasperson 1986; Marks & von Winterfeldt 1984; Slovic 1987).

But limiting a discussion of localized mobilization to NIMBY arguments leaves out the rich motivations of the individuals and organizations seeking to build a climate movement. In addition, analyses of the NIMBY characterization of individual and community mobilization[5] against projects on the basis of environmental risk remain focused at the local level, leaving little space for exploring their intersections with social movement-based arguments about the role for individual voices in public processes (Carmin 1999). This dissertation, captures the efforts of national and state-level environmental organizations to (re)learn local organizing and reach beyond their existing constituencies. The differences in organizational form, available resources, organizational capabilities, and

[5] Local communities mobilizing to oppose proposed or existing projects on the basis of their potential risks share a number of common factors, including: distrust of government, limited information about potential risks, local and parochial perspectives on the benefits and costs, overly emotional project assessment, and high level of risk aversion (Kraft & Clary, 1991; 302-3). More recent studies have found that factors such as proximity to existing projects and belief in climate change directly influence response to sited projects (Wexler 1996; Wolsink 2000).

institutional histories across the participating organizations in the Climate Coalition generated different constituencies for each campaign. These organizational differences also intersected with the cultural context of each location to shape the collective experiences and interpretations of movement volunteers regarding future energy and climate decisions.

Methods and research sites: A brief overview

Interested in the phenomenon of community-level mobilization and the challenges facing the environmental movement around the issue of climate change, I joined the Climate Coalition as a researcher responsible for "knowledge capture" across the network of environmental organizations. Thought the Coalition had created my position with at least some expectation that the organizing work would generate lessons worth learning, they had no sense initially of what those lessons would be. As a result, I participated in all Climate Coalition phone and in-person meetings, primarily to listen and observe. As the Coalition finalized a technological reporting system for the organizers and managers to capture and share their weekly activities with one another, I coordinated and reported the data on a weekly basis across the organizations. After the Coalition disbanded, I continued to maintain relationships with the organizers, their managers, and other staff within the participating organizations. I provided technical assistance on capturing and communicating the full scope of community organizing activities within each organization, and conducted multiple interviews with several organizers, managers, and staff members over the course of my involvement.

As a result of this access, I position this research at multiple levels of aggregation, situating it both within and outside of the four U.S. environmental non-profit organizations engaged in the creation of pilot campaigns to force the closure of high-polluting coal-fired power plants in three cities: Cleveland OH, Austin TX, and Charlotte NC. I look comparatively across the four organizations as they collaborated and shared knowledge on campaign activities, strategies, and successes through the boundary structures of the Climate

Coalition (Star & Griesemer 1989; Kellogg et al. 2006; O'Mahoney & Bechky 2008). Within each organization, I examine the processes by which they took on characteristics of movement organizations: by supporting social movement building campaigns, and by extending and re-aligning their existing activities and structures to fit new activities, goals, and constraints. Finally, I look at the campaigns and at the actors within them, seeking to understand the impact of their participation on group and community understandings of risk and intersections with expertise on climate change.

Organizing Context: The Climate Coalition

The Climate Coalition is a collaborative working group comprised of senior leadership staff from ten national NGOs that aims to build a social movement to influence American attitudes and policies about climate change. It first met in April 2010 after the failure of global climate policy negotiations in Copenhagen[6] and after the U.S. Congressional elections in November 2010 produced a Republican Congressional majority that sought to block any new climate policy efforts.[7] The Coalition currently consists of representatives from ten NGOs, including a diverse collection of national, state, and local organizations. At that initial April 2010 meeting and in the two that followed in December 2010 and April 2011, the Coalition began planning the four pilot campaigns as a first strategic step toward a climate movement.

In addition to drawing on the resources of its member organizations, the Climate Coalition maintains two structures to both coordinate its activities and offer a collaborative, relational space (Kellogg 2009; Polletta 1999) for staff from each pilot campaign to negotiate and learn from the challenges of implementing a grassroots community organizing framework of movement building. The first of these, the Organizing Committee, coordinates resource allocation, fundraising, and knowledge management for

[6] These negotiations, held in December 2009, are known as COP15: the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. More information is available from: http://unfccc.int/meetings/copenhagen_dec_2009/meeting/6295.php. Accessed 10 May 2014.
[7] E.g., through a carbon tax or a cap and trade program for CO_2 emissions.

each of the four pilot projects and for the Coalition itself. The Organizing Committee meets by phone or videoconference once per month for 90 minutes, and in person every six months for one and a half days. Over the course of my dissertation research, I participated in two multi-day, in-person meetings and four phone meetings. The Organizing Committee works to balance the Coalition's short-term goals of running campaigns to close a small number of coal-fired power plants with the long-term vision of a climate-focused social movement. The second structural element of the Climate Coalition, the Campaigns Team, brings together the staff organizers of each of the four pilot projects and their direct supervisors for weekly 60-minute meetings on issues relevant to each campaign. This group offers a venue for the organizational leaders of the four pilot project to share stories, compare organizing and campaign strategies and tactics, and learn from one another together about how to implement the volunteer leadership framework of movement building. It is also a space to explore the challenges facing a particular campaign in terms of resource commitments, volunteer activities, or interactions with local- or state-level political or regulatory bodies. Over the course of my research, I participated in one, multi-day, in-person campaigns team activity – a kick-off training – and 29 weekly videoconference meetings of the Campaigns Team.

Though the Climate Coalition supported four environmental NGOs running movement-building campaigns in three U.S. cities, my dissertation focuses closely on two of those four campaigns. Specifically, I followed campaigns in Austin, TX and Charlotte, NC, the former directed by a NGO I call "Texas NGO" and the latter run by a NGO I call "North Carolina NGO." In the remainder of this section, I describe each site in as much detail as is possible while keeping the organizations anonymous.

Sites: Austin, TX

Texas NGO is one of the largest environmental non-profit organizations in the United States. Founded over 50 years ago, Texas NGO is a national organization with a presence in many states; its size and resources offer it the capacity to coordinate local, state and

national activity on a scale unavailable to most other U.S. environmental groups. The organization has participated in the U.S. political system extensively throughout its history, mostly in electoral campaigns and lobbying efforts on wilderness preservation. Though it boasts a more active membership base than many U.S. environmental NGOs, Texas NGO has faced challenges similar to those of other federated civic association, most notably a tension between centralized authority and volunteer participation (Warren 2001; 34).

In 2010, the organization initiated a nation-wide campaign against coal-fired power plants. The campaign has to-date focused on blocking the construction of new coal-burning power plants in the U.S. In its coal campaign, Texas NGO has begun to incorporate what it describes as "grassroots organizing" efforts alongside legal and regulatory pressure as strategies to draw on in attacking coal-fired power plants. One element of this national effort, the local campaign in Austin, Texas that is one of the sites for this research, aims to shut down the Fayette Power Project, a large[8] coal-burning facility that began operating in 1980 on Fayette Lake, approximately 60 miles southeast of Austin. The Fayette plant is co-owned by the local utility company Austin Energy and the quasi-governmental Lower Colorado River Authority.

Sites: Charlotte, NC

North Carolina NGO is also a large environmental organization in the United States. Founded over 40 years ago, North Carolina NGO works on a variety of issues including nuclear power and waste, wildlife protection, and pollution using lobbying, corporate campaigns, and direct action. Like Texas NGO, in 2010 North Carolina NGO initiated a nationwide campaign against coal-fired power plants. As a federated organization with a national office and local chapters and groups, North Carolina NGO has the capacity and resources to mobilize coordinated local, state and national activity on a large scale. It has long sought to actively engage its membership – which also provide the majority of its

[8] The Fayette plant has the capacity to produce 1,641 mega-watts (MW) of electricity when running at full capacity.

funding – in the activities of the organization. As an organizationally-supported test of the utility of community organizing-driven movement building techniques, North Carolina initiated its campaign in the city of Charlotte, NC in September 2011 to close four coal-fired power plants in and around Charlotte: Buck, Riverbend, Marshall, and Allen. All of the plants are owned and operated by Duke Energy, the largest electrical utility company in the United States, which after merging with Progress Energy in 2011 operates 27 coal-fired power plants in the U.S.[9]

Methods in brief

This is a mixed methods dissertation that draws on a variety of data sources. Because I offer a detailed discussion separately in each chapter of the methods used to support the analysis and arguments, this section presents an overview of the research approach rather than a detailed discussion of each method. Seeking to study social movement building in action across multiple sites, this dissertation uses a comparative case study approach to both investigate a phenomena within its real-life context – the application of a grassroots organizing framework on social movement participation within and outside organizational frameworks – and because "the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 1998, 13). The community organizing and movement building campaigns I follow featured multiple sources of variation, most easily captured through in-depth, comparative case studies. The organizations running each of the pilot campaigns under the auspices of the Climate Coalition varied in terms of mission, resources, existing constituency, and ability to support and create space within their organization for a different type of activity – grassroots organizing of volunteer leadership teams – to take place. The paid organizers varied not only demographically but also in their abilities to mobilize the multiple constituencies of their communities around the closure of the coal-fired power plants at each site. Volunteer leadership teams varied significantly in their ability to function effectively both internally with regard to norms, and goals as well as

[9] Of approximately 379 total as of Oct 1, 2011. Data compiled from Duke Energy and Progress Energy websites: http://www.duke-energy.com/progress-energy-merger/. Accessed 15 April 2014.

externally in working to achieve broader campaign objectives. Finally, participants on each campaign also varied across multiple attributes. As a result, this dissertation draws on a variety of complementary data collection methods: internal campaign metrics, surveys of volunteers, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and participant observations (Kritzer 1994; Snow & Trom 2004; Yin 2003).

In sum, I describe social movement building campaigns based on a grassroots community-organizing framework. I seek to be responsive to increased calls for social movements researchers to look broadly at movement "outcomes" rather than simply at success and failure (Gamson 1990; Tarrow 1994; McAdam et al. 2001; Andrews 2004). Each of these campaigns sought to build community power aimed at closing one or more coal-fired power plants in order to create the impetus and framework for a national climate-focused social movement. The volunteer leadership framework of grassroots organizing adopted by the Climate Coalition and its pilot projects emphasizes the role of organizers in catalyzing relationships among constituent leadership as well as the constituency itself on the basis of shared values communicated through narrative. Organizers recruit individuals in a community to form leadership teams of volunteers who, ideally, then become hubs of local campaign activity, recruiting more volunteers and managing new teams of volunteer leaders (NOI 2011). Using story-telling to reveal shared interests and resources on which commitments to work together may be developed, organizers seek out face-to-face meetings with potential volunteers as the setting in which these stories may be shared. The volunteer leadership model of organizing adopted by the Coalition places much of the onus for executing the day-to-day activities of a movement in the hands of the volunteer leaders identified and tested in the base-building phase of the campaign (Ganz et al. 2008).

Chapter Overview

Chapter 1 examines the collaborative network of environmental NGOs known as the Climate Coalition. In this chapter, I describe a collaborative action network comprised of 10 U.S. environmental NGOs that operated for ten months in 2011 and 2012 before dissolving.

Collaborations between organizations frequently end in failure. The literature on strategic alliances between firms and cross-sector partnerships between firms, NGOs, and local government offers multiple perspectives on why these collaborations form, a set of tensions they must negotiate, and examples of failure. This literature, however, has little to say about collaborations between NGOs, where competition between organizations is minimal. The research on NGO partnerships and networks, on the other hand, focuses primarily on the structures and governance of these organizational collaborations, but does not connect these structures and governance mechanisms to failed collaborations. Drawing on participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I argue that the failure of this NGO-NGO collaboration shared its basis with the failures of other types of organizational collaborations. Finally, I discuss how the hybrid governance system of this network was the mechanism by which the network's internal tensions were made visible.

Chapter 2 analyzes two of the environmental NGOs participating in the Climate Coalition to understand the organizational implications of adopting a new approach to their activities on climate change. How organizations undertake – and resist – change remains highly contested and uncertain; in this chapter, I compare the struggles of two large U.S. environmental NGOs to more actively involve their members in organizational activities than they had done in the past. I specifically examine the use of community engagement organizing – where an organizer identifies, recruits, and develops volunteer leadership within a community to produce change – as a mechanism for democratizing organizational decision-making. In answer to the question why these NGOs were ultimately unable to meaningfully incorporate community organizing – even as they devoted substantial resources to its adoption – I show that existing organizations relied on a model of professional expertise for their legitimacy and historical policy successes. As such, they excluded public participants from meaningful roles and as a result, failed to sustain commitments to new structures and practices.

Chapter 3 looks closely at the volunteer members of one of the environmental NGOs from the Climate Coalition, and explores the role of community organizers in recruiting,

retaining, and cultivating volunteer expertise and leadership in movement organizations. In it, I examine one U.S. environmental organization's efforts to identify, recruit, and sustain a volunteer base for activism on climate change. I look specifically at the NGO's community organizing activities to understand their community organizer's role in catalyzing volunteer engagement in nascent social movements in sites with little history of activism. Drawing on two years of participant observation with the NGO's organizer and volunteers, a survey of the active volunteers, and semi-structured interviews with organizational staff and volunteers, I show that for this site, volunteer recruitment follows similar patterns as in past social movements. The most active and committed volunteers in my research had greater civic skills, organizational ties, and experience with activism. But these attributes did not translate into helping the NGO grow a bigger base of volunteer activists. Building on the literature on volunteer recruitment to low and high-risk activism and the research on political participation, I look at the community organizer as not only a professionalized recruitment mechanism, but also as a volunteer leadership and expertise development agent. I argue that professionalized recruitment and management of volunteer participation within a movement organization by a trained, paid organizer produces long-term volunteer retention and satisfaction alongside positive movement outcomes. For the case of the North Carolina movement organization, the arrival of an experienced organizer in 2011 helped to establish and cultivate a thriving, committed base of volunteer leaders in a challenging environment for activism.

Chapter 1

Networking a Movement: Structuring and managing an action network across environmental organizations

"When you're willing to leave your branding and your organizational objective aside and work together, you're also much more focused just on your purpose. But I think that also does pose a hard thing for our organizations, to be willing to commit resources to something that may not actually grow our brand or whatever, but [the Climate Coalition] may in fact be the type of environment to push that edge." – Beth (10.19.2011)

"I think that we actually were somewhat intentional in saying that this wasn't going to be a body that coordinated the movement. And we're very intentional about calling this an experiment: we were all really focused on doing learning a new way to coordinate and mobilize and change the organizations that we're working in." – Jessica (10.19.2011)

In this chapter, I explore the turn within the U.S. environmental movement from policy networks to action networks as forms of organizational collaboration. While U.S. environmental organizations have previously collaborated in coordinated networks to advance shared interests through policies at local, state, and national levels of government (Bosso 2005; Kroll 2013; Vig & Kraft 1994), these organizations have rarely, if ever, joined together in action networks to develop and deploy grass-roots human capital for activism and advocacy. As NGOs in all sectors increasingly seek to leverage their limited resources and to actively learn best practices from one another, they turn more frequently to action networks as a mechanism for doing so (Saz-Carranza 2012). However, most scholarship on inter-organizational networks focuses on the impacts – rather than the management and governance – of these networks, leaving U.S. environmental organizations with little guidance as to how they might most effectively form, operate, and sustain these action-focused collaborations. But the difficulty of re-configuring network structures after establishment – and the tight coupling between network governance and organizational

commitment to network goals and activities – suggests a focus on governance is essential to the effectiveness, and survival, of inter-organizational networks.

I focus here on one such network of organizations – the Climate Coalition – working collaboratively to accomplish more than each NGO could achieve on its own, and I argue that the structure and management of action networks significantly impacts network longevity, and indirectly, impact. I analyze the possible explanations for why this alliance collapsed only nine months after its inception to understand the possible barriers to future networks of environmental organizations, a potentially necessary precondition of a climate movement in the U.S. and globally (Skocpol 2013). Drawing on ten months of ethnographic research on the formation, operation, and disintegration of this network, I show that despite selecting the most appropriate governance mechanism for the network – on the basis of the trust, size, goal consensus and network-level competencies – the alliance collapsed prematurely. I describe the management of tensions inherent in inter-organizational collaborations to show what appeared to be reasonable and appropriate governance structures are nonetheless incompatible with each organization's day-to-day activities, inhibiting forward-moving organizational progress. I analyze the possible explanations for why this alliance collapsed to understand the possible barriers to future networks of environmental organizations, a potentially necessary precondition of a climate movement in the U.S. and globally.

Network Structure and Governance

Research on networks offers a distinct perspective on inter-organizational collaboration. Though the vast majority of research on networks frames them as an analytic perspective on relations between actors (Granovetter 1985, Burt 2004), networks can also be analyzed as an organizing logic alongside hierarchies and markets (Kilduff & Tsai 2003; Knight 2005; Powell 1990; Powell et. al, 2005). An inter-organizational network is "a long-term cooperative relationship among organizations in which each entity retains control over its own resources but jointly decides with others on their collective use (Saz-Carranza 2012, 2).

While inter-organizational collaborations in the form of alliances and cross-sector partnerships use contractual mechanisms or formal agreements to resolve tensions and coordinate activities, networks typically mediate conflict through negotiation and reciprocity, and imply mutual adjustment between interdependent organizations (Powell 1990). In the face of complex, "wicked" problems (Rittel & Webber 1973; Roberts 2000) – like collective action in the face of uncertainty on issues such as climate change – goal-directed inter-organizational networks are important "formal mechanisms for achieving multi-organizational outcomes, especially in the public and nonprofit sectors where collective action is often required for problem solving" (Provan & Kenis, 2008; 231).

Much of the scant research on inter-organizational networks has sought to theorize and characterize their structures and key points of tension rather than produce explanations for network instability or dissolution. Though some inter-organizational networks may be passive knowledge-sharing mechanisms, I focus here on the more common goal-directed networks, which can take four potential forms: informational, developmental, outreach, and action (Agranoff 2007). In this schema, informational networks exist to exchange information between organizational members of the network; developmental networks add education and member services, while outreach networks additionally "sequence programming, exchange resource opportunities, and pool contacts" (Saz-Carranza 2012, 6). Action networks are the most 'directed' form of inter-organizational networks, offering both the greatest potential leveraging of organizational resources through collaborative action but also requiring the greatest amount of coordination and governance.

The decision on an action network's governance mechanism at the time of formation shapes not only the activities of the network but also the relationships between organizations within the network. As Table 1 below illustrates, Provan and Kenis (2008) describe three modes of network governance: shared governance, governance by a single "lead" organization, and governance by a network administrative organization (NAO), "a separate entity... set up specifically to govern the network" (236). Put a different way, while inter-organizational network governance can be shared informally across network

members or undertaken by a single network member, it can also be delegated to a separate entity created specifically to oversee and coordinate the network (Saz-Carranza 2012; 7). This third form of network governance, via NAO, removes network-level administrative responsibilities and any resulting tensions from each participating organization (Provan et al. 2004). Instead, the network typically establishes a governing board – with representatives from most if not all members of the network – to oversee the strategic elements of the network, leaving the NAO with solely operational and administrative responsibilities (Goldsmith & Eggers 2004). However, by inserting a third party into coordinated activities between organizations and decisions on organizational involvement in the network, selection of a NAO mechanism introduces the possibility of tensions arising between the NAO and network organizations that are not present in the other forms of network governance.

Table 1: Four Criteria for Network Governance Mechanism Selection[10]

Governance Form	**1) Trust**	**2) # of Participants**	**3) Goal Consensus**	**4) Need for Network-Level Competencies**
Shared Governance	High density	Few	High	Low
Lead Organization	Low density, highly centralized	Moderate	Moderate to Low	Moderate
NAO	Moderate density, NAO monitored by members	Moderate to many	Moderate to High	High

The literature on network effectiveness and network governance proposes a set of criteria by which each network should be structured. Provan and Kenis (2008) argue that the choice of governance mechanism should be connected to a network's position on four continuums: trust, number of network participants, consensus on common goal, and need for network level competencies (237). The first, trust, can spread asymmetrically across the network and be concentrated between groups of organizations, but networks are most effective when trust is distributed relatively equally across them. Most of the research on

[10] Drawn from Provan & Kenis 2008; Saz-Carranza 2012).

organizational trust has focused on the general desire for trust within collaborations and the different ways in which trust is demonstrated, focusing mostly on reputational effects based on trust of individual network members (Uzzi 1997). Still, a brokered network can deemphasize trust somewhat, as instead of monitoring one another, the organizations in the network merely need to monitor the NAO. The second, size, finds an NAO governance mechanism most appropriate for large networks simply because of the challenge of coordinating large numbers of organizations (Human & Provan 2000). The third, goal consensus, blurs the distinction between shared goals and organizational homophily, as low goal consensus begs the question of network participation in its entirety. Moderate goal consensus is then the baseline for participation, and only the need for high goal consensus demands a highly-brokered, NAO form of governance; this category is where the difference between organizational goals and network goals is made manifest (Provan & Kenis 2008). The final continuum, network-level competencies, centers on the added value of the collaboration to the organizations participating; some researchers suggest that NAO governance fits networks with an outsized need for network-level competencies (Saz-Carranza 2012). But while the nature of these competencies remains unexplored, their impact on network effectiveness cannot be understated.

Table 2: Inherent Tensions in Inter-Organizational Networks and Collaborations

Tensions	1) Efficiency and Inclusiveness	2) Internal and External Legitimacy	3) Stability and Flexibility
Explanations	This tension addresses network decision-making processes and focuses on the extent to which decisions about network priorities and activities made inclusively	This tension balances legitimizing relationships between organizations in the network with the need for a network to appear coherent to external audiences.	This tension weighs the inherent flexibility of networks for coordinating across organizations with the stability necessary for long-term focus and resources management.
Citations	Provan & Kenis 2008; Uzzi 1997	Suchman 1995; Human & Provan 2000	Huxham & Vangen 2005; Powell 1990

The effectiveness of an inter-organizational action network – and its survival – derives from matching a network's position on the four continuums with its choice of governance mechanism. With the appropriate governance structure, a network balances three primary tensions – between efficiency and inclusiveness, internal and external legitimacy, and stability and flexibility – present in all networks (see Table 2, above). Relatedly, Saz-Carranza (2012) argues that efforts to balance these three network tensions are both necessary and inherently paradoxical; the network governance mechanism needs to maintain unity across network members with regard to goals, strategy, and tactics, while allowing for sufficient inter-organizational diversity. In addition, research on network governance – particularly the limited research on NAO governance – generally assumes an action network to be stabilized and functional.

But for newly formed action networks, implementing a functional governance system, or having a network for an NAO to manage, is not a straightforward affair. A network's governance system needs to be implemented as well as selected, and the literature on network governance selection does not provide sufficient guidance with regard to implementation. In this paper, I present a case study of an inter-organizational action network, focusing on the implementation of network governance as an explanatory mechanism for understanding the failure of the network. I describe the Climate Coalition, the network of environmental organizations on which this paper focuses, as an "action" network that incorporates an explicit governance mechanism and sometimes (but not always) adopts a common collaborative course of action (Saz-Carranza 2012, 6). I describe the process by which the Coalition came select a NAO mechanism for network governance and then sought to implement a NAO governance structure formalize the nascent network. Drawing on ten months of ethnographic research on the formation, operation, and disintegration of the Coalition, I show that despite selecting the most appropriate governance mechanism for the network – on the basis of the trust, size, goal consensus and network-level competencies - the Coalition failed to negotiate the expected set of tensions and ultimately dissolved.

Though the dissolution of the action network after only ten months of joint activities may fit conventional patterns of success and failure for strategic alliances, the network's choice of a NAO as an organizing logic introduced an implementation strategy that ultimately undermined both its governance capabilities and organizational goals. Put succinctly, one of the most distinctive features of the Coalition is the composition and specific role of the NAO. Though U.S. environmental organizations have participated in multiple networks, alliances, and knowledge-sharing partnerships over time, a third-party-led collaboration was a very different network arrangement for each of the environmental organizations participating in the Coalition (Bosso 2005; Shaiko 1999; Walker 2009). In addition, the network governance literature suggests that the primary– and most often the only – role of the NAO is to coordinate the administration of the network. But the Coalition's NAO not only managed the administration of the network, but also took on several other types of responsibilities. As a result, in addition to the added administrative and managerial burden of coordinating with the NAO on network-related activities – as well as the substantial burden of twice weekly engagements with the NAO – the organizations in the Coalition struggled to define the boundaries between the network, the organizations and the NAO.

The literature on organizations, boundaries, and boundary-spanning entities highlights the tensions encountered at the boundaries between organizations and their environments, and offers a variety of perspectives on how organizations have sought to address those tensions. While organization studies research has mostly privileged studies of efficiency and power relationships (e.g., Williamson 2002; Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) in examining organizational interactions, neither conception has useful traction for NGOs like those in the Coalition. Instead, examining organizations' efforts to maintain unique competences and identities within collaborations (Santos & Eisenhardt 2005) illustrates the challenge facing the Coalition's NAO in coordinating across and within participating organizations. The concept of boundary organizations (Gieryn 1995; O'Mahony & Bechky 2008), then, encourages a focus on the organizational mechanisms and processes that enable collaboration. It also allows for differentiation between what Zietsma & Lawrence (2010) label as "practice work" – shared routines and recognized activities specific to

organizations and roles – and "boundary work", or the efforts to establish, expand, reinforce, or undermine professional and organizational boundaries (Abbott 1988). Collaborations like the Coalition feature both elements, with the latter generating much of the tension within the network.

Borrowing from the diverse literature on boundary objects (Star & Griesemer 1989), boundary organizations (Gieryn 1995; Miller 2001), and boundary-spanning organizations (Aldrich 1979; Scott 1992; Braun 1993), I consider the implications of taking the NAO as a boundary crossing entity. As David Guston describes, "the success of a boundary organization is determined by principals on either side of the boundary, both of whom rely on the boundary organization to provide them with necessary resources" (Guston 2001; 401). O'Mahoney & Betchky (2008) focus on the convergence and divergence of interests within collaborations and the role of boundary organizations in managing relationships between participating groups:

> Boundary organizations enabled collaboration not by blurring boundaries but by reinforcing convergent interests and articulating how interests diverged. The job of a boundary organization is not to collapse or merge divergent worlds but to preserve [the integrity of each] while building a bridge between them. Only by preserving the boundaries that separated the two parties could boundary organizations sustain their ability to represent either party (450).

For the Coalition, selecting a NAO for network governance – a third-party organization external to the participating groups but integrated with the network – was essentially a choice to establish a boundary organization. By necessity, the NAO governance structure produces its own relevance through relationships between the network and the organizations it serves. But the diverse literature on boundary organizations agrees on one key point: that boundary organizations are successful only when they treat the boundaries they span with deference, something that the structure of the Climate Coalition made challenging.

For complex, multi-level action networks like the Climate Coalition, the novel degree of participation, commitment, and involvement demanded of each organization in the network suggested a methodical, yet creative, approach to implementing the NAO governance structure. For the Coalition, the need for a substantive role for the NAO within the network – coupled with network's long-term strategy of community organizing to build a climate movement – led to friction between participating organizations and the NAO. Though each organization's leadership continued to express optimism at the long-term prospects of the network, organizational staff responsible for the daily activities and work of the network experienced tensions with one another and the NAO that ultimately forced a rupture in the network.

In the remainder of the paper, I first describe the structure and formation of the Climate Coalition as a NAO-led action network. I distinguish between the selection of the governance mechanism and its implementation. I then explore the three tensions internal to any network or alliance, and show how the management of these tensions undermined the functional governance structure. I use matching examples to illustrate the three inherent tensions – as Table 3 below describes – within the management of the network: between I) efficiency and inclusiveness, II) internal and external legitimacy, and III) flexibility and stability. Specifically, I describe efforts to: 1) formalize criteria for participation in the network through a Memorandum of Understanding between network and organizations, 2) stabilize the relationship between participating organizations and the NAO staff around coaching and mentoring of organizational staff, 3) expand the number and diversify the types of organizations participating in the network, and 4) create an apprentice organizing program to extend the reach and impact of the network.

Table 3: Three tensions inherent to all collaborations and networks, and summarized examples from the Climate Coalition under each tension.

Tensions	1) Efficiency vs. Inclusiveness	2) Internal vs. External Legitimacy	3) Flexibility vs. Stability
Examples	Coaching relationships (between orgs & NAO) and the Campaigns Team structure	The NAO's role in finalizing a MOU with participating organizations	Discussions between participating orgs and the NAO on expanding the network

As the Coalition attempted to implement its governance mechanism, the NAO – as a boundary organization – became itself an independent decision-making body mediating between the alliance members rather than as an enactment of the alliance, it became another member with independent, diverging interests. Though the three tensions above are inherent in every network, alliance, and inter-organizational collaboration, the Coalition should have been able to balance these tensions effectively by selecting an appropriate governance mechanism – the NAO – and implementing it effectively. That it could not illustrates the challenge facing nascent action networks around the selection and implementation of a governance mechanism, and those facing boundary organizations within networks as they seek to mediate across divergent organizational interests.

Forming the Coalition: NAO staff and network structure

The Climate Coalition is an action network comprised of ten national environmental organizations that aims to build a social movement to influence American attitudes and policies about climate change. First meeting in April 2010, the Coalition eventually came to consist of representatives from ten different environment-focused organizations. In addition, the Coalition featured two senior advisors who respectively catalyzed the idea for and provided the shared practice of organizing for the network. Beginning at the initial April 2010 meeting, the Coalition began planning four pilot campaigns as a first strategic step toward a climate movement.

In addition to deciding on a coal-fired power plant-focused pilot project approach for building a climate movement at the second meeting in December 2010, the Coalition began to explore a network structure that included a coaching and knowledge capture team with three staff that would serve as the NAO. The network had a strong need for network-level competencies around grassroots organizing; none of the four organizations in the network that had agreed to run pilot campaigns had experience organizing using a base-building model. As a result, the Coalition agreed to hire a single expert coach to work with all four pilot campaign organizers rather than have each of the four organizations acquire their own internal experts separately. More specifically, the network made plans to hire a "lead organizer" with substantive experience in the community engagement organizing model, who would provide active coaching to each of the four pilot projects; Elizabeth Guthrie was hired in March 2011.This decision to bring on a network-wide organizing coach committed the Coalition to a NAO mechanism of network governance with Guthrie overseeing the administrative coordination of network activities in addition to her coaching role. At its third meeting in April 2011, the Coalition introduced the NAO staff, which consisted of Guthrie, two mentors, and a researcher (me).

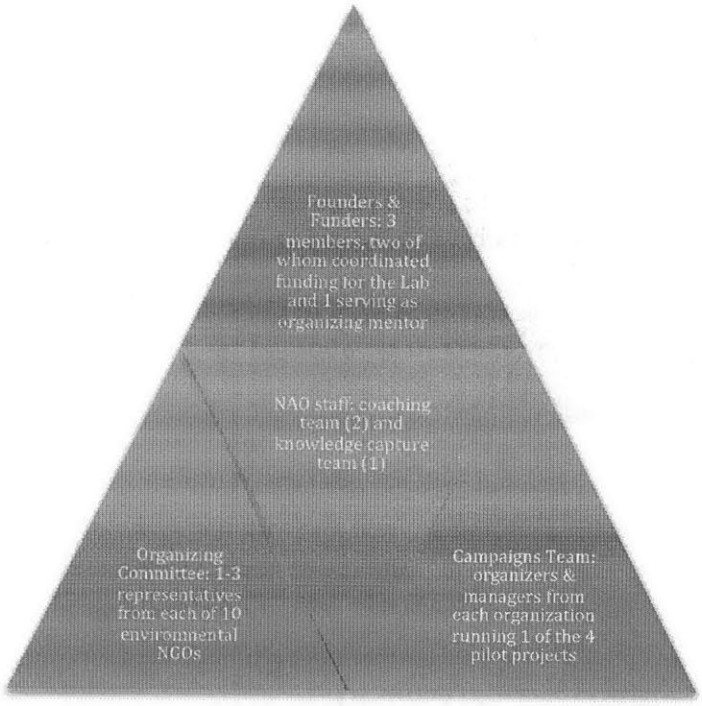
Table 4: Alignment of the Climate Coalition with Network Governance Criteria

Criteria for Network governance by NAO and the Climate Coalition				
Governance Form	**Trust**	**# of Members**	**Goal Consensus**	**Need for Network-Level Competencies**
NAO	Moderate density; Members monitor NAO	Moderate to many	Moderate to High	High
Climate Coalition	Moderate and variable; built on existing relationships and alliances between participating NGOs	Ten; with four active campaigns	High; shared goal of movement-building on climate, campaigns on coal-fired power plants	High; expert coaching for novice organizers on community-engagement model, coordinating Campaigns Team structure

The Climate Coalition also established administrative structures for governing the network through the NAO. In a typical NAO-managed network, the NAO coordinates the activities

of the network but remains apart from the decisions, actions, and outcomes of the network participants (Saz-Carranza 2012). Specifically, the NAO oversees the administration and operation of the network, but the top-level advisory structure retains all responsibility over network strategy, mission, and outcomes (Provan & Kenis 2008). The Coalition's NAO did not limit its interaction with the network in this way. Administratively, the NAO – the coaching and knowledge capture team – coordinated and connected the two levels of the network, arranging Organizing Committee meetings and facilitating weekly Campaigns Team meetings.

Figure 1: The structure of the Climate Coalition



The top-level advisory body, the Organizing Committee, featured representatives from each organization participating in the network, and met monthly. The smaller bottom level structure, the Campaigns Team, brought together the staff organizers of each of the four pilot projects and their direct supervisors for weekly meetings coordinated and run by NAO staff. The Organizing Committee worked to balance the Coalition's short-term goals of running campaigns to close a small number of coal-fired power plants with the long-

term vision of a climate-focused social movement, and its members also facilitate smooth interchange between the network and each organization. The Campaigns Team aimed to be a collaborative, relational space for staff from each pilot campaign to negotiate the challenges of implementing a community engagement organizing-based framework of movement building (Kellogg 2009).

In addition to its administrative responsibilities, the Coalition's NAO also took on roles uncommon to the third-party network governance. Independent of its network-wide activities, the NAO provided one-on-one coaching to each pilot project organizer. In addition, NAO staff met separately from the Organizing Committee to coordinate high-level strategy for the network. Both of these latter two non-NAO-like activities, individualized coaching and high-level strategizing, contributed to emerging tensions within network participants at both the Organizing Committee and Campaigns Team levels. On network strategy, the NAO staff worked closely with three founding members of the network, two of whom also undertook the responsibility of securing resources to serve as seed funding for the network. The third founding member, Jerry, advised the group on the community-engagement organizing model used in each of the four pilot campaigns. Together, the NAO staff and the three founders gathered outside of formal network meetings to discuss network strategy and long-term plans, which also came to generate some tension within network participants on the Organizing Committee.

From Structure to Action: The first few months of the Coalition

In June 2011, the network held a three-day training and kickoff meeting in the wood-paneled rooms of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government that brought together 40+ staff and leadership from the ten organizations participating in the Coalition. The NAO staff introduced the organizers and managers of the four pilot campaigns to one another and the community-engagement organizing model that each organization had committed to use in their work with the network. Familiarity with the network's organizing model varied widely across the organizers and managers attending the kick-off meeting; as

Erica, an organizing manager, put it, "the model isn't a revolution in the way we do organizing, but it's still gonna take a while to teach an old dog a new trick!" (06.16.11), while another organizer, Robin, explained that when she applied for her organizer position, she said "I was like 'if you don't want someone who's gonna do environmental justice organizing – who's a community organizer – do not hire me!'" (06.15.12). Though none of the organizations participating in the Coalition had run base-building organizing campaigns prior to the network's pilot projects, organizers and managers from several of these organizations had some familiarity with the organizing model. However, others did not and thus came to rely heavily on coaching provided by the NAO staff.

The NAO worked actively to shape the Campaigns Team into a network-wide resource rather than a disparate collection of organizational staff forced into a series of joint weekly meetings. The Campaign Team's structure and functionality was completely up in the air at the campaign kickoff and despite the efforts of the NAO to stabilize the group, remained in flux throughout the time at which it operated, between July 2011 and January 2012. At first, the NAO worked with the group to formulate norms for participation, attendance, and contributions of each member on a weekly basis. Over time, as participating organizations shifted organizers and managers onto and off of the network's pilot campaigns, the NAO struggled to maintain the Campaign Team's consistency.[11] With this inconsistency in attendance came a lack of clarity in the group's purpose and ability to make their shared work useful to one another and their organization. This left NAO staff without the ability to forge a shared goal consensus, facilitate meaningful group decision-making, and mobilize network participants into consistent engagement with network activities.

The Coalition's Organizing Committee avoided many of the issues facing the Campaigns Team, but consistent attendance across meetings did not necessarily produce aligned

[11] For example, when organizer Peter left North Carolina NGO in July 2011; his manager Cat made way for new organizer Robin and manager Erica to join the Campaigns Team. In August 2011, organizer Joe joined the Texas NGO's campaign and organizer Maria departed. Tim joined the Campaigns Team in September 2011 along with his manager Abby, and organizer Nate joined organizing manager Sam at Ohio NGO in October 2011.

expectations across participating organizations. For example, every member attended the October 2011 meeting at which the NAO team presented the results of the first four months of organizing results as captured in the Coalition's technological system. However, when it came time for analysis and extrapolation of those results, Organizing Committee members had different reactions. The data on pilot project activities showed that two of the four organizations were not committing the full time of a single organizer to their pilot project; Ohio NGO was using between 10 and 25 percent of their organizer's time for organizational maintenance and administration, and Texas NGO had two organizers working approximately 50-60 percent of their time on the Austin campaign, with the remainder spent on other organizational campaigns. NAO staff had not previously made explicit an expectation for the network that each organization running a pilot project would provide and support a full-time organizer. Still, North Carolina NGO devoted a full-time organizer to their Coalition project, and the pushback from both Texas and Ohio NGOs to make the commitment of a single full-time organizer, even six months into the project, provides further evidence of the lack of network stability. As a result, NAO staff members were unable to frame network participation to align with the community engagement-organizing model and facilitate decision-making processes with Organizing Committee members that resulted in substantive organizational agreements.

Networks are nothing new to the medium and large-sized environmental organizations that made up the Climate Coalition, but past experience with inter-organizational alliances didn't neatly overlap with expectations for the Coalition. But the type and level of participation demanded of each organization by the Coalition was of a different degree than these prior partnerships. More specifically, participation in the network demanded not only a contribution of resources and time from each organization's senior leadership – for the Organizing Committee – but also the full-time involvement of at least one staff member from each organization. Even further, the network's structure, with the NAO staff heavily and regularly involved in the work of each organizer and the strategy and planning of each campaign, required an effective relinquishing of complete organizational control over the pilot project. Eventually, this lack of full ownership by each organization over their

staff and campaigns led to questions about the sustainability of the network. In the next section of this paper, I explore the network through the lens of the three tensions suggested by the governance literature, and suggest a fourth tension as a possible explanation for the network's dissolution.

Table 5: Tensions inherent to all collaborations and networks, and summarized examples from the Climate Coalition under each.

Tensions	1) Efficiency vs. Inclusiveness	2) Internal vs. External Legitimacy	3) Flexibility vs. Stability	4) Organization/ Network Boundaries
Examples	Coaching relationships (between the NAO and organizations running pilot campaigns) and the Campaigns Team structure	The NAO's role in finalizing a memorandum of understanding with participating organizations	Discussions between participating orgs and the NAO on expanding the network	Efforts by the NAO to shift network priorities to include a proposed apprentice organizer training program

Tension 1: Efficiency vs. Inclusiveness

The internal conflict over how to structure and manage the coaching relationship between NAO expert staff and the organizational staff on the ground offers a window into the tension between efficiency and inclusiveness in network processes and activities. The NAO faced initial challenges in figuring out what and how best to communicate with the Organizing Committee and with the organizational staff to best manage across tensions. However, while the NAO succeeded in establishing relatively clear expectations with Organizing Committee members before the network's kick-off training event in June 2011, it struggled to do so with other participants from the network's organizations. Un-resolved issues around boundaries between organizational and network decisions, trust in relationships between NAO and organizational staff, and balancing network and organizational activities foreshadowed organizational frustrations with the Coalition.

Beginning soon after the initial organizing work of the network's four pilot campaigns, tensions between the NAO staff and the organizer and organizing manager emerged. Throughout the 10 months of the Coalition's existence, the NAO struggled to define its relationship with organizational staff responsible for the day-to-day operation of the network's activities. While the NAO established relatively clear expectations with Organizing Committee members, it struggled to do so with other participants from the network's organizations. This situation boiled over at an October 2011 meeting of the Organizing Committee – four months after the kick-off of the four pilot campaigns – where Rick, a senior director of Texas NGO, highlighted his frustration at the unclear lines of authority within the network:

> This sort of raises for me a question of, so what is the role of the Climate Coalition staff versus the organizational staff in terms of the coaching those meetings? Because the projects are managed by the organizations, not by the Coalition... It should be the managers from the organizations that are having the weekly check-in calls... There should be some clarity about who's coaching who.... I think being clear about what happens at those check-ins and when they happen, and what the role of the Coalition is versus the role of the organizational managers on the ground, is one that's a little blurry at the moment and needs to be crystal clear (10.19.11).

Though Organizing Committee members were willing to take responsibility for their role in facilitating a productive relationship between the NAO staff and their organizers and managers, the issue remained an active one for Beth, a senior director at North Carolina NGO:

> I take full responsibility for [the performance of my team]. Because I am in the position to set the expectation, clarify the roles, make sure my very, very deep level of management - between me and the organizer - is all lined up. And that the relationship with Elizabeth [coach and NAO staff member] is clear and all that stuff, and it really wasn't. And so I think coming out of our training in Boston, well, we've just kind of floundered (09.21.11).

In particular, the network experienced challenges when trying to gain clarity around who

would be responsible for directly overseeing the network's activities – the NAO staff or the managers from each organization.

One particular challenge for the NAO staff was when they were asked to broaden their role beyond network administration. Exactly because the Organizing Committee staffed the with experts in base-building organizing, these NAO staff engaged participating organizations in a coaching/mentoring role rather than a simply administrative one, and the balance of delivering their expertise without overstepping organizational boundaries was a constant point of contention. The main point of contact between the NAO staff and the organizational staff came in weekly coaching conversations, a schedule which Elizabeth, the network's coach, felt strongly about maintaining:

> We originally had coaching with the pilots every other week. But we actually started encouraging [meeting] every week because we feel the organizers are learning, you know, the framework and how to do this. I just think the more the better… The ideal scenario is being there every day with them on the ground, right? (10.19.11).

On a typical organizing campaign, multiple organizers work together in a single place to learn from one another and from their more knowledgeable peers. In a network, however, this knowledge sharing had to happen over a distance, and Jerry, the network's mentor, spoke frankly about the challenge inherent in conveying this expertise across the network:

> So what we're trying to do is figure out how in the world we can support novice organizers - or relatively novice organizers - in getting the tools that they need to become effective. You know, in an extremely constrained circumstances. And so the coaching meetings are sort of like a shot at that. But it's a poor substitute for actually being there (10.20.11).

Both the NAO staff and the organizers and managers knew of the challenges of providing expert mentoring across distance within the network, but struggled with them nonetheless throughout the ten months the network existed.

The difficulty of creating productive coaching structures between NAO and organizational staff eventually produced internal debate over structure and flexibility in the network

activities. The coaching role in particular brooked some of the most consequential disagreement between participating organizations with regard to how much interaction with the NAO an organization's staff should be expected to undertake. Wendy, an Organizing Committee member representing one of the smaller two organizations running a pilot campaign, proposed to reduce her staff's time spent in meetings:

> I'd like to throw out a proposal of reducing the amounts of time spent in coaching and team meetings perhaps to every second week or perhaps to shorten meetings, and using that time to free up more organizing time, but also allowing the coaches - in their freed-up time - to dig deeper into some of the analysis (10.20.11).

The other three organizations running pilot campaigns continued to support the NAO's plans for coaching, but complained that the relationship between the NAO staff and their organization remained a bit of a black box. As Rick put it:

> So the coaches are in these detailed meetings, you know, weekly or biweekly with the projects. So I think you guys are learning, you know, a lot about each project. And we've invested a lot in a system right now of coaching. I'm just trying to think what's the best way to use what you know to fill everybody in cause you're the people who know what's going on in more detailed level in all four projects or however many we end up with (10.20.11).

Though the Organizing Committee sought to formalize learning and knowledge sharing structures between participating NGOs, the Coalition struggled with consistent reporting and feedback on the activities of the network, which furthered tensions between the organizations and the NAO staff responsible for making those connections.

As the Organizing Committee asserted itself into the relationship between NAO staff and each participating NGO, it complicated organizational hierarchies. For example, several Organizing Committee members requested that NAO staff report back to them about organizational tensions; as Beth requested: "if you're observing any sort of tension or anything that you would like to recommend, I think that that would be really great to hear from you." Other Organizing Committee members also saw the potential for the NAO to inform them about potential sticking points within their relationships with organizers and

managers. Essentially, the NAO staff quickly found itself in a bit of an impossible situation. Tasked with coordinating the network's activities and with coaching each NGO's staff in designing and implementing an organizing campaign, the NAO found itself stymied on both.

As the network struggled to make concrete progress toward its movement building goals, the NAO's focus on coaching and mentoring each participating NGO's organizer also became a point of criticism for some network members. Reflecting on why he had become frustrated with the network and the slow pace of its progress, John, an Organizing Committee member of North Carolina NGO, placed the blame on the NAO's coaching role, notes:

> The focus had been really strongly on the coaching element, which had caused some real confusion and tensions around it. Rather than really growing our capacity it felt like we were not getting... the shared learning with other organizations that we needed to get (02.05.13).

In addition to complaints about the organizing model dictated by the Coalition and its conflicts with existing organizational activities, several participating NGOs remained uncomfortable with the NAO staff's role as it extended beyond simply administrative tasks into strategizing and active coaching of organizational staff. Erica, the NC NGO manager, offered her thoughts on the relationship between the lead coach and her organization:

> I think Elizabeth was a really good agitator. I think she was well-thought out and ambitious and like, you know, was talking about the things that were important to [us]. So definitely like calling us on our bullshit of like 'you guys say you want to build a movement but you're taking forever to work with people! What is that about? Shouldn't you just do this? Why wouldn't you just do this?' So I think for my taste I think she was quite good. I think for others, she was kind of a 'bull in a China shop' is the best I know how to describe it. But... I think had it been a different coach, I don't think the results would be more than just totally different. The process of the organizer / coach interaction would have been different, but I think

> ultimately the emphasis should have been the same, and the tension would have been too (05.29.12).

Of course, the perspective of the organizers receiving the coaching from the NAO differed from that of the Organizing Committee members. Though their high-level superiors were at times markedly skeptical of the utility of the NAO coaching arrangements, the organizers did not feel similarly. As Maria, the Austin organizer, notes, she tried to avoid most of the tension between the NAO and her organization:

> I loved Elizabeth – she was great. Like, it was much more helpful to me to call Elizabeth and be like 'I have this like little tweak, what do you think?' So [The relationship between NAO staff and the organizers] wasn't a thing for me. It was probably more of a thing to the management - anyone other than me! I mean, everybody's my manager, essentially, because I'm at the bottom of the totem pole. So I was just doing the work (07.02.12).

Similarly, Robin, the North Carolina NGO organizer, valued her interaction with the NAO and sought to insulate her network activities from others in her organization: "Many, many people at [NC NGO] were incredibly critical of the Climate Coalition. And so I took it on for myself to be able to do the [NC NGO] thing, and the Climate Coalition, at the same time. I didn't wanna justify their critique – because I believed in this model" (06.15.12). From this perspective, the conflict between NAO and organization is not one of personality or style, but rather of tension and authority. As the relationship between the NAO staff and the participating organizations continued to remain in flux, the network's efforts to stabilize around expansion plans and new directions began to face opposition.

Tension 2: Legitimacy, internal and external

Discussions within the network about expanding the size and scope of the Coalition clarify efforts to validate the internal value of the network's activities – that it is making measurable progress toward its goals – and address the problem of external legitimacy. Even before the ink had dried and the organizers hit the field on the first round of pilot

projects, the Climate Coalition's Organizing Committee members began to discuss how the effort might grow. As Jessica, one of the founding members explained, "we want to do what we can to spread this framework for organizing far and wide, throughout our organizations and to other organizations across the country in the hopes of helping to build a broad movement." (10.19.2011). With ten organizations currently represented on the Organizing Committee – four that maintained the initial group of pilot projects and six that did not run pilot projects – the network did not seek to incorporate a wider range of opinions and experiences from the environmental community onto the advisory board. Rather, the Organizing Committee's interest in expansion followed directly onto the mission of the action network – to build a movement on climate change through grassroots organizing in communities on coal-fired power plants. By growing the Coalition to include several additional pilot projects in local communities new to the Coalition, the Organizing Committee would secure new venues for implementing the community organizing model and bringing in new organizations to the network.

Another aspect of the motivation for growing the Coalition was to improve the diversity of the organizations represented within it. Even before the June 2011 kick-off event, members of the Coalition's Organizing Committee had acknowledged early on that the Coalition was not representative of the environmental justice movement, a point repeated by the organizers and the organizing managers at the initial training in June. Despite tenuous relationships between local environmental justice groups and national environmental organizations, the lack of representation of local environmental justice groups troubled most members of the Organizing Committee. So the network sought to engage the environmental justice community in discussions on how to build a climate movement. As Robert, the executive director of one of the six participating organizations in the network not running a pilot campaign summarized:

> [We] believe that we must have an authentic climate justice movement in this country to avert catastrophic climate change in the coming decades. It's why we came together to have a conversation. We believe that much of the work around climate, energy, and coal in this country has been well-intentioned but not oriented

> sufficiently towards building a climate justice movement. We believe an essential component of building a climate justice movement is to build a base of informed, engaged, empowered grassroots leaders focused on a long-term vision, connected through shorter term focused campaigns. And we are seeking to partner with existing organizations who want to experiment with a new approach to building that base, to improve our learning and practice, and to build a movement (10.20.11).

The Coalition quickly found the process of identifying potential partner organizations and reviewing their capacity for running a pilot campaign within the network more complex than expected. The NAO staff worked with an external consultant, Libby, in July and August of 2011 to draw up a list of potential pilot expansion projects and an application process by which interested organizations would detail their funding streams, board structures, past successes, current projects, relationships with other community groups, and experience with coal and climate. As Jessica, one of the network's founding members, described:

> We concluded that somebody was going to have to run around after an initial vetting to see how these organizations operated in the communities they were based in. It's hard to tell what's real and what's not when organizations represent what they're doing, how many people they have, and whether they can help you (8.8.11).

In September, Libby traveled to possible pilot campaign sites in Michigan, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Alabama to meet with local environmental organizations in each community about the feasibility of their joining the Coalition, the possibility of integrating community engagement organizing into the organizations themselves, as well as the financial feasibility and sort of long-term viability of these projects if they were to join the Coalition. But the progress of expansion hinged on the external legitimacy of the network, as Libby put it to the Organizing Committee: "the Climate Coalition is an unknown entity for these folks. It's a little hard for me, relating it as a third party... to give the full feel of what goes on" (10.20.11).

At their December 2011 meeting, the Organizing Committee decided not to move forward with any of the additional pilot projects, offering a variety of reasons for their decision. The network had agreed on a set of strict criteria for expansion, as Robert articulates:

> The criteria that I think are absolute necessities are there has to be a constituency composed primarily of people of color. There should be a demonstrated interest in addressing the coal plant. [And] an interest and commitment to community organizing and a real eagerness to be part of the Coalition's structure, which is something that I think we probably can't know yet but I think we need to do a little bit of further exploration (10.20.11).

As a result, none of the applicant organizations met all of the criteria. The Organizing Committee remained unconvinced that any had the necessary experience with community engagement organizing, including even those sites that did have some experience doing community engagement work and using community organizers. The network members had concerns about organizational stability and long-term campaign viability in turning down candidates for expansion, and worried that for several candidate organizations, the coal plants at these sites were already in the process of closing down, as Sally, an Organizing Committee member from Texas NGO, described: "the Mt. Tom plant in Massachusetts is still teetering- it's vulnerable but it's not a foregone conclusion... there's always the possibility we could win sooner than we expected" (12.15.11). And a final prominent reason offered by the Organizing Committee for not supporting these projects was simply that these local organizations were not committed to the work of building a climate movement but rather simply interested in the financial resources offered to network members. Being local environmental organizations working on environmental justice work there was not significant financial support forthcoming for a lot of this work in any meaningful way, and so the board worried that these organizations envisioned participation in the network as simply a new source of funding. As Beth argued, "We've been very careful so far to structure these transfers of money [between the Coalition and participating organizations] as not being grants. And we'll have to have that conversation with these new groups - I think that's a very important point" (10.20.11). Ultimately, the

network could not agree on that any of the candidate organizations had the structure, resources, and support systems in place to maintain a successful pilot project over a certain period of time.

Tension 3: Flexibility vs. Stability

The relationship between the Climate Coalition and the network's organizations was not fixed, but rather changed over the duration of the network's existence. Initially, as the environmental groups committed to participate in the Coalition – six by joining monthly meetings of the network's organizing committee, and four by agreeing to operate pilot organizing campaigns sited in each organization but overseen by the network – the arrangements and agreements were verbal and informal. From the initial meetings of the network, where leaders from each of the ten participating organizations gathered to reach agreement on the shared goals and approach of the Climate Coalition, conversations on establishing more formal mechanisms for network participation were already underway. The process by which the network sought to formalize a set of requirements for membership – developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the network and each participating organization – highlights the challenge of multi-organizational collaboration, and offers a useful lens for examining the role of the NAO in the network's formalization, operation, and dissolution.

A primary role for the Memorandum of Understanding negotiating process was to establish a baseline level of participation for each organization in the network. Nominally, the ten organizations that had agreed to participate in the Coalition each had some degree of commitment to the high-level goal of the network – to build a social movement in the United States to address climate change. More specifically, however, these organizations also committed to a more ambitious project – the method by which they'd work to achieve that movement building goal. As Elizabeth, lead coach on the NAO staff describes it:

> To start talking about what would it look like to gestate a movement building project, I mean, what does that even mean, exactly? We made a decision to focus

> on four, initially – and perhaps more in the future – climate projects… We picked a place where [these organizations are] campaigning to implement and test out a framework of organizing that is fundamentally rooted in building a constituency, building a base, and essentially creating and developing the leaders beyond the staff of environmental organizations. (9.7.2011)

While this objective – direct organizational resources to organizing a base of committed volunteers in specific communities to fight climate change – seemed both ambitious and completely possible – it would require a substantive commitment of resources by each organization in the network. Though each organization's leadership had verbally agreed to such a commitment, the group set out to formalize what it would look like in practice via an MOU. As Sally explained it, "the MOU is a tool with which to have the conversation about 'here's a level of commitment that we'll need'" (08.08.11). Reaching an agreement about what that "level of commitment" entailed, however, was less than straightforward.

An existing contractual relationship between the network and two of the four organizations running pilot campaigns complicated efforts to capture a shared baseline commitment to the network. Though each of these four NGOs committed to coordinating a single organizing campaign through the network, only two of the four had the resources in place in June 2011 to fulfill that commitment. The remaining two NGOs received the necessary funding to support the full time of one organizer and part of the time of an organizing manager from the network, and signed a (different) MOU with the network's funders prior to kick-off event in June 2011. As a result, this differentiation in formal commitment to the network infused even greater confusion in the MOU discussion, as the Executive Director of Ohio NGO describes:

> We had an agreement for groups that are receiving funding for an organizer that had a specific and basically just saying I'm committing to a full-time organizer… But the language that's being used as MOU … it seems to me it's just a much more detailed document. It's like the difference between passing the laws and writing the regulations, you know? (10.20.11)

The four organizations struggled to reach agreement on the type and detail of commitment to the network that a MOU should incorporate. For one of the organizations, this commitment meant meeting a set of detailed quantitative metrics around the resources each participating organization would develop. As one network member explained, though, figuring out in advance which required metrics would be relevant proved to be a challenge: "What are we measuring to get there? Are we measuring one-to-one meetings or are we measuring organizer hours?" (10.19.11). Tim, one of the NAO staff members, suggested a more expansive view of articulating quantitative targets in an MOU:

> What exactly does a pilot project require on the part of an organization? We've talked a minimum of a full-time organizer; we've talked about possibly, you know, some type of apprentice commitment. We're talking about, of course, necessary managerial and other forms of support. How would those of you who've been involved in this articulate what that looks like in terms of staff commitment? (12.15.11)

Other organizations in the network resisted the push to specify a baseline commitment so concretely. John, the national coal and climate director of North Carolina NGO, offered a different vision for what an organization's commitment to the Coalition might entail:

> I hate being in the place where we come to the table... at the end of an experiment and be like 'well, we didn't have the right controls. Or, we didn't really engage in it'. So, I guess I'd like to come away having done it right - and obviously, there's no preconceived notion, right? Let's figure out what our best guess for that is... and talk through what in practice engagement looks like that would be sufficient to learn and create a model that can be replicated elsewhere (09.21.11).

Put more succinctly, this approach to the MOU sees it as having network members merely "committing to doing something different than usual with this project."

The ten organizations that comprised the Climate Coalition sought from the very beginning to make the network an <u>action</u> rather than a coordinating network. As the Organizing Committee members struggled to optimize the structure of the network, they admitted that to succeed in their goal of using community-engagement organizing in local

communities to build the base for a climate movement – and learn from one another while actually doing it – they would need expert guidance on how to do the organizing work. As none of the NGOs in the Coalition had meaningful experience with base-building community organizing, they added an expert coaching team to the network's NAO (06.13.11). The result was that the network took on a hybrid form with the NAO connecting the ten environmental NGOs administratively as well as leading and directing the organizations' movement building work. The network's members acknowledged that this changed the tenor of the group somewhat, as Beth articulates:

> [We said] In the beginning – and still have so far – that we wanted to place these projects in existing organizations. And so to me that's also another whole kind of layer in thinking about say 'how people are spending their time, etc.' Which is different than a model that says we're going to hire organizers centrally, like from the Coalition, and put them in different places. So, I think that's one of the complications with this / I mean, if an MOU is kind of usually 'ok, you're gonna do one thing, I'm gonna do one thing, how are we gonna do this together' then it's another layer of complication because we've got lots of different organizations involved (10.19.11).

The choice of using a NAO mechanism to coordinate the activities of the network, coupled with the need for network-wide expertise in base-building organizing, led directly to the formation the NAO as a boundary organization, neither integrated with nor fully separate from the organizations of the Coalition.

Tension 4: Network boundaries and the NAO as a boundary organization

"I think that's the Coalition, and therefore me (12.15.2011)"

– Climate Coalition lead coach and NAO staff member

The active involvement of NAO staff in the day-to-day administration and high-level strategizing of the Climate Coalition complicated relationships between the network's organizations and blurred the boundaries between the network and the organizations. In

brief, as part of its role in administering the network, the NAO had begun to stand in for the network as well. Though none of the organizations objected to the handoff of network-level activities – such as the MOU process – to the NAO, each came to realize that the result was that pilot organizations were now negotiating with the NAO rather than with the network, that is, with one another. With a third party in between discussions between organizations about their level of commitment to the network, frustrations emerged. Sally, from Texas NGO, tried to describe her complaint about the MOU process:

> So I have been working on an MOU and I feel as though (.) there's a way that we can talk about what the expectations were and then what happened. I sometimes feel as though there's a fuzzy 'we' – so that there is actually a core leadership team [the NAO staff] that actually have some clear ideas and expectations about what is needed to move forward. And that that needs to be clearly written down (10.19.11).

Though network participants didn't yet consider the NAO a boundary organization, they clearly perceived of it as distinct from the network and their organizations, and struggled to make sense of that separation.

As the NAO staff entered into the picture, bringing their own expertise and expectations around organizational commitment to the network's mission, they began to shift discussion of what that commitment might entail. When the network's organizations gathered in October 2011 to finalize the MOUs, the tension over the NAO's role in the network surfaced, as Rick describes:

> I feel as though ... there might be a clear set of ideas that haven't been articulated – underlying assumptions – that are constantly causing us to revisit what a collective view might be. And so I guess we can maybe identify some areas where we can get more clarity but I feel as though there is a 'we of the people who are working to lead this project that may have some clear ideas' and then there is a 'we of what the pilot group may think would be helpful' and then there is each individual organization needing to be clear about what, from their organizational context, is going to be a requirement in order to be able to participate (10.20.11).

Not only did these MOU discussions highlight the ongoing lack of agreement as to what full participation in the network should entail, but also over how the network should be structured and operated. After six months of running pilot campaigns through the network, the Organizing Committee couldn't agree on exactly what they thought the Coalition should look like in the future.

The slow progress of organizing activities and little productive network-wide engagement contributed to the inability of the network to stabilize on a specific structure. The position of the NAO at the boundary of the organization and the network helped to produce this stasis. NAO staff worked directly with the organizers of each NGO on generally struggling early campaigns, while working with NGO leaders on developing an MOU that would formalize the work on those campaigns. When the former did not go smoothly, as Jerry points out the latter appeared to rub salt in that frustration for both the organizations and the NAO:

> I feel like maybe in June we weren't explicitly clear, but I think part of the problem, just being honest, is the coaching team has been put in a place of negotiating with the pilots what percent of time of an organizer we can have on this project. Which at the end of the day, it's not a negotiation, right? I mean, I think at the end of the day it's like 'what do the pilot organizations ultimately want to get out of this in building the organization as well as this movement, right? (10.19.11)

The discussion about the form and content of an MOU by network members also illuminated the expansion and solidification of the network's goals between the planning and campaign phases of the Coalition. In the three planning meetings to establish the need for the network's existence and planned campaigns, the ten organizations in the network debated the structure and management of the Coalition, reaching a degree of certainty. As one member put it: "I think at the beginning of all this, everyone signed up to be part of this but it wasn't really clear what everyone was signing up for. I know there's still not clarity in plenty of areas, but I think there's a lot more clarity than there was before" (08.08.11) But even before the real work of the Coalition had begun with on-the-ground

organizing, the debate over the form of the network raged. As Jessica, one of the founding members, argues:

> I think it would have been a big mistake to start a new organization. In part because you might have been able to, um, have a cleaner set of outcomes that sort of match what our assumptions were, but it would have had even less ability to even impact - less relevant - it would have been this isolated experiment that would have had less chance of really fostering the conditions for a movement (02.08.12).

Network members explicitly argued that they had designed and formulated the Coalition not to be a separate organization: "by setting this group up as a Coalition, we've said we're going to try something, put our all in it, then learn from it and readjust" (09.21.11). As Beth put it, "You don't create a new organization but you take an existing organization and create something totally outside of it" (10.19.11). That something was a ten-NGO action network that became about more than simply coordinating action across the organizations when administered by a NAO.

Alongside the ongoing conversation about how to integrate the NAO as a boundary organization within the existing network and participating organizations, the NAO began in October 2011 to push the participating organizations and the network into a discussion about adding or substituting a different approach to its climate movement building efforts: an apprentice program. At the October 2011 Organizing Committee meeting in a posh Washington, DC high-rise, following an extensive conversation about the lack of progress made by all of the organizing campaigns, NAO staff began to suggest a new approach. Elizabeth proposed finding some way of bringing multiple organizers together in a single location rather than having one organizer per site:

> I mean another way of thinking is bringing a team of organizers to one place for a limited period of time. You know, which they learn together, they get the spirit together, they get the whole thing. And then they go back to the places where they were... It really is a question about how to make best use of the resources being invested. It's like all that investment ought yield more. (10.20.11)

The Organizing Committee did not dismiss the suggestion immediately, instead exploring the implications of such a shift and how they might implement it. As Sally, a senior director at Texas NGO, summarized:

> We have our own apprentices and we have Green Corps that we could direct towards this...it's just somewhat limited. And then finally, we're trying to shift - and *turning a battleship is an appropriate analogy* - our whole organizing department towards this type of organizing. And that's a big, sort of, replicable effect that hopefully we will be able to measure, but sort of, changing the way we're doing things in Austin is (.) taking longer than I think I thought it would, and so it's going to take even longer in [Texas NGO]. But that's a big opportunity as well (10.20.11).

The largest of the organizations in the network, Texas NGO, cast doubt on the prospect of changing the focus of the Coalition quickly. While the idea might be worth supporting, the organizational realities of network participation suggest a more complex path to change.

Though resistance to change did not materialize as a factor in the discussion about transforming or adding to the network, no obvious path by which the Coalition would establish and operate an apprenticeship program came to light. So the NAO staff sought to link a proposed apprenticeship program, which would develop organizing capacity for future climate movement building work, to the mission of the network:

> One of the original needs identified by numerous people at our first meeting was, you know, not enough organizing capacity: not enough people who can do this kind of work on the ground. And so how could we help fill that gap? The apprenticeship program would be one way to do that. So if you start out with that as the potential the role for the Coalition, then the second question is how would we fulfill that role? And we tried one thing, which was imperfect, and we're talking about an apprentice program, which would be another way to try to address that need that's been identified out there... (02.08.12).

But the mechanics of how an apprenticeship program might work remained unclear. NAO staff suggested as one possible option that the network would raise money, separately from the participating organizations, to support new apprentices:

> So, I don't know what the answer is yet, but I was thinking about how we best use our resources in communicating this apprentice idea. And I wonder if, you know, people are raising the money to bring these people in to work on this project, I mean, should we hire the people, or be very involved in the hiring? (10.19.11)

This suggestion differed from the original approach of the Coalition, where each of the four organizations running pilot campaigns agreed to support their own organizer to work collaboratively as part of the network. But the original organizers remained within each organization and tethered to its practices, responsibilities, and hierarchies. In contrast, the NAO staff argued that any new apprentices should sit outside of the organizations and instead report to the network: to the NAO and the Organizing Committee. While such an arrangement would free new organizers/apprentices from significant organizational responsibilities and ties, it would also have the potential to concentrate the tension between the NAO and participating organizations over lines of authority and network-wide strategy.

Discussion

The literature on governance and management of networks, particularly goal-oriented action networks like the Climate Coalition, predicts the effectiveness of networks based on the degree to which their governance structure aligns with four categories of network variables: trust, size, goal consensus, and network competencies. Specifically, it suggests that the most formal governance mechanism – the NAO –for networks of a moderate to large size with moderate goal consensus and a high need for network competencies. The Coalition's choice of a NAO to direct the network's activities, then, falls squarely within the scope of predicted effectiveness. Yet the Coalition was far from effective as a network, and dissolved in less than a year. How, then, can we understand this failure? In the data presented above on the structure, formation, stabilization, and attempted growth of the Coalition, I have argued that the hybrid form of the NAO – in which NAO staff added participation in network strategy and expert coaching work to the traditional operations

management role of a NAO while – ultimately led to the failure of the network. But if the research on similar networks can't fully explain the story of the Coalition, what can?

Research on inter-organizational collaborations of all shapes and sizes offers a diverse set of claims on the formation and dissolution of similar relationships between organizations. As we've seen from the literature on network governance, successful collaborations between organizations balance a number of tensions. The research on inter-firm collaborations – joint ventures, strategic alliances, and relational contracts – has tended to generate on market-based explanations for instability in these arrangements, emphasizing trust between firms, minimizing costs within markets, transparent knowledge and resource sharing, and flexibility in structural arrangements (Dacin 2007; Das & Teng 1999, 2000; Kanter 1994; Kogut 1988; Miles & Snow 1991; Parke 1993). The literature on cross-sector partnerships broadens this focus to include some non-market explanations for collaboration instability or failure, including a lack of internal or external legitimacy, and political transitions or political will (Gray 2000; Koschmann 2012; Selsky & Parker 2005; Shah 2011). However, the largest collection of literature on organizational collaboration focuses on the structure and agency of inter-firm relationships; that is, on collaborative undertakings between two or more firms. Notably, failure is a common result for more than 50 percent of alliances between corporations and most likely cross-sector partnerships as well (Das & Teng 2000; Kelly 2002; Mandell & Keast 2007; Stafford et al., 2000). For example, Huxham & Vangen (2005) draw on extensive analysis of non-profit alliances and cross-sector partnerships to argue that even alliances that do not fail often succumb to "collaborative inertia" rather than realizing the advantages of collaboration. What factors drive the success and failure of collaborations, alliances, and partnerships?

Organizations scholars offer a variety of arguments for the instability of organizational collaborations, none of which overlap perfectly with the case of the Climate Coalition. Relational contracting and transaction cost economics emphasizes that trust between organizations predicts successful collaboration, and emphasizes the negative influence of opportunistic behavior (Williamson 2002; Zaheer & Venkatraman 1995). In the Coalition,

however, none of the participating organizations had anything to gain through such behavior, and trust between them never became an issue. Resource dependence posits that organizations enter alliances to reduce environmental uncertainty and to acquire knowledge from their collaborators; once completed, these alliances dissolve (Inkpen & Beamish 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik 1978). But as Doz (1996) argues, inter-organizational learning stabilizes rather than dissolves alliances, and none of the instability in the Climate Coalition originated in shared knowledge. An internal tensions framework (Das & Teng 2000; Miles & Snow 2001), on the other hand, acknowledges "inevitable tensions and attempts to balance contradictory forces so that neither dominates" within an inter-organizational collaboration (Das & Teng 2000; 85). Posing three key tensions – between competition and cooperation; rigidity and flexibility; and short-term and long-term perspectives – this framework argues that successful alliances actively seek to balance these opposing forces.

Table 5: Comparing Tensions: network governance vs. inherent tensions

	Tension 1	*Tension 2*	*Tension 3*
"Network Governance" Tensions	Efficiency vs. Inclusiveness	Internal vs. External Legitimacy	Flexibility vs. Stability
"Inherent" Tensions	Cooperation vs. Competition	Short-term vs. Long-term perspective	Flexibility vs. Rigidity
Key points of difference and the Climate Coalition			The third tension – around the flexibility of the network – is consistent across frameworks

The three tensions of this framework are similar but usefully distinct from those suggested by the network governance literature, and taken together better explain the role of the NAO as a boundary organization in the failure of the Coalition. One of the three internal tensions described by Das & Teng (2000) - between rigidity and flexibility – overlaps clearly with the tension between stability and flexibility suggested by the network governance literature (e.g., Provan & Kenis 2008). The remaining two tensions – between

cooperation and competition, and between a short-term and long-term orientation for the collaboration – taken separately seem less relevant to the particular case of the Coalition. In particular, cooperation and competition is less relevant to collaborations between NGOs; although competition for resources and recognition is not absent in the world of non-profit organizations, profit-seeking behavior is generally balanced against other organizational goals, and thus inter-organizational competition is minimized. Still, substantial research indicates environmental organizations do compete for resources, members, political influence, and ideas (Brulle 2000; Shaiko 1999; Walker 2009). As a result, giving up control over even small aspects of a their work to the network's boundary organization may have become an untenable option for the organizations in the Coalition. The third element – short vs. long-term orientation – suggested in an internal-tensions framework aligns most closely with the struggle of the participating groups and the NAO as boundary organization in reaching consensus over the goals and activities of the network. Though each participating organizations in the Coalition signed onto the network's goal of movement building work on climate change via grassroots community organizing, the immediate results of that work was a short-term membership bump in for each organization. Seeking to dramatically and quickly boost and sustain those early results, the NAO proposed an apprentice program as an effort to produce long-term capacity through organizers rather than new recruits. Over the long-term, the NAO argued, boosting the number of trained and experienced community organizers working on climate change will have a greater role in catalyzing a potential climate movement. But with the boundary organization charged with overseeing the training and placement of these apprentice organizers – and with integrating any new organizations into the network – the organizations running pilot campaigns within the Coalition would almost certainly not benefit from those organizers directly.

Looking together at these two tensions of cooperation vs. competition and short-term vs. long-term orientation offers the clearest lens for interpreting the dissolution of the Climate Coalition. Treating the NAO as a boundary organization opens for investigation its role in running both the network's administrative and strategic activities. Efforts by the NAO to

formalize the network's structure through the MOU process while simultaneously seeking to expand the number of participating organizations highlighted the discontent of participating NGOs over the demands of network participation. Furthermore, the NAO's ongoing coaching of existing organizers and the proposed apprentice program threatened participating organizations' control, branding, and identities, further exacerbating tensions within the network. Though the Coalition's decision to adopt an NAO-based governance structure conformed with its need for network-level competencies around coaching on the community engagement-organizing model and consensus on the need for a climate movement, the tensions that resulted when the NAO took on the role of a boundary organization between participating groups and the network ultimately led to the Coalition's failure.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the turn from policy networks to action networks within the U.S. environmental movement as forms of organizational collaboration, looking particularly at the Climate Coalition and its collapse only nine months post inception to understand the possible barriers to future networks of environmental organizations. In conclusion, I look back to my first substantive interaction with the Climate Coalition to make apparent the implications for future climate movement building work. In early June of 2011, in the post-Spring-semester calm, I entered a wood-paneled room full of mostly twenty-somethings in beat-up jeans and t-shirts gathered to kick-off four community organizing campaigns that just might be the first steps toward a climate movement. Over three consecutive days – long ones that started at 8am and didn't finish until the summer sun had begun to set – I observed as the group of forty-plus community organizers and their immediate managers worked hand-in-hand with a team of experienced trainers to learn a new organizing model and lay the foundations of the network that would become the Climate Coalition. The excitement and energy in the room – the sense that the collective was building the foundations for a social movement on climate change –was palpable nearly the whole

time I was there. Translating that excitement into a sustainable action network with multiple partner organizations, however, turned out to be a bit more challenging.

Nearly two years later, sitting comfortably in the back row of a basement auditorium at Harvard University on a brisk March afternoon in 2013, I awaited an event celebrating a new report on the environmental movement's ongoing climate problem. Authored by Theda Skocpol, Harvard Sociology Professor, it detailed the failure of the U.S. Congress to pass 'cap and trade' legislation, and argued for the immediate creation of an environmental NGO-anchored, grassroots activist-based network to make future legislation politically possible. Released in a packed Harvard lecture hall full of mostly white, influential Harvard-connected faculty and Cambridge residents, the report highlighted the same questions identified by a small group of non-profit environmental leaders two years prior: What will it take to build a climate movement? Where should we start?

As I thought back to the kick-off of the Climate Coalition, I couldn't shake my sense of ironic déjà vu. The ten NGOs that gathered to form an action network dedicated to learning together how to build a social movement on climate change had the same questions, but the network they created did not even last a year. Analyzing its demise, I've argued that despite selecting the most appropriate governance mechanism for the network, what appeared to be a reasonable and appropriate structure was nonetheless incompatible with each organization's day-to-day activities, inhibiting forward-moving organizational progress. Rather than streamlining organizational interactions within the network, investing a boundary organization with the authority and responsibility of managing the activities of organizational staff exacerbated tensions between NGOs. While the answer to questions of what should be done on the issue of climate change might be an action network of environmental organizations, such a network must navigate the choices and barriers of structure, collaboration, and action before a climate movement emerges.

Chapter 2

(Not) Getting from Us to We: Expertise as a roadblock to change in U.S. environmental organizations

"There are multiple challenges here. There's an organization change challenge. There's a learning challenge, and there's the making-the-grassroots-organization-on-the-ground-actually-happen challenge. And it seems to me we're in the organization change domain right now, which is changing the way in which organizers and organizations operate enough to be able to even have a shot at the second and third challenges." – Beth (08.08.11)

"What do we call winning? What are we trying to win?" – Elizabeth (06.15.12)

The environmental movement's fight against climate change in the 21st century might be best described as winning sporadic battles but losing the larger war. The failure of climate change legislation in the U.S. Congress in 2009 signaled the need for a new approach by environmental organizations. In response, a group of leaders from prominent U.S. environmental non-profit organizations (NGOs) came together in 2010 to establish a collaborative experiment in piloting one such approach: the Climate Coalition. Specifically, they agreed to integrate community engagement organizing into their existing organizations as a means of mobilizing the public to support environmental policies and as an implicit acknowledgement of their inability to influence public policy. This chapter examines the gestation and implementation of this collaborative experiment, and its implications for organizational change at each of the participating organizations.

Using participant observation of high-level meetings of the Climate Coalition and interviews with organizational leadership and staff, I compare the efforts of two of the organizations in the collaborative to wrestle with the organizational implications of adopting community organizing. I show that while each organization's leadership committed to adopting community engagement organizing in specific communities as a

condition of participation in the experimental collaborative, they did not facilitate agreement within their organizations about the changes to organizational strategy that this adoption would require. Simply put, serious – and successful – adoption of community organizing as an organizational strategy demanded corresponding modifications to each organization's theory of change: a set of assumptions about actions that will produce desired outcomes (Ganz 2009a; Han 2014; Warren 2011). These NGOs previously drew and deployed their power[12] through a mixture of political lobbying, legal challenges to environmental problems, and media-focused direct action expertise. But community organizing introduces a new potential source of power – an organized base of volunteers. I argue in this chapter that although these organizations agreed to adopt community organizing, they did not commit to making their volunteer base a primary source of power. As a result, they began the process of building a base of committed volunteers, but had no ability to mobilize its power to achieve its desired outcome.

But 'success' for an engagement-centered model of community organizing is not just a matter of aligning the goals of a nascent social movement with democratic principles and using creative protest tactics to mobilize participants. Rather, the organizing model adopted by these organizations seeks to substantively involve volunteers in movement leadership and organizational management. But by failing to modify their previous theories of change, each organization walled off the transformational possibilities of volunteer involvement in the management of the movement organization writ large. Though each organization committed to experimenting with community organizing, it did not commit to ensuring that staff members share professional prerogatives. As a result, none made sufficient changes in organization routines and practices to incorporate meaningful volunteer participation and leadership, even as they devoted substantial resources to build a volunteer base. By excluding both organizers and volunteer participants from meaningful roles within the organization, they failed to sustain

[12] Though power is often conceptualized as a multi-dimensional phenomena, I focus here on what might be called "social power" (Speer & Hughey 1995), which incorporates links between resources (either organized money or organized people) and influence (Alinsky 1972).

commitments to a new organizational theory of change that privileged a volunteer base as a source of organizational influence and power.

The rise and fall of the U.S. environmental movement: The shift from grassroots to interest groups

The story of the U.S. environmental movement between 1960 and the present is a familiar one. At first, environmental organizations experienced exponential membership growth and several high-profile political victories. The large environmental organizations comprising the most visible core of the U.S. environmental movement – the Sierra Club, Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, the World Wildlife Foundation, Greenpeace, and several others – expanded steadily, even explosively, in both membership and influence between the late 1960s through the early 1990s (Bosso 2005; Brulle 2000; Vig & Kraft, 1994). This growth occurred for a confluence of reasons, among them a new awareness of industrial pollution and toxics through the publication of *Silent Spring* (Carson 1962), growing middle-class political participation (McFarland 1978), legislative and legal advances on environmental protections, and private foundation support of environmental organizations (Bosso 2005). The environmental movement and its attendant organizations undertook citizen activism on a large scale (Davis 2004; Nash 2006; Rome 2001; 2010). As environmental organizations gained membership, momentum, and influence, they shifted their activities to adopt new tactics that their leadership believed would most effectively utilize this newfound power. More specifically, they opened offices in Washington DC and began to focus their attention on influencing U.S. policy-making bodies on environmental concerns (Bosso 2005; Jasanoff 1990; McClosky 2005). This new model of activism for the environmental movement offered promise of greater influence than grassroots mobilization, but held the potential for peril as well.

While environmental organizations expanded dramatically in terms of membership and budgets during the 1980s and into the 1990s (Andrews 2006), the implications of that expansion reverberated across the environmental sector for the next two decades. In

particular, large environmental NGOs began to shift their focus away from localized environmental harms of direct impact on their membership base to concerns of their largely elite donors and management (Bosso 1994; Shaiko 1999; Skocpol 2003). Though a focus on increasing and deploying each NGO's financial resources represented one aspect of this institutional transformation, another more important element was a shift away from a grassroots power- and democratic leadership-based strategy. More specifically, the rapid growth of large environmental organizations effectively professionalized the environmental movement into an "advocacy community" (Bosso 2005). In this new form, the elite organizations of the environmental movement sought to deploy their power through political lobbying rather than through grassroots political participation (Walker 2009). As Skocpol points out, elites prefer these forms of engagement – they are clean and relatively contained – and "only in special circumstances do elites turn to democratic leadership – above all, to the kinds of democratic leadership that involve mobilizing and organizing others" (2003; 177). This strategy of working through lobbying, legal pressure, and political activities produced a number of significant victories (Vig & Kraft 1994), but it failed when applied to climate-focused "cap and trade" legislation in 2009.

As a result, even as environmental groups increased in size and influence, they also grew further and further away from their grassroots origins and from the voices and desires of their membership and constituency. Further exacerbating this disconnect, environmental organizations that previously used member engagement activities such as street and door-to-door canvassing began to dismantle those engagement strategies in the 1990s, instead hiring external companies to handle their canvassing and member engagement activities (Bosso 2005; Fisher 2006). This professionalization and centralization of relationships between environmental groups and their membership base through the use of external canvassing organizations ultimately limited contact between public voice & organizational leadership (Fisher 2006). As the elite NGOs of the U.S. environmental movement continued to embrace organizational strategies emphasizing professional expertise over grassroots voice and leadership, they operated more like elite interest groups than as a mass political movement (Berry 2007; Lowi 1967). In other words, the biggest environmental

organizations chose to become less accountable to and engaged with their membership in order to remain influential amongst the field of competing interest groups. In sum, the professionalization of environmental NGOs offered the illusion of victory while setting the stage for the current crisis facing the U.S. environmental movement.

This shift to professionalization of large non-profit organizations was not unique to the environmental sector, but rather a systemic move toward professionalization across the range of civic associations. The move of national civic associations "from membership to management" led to elite interests dominating the NGO sector by focusing on the financial resources of a civic association rather than the various resources provided by its membership (Putnam 2000; Skocpol 2003). While civic associations build community and a more democratic polis (Putnam 2000), they more specifically work to develop leadership capacity in volunteers, teaching citizens new skills in and improving their existing skills in democratic participation (Skocpol et al., 2000; Baggetta et al., 2012). In fact, the most effective civic associations – in terms of public recognition, member engagement, and leadership development – have been those organizations with the ability to recruit broadly, develop leadership skills, and mobilize capacity in community (Andrews et al., 2010). But the professionalization of these groups reshaped their organizational staffing and decision-making structures, producing more bureaucratic styles of governance in the non-profit sector. The cost of maintaining these structures, even when coupled with an influx of financial resources into the non-profit sector beginning in the 1990s, generated competition between organizations for resources and additional distraction from their mission-driven activities (Clemens & Guthrie 2010). As a result, once environmental organizations began to spend fewer resources organizing their membership base, they correspondingly began to rely on their base for financial contributions and little else. This catalyzed a vicious cycle by which these NGOs, instead of drawing power from their base, began to draw it from elsewhere, further reducing their incentives to organize their membership base (Barry 1999). As a result, the previously membership-driven environmental movement found itself in the mid-1990s with substantially more resources

at its disposal, but with a professionalized structure more suited to interest group rather than grassroots politics.

As large environmental NGOs exponentially expanded their membership base, they found themselves in need of new staff, structures, and procedures for managing these new members and deploying their political power. The resulting organizational professionalization produced three general consequences. First, the growth and resulting organizational complexity of U.S. environmental NGOs led them to spend more energy on organizational maintenance, often at the expense of time spent listening to and communicating the voices of their members to policymakers (Shaiko 1999). In addition, though new members brought financial resources to the organization, the inconsistency of membership dues drove some environmental NGOs to seek external funding through foundations and other grant-making bodies (Bosso 2005). This new reliance on external funding – and the need to maintain it over time – had the unplanned effect of driving U.S environmental organizations toward more conservative forms of action than their members expected, which ultimately decreased member engagement and participation in organizational decision-making (Brulle 2000). Finally, the increased resources and membership interest in environmental organizations encouraged these organizations to focus on issues and concerns they considered appropriately 'environmental.' Prominent environmental leaders have critiqued such a treatment of the environment – nature as a "special issue" – arguing that separating the environment from all other political issues and crafting technical & scientific answers to environmental problems, rather than treating them holistically, has led to the political failure of environmental NGOs (Shellenberger & Nordhaus 2004). Each of these three results of the professionalization of large environmental NGOs – making the environment a special issue, using more conservative forms of action, and focusing on organizational maintenance – privileges the perspectives of organizational elites at the expense of a wider, more democratic sense of organizational governance.

Locally Reconnecting: Environmental justice and community organizing

At the same time that large U.S. environmental organizations began to reach their zenith in terms of membership and resources, an increasing number of smaller organizations focused on single or narrow set of environmental issues emerged to fill in the gaps left at the local level by the large organizations. In particular, the end of the 1980s and early 1990s saw the emergence of the environmental justice movement and an explosion of small organizations focusing on local rather than regional or national environmental problems (Bullard 1990; 1993; Fortun 2001; Schwab & Gibbs 1994). At the same time that large US environmental organizations were focusing their efforts on shaping federal and state environmental protection policy, environmental justice groups were using the power of local citizen groups to tackle environmental problems locally. Local environmentalism found greatest success when it drew on localized, direct claims of impact in contrast with more conventional, elite modes of protest (Allen 2003). Environmental justice activism seeks not only to counter local environmental harm, but also to build community around harms in a specific place and provide citizens a new vocabulary for democratic participation (Checker 2005). Environmental advocacy organizations that drew on and produced local knowledge about environmental problems transformed regular citizens into active participants with political voice (Coburn 2005). At the same time that large environmental organizations struggled with representing member voices in organizational decision-making, environmental justice groups worked to highlight citizen voice. This rise of environmental justice and of 'grassroots' environmental groups – as well as the rise of the 'wise use/property rights' counter-movement – posed a further challenge to national environmental NGOs and their need for organizational maintenance, further dividing the large environmental organizations from the rest of the environmental movement (Bosso 1994) throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

Bridging the gap between local groups working at the grassroots in local communities on justice-related environmental issues and national environmental organizations has proved a consistent challenge. Though many large U.S. environmental organizations reached out

to local environmental groups and took organization-wide positions supporting environmental justice concerns, the strategies, targets, and tactics of large and small environmental organizations remained fundamentally distinct. Perhaps expectedly, the most effective interactions between local grassroots campaigns and national environmental organizations successfully blended the varying expertises of professional staff and volunteers (Andrews & Edwards 2005). But large U.S. environmental organizations have struggled to integrate environmental justice activism with their existing modes of advocating for environmental issues. The challenges of integration lay across two distinct areas of difference: that of philosophy and that of democratic participation and decision-making structures. For the former, the challenge of integrating notions of social and economic justice into the historically dominant environmental focus on preservation, conservation, and sustainability (Brulle 2000) has emerged as a core tension point (Agyeman 2005). Equally important, however, is that environmental justice envisions and demands a greater level of citizen/member participation and voice in the environmental organization than the organizational structures of large environmental groups allows (Jamieson 2007). While large U.S. environmental organizations have discussed efforts in the past to spur member engagement and voice (Shaiko 1999), they have had little success in overcoming bureaucratic organizational structures that limit such participation.

Research Setting

The U.S. environmental movement features substantial variation in the organizations that comprise it and the extent to which their work overlaps one another in any meaningful way. In a similar vein, problems considered 'environmental' also vary widely. Generally, however, most environmental organizations – from national NGOs to local groups – work on a common set of particularly pressing and widely considered to be the most important environmental problems, including those of global warming and climate change. After a decade of political inaction on climate change culminated in unexpected twin defeats of substantive U.S. climate legislation and of a global climate agreement in 2009, leaders from approximately 50 U.S. environmental NGOs large and small convened in Boston for a two

day meeting. They gathered to discuss what a new approach to the problem of climate change by the environmental movement might look like. From that conversation sprang a coalition of approximately ten environmental organizations who agreed that the failure of climate change legislation in the U.S. Congress in 2009 was the perfect time for the environmental movement to take a new approach. In response, a group of leaders from these NGOS came together in 2010 to establish a collaborative experiment that would try something new. Here's the origin story of the Climate Coalition – as told by Jessica, one of the network's founders:

> And really the question I had presented in 2009 to [Jerry, a founder and advisor to the group] was: is it possible to build a social movement around climate change?' And Jerry sort of looked at me and he smiled and he said 'well I don't see why not!' And from there I started calling people I knew... one conversation led to another and I probably talked to a hundred people on the phone... And I would say to a person, that every single person I spoke to - many of them I had never met - expressed real enthusiasm about this. They said 'Yes, this HAS to be done. This is so important! (06.12.2011)

From Jessica's efforts to bring together leaders of organizations across organizational boundaries of U.S. environmentalism sprang the Climate Coalition. The mission statement of the Coalition articulates its new approach:

> We are organizing local, state, and national leaders who care about stopping climate change to recruit, train, and develop grassroots leaders and build local leadership teams to shut down dirty coal-fired power plants by launching four focused pilot projects and supporting them with training, campaign coaching, online and data support, knowledge capture and analysis, and a peer learning group.
>
> Our strategic objective is to launch and support these four pilot projects that will learn how to shut down coal-fired power plants and build capacity to shut down others, until there are organized constituencies working to transition the 660 coal

> power plants operating across the U.S. out of operation. From four... 660! Our theory of change is that if we succeed in shutting down coal plants by organizing locally, we will mobilize people power than can win a safe climate future (Climate Coalition Training Booklet, 2011).

In the remainder of this paper, I'll look closely at the struggles of two of these four organizations in their efforts to use community organizing as a new strategy for increasing and deepening volunteer participation. As in Chapter 1, I refer to the two organizations that I focus on in this paper as North Carolina NGO and Texas NGO, after the locations where they chose to run their organizing campaigns. I briefly recap the background of the two organizations, Texas and North Carolina NGOs, as well as the two sites themselves.

Research Sites

Texas NGO is one of the largest environmental non-profit organizations in the United States with over 750,000 members. Founded over 50 years ago, Texas NGO is a national organization with a presence in many states; its size and resources offer it the capacity to coordinate local, state and national activity on a scale unavailable to most other U.S. environmental groups. The organization has participated in the U.S. political system extensively throughout its history, mostly in electoral campaigns and lobbying efforts on wilderness preservation. Though it boasts a more active membership base than many U.S. environmental organizations, Texas NGO has faced challenges similar to those of other federated civic association, most notably a tension between centralized authority and volunteer participation (Warren 2001; 34).

North Carolina NGO, another large environmental organization, boasts over 500,000 members in the United States. Founded over 40 years ago, the organization works on a variety of issues including nuclear power and waste, wildlife protection, and pollution using lobbying, corporate campaigns, and direct action. Like Texas NGO, it has the capacity and resources to mobilize coordinated local, state and national activity on a large scale. It

has long sought to actively engage its membership – which also provide the majority of its funding – in the activities of the organization.

Prior to joining the Climate Coalition, both organizations had been working for several years on coal – in particular, trying to block the construction of new coal-fired power plants in the last half of the Bush administration and then on trying to shut down some of the oldest and dirtiest coal-fired power plants still operating around the country. In both organizations, then, the organizing work is subsumed under the larger coal and climate departments. Though they may not have been building a volunteer base for a social movement on climate change to take root, they were pretty successful at closing coal-fired power plants – as of December 2013 the U.S. environmental organizations working on coal have closed 152 plants to date in the U.S. out of 522 total (Beyond Coal, 2013). Closing plants has demanded a wide range of strategies, tactics, and expertises: in lawsuits, lobbying state legislatures, building coalitions of allies, attracting national and local media attention through rallies, protests, and in non-violent direct action. Both NGOs combined several of these strategies and tactics to achieve their preferred theories of change.

The Climate Coalition's organizing campaign in Austin, Texas aimed to shut down the Fayette Power Project, a 1641 MW coal-burning facility that began operating in 1980 on Fayette Lake, approximately 60 miles southeast of Austin. The Fayette plant is co-owned by the local municipal electrical utility, Austin Energy and the quasi-governmental Lower Colorado River Authority. The Coalition's organizing campaign in Charlotte, North Carolina had a similar if numerically larger goal – to close four coal-fired power plants in and around Charlotte: Buck, Riverbend, Marshall, and Allen. All four of the plants are owned and operated by Duke Energy, the largest electrical utility company in the United States after merging with Progress Energy in 2013.

Though the two campaigns, locations, and organizations had many similarities, they also had several differences. Austin, TX is the 11th largest city in the U.S. with a population of 842,000; Charlotte, NC is the 17th largest with 775,000 (U.S. Census 2010). Charlotte – "the

Queen City" – is regarded as a very buttoned-up, corporate city. It is the second largest financial center in the U.S. behind Manhattan, and is home to Bank of America, Wachovia, Duke Energy, and NASCAR.[13] Austin, on the other hand, has a high tech and education economy with Dell, IBM, and the UT system, and has long had the tagline "Keep Austin Weird".[14] While Charlotte is a relatively conservative metropolitan area in a slightly conservative state, Austin is a very liberal metropolitan area in a very conservative state.

The two campaigns and sites also differed in terms of their targets and overall campaign strategies. For example, Austin Energy, a municipal utility company,[15] held partial ownership of the coal plant targeted by Texas NGO's campaign that provides energy to the city's residents. As a result, the campaign focused on the Austin City Council as the decision-making body responsible for deciding the fate of the coal plant. State law requires the City Council to undertake transparent deliberation and decision-making (TX Attorney General 2014), and council members are at least somewhat responsive to public pressure via the ballot box. In North Carolina, however, Duke Energy, a vertically integrated corporate utility with regulated service areas in six states, oversees the production and distribution of electricity (Duke Energy 2014). As compared to a public utility like Austin Energy, Duke Energy has no electoral accountability or public transparency requirements other than occasionally reporting to state regulatory bodies and its shareholders. North Carolina NGO's campaign, then, had to develop an entirely different strategy than Texas NGO for targeting the four Charlotte-area coal plants. I argue here, however, that the contextual differences across the campaigns are less relevant than the organizational structures and practices that shape the uptake of organizer and volunteer expertise.

But which organizational structures and practices shaped the trajectory of the climate-focused organizing campaigns of these two organizations? Both organizations typify many

[13] More information Charlotte, NC can be found at the city's website. Available from: http://charmeck.org/. Accessed 29 April 2014.
[14] More information on Austin, TX can be found on the city's website. Available from: http://www.austintexas.gov/. Accessed 29 April 2014.
[15] Municipal utilities are not for profit public utilities established by a city or county to provide electricity (and/or other services) to residents.

of the characteristics common to modern civic – and environmental – organizations. They rely on an elected leadership structure for governance, their advocacy work features clear goals, and they operate at the national, state, and local levels. Though Texas NGO is considerably larger in size and resources than North Carolina NGOs, both organizations support relatively autonomous local chapters. When joining the Climate Coalition in June 2011, each NGO initiated a brand new organizing campaign, seeking to build a volunteer base of power through the work of a single community organizer working with the support of the national NGO's organizational structure. As I describe in the remainder of this chapter, the interface between each NGO's local organizing work and the organizational staff of the national organization shapes the receptiveness of the NGO to the premise – and promise – of the power of an organized volunteer base.

The organizations – North Carolina NGO and Texas NGO – did not anticipate that the changes necessary to implementing this new model of organizing model come easily. One of the founders of the Climate Coalition captured the tensions of the change, and the justification for doing so:

> And, you know, one difficulty that I think [Charlotte] or [Austin] or any of the organizations are going to have in this is that there are legitimately multiple organizational objectives. It is a legitimate organizational objective to try to shut down the coal plant, of course, but what we're really trying to do with this project is not fundamentally about that. It's fundamentally about engaging, you know, as many people as we can in as an emotionally deep way as we can - to be people who want to commit themselves somehow or the other to a climate movement (08.08.11).

Balancing multiple objectives across levels of aggregation is a common tension facing social movements (Andrews 2004; Ganz 2009a; Morris 1984). The fact that the NGOs in the Climate Coalition faced internal tensions over the shift to organizing is an expected rather than surprising result of adding a new organizational objective, building power through a volunteer base, for these two NGOs. The challenge of balancing internal tensions within

emergent and existing social movements seems both incredibly obvious and yet worth coming back to in light of the moral turn in the climate change discourse. The social movements literature has a lot to offer in helping to shed light on how movements form. But in general it's been very focused on movements that have already formed, rather than on the processes by which people and organizations coalesce to make them (McAdam & Boudet 2012). The research on community organizing, on the other hand, looks closely at the processes of building relationships and new knowledge/power configurations within communities, but does not often connect that necessarily local work into possible movement building.

Community Engagement Organizing

In the remainder of this paper, I describe the community organizing model adopted by the Climate Coalition and explain how it seeks to cultivate leadership development and expertise in volunteers to catalyze a climate movement. I detail how the two organizations have historically interacted with their members and how that would need to change in the new model of volunteer/ organizational relationship. And finally I discuss the result of both organizations integrating these new volunteer experts into more meaningful roles and the implications for the transformation of the environmental movement. Each of the organizations running a pilot campaign in the Coalition had at least some experience hiring, managing, and utilizing staff in a position called "community organizer." The role and responsibilities – let alone the more abstract notions of community and organizing – of such a position varied widely by organization. Before describing the ways in which these two organizations envisioned organizing, I introduce the model of organizing that they signed onto experimenting with as a way of building a base of volunteer experts and leaders.

In its most simple form, community engagement organizing seeks to build a constituency with the power to demand change. Also described as movement building organizing, relational organizing, or a neighborhood model of organizing, community engagement

organizing involves an organizer or team of organizers working directly in a community to empower members of that community to create their own change. Speer & Hughey (1995) describe the organizing process as a cyclical and interdependent relationship between member empowerment and organizational power. Warren (2001) offers a similar view of relational organizing, arguing that successful organizing depends on balancing the tension between participation and authority. A long-standing debate exists between experienced organizers about whether the organizer should come from within the community or from outside, but reality is most often the latter (Alinksy 1972). The ideal type of the model envisions the identification, recruitment, and development of citizen leaders from within communities through campaigns organized to take on an issue or set of issues that the community finds most important to tackle. These volunteer leaders then take ownership of the campaign: planning the strategy, deciding on and implementing tactics, and recruiting and developing new volunteers. As a result, when the campaign ends, it ideally will have produced not just the desired victory but also a group of empowered citizens with the skills to continue organizing on emergent issues in their communities.

The community engagement organizing model emphasizes transformational rather than transactional relationships between organizers and volunteers. By this distinction, I mean transformational outcomes – such as new relationships that generate commitments and resources for a campaign – versus transactional outcomes like the collection of petitions and volunteer attendance at events (Ganz 2009a; Han 2014). At the heart of this distinction between transformational and transactional relationships – and outcomes – is the difference between mobilizing and organizing. As Han (2014) describes, "when mobilizing, [organizations] do not try to cultivate the civic skills, motivations, or capacities of the people they are mobilizing. Instead, they focus on maximizing numbers [transactions] by activating people who already have some latent interest. Organizers, in contrast, try to transform the capacity of their members to be activists and leaders" (xii). Like transformational and transactional relationships, mobilizing and organizing are not mutually exclusive activities. For example, in the community engagement organizing model, the primary day-to-day job of an organizer in this model is not to work only toward

mobilizing volunteer participants via petitions, rallies, and protests, but rather to use these activities as a basis for building long-term relationships between members of a community (Ganz 2009a; Osterman 2003; Warren 2001). In addition to these mobilizing activities, organizers in the community engagement model also build relationships through face-to-face, individual meetings with volunteers. Those meetings – ideally at least 20 per week, one hour or so in length – generate the base of a campaign (Osterman 2003; Warren 2001). Other base-building activities in the organizing model include house meetings, in which campaign volunteers develop leadership skills by holding small group meetings to recruit new members and discuss the community's issues. The model emphasizes shared stories at multiple levels – personal stories to build rapport, stories about the world to produce a feeling of community, and finally, stories of now to catalyze action (Ganz 2009a).

Organizing and Social Movements

Community engagement organizing has a long history of success in a wide variety of settings, from local community issues to national social movements. As a model, it has roots in the work of Saul Alinsky in the 1930s, when he organized the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago made infamous by Upton Sinclar's The Jungle (Warren 2001). While Alinksy first implemented this version of community engagement organizing in the 1930s, the idea of organizing has been around a good while longer - union organizing emerged in the middle of the 19th century, for example. Alinksy formed the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in 1940 to spread this justice-based, community focused model of organizing, and it has been credited with many successes, including the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 that helped to catalyze the Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1988; Morris 1984) and the Delano grape boycott that initiated the farmworkers movement (Ganz 2010). The IAF continues to this day to partner with a wide range of community groups and local religious affiliate organizations in the United States and around the world. Organizations, activists, and social movements have used community organizing across a wide spectrum of electoral and advocacy campaigns. While many aspects of community organizing rely on specialized forms of knowledge, it's also worth emphasizing that much

of organizing relies not on exclusive forms of knowledge but rather on everyday practices like telling stories about ourselves, making plans, and showing up to meetings. Of course, building a lasting community infrastructure based on personal relationships and shared stories is not new to environmental justice work, but mostly foreign to large U.S. environmental groups. In the remainder of this chapter, I turn to the efforts of two such groups – Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO – to deploy this model of community organizing.

Making Organizations Change: Getting volunteers back into a theory of change

Before delving into the challenges facing each organization in adopting community engagement organizing to build their volunteer base, I first describe where both were successful – finding personnel at the local level capable of generating transformational outcomes through organizing. The experience and daily efforts of the two organizers and their immediate managers in each organization to move their respective organizations away from their previous conception of organizing and volunteer participation within each shaped the success and failure of the Climate Coalition's goal of building climate movements from within these organizational campaigns.

Robin, an organizer with North Carolina NGO, came from a long family history of organizing. She grew up in Chicago with an activist family; Robin's father learned community-engagement organizing in the farmworker movement and continued to organize in Chicago city politics throughout her childhood, and her grandmother played a leadership role in the post-WWII reparations movement for the Japanese community. After finishing a college degree in environmental analysis and social justice, Robin organized on immigration and Chicago city council races before stumbling on the Charlotte organizing position. She took it only after being assured that the organization was truly committed to a community engagement model:

> And I was like "you heard me, right?' (laughing) I said 'justice' and I said 'community.' I did not say 'only green' and I did not say 'advocacy' - those are

> REALLY really different, right? There's this whole spectrum of like are you an advocate or are you a community person, right? And I am saying I don't want to be an advocate. I say I'm gonna be as close to community organizing as I can (06.15.12).

Maria, an organizer in Austin, didn't come from the same deep bench of activism as did Robin, but shared a very similar commitment to social justice-focused community work. In college in California she became heavily involved in President Barack Obama's first campaign, and then got heavily involved with organizing around immigration reform before turning to environmental activism. In Maria's own words:

> You know, some of my closest friends are undocumented, and it was very natural for me to get involved very very heavily [in immigration reform] - I was for three years and I still am. But it started to become a really really heavy emotional load - one can only imagine what it's like to actually be undocumented… so I started thinking about what I could do that would really truly transformative, or at least trying to get at the root of the problem… And I pretty much settled on climate change. Because one way or another, that is the reason why people will be forced to leave their homes. And I feel that of all the things that can possibly happen to you, being forced to leave your home is quite possibly the very worst (07.02.12).

Both organizers shared a similar background and orientation to organizing approaches – to solving problems and making change through movement building work. Their direct managers both had a similar trajectory into their organizations, and shared a dedication to the aims of the Coalition. Susan, who grew up in Kansas, was an organizing manager for Texas NGO. She began organizing in college without really knowing that was what she was doing, and learned the community engagement-organizing model at MoveOn.org. After joining Texas NGO she began to seek out organizers who took movement building organizing seriously:

> When I first I came [to Austin], nobody knew what was happening in Texas. I talked to our campaigner and expected him to tell me what my job was gonna be and

> what I was gonna be doing. And he was like 'so, what's going on in Texas?' And I was like 'let me call you back' (laughing)... And then I transitioned to being a manager right after we hired two other organizers. They were not a good fit... you know? It's like we're building leaders and we're building teams and with them it was like 'I don't want to do that! I want to go talk to politicians and shake their hands and be important' (06.29.12)

Erica, an organizing manager with North Carolina NGO, had also worked in the organizing world for several years before participating in the Climate Coalition. However, rather than collecting experience in organizing at a variety of environmental, political, or justice-focused groups, she had moved up through the organization at North Carolina NGO. As Erica describes, she did not have extensive experience with the community engagement organizing:

> I only had but a superficial understanding of what we were doing in the Coalition anyway. But as we got into it, it's like we knew - even at that time, before the strategy was settled - that Robin was gonna be working in these frontline communities. We knew that having those communities more than superficially engaged in the work - like not just co-opting their stories for media but actually having them at the forefront of the campaign - was gonna be smart (05.29.12)

While each organization's leadership committed to adopting community engagement organizing in specific communities as a condition of participating in the Climate Coalition, they did not facilitate internal agreement about the changes to organizational strategy that this adoption would require. Deploying capable staff at the local levels to begin the process of building a volunteer base was a necessary first step to the organizational integration of community organizing. And Erica and Susan shared a fierce dedication to protecting the time and space of their organizers – which included Robin and Maria – from the demands of other staff working on coal and climate campaigns in their organizations. But serious – and successful – adoption of community organizing as an organizational strategy demanded corresponding modifications to each organization's high-level theory

of change. As past social movements have shown, the tension between integrating the goals of the national organization with the work on the ground in local communities is both expected and manageable. Local organizing across a variety of sectors (Pastor 2009, Warren 2001) has produced transformational outcomes locally but not necessarily further. Why neither Texas NGO nor North Carolina NGO succeeded in managing the interface between local action and national purpose is the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

Local Autonomy, National Support

Though each organization's campaign had a mandate from above to experiment with community engagement organizing, how the rest of the organization should support the organizing work remained unclear. In addition, translating the community engagement organizing model from executive mandate to on-the-ground implementation required organizational staff buy-in and reconfiguration of organizational structures and practices, none of which was straightforward. As Erica explained

> We're in the right place at the right time. We had an organizer and an organizing manager who were willing to go there. Albeit with sort of clumsy, novice territory, you know, and that at least in word if not in deed the organization wanted us to go there too. And for my druthers, that was the most important sticking point - that no matter how much [our Executive Director] said he was on board with the pilot project in Charlotte, the actual campaign - his staff - was pretty resistant (05.29.12).

A primary impediment to incorporating community engagement organizing turned out to be the interface within each NGO's organizational structures between the national coal and climate campaigns and the organizers in local communities. Even as Austin and North Carolina NGOs emphasized a focus on day-to-day organizing, both Robin and Maria remained tightly coupled with the campaign work. As Robin in Charlotte relates, this meant that the aspects of her work that intersected with the campaign frequently detracted from the volunteer focused organizing: "So, actions are actually planned within the campaign. And once [the Actions Department staff] scheduled and detailed the plans

for those actions, they would bring them to us and say 'ok, here's our action. Coordinate with us.' And it didn't matter if they made no sense for our organizing campaign at the time" (03.08.13) Though Robin and her manager Erica were attempting to move the campaign's organizing work in a new, volunteer leadership-focused direction, the organizational staff did not enjoy a similar mandate to treat the organizers any differently, and tension emerged at the intersection.

The organizational structures of both Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO made regular demands on each organizer's time, which conflicted with the day-to-day realities of community organizing work that takes place in the community rather than in an office. Both managers worked hard to create space from organizational commitments for their organizers to dedicate all of their time to intensive organizing work. Clearly, the organizers and managers that participated in the experimental Climate Coalition were predisposed to community-engagement organizing, and most were already familiar with it. But the same could not be said for most other staff members in both Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO, even though both organizations supported "organizing" departments prior to joining the Coalition. So the question is this: what were organizers doing in these two organizations if not community engagement organizing? In brief, they were doing mobilizing rather than organizing: short-term campaigns focused on public spectacles – rallies, protests, actions – in favor of the organization's issue of the moment, which could and did shift radically and rapidly. Erica described it somewhat cynically: "Nothing lasts past four months. [We're building] for an event, or a press conference, for getting your name more in the media as an organization, towards fundraising for list building - it actually only exists to sustain itself" (05.30.12). Susan, the organizing manager with Texas NGO, offered a similar take: "The other way that [our organization] does it is to gather thousands of petitions and then the get hundreds of people to show up at a rally and they get some media, and then they do it again in six months" (07.02.12). For both organizations, previous "organizing" activities focused on transactional mobilizing around campaign targets in support of an organizational theory of change emphasizing power from mass public events rather than an organized base of volunteer leaders.

The community engagement organizing model's emphasis on long-term relationship building work in local communities challenged these existing organizational preference for mobilizing as "organizing". For example, both organizations viewed the placement of organizers in a very objective way, moving them from site to site and campaign to campaign frequently. Maria, the Texas NGO organizer, worked simultaneously on multiple campaigns across southern Texas, allocating her time based on the perceived urgency in each place. Robin, in Charlotte, describes how her organization did something similar in the past:

> [The organizer I replaced] was moved - he was in Columbus and they moved him to Cincinnati like two months before. So this is the other really fucked up thing that the environmental movement does, is it doesn't let you actually build relationships! It moves you all the damn times to where the most urgent, pressing campaign is in that moment, and it doesn't let you build long-term in a community! (06.15.12).

Though a long-term commitment to organizing in both organizations was one of the premises of the Climate Coalition experiment, a revised theory of change that would support long-term base-building work did not come along with it.

Transactional Volunteers

Both organizations' structural emphasis on mobilizing for transactional outcomes prior to participating in the Climate Coalition also shaped their modes of relating to volunteer participants. Susan remembered her prior organizing work that emphasized mobilizing over relationship-building with regret, saying "I remember thinking like 'I wonder if I will ever look at somebody again and not think "what can you do for me?"' It wasn't like this deep relationship I had with this person, but like 'what can you do for me so that I can meet my metrics?'" (06.29.12). Robin summarized her organization's pre-Coalition perspective on organizing as follows:

> As a volunteer you're only a cog. As an organizer my job is to fit you in. If you don't fit you're gone. You're worth nothing - I don't care who you are, I don't care who you're impacting, I don't care what your commitment is, I don't care what else you bring that I'm not considering... [As an organizer] my whole job is to squeeze everything out of you that I can (12.13.12).

A transactional outcome-based theory of change leaves little space for sensitivity to the cultural, political, and economic distinctions of a campaign location, and virtually no avenue by which volunteers might contribute in any strategic way. As a result, organizations and their organizers would superimpose a single campaign strategy and tactics across campaign sites and do all of the planning from above. Acknowledging the existing preference within her organization for such an approach, Robin nevertheless offered her perception of the fallacy of such an arrangement for the long-term effectiveness of a campaign, saying "so right - you're a strategist, you understand pressure points, power mapping, strategic campaigning... you don't know the things that will actually make this work, and you're just using assumptions off what's happened in the past" (12.13.12). By keeping the campaign planning internal to the organization rather than bringing in the local knowledge of volunteers, the 'old model' had no space available for the input of knowledge and energy of their volunteers in the campaign. While involving volunteers in campaign planning may be a strategic long-term investment for a campaign, environmental organizations like Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO had not yet figured out how to integrate it prior to their Climate Coalition experimentation with the new organizing model.

Organizational impediments: Missing structural supports for transformational outcomes

Full implementation of the community engagement-organizing model within each organization demanded more than just identifying and deploying organizers to work in local communities. Though talented and experienced organizers like Maria and Robin

could begin to build a volunteer base of committed and expert leaders capable of transformational outcomes, aggregating the power of that volunteer base required the support of national organization. For each organization to fully transform the power of that volunteer base, however, some change would be necessary. Prior research on organizational change indicates that factors like a fear of unfamiliar tasks, loss of power and voice, and fear of losing a job have all been associated with resistance to change (DiMaggio & Powell 1983; Kellogg 2009). My data indicates that the first two factors frame much of the experience of both organizations in their efforts to implement the community engagement organizing model, though loss of power and voice takes on a variety of forms within both organizations and structural impediments to change also play a major role.

Reporting schemes and technologies

Prior to the turn to community engagement organizing with the Climate Coalition, both North Carolina NGO and Texas NGO had multiple technological systems in place to track and measure the activities and outcomes of organizational staff, including organizers. However, these systems were designed to support the prior conception of an organizer's expertise, specifically, of their ability to producing mobilizing-based outcomes. Here's Susan's take on the Austin technological system:

> I remember when I first started as an organizer; I'd come from MoveOn, which is very tech savvy. Their team support system… it was designed to support organizers. And so when I came to [Texas] and I had a tutorial of our system, it was probably like the most frustrating thing at [the organization]. Like I'm always a pretty level-headed person, and I was like almost in tears. I was like 'how am I supposed to do my job?' I couldn't comprehend how I was supposed to do my job with that sort of support. Our system just doesn't work; it doesn't support the organizers (07.02.12).

On top of the structural relations that subordinate the organizers to the plans of the campaign, the technological systems that privilege volunteer turnout and fail to capture

volunteer leadership development activities further complicate each organization's efforts to build a base of committed volunteers to work on the problem of climate.

The adoption of community engagement organizing not only brought a new approach to organizing activities within each organization, but it also demanded that both groups rethink the metrics by which they understood organizing successes and failure. The organizations struggled to adjust to the new demands on the daily practice of the organizers under the new model. Susan offers a clear description of the new organizing practices, saying "The expectation was laid out [in the Coalition] that people should be having ten to fifteen meetings a week, so that's a learning process... that represents a major shift in how organizers are spending their time from what they're doing now, which means there are going to be other things that they're not going to have time to do" (06.29.12). Prior to joining the Coalition, both organizations measured the work of their organizers through purely transactional outcomes. For example, organizers reported weekly on the number of hours their volunteers contributed to the campaign, the number of petition signatures collected, and the number of "hits" their campaign had in the local media. The organizers struggled for recognition and validation of the new organizing model, working specifically on putting the structures in place to support the dedicated time-intensive on-the-ground organizing work demanded by the model.

Claiming vs. Rejecting Credit: measuring success and transactional outcomes

Though the community engagement organizing model is predicated on developing volunteer leadership to catalyze transformational outcomes – achieving transactional outcomes along the way – measuring and translating these outcomes was, at best, difficult. For example, neither organization had a direct measurement or reporting category to capture the development of volunteer leadership capacity. As a result, the organizers for Austin and North Carolina NGOs struggled to convince others in their organizations of the success and relevance of their organizing for the goals of the

organization. Maria, for example, started her campaign in Austin before the organization got around to formalizing it, as she puts it:

> I sneaked my way onto the campaign. I was never officially assigned to it when we started doing stuff - oh my god, over a year and a half ago. I was like 'you know what? I'm gonna convene a meeting', and I can't even really remember but I got together some people in Austin in this room and started talking about stuff. And this was embryonic. But I kind of just started doing it and only later on did Susan let me put it on my work plan (07.02.12).

Even when the leadership of their organizations had sanctioned the organizing campaigns in Austin and Charlotte, both organizers sought to continually complicate any taken-for-granted relationship between their organizations' coal and climate work and the volunteers that they recruited. As Robin put it, "I mean, I'm launching a chapter that's connected to [my organization] but not named after it. I actually don't know anyone else that's done that. I mean, we've launched coalitions, but they always also have our branding on it. I'm literally saying I don't actually stand in the front of the room, ever" (12.13.12). Prior to joining the Coalition, the two organizations previously took every opportunity to put themselves at the front of the room – in branding, in signs, in coalition work – when working with their membership base. The community engagement organizing approach to volunteer interaction used these moments where organizers and other staff in the past would have given speeches, led rallies, or spoken with the media to instead emphasize them as volunteer leadership development opportunities. Though the campaign staff in theory saw the value of allowing volunteers to develop these leadership skills and responsibilities by taking the public credit, this practice went against the dominant organizational discourses that emphasized that impact came through visibility at all times.

Changing theories of change: the problem of existing expertise

A new theory of change, but locally only

Perhaps the primary challenge of incorporating the community engagement organizing model into existing U.S. environmental organizations is the extent to which organizing challenges prior conceptions of how organizational success happens. For federated organizations like Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO – with existing theories of change predicated on the power of lobbying, lawsuits, public education, and media coverage (Bosso 2005; Brulle 2000; Skocpol 2013; Shaiko 1999; Shellenberger & Nordhaus 2004) – "success" has generally been generated at the national level. Implicit in the introduction of community organizing is an argument for organizations make space for local rather than national action in organizational purpose. Robin captures the potential disruption of community organizing to her organization's existing theory of change with a blunt question:

> What do we call winning? What are you actually trying to win? And I think everyone in their heart wants to win something, but we're like 'well we can't get there so let's mentally concede to whatever we're gonna define as a victory. And there's different scales for that, right? So [Texas] will say 'eh, we're not gonna get rid of fossil fuels, so we're gonna concede that natural gas plants are victories.' And my organization says 'No, we're hard-line on the science, but we're gonna say that getting 300 media hits counts as winning.' Like, no, I'm sorry (06.15.12).

Integrating the community engagement model into both organizations faces the obvious challenge of existing organizational structures and the routines, practices, and expert knowledge of organizational staff. For example, when the organizing results at the local level in Charlotte did not meet the national organization's coal team's prior expectations of what an organizer could contribute to their work, the organizer, Robin, met resistance around the validity of building volunteer leadership capacity rather than just making

numbers. A story offered by Erica highlights the disconnect between organizational expectations and the reality of organizing in the community:

> There was a volunteer meeting and Robin had like 30 people at it - it was like six weeks on the ground - and then like two nights later she had like 70 people show up to like a meeting with [our executive director]. So [our coal campaign director], his observation was six weeks in, [our] new organizer turned out a shit-ton of people. Versus after six months, at the strategy meeting we had in October, there were only 18 people there and a lot of them weren't that good quality.... So his observation was like 'why are we using community engagement, I don't get it. We saw better results before we started doing the engagement thing' (05.29.12).

Though the national coal campaign staff did not initially object to the community engagement model of organizing, when it didn't meet their expectations for a typical mobilizing outcome, they expressed resistance to the goals and practices of the pilot. Which brings us to a point of major conflict in the whole project of bringing community organizing at the local level within the auspices of a national organization. When each organization has a common expectation for organizing based on mobilizing for transactional outcomes, replacing it with organizing that aims to cultivate volunteer leadership and expertise toward transformational outcomes demands more than just a new organizer, but rather a new theory of change within each organization.

Challenging control: toward a new theory of change

The implications of the community engagement organizing model go beyond simply displacing the organization's prior expectation about how to achieve victory on a campaign and for the production of an organizer. Rather, they begin to explore the possibilities and their ramifications of allowing real control of campaign tactics and strategies – and even campaigns themselves – by volunteers. This process necessarily begins slowly, as organizers engage with volunteers beyond simple mobilization, and begin the process of leadership development within a community toward the goal of transformational outcomes. As Maria describes:

> It's great to able to watch a leader on the ground be able to tell their own story around climate and coal, and really take ownership for how they want to do that story process. So, being able to see that for the first time around coal versus the other times that I've seen leaders in our organization talk about why they want to be an environmental leaders - it's a very different thing (08.24.11).

Working under the community engagement model gave the organizers and their organizations a license to open up the strategizing process of the campaign, not just the relationship building work. Erica embraced this new approach to involving volunteers in developing and advancing the campaign and its strategy, though she did not find it to be smooth sailing, initially:

> So in December we had a joint strategizing session with a group of volunteers in the community. The organization hated it. They thought it was a waste of time... The volunteers hated it. They felt it was not the most empowering setup for that. However, it was critical, and I will push both sides to say it wasn't perfect, it was groundbreaking. Never before has an organization been forced to say 'this local volunteer who's seventeen years old gets just as much say as a 70,000 dollar campaign strategist from the organization (06.15.12).

Setting campaign strategy – putting their theory of change into practice – was a point of pride for both organizations as well as the site at which multiple organizational experts could contribute to a meaningful outcome. It was also a key point of change for the structure of relationships between organizers, volunteers, and the organizations themselves. While organizers may have an idea of what they think is best for the community they are working in, by turning over control of the strategizing to their volunteers, they not only tap into local knowledge but also generate greater commitment to the campaign. If the community engagement organizing model was to have initiated widespread organizational change within the two organizations – as well as catalyzed the foundation of an empowered group of volunteers who could form the base of a social

movement on climate change – control over decisions large and small would show the shift of power from organization to volunteers had begun.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I've described the design and implementation of movement building organizing campaigns by two environmental organizations. Both sought to integrate community engagement organizing into their existing organizations as a means of mobilizing the public to support environmental policies and as an implicit acknowledgement of their inability to influence public policy. Examining the implementation of this collaborative experiment – and its implications for organizational change at each of the participating organizations – I compared the two NGOs' efforts to wrestle with the organizational implications of adopting community organizing. I show that while each organization's leadership committed to adopting community engagement organizing in specific communities as a condition of participation in the experimental collaborative, they did not facilitate internal agreement about the changes to organizational strategy that this adoption would require. Simply put, serious – and successful – adoption of community organizing as an organizational strategy demanded corresponding modifications to each NGO's theory of change. These NGOs previously drew and deployed their power through a mixture of political lobbying, legal challenges to environmental problems, and media-focused direct action expertise. But community organizing introduces a new potential source of power – an organized base of volunteers. I argued in this chapter that although these NGOs agreed to adopt community organizing, they did not commit to making their volunteer base into their primary source of power. As a result, they began the process of building a base of committed volunteers, but had no ability to mobilize its power to achieve its desired outcome.

But 'success' for an engagement-centered model of community organizing is not just a matter of aligning the goals of a nascent social movement with democratic principles and using creative protest tactics to mobilize participants. Rather, the organizing model

adopted by these two organizations seeks to substantively involve volunteers in movement leadership and organizational management. But by failing to modify their previous theory of change, each organization walled off the transformational possibilities of volunteer involvement in the management of the movement organization writ large. Though each organization committed to experimenting with community organizing, it did not commit to ensuring that staff members share professional prerogatives. As a result, neither organization made sufficient changes in organization routines and practices to incorporate meaningful volunteer participation and leadership, even as they devoted substantial resources to build a volunteer base. By excluding volunteer participants from meaningful roles within the organization, they failed to sustain commitments to a new organizational theory of change that privileged a volunteer base as a source of organizational influence and power.

Chapter 3

Making the Collective: Pathways to volunteer involvement in social movement organizations

"How do we get enough people to have a critical mass of concern in any of these communities - not to mention across the country - to where it actually becomes a real thing? This organizing is just one way to think about how to get there, just a systematic way to think about 'well, how do you get enough people? How can you start from scratch and get enough people?'" – Jerry (10.19.2011)

"No more messing around - organizing is serious business! What gives me the most hope is being out in the field and seeing the energy that's being built and the new people that are being brought in. This is not the same usual suspects. And that's, I think, where the shift from campaign to movement happens." – Elizabeth (10.19.2011)

This third and final chapter explores the move by U.S. environmental organizations working on the issue of climate change from a strategy based on litigation and political lobbying to a focus on grassroots community organizing. The U.S. environmental movement experienced an extended period of political and regulatory success between the late 1960s and mid 1980s by mobilizing the power of grassroots supporters embedded in local communities Later, environmental NGOs followed the trend "from membership to management" (Skocpol 2003) that began in the late 1980s, becoming increasingly unconnected to what had formerly been their volunteer base. Following the defeat of climate policy legislation in the U.S. Congress in 2009, however, several U.S. environment organizations sought to re-engage their moribund relationships with local volunteers. Drawing on a model of community organizing connected to the success of 20th century social movements such as the California farmworkers movement and the civil rights movement, these NGOs sought to boost their organizing capacity to impact climate change-related policies. However, their initial efforts at volunteer recruitment progressed

more slowly than anticipated. Political and social movement participation is a multi-step process (McAdam et al. 2001), driven not only on value alignment but also by structural pulls into activism: connections with organizations and personal networks that draw potential volunteers into social movements. What role do community organizers play in mobilizing commitments and networks to attract and retain volunteers in social movements?

To approach this question, I examine the efforts of one U.S. environmental organization – North Carolina NGO[16] – to identify, recruit, and sustain a volunteer base for activism on climate change. I look specifically at the NGO's community organizing activities to understand their community organizer's role in catalyzing volunteer engagement in nascent social movements in sites with little history of activism. Drawing on two years of participant observation with the NGO's organizer and volunteers, a survey of the active volunteers, and semi-structured interviews with organizational staff and volunteers, I show that even in these sites, volunteer recruitment follows similar patterns as in past social movements. The most active and committed volunteers in my research had more civic skills, organizational ties, and experience with activism. But these attributes did not translate into helping North Carolina NGO grow a bigger base of volunteer activists. Building on the literature on volunteer recruitment to social movement activism and the research on political participation, I look at the community organizer as not only a recruiter, but also as a leadership and expertise developer. I argue that considering volunteer participation in movement organizations as a form of dynamic self-expression suggests an important role for trained community organizers in creating and cultivating value within the participation itself. For the case of the North Carolina movement organization, the arrival of an experienced organizer in 2011 and the transition from informal to professionalized volunteer management helped to establish a thriving movement organization in a challenging environment for activism.

[16] As in the rest of my dissertation, I have anonymized the names of the NGO and all respondents throughout the dissertation because several respondents (e.g., the community organizers) are easily recognizable through their organizational affiliation.

Volunteer Participation in Social Movements and Organizations

Recruitment

Differential recruitment of volunteers to protests and other social movement activities has long been a feature of collective behavior scholarship. Previous to Doug McAdam's seminal study of Freedom Summer participants (1986), volunteer recruitment was seen as dependent on an individual's alignment with a movement's values. But while it is commonly assumed that social movements attract people with shared beliefs, there are other determinants of participation. Similar values and attitudes to movement participants do shape an individual's identification with that movement, but do not necessarily determine their recruitment or ongoing participation (McAdam 1986, Klandermans & Oegema 1987, Tindall 2003). In addition, studies of movement participation and mobilization show that only a small proportion of sympathizers actually get involved (Barkan et al., 1995). What appears to distinguish those who hold pro-movement values from those who actually get involved is contact with someone already participating: a friend, colleague, family member, or community organizer.

In addition to shared political values, social movement participation may also be explained by biographical availability and social network-based recruitment. In exploring recruitment to activism, McAdam (1986) introduced biographical availability to capture the demographical differences among participants in the civil rights movement; young and single volunteers simply had fewer commitments – as compared with those with caregiver responsibilities – that prevent them from joining movements. For the case of Freedom Summer, however, McAdam (1986) concluded that while biographical availability and value alignment were present in both participants and non-participants, structural connections and prior activism were more prevalent in participants. Along the same lines, and building from the premise that stronger connections to other movement participants result in greater movement participation (e.g., McAdam 1986; Fernandez & McAdam 1988; McAdam & Fernandez 1990), social network factors that determine participation – such as

network ties, frequency of communication, length of membership in a social movement, and level of identification with a movement – also drive volunteer mobilization (Tindall et al. 2011). Like the research on shared political values, this literature introduces the notion of a "recruiting agent" to highlight the role of personal ties in the recruitment process, but envisions these agents as friends, colleagues, and family members. In sum, several related strands of collective behavior research seek to explain differential recruitment to social movements. Alignment of personal values and shared beliefs across movement participants presages social movement participation, as does biographical availability. Social network ties "pull" citizens into participating in social movements, though recruitment often has multiple steps before full participation in mobilizing actions and protest. Most social movements consist of many related organizations working toward a common goal, so why do volunteers choose to participate in a specific organization? Each of these theories suggests a role for informal ties between existing and potential social movement participants.

Retention

Sustained commitment by a volunteer to a specific social movement organization or campaign depends on a variety of motivational and structural factors. At a minimum, volunteers remain active participants in social movements when organizations provide meaningful opportunities for volunteer engagement (Wilson & Musick 1999; Wilson 2000). In addition, movement organizations that encourage decision-making through participatory democracy (Polletta 2002) – and possibilities for pre-figurative politics[17] (Breines 1989) – promote ongoing volunteer participation. For volunteers on environmental issues in particular, volunteer motivation and sustained commitment depend on the specific environmental issues and campaigns undertaken by an NGO (Liarakou et al. 2011) as well as on factors such as wanting to contribute to their

[17] Bound up with the idea of participatory democracy, prefigurative politics may be understood as "an ongoing opposition to hierarchical and centralized organization that requires a movement that develops and establishes relationships and political forms that "prefigure" the egalitarian and democratic society that it seeks to create" (Breines 1989; 6).

communities, find meaningful social interaction, and attachment to a particular place and community (Measham & Barnett 2008). Finally, the literature on volunteering emphasizes identity convergence between the high-level goals of a movement – in this case, limiting climate change – and symbolic dimensions of sustained volunteer participation; volunteers able to continually align their personal beliefs with their volunteer activities in service of a larger goal are more likely to continue participating over time (Passey & Giugni 2000). But like many large, non-local NGOs, U.S. environmental organizations have spent more energy defining roles suitable for volunteers to play (Measham & Barnett 2008; Andrews et al. 2010) than allowing volunteers to take responsibility – leadership – for leveraging their participation into outcomes meaningful for both the organizations and the volunteers themselves.

Political Participation

Looking at social movement participation through the broader lens of political participation echoes a role for structural pulls, but also offers a dynamic conception of why individuals participate in political activities. Generally put, recent research on political participation has sought to conceptualize voting – and participation more generally – as a dynamic, "self-expressive behavior" linked to an individual's social identity and relationships (Rogers et al. 2012; 92). Rather than attributing whether or not people get involved to their individual characteristics (Campbell et al. 1960; Verba & Nie 1972), participants' social context and the dynamic interactions with other individuals and organizations influence their willingness to get involved (García Bedolla & Michelson 2012; Verba et al. 1995). While this research speaks more to political participation as voting than as taking leadership in a movement organization, it suggests a role for active recruitment and coordination of individual participants. For social movements and movement organizations, considering a dynamic vision of political participation linked to ongoing social relationships and self expression offers different avenues to consider volunteer recruitment outside of social and political values, biographical availability, and structural pulls.

In addition, the literature on participation in political and civic life offers a useful contrast to the question of volunteer engagement with forms of participation like protesting and demonstrating. Looking particularly at the question of the structural levers by which volunteers join movement activities such as protests and demonstrations, Soule & Schussman (2005) join McAdam (1986; 1988) and McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) to argue that volunteer recruitment to social movements is not a single step shift, but rather an extended multi-step process of engagement. Soule & Schussman (2005) identify two distinct roles for organizations in catalyzing political participation: first, as a site for connecting like minded volunteers who then recruit each other into protest; second, organizations offer volunteers' training on civic skills – e.g., public speaking, public narrative[18], and meeting management – to make their participation more meaningful and effective. But they find that while possessing civic skills makes volunteers more likely to protest, maintaining active organizational affiliations has no impact on protest participation. Soule & Schussman take this to indicate that: "the process of generating protest participation begins long before the appeal or invitation, in organizations, attitudes, and personal characteristics that make individuals likely to receive requests for participation" (2005; 1092). They suggest three conclusions: first, that politically interested and engaged volunteers are more likely to be asked to protest; second, that better educated volunteers are more likely to be asked; and third, that members of organizations are more likely to be asked to protest.

Dynamic Social Movement Participation

Like social movement recruitment, a dynamic political participation lens treats organizations as well-resourced coordinating mechanisms and sites for volunteers to come

[18] Public narrative is collective, public story telling. More formally, it is "a discursive process through which individuals, communities, and nations make choices, construct identity, and inspire action... Public narrative is composed of three elements: a story of self, a story of us, and a story of now. A story of self communicates who I am – my values, my experience, why I do what I do. A story of us communicates who we are – our shared values, our shared experience, and why we do what we do. And a story of now transforms the present into a moment of challenge, hope, and choice" (Ganz 2008).

into contact with potential recruits. But the question of what volunteers actually do after joining social movements remains stubbornly unexplored. While the social movements literature is rightfully focused primarily on protest and demonstration – on symbolic public action that draws media attention and forces discussion – volunteers can play many more roles than just protestor, and are most effective when taking on leadership roles (Han et al. 2011). For movement organizations, the challenge of volunteer recruitment is not just in finding biographically available individuals with similar social and political views and giving them the opportunities for participation to maximize their contribution, but also in cultivating and creating value for them within the participation itself.

In this paper, I examine volunteer recruitment, ongoing participation, and development into leadership roles within a single movement organization in Charlotte, NC. Building on the literature on volunteer recruitment to activism and the research on dynamic political participation, I look at community organizers as catalysts of meaningful volunteer engagement and at volunteers taking various levels of leadership within the movement organization. Organizers must integrate differing motivations across participants, convince volunteers to join their organization over others, manage constant turnover while building leadership and civic skills in those activists that remain, and work to slowly overturn existing views held within some communities against public organizing and protest. Most of the collective behavior scholarship does not take into account the work of professionalized organizers in understanding why volunteers come to participate in social movements and why they choose to (or not to) stay active in movement organizations. I argue that professionalized recruitment and management of volunteer participation by a trained, paid organizer in a social movement organization is essential for long-term volunteer retention and meeting campaign goals. For the case of North Carolina NGO, the arrival of an experienced organizer in 2011 and the transition from informal to professionalized volunteer management helped to establish a thriving movement organization in a challenging environment for activism.

In the two sections that comprise the remainder of this chapter, I describe volunteer participants and the work of professional recruitment and management via community organizing in North Carolina NGO. First, I draw on a survey of 51 active participants to show that these social movement volunteers follow similar patterns reported in more extensive studies of collective behavior, sharing similar social and political values, reporting high biographical availability, and participating in multiple movement organizations. Finally, I analyze 23 semi-structured interviews with volunteers to argue that the difference between professional and informal recruitment to social movement organizations emerges along three continuums. That is, potential participants choose to join movements on the basis of organizational resources and opportunities, alignment of individual motivations with movement organization-specific goals and activities, and the alignment of volunteer expertise and expectations with the strategy and tactics of the movement. Each of the three presents a challenge to volunteer participation, and an opportunity to explore the difference between informal and professionalized recruitment and retention by a community organizer.

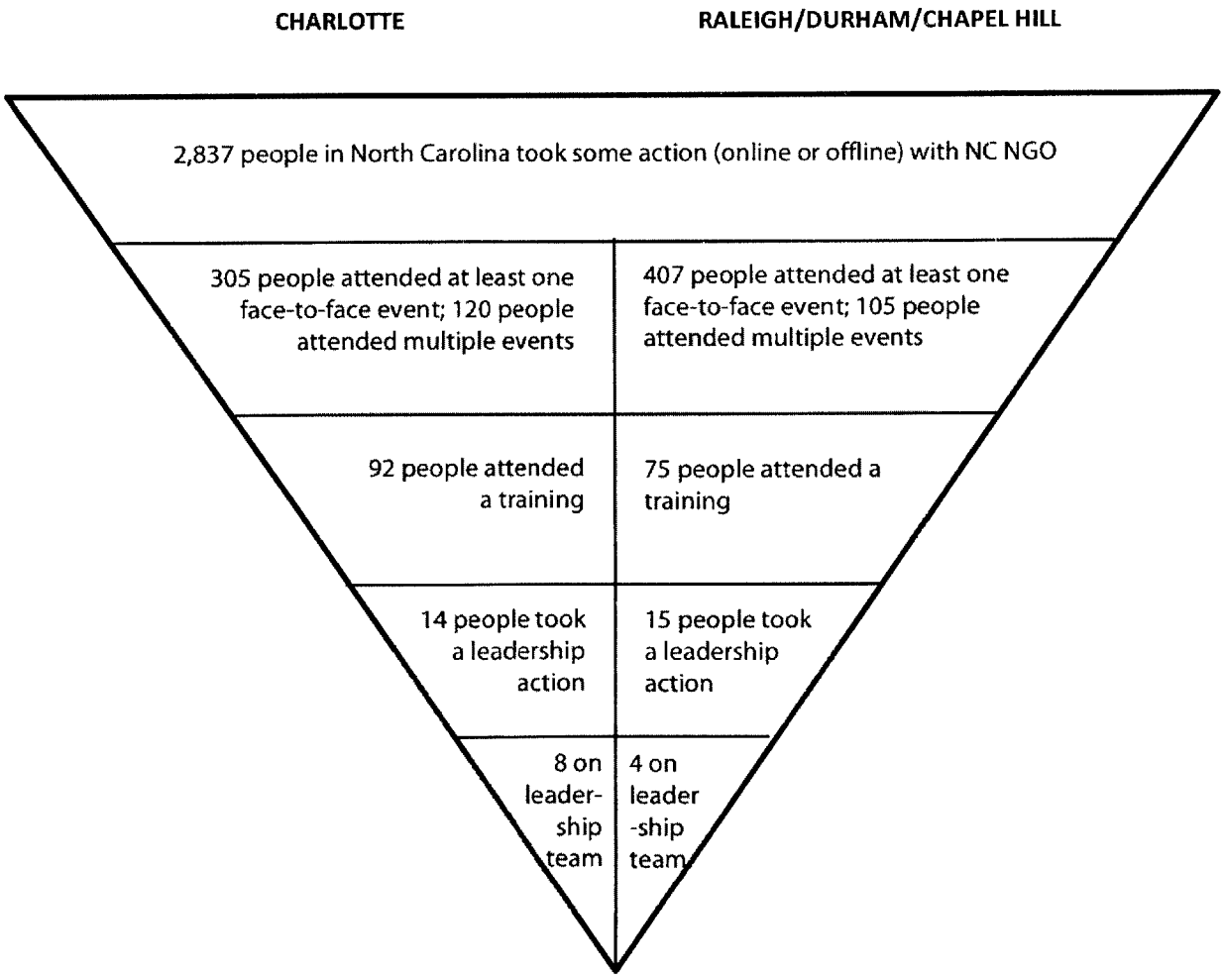
Understanding the landscape of volunteer participation in North Carolina NGO

The quantitative analysis of this paper draws on two separate data series on participants in North Carolina NGO's Charlotte and Raleigh/Durham campaign activities. Looking closely at these participants, I examine not only participation in the organization's activities, but the differences between the most active participants in the organization. Rather than trying to understand distinctions between volunteers joining and not joining a social movement or social movement organizations – no matter how committed they may be to the goals of the movement – this dataset allows an exploration of differential participation and leadership development.

First, data on all potential volunteers captured in the organization's database as of June 2013 indicates that 2,837 people in North Carolina took some action, either in-person or online, with the NGO. As Figure 1 below indicates, of those 2,837 participants in some form

of action, 712 attended at least one in-person event, and 167 attended an in-depth training session to prepare for a future event. 29 volunteers took at least one leadership action, such as leading a house party, organizing an event, or otherwise taking responsibility for some aspect of the NGO's work, and 12 participated actively on a volunteer leadership team within the organization. I offer this descriptive analysis to situate the volunteers followed in greater detail in the remainder of this chapter. While North Carolina NGO recruited intensively to build a general membership base, only a small number of these participants took a more active role as volunteer leaders and experts in the organization.

Figure 1: Participants in North Carolina NGO's activities as of June 1, 2013 (Han & Deshmukh Towery 2013)



Though the work of a community organizer in a social movement organization involves volunteers at all levels of activity, I focus in the remainder of this chapter on volunteers who maintained a base of sustained and/or continued participation in the movement organization's work. Looking specifically at the most active volunteers, I draw on a survey of 51 volunteers with the organization conducted between December 2013 and January 2014. These 51 respondents are representative of the bottom half of Figure 1; they all had joined and engaged seriously with the organization at or before they were surveyed. The 51 respondents to the survey represented a cross-section of active participants on the campaign in terms of age, gender, income, education, race, and time living in Charlotte or Raleigh/Durham. Like most of the volunteers participating in North Carolina NGO's campaign, survey respondents were mostly either under 30 years old (35%) or over 50 years old (43%). Though North Carolina NGO's organizer actively sought to engage volunteers with families and children in the campaign, the time constraints of the typical volunteer between the ages 30 and 50 years simply offered less time for participation in civic associations. 61% of respondents are women, while men comprise the remaining 39%. Respondents were evenly distributed by attained education[19], but less so by race: 73% are white, while 12% are black, 4% Asian, 4% Hispanic. They fell across the socio-economic spectrum, with 45% earning less than $30,000 per year, while 20% make $50,000-$99,000 and 18% make $100,000+. Of the 51 respondents, 14 represented the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area while the remaining 37 came from the Charlotte area; more than two thirds of respondents had strong ties to their communities, having lived in one of the two metropolitan areas for at least six years. Distributed across socioeconomic status and income, but predominantly white and long-time residents of their communities, these 51 survey respondents are broadly representative of the pool of volunteer participants with North Carolina NGO.

The survey incorporated measures of multiple aspects of differential recruitment and social movement participation. These include: measures of social and political value alignment across volunteers (i.e., are volunteers similar to one another in the types of social and

[19] 25% completed HS and/or some college; 25% completed college; 28% completed a graduate degree.

political values), measures of civic skills (i.e., comfort with public speaking, meeting convention and management, and working on volunteer teams), and measures of active organizational participation. I categorized the 51 respondents into three categories related to the intensity of their participation with the NGO: 12 participated most actively as part of a leadership team, 18 took at least one but not sustained leadership within the NGO, and 21 who actively participated in the organization's events but did not take any leadership actions. Table 1, below, offers an example respondent in each of the three categories of leadership intensity. The data reaches across competing explanations for differential volunteer recruitment and participation in social movement campaigns and organizations. By grouping volunteer respondents according to the extent to which they took sustained leadership within the organization, I seek to illuminate any differences across degrees of volunteer involvement in the environmental organization.

Table 1: Survey results across variables of volunteer participation in social movement organizations

Averages for Values, Civic Skills, & Organizational Involvement Variables (# of volunteers)	Volunteer participation/leadership (Coded)		
	Category 0: Events only, no leadership (21)	Category 1: Events, & inconsistent leadership (18)	Category 2: Events, and ongoing leadership work (12)
# of Social/Political Values (coded)	17.48	16.33	18.45
# of Civic Skills (coded)	39.19	40.44	44.83
# of orgs actively involved in	2.81	2.83	3.42
# of leadership roles	1.10	1.06	2.00
# of hours per week (coded)	3.19	2.94	3.58
Example: volunteer participation and leadership taken	Participating for over 1 year, a Category 0 volunteer has attended 10+ events but has not sought out any leadership roles.	Attending 10+ events over 2 years, a Category 1 volunteer committed to taking responsibility for coordinating a protest in May 2013	A Category 2 volunteer quickly assumed leadership responsibilities, coordinating volunteer petitioning and phone-banking activities, canvassing, and personal narrative trainings.

The survey shows no meaningful differences across categories of respondents with regard to shared social and political values. As the collective behavior and social movements literature has consistently shown, movements and movement organizations attract individuals with shared beliefs and values, and the NGO's volunteers across all leadership levels are no different. Similarly, survey respondents show only a slight difference in the number of organizations they actively participate in. However, volunteer respondents participating on leadership teams (Category 2) take on nearly double the number of leadership roles within the organizations they volunteer with than do the other respondents. They also spend a greater number of hours per week on their volunteer activities than do respondents in less active leadership roles with North Carolina NGO.

Finally, in a possibly tautological relationship, volunteers with North Carolina NGO who participate most actively on leadership teams report a greater number of civic skills than do volunteers taking on fewer leadership opportunities. As Soule & Schussman (2005) found in their investigation of the relationship between protest participation and civic skills, while possessing civic skills makes volunteers more likely to protest, maintaining active organizational affiliations has no impact on protest participation. They conclude that protest participation should be considered a multi-step process incorporating organizational initiation and skill development. Though these survey measures do not offer evidence to confirm or deny this conclusion, they do suggest that volunteers with civic skills also participate actively in multiple organizations, which welcome their involvement. Volunteers with leadership skills and existing expertise can be seen to simply offer a greater benefit to the organization than do less experienced volunteers. But how did volunteers with the movement organization come to take on these leadership responsibilities, let alone come to participate at all? In the next section of this paper, I draw on qualitative data on a subset of these surveyed volunteers to explore in detail these questions, and the role of the professional organizer in volunteer participation.

Digging Deeper: Exploring factors influencing volunteer participation and leadership

The remainder of this paper draws on in-depth interviews with active participants in the movement organization to explore volunteer narratives about their participation and the role of the community organizer on the campaign. More specifically, I conducted a total of 23 semi-structured interviews with North Carolina NGO volunteers active in the organization's campaign work over a thirteen-month period. The interviews ranged in length from 35 minutes to almost three hours, and were coded and analyzed inductively in qualitative research software Atlas.Ti.[20] Taken collectively, they reinforce familiar themes of collective behavior and social movements like biographical availability and network-based volunteer recruitment. In general, my interviews with Charlotte-area North Carolina NGO volunteers from across the leadership spectrum do more to highlight the similarities between all the volunteers than the differences between those taking on leadership responsibilities and those who have not. However, they also indicate the integral role of North Carolina NGO's community organizer in mobilizing experienced volunteers with diverse motivations and managing volunteer expectations and frustrations with the organization and the direction of the movement.

Biographical availability

The literature on social movement participation emphasizes the social and economic position – specifically, the free time of and financial resources – of potential volunteers, showing that active participants tend to have fewer substantive commitments on their free time. In my interviews with already-committed volunteers, biographical availability did not emerge as a point of differentiation, though it was a point of commonality. For example, nearly all of the interviewees had dedicated significant time to their participation on the campaign. As Will, one of the younger volunteers describes, the decision to participate with North Carolina NGO fit neatly into his life plan: "I decided I'm taking a gap year after school so I've got all this time I may as well go volunteer for these guys and try and do something about it. So that's generally how I got involved (06.20.13). As scholars of previous social movements – like the Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1986) or the New

[20]Available from: http://www.atlasti.com/index.html.

Left movement (Breines 1989) – point out, young people like Will typically comprise the core activists in a movement. But youth are not the only biographically available constituencies for collective action, as research on the U.S. anti-abortion movement (Ginsburg 1998; Munson 2009) and the Tea Party movement (Williamson et al. 2011) illustrates; participation is not solely determined by age, but also by a willingness to commit personal time and resources to a movement.

However, several of these volunteers actively chose to create time in their lives to participate actively. While only 11 of the 23 interviewees were either retired or unemployed, the remaining six had part or full-time work and/or family responsibilities and still made time in their lives to volunteer with the organization. As Nancy – one of these six – described, finding time necessary to participate actively is a struggle she finds worthwhile but laments that most of her social connections do not:

> It's mostly to do with classical everyday lives of mothers - working mothers or even stay-at-home mothers. Most people just - they're very grateful that I'm doing this kind of work and that other people are too - they definitely care about this issue, and that's the most frustrating part because you figure people care and they understand the problems and then they would get involved to some extent, but, you know, practical life issues get in the way. It seems all their kids are incredibly scheduled for all these events! So yeah, I do have sympathy for my friends, cause some of them are trying to work while they're raising kids and it's a lot and it gets in the way. So they can totally make the rallies - but honestly I think they're doing it to make me happy! I think that if I can keep getting them to attend, maybe they'll be drawn to it like I did, once they start to see the community of people that are doing this kind of work: it's so impressive, I mean, don't you think? (07.12.13)

Other active volunteers also struggled to participate regularly as a result of their economic situations. Allison, one of the first volunteers to join North Carolina NGO's coal and climate-related work when it began in 2011, drifted in and out of active participation as a result of the demands of her employment situation:

> I'm seeing two, maybe three types of volunteers. Those who come in and stay in, those who come and go, and those who come in - stay a while - go, come, stay a while. So there's a couple of different types of volunteers. I personally, because I had stuff going on with work, I drifted away but I never left it at heart. I never kind of passed. It's a part of me, and just as much as I think it's a part of some of the volunteers who have stuck around a long time. But they're very dedicated... It's not for everybody. But as far as me, I don't think I'm that different from most of the regular volunteers, because we're all really fueled by the same fire. We all have our own reasons for being concerned and concerned enough to make a difference. And to dedicate so much time, so much energy to this (06.21.2013).

While the movement organization recruited and retained a core of committed volunteers, the challenge of identifying potential participants with the time – and inclination to donate it – faced North Carolina NGO as it did other social movement organizations.

Experience with organizing tactics: from petitioning to protest

Alongside biographical availability and shared social and political beliefs and attitudes, moderate to high levels of civic skills – including experience with collective action – feature prominently across the interviewed volunteer leaders. Nearly all of the interviewees joined the North Carolina NGO's campaign in Charlotte with some background in public protest or with some civic skills such as petitioning, canvassing, and public speaking. Several long-time area activists had learned these skills through a long history of working on similar social justice-related issues. As Joan, a veteran volunteer in Charlotte, described:

> So we did, you know, civil rights stuff through those years. And then the nuclear stuff was beginning [in the 1970s]... and so probably partly through that we got involved with the environmental stuff. And with the environmental stuff... its just part of another thing that's infringing on people. You know, with civil rights you had blacks' rights; immigration you're keeping immigrants away; with environment people think or thought for a while they could build a bubble, and it turns out that you can't do that.... And so these things start coming together. And that's why it's

> natural to have Robin here, because you can't separate the issues on racial justice from other forms of justice. (06.20.13).

Alternately, other interviewees new to the organization and to the Charlotte area acquired their civic skills as activists elsewhere. Laurent, a veteran of the anti-war and Occupy movement, described his lengthy repertoire of activism:

> My activism goes back to 2003 in the imminent invasion of Iraq. I would describe myself as a very caring person before that but not someone who was politically engaged and certainly not in grassroots political activity... Several months before the invasion actually took place in March 2003, and a friend invited me to my first political rally in DC... I don't know that I was ever really a member of any group, I just went to a lot of events and a lot of protests... [But] there are some groups I've stuck with for many years (06.25.13).

Not all interviewees had extensive protest experience or civic skills, and leaders and non-leaders alike had similar experiences with participating in public protest. While only a few had training and experience in the kind of direct action that the organization specializes in – two respondents attended a North Carolina NGO-run "action camp" in 2012 – nearly all had participated in public hearings and small mobilizations. But those volunteers lacking these experiences relied heavily on the community organizer to acclimate them to public protest and train them to take on leadership activities. As Betty, one of these novice participants, described:

> At some point, I guess I signed a [North Carolina NGO] petition, because then when Robin came into Charlotte a couple months later, I got an email in my inbox... before meeting with Robin I had no idea what, like coal was, I was completely ignorant of basically anything going on. But yeah so I went to that first meeting, I took my daughter with me, and there was a whole bunch of like great people there and it was awesome and that's how I met Robin and got involved with Robin. And she's very - how do you say, pushy? – but not in a bad way; you can't really just go and sit there and leave. There's always like an action that, you know, we need you here, we need you there, so I think the first thing that she mentioned, actually, at

> that first meeting was that they were gonna start collecting petitions. And I had not done that before, not anything like it, but I just felt like it was something that needed to be done and I was there to do it (06.20.12).

For the few active volunteers interviewed that did not join the movement organization with experience in public protest and organizing skills, participation in the group's activities quickly provided a foundation on which to develop leadership capabilities and specific expertise as desired. As the NGO's organizer, Robin, remarked, building a foundation of volunteers with a history of collective action experience is invaluable: "for movement building, there is something essential about having elders who can say 'when it gets hard, or when you don't win something, it's ok and I've seen it when…' And if you don't have those people - good lord (6.15.2012). Beyond biographical availability and the civic skills and previous leadership experience of movement participants, three other factors influence volunteer participation and retention in a grassroots-organizing campaign. These include the resources of the organization, the alignment of the organization's goals with volunteer motivations and expectations, and the organizer's role in supporting and developing volunteer leadership and expectations. In other words, the volunteers I interviewed were generally similar in their willingness to devote time to the organization, and mostly possessed a useful baseline of civic skills and social movement experiences.

What, then, made these volunteers join the campaign take on leadership roles – and for a core group of volunteers – remain with the organization? One explanation is the organization itself: its ability to direct resources to support volunteer activities and its reputation. Another is the high-level goal of the movement organization, and the extent to which volunteers' own motivations and values overlap with that of the organization. A third possibility is the work of the community organizer both to deepen volunteer involvement and leadership, but also to manage frustrations and articulate a clear path between volunteer participation and meaningful outcomes. In the next section, I explore each of the three possibilities and focus also on the role of the community organizer in

producing volunteer retention.

The Organization: reputation + resources = recruitment & retention?

The reputation and resources of an organization offer persuasive opportunities for long-term volunteer participation with a single organization. The literature on resource mobilization in social movements emphasizes this argument, suggesting that organizations with sufficient resources to support the work of a movement will attract and retain the necessary volunteers (Edwards & McCarthy 2004; McCarthy & Zald 2002). In interviewing active volunteers, I explored their explanations for choosing which organizations to give their time to. Approximately half of my interviewees discussed participating in several environment-related organizations in North Carolina. They offered a variety of explanations for choosing to participate in multiple organizations: differences in strategies, tactics, internal decision-making, resources, and scope. As Karen, a volunteer leader turned campaign intern and hopeful future organizer describes: there are so many different groups working together, and so many different people from so many different backgrounds. It feels like a community of activists. You really do feel like this sense of community and it just feels way more powerful" (06.25.13).

With multiple groups of different sizes and goals – and vastly different resources to support volunteers – to chose from, why do volunteers select one organization over another? One possibility is that volunteers often do not choose only one organization to support with their financial resources and donated time. Volunteer affiliation with and/or membership in multiple organizations indicates a greater likelihood of political participation and social movement mobilization (Schussman & Soule 2005). It stands to reason, then, that most if not all of my respondents – volunteers active in and taking leadership responsibilities within North Carolina NGO – would participate in more than one organization working on environmental issues. This did indeed turn out to be the case, but volunteers also offered a variety of reasons for participating in both North Carolina NGO and other organizations as well. As one volunteer explains, North Carolina NGO

brings not only deep organizational resources, but also experience in working constructively with other organizations. This bridging ability – which left volunteers feeling like they were more than simply "North Carolina NGO volunteers" – was a strong motivation for Karen:

> The other thing that I really like about [North Carolina NGO] is that they're really, really good at coalition building. There are so many groups that are partnered with us now because of the Duke campaign[21], so many diverse groups. It's not just environmental groups, it's like social justice - and it's like I've always known that like for example that coal pollution is like terrible for you know like thousands of different ways, like health, environment, economics and all these things. But the great thing is like with the campaign here right now, like it's like a people's movement. You know, you've got Democracy NC, you've got Action NC, NC WARN, AARP, NAACP - all of these different groups. (06.25.13).

Jared echoed this choice to join North Carolina NGO on the basis of its ability to work well with other organizations working on similar causes

> It's not like [NC NGO] is, say, 50 people strong. It's like it's kind of a coalition of a whole bunch of people doing their own thing with similar goals. But they show up for their things and then we show up for their thing. And I feel like Occupy also - like having the DNC[22] down here – helped them kind of get a little bit of national support… We went to one Occupy meeting before the DNC and there was already a community that was working really hard. The Rainforest Action Network, Occupy down here, Occupy up in New York, you know, Greenpeace, NC WARN, the Green Party - all these groups - they were already kind of galvanized, but I do think we helped grow it (06.18.13)

But organizational openness to collaboration also demanded that the North Carolina NGO

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[21] North Carolina NGO's organizing campaign – which ultimately sought to close four coal-fired power plants in and around the city of Charlotte – primarily targeted the owner of those plants, Duke Energy. In addition to protest activities around Duke's headquarters, a 48-story skyscraper in downtown Charlotte, the campaign focused on regulatory hearings and corporate meetings to mobilize volunteers and pressure the corporation.

[22] Charlotte hosted the 2012 Democratic National Convention, which

organizer actively promote her organization to those volunteers thinking about spending more time with an ally. Despite this effort, some volunteers, like Sarah, saw value in supporting both North Carolina NGO and other organizations doing related work:

> It was after I started speaking at the [North Carolina State Utilities Commission] hearings that I got more interested. And the thing that totally fired me up was the DNC, because all of a sudden...there was a group of people who were doing something for climate change... But NC WARN's[23] is just doing more. They're more consistent.(06.20.13).

Similarly, Nancy also differentiated between the strengths of North Carolina NGO and other organizations, and actively chose to support both groups:

> I feel like [North Carolina NGO] is much more of a grassroots group. Robin is focused on - I think at least - building up the people's movement, you know, putting pressure on Duke through the work of the public. NC WARN is, well, I think they're kind of the originator. I love the work that they do - to me they're focused on hitting Duke directly, you know, with the set of hearings and the lawsuit... I think NC WARN is definitely more focused on the watchdog role - putting out press releases, getting things out to the media, establishing media contacts - and so I think the two groups work perfectly together (07.12.13).

And still other volunteers resisted being tethered to a single group at all. Instead of committing to work with a single organization, Megan sought to work with any organization she wanted to and that she believed would benefit from her expertise:

> I had my very strong ideas about what was needed and [I was] really not wanting to be part of groups that were just making compromises out the yin yang. You know, I wanted to push... to stop the coal plants, and not to say "ok put a little bit better scrubber on them" or whatever. [I had] my own ideas about wanting to go for what the science required and not for what was practical or feasible. I mean, I wanted to

[23] NC WARN is a Raleigh, NC-based non-profit organization dedicated to "tackling the accelerating crisis posed by climate change by working for a swift North Carolina transition to energy efficiency and clean power." Effectively, they act as North Carolina's public utility watchdog group, and hold a permanent invitation to participate in all state regulatory hearings around energy topics. More information on NC WARN is available from: http://www.ncwarn.org/about-us/. Accessed 10 May 2014.

> help all the groups, but I didn't want to be taking orders from anybody about what to do because I felt that I was honestly, reading enough... I felt that I knew more about climate change than they did! But anyway, I volunteered with [Clean Air Carolina[24]] for a long time. But again, even while I was doing that I just considered myself a full time person working on climate change and trying to help different groups (06.19.12).

Though each local organization occupied a unique niche in the Charlotte-area environmental and activist sphere of organizations, the onus remained on every organization to advocate individually for volunteer involvement. The organizer for North Carolina NGO, Robin, worked actively to encourage volunteer participation in the organization's work on the Duke Energy campaign and on climate change. But she found that volunteers valued a wide variety of organizational objectives, attributes, and activities, and that volunteer participation on the basis of its value to dynamic self-expression required personal rather than transactional relationships between organizers and volunteers.

The "why" behind the curtain: Volunteer values and motivations

The alignment of a volunteer's motivations and social and political values with the goals and activities of a particular movement organization offers another angle to explore long-term volunteer participation. Similarly, an essential role of the organizer within North Carolina NGO's activities was to coordinate volunteers with varying motivations and goals for joining and remaining with the organization. For some volunteers, the top-level goal of the organization and its work in North Carolina and elsewhere – to address the problem of climate change in some meaningful way – is motivation enough to ensure their ongoing participation. This perfectly captures the work of Megan, one of the most active volunteers:

[24] Clean Air Carolina is a Charlotte, NC-based organization whose mission is "to ensure cleaner air quality for all North Carolinians through education and advocacy and by working with our partners to reduce sources of pollution." More information available from: http://cleanaircarolina.org/ Accessed 10 May 2014.

"But then, of course, I got involved with [North Carolina NGO], 'cause when they put somebody here, I'm gonna try to help anybody that's working on climate" (06.24.13). For volunteers such as Megan, the goal of the movement organization – and the larger social movement – is so important and so urgent that she'll work with any organization to achieve it. For others, however, their motivations are not directly connected to the issue of climate change. In this case, the role of the organizer is to mediate across different individuals' objectives, and make space for volunteers with differing individual aims to work constructively toward a shared outcome.

The individual motivations – justifications – of volunteers on the campaign offers another point of difference between volunteers who took leadership on the campaign and volunteers that did not. Approximately half of interviewees described their participation with the organization in the context of working to fight against climate change, while the other half spoke more generally about environmental issues motivating their involvement. Though volunteers primarily concerned with climate change take on leadership roles and participate on leadership teams slightly more than do volunteers concerned about other environmental issues, more interesting for understanding long-term participation, organizational commitment, and volunteer leadership. In particular, volunteer motivations offer insight into how North Carolina NGO and the community organizer on the ground in Charlotte managed the expectations of volunteers with different motivations and integrated them into the goals and strategy of the organization. For example, Paige emphasized the social justice and racial symbolism of her volunteerism for an environmental cause:

> As I got involved with the Occupy Wall Street and you know met Robin, my thinking changed. We need to be involved because we need to show that we care about our children and our future generations as well as anybody else. It shouldn't be one community fighting. So, that was one of the reasons [I participate]: to be visible as an African American and hope that it would catch on and that other African Americans would join the movement... We are all in this together so we should have the same values that other people have and we should value the planet

(06.24.13).

Nancy, a relatively new but quickly active volunteer with the organization, described her participation using a strictly environmental lens, though she acknowledges others' motivations as valid also:

> My real passion is in environmental stuff - that's why [NC NGO] is perfect for me... and really my interest is conservation. I feel like to turn a lot of this around, we're gonna have to really get involved in massive conservation efforts. ... And I feel like people should stand up and show others that there are many of us in our community, mothers and people that I kind of represent - maybe a little bit different of a demographic than the average protestor - I wanted to make sure that I was there to support it. Because I believe in those causes, I believe that America is starting to become run by corporations and kind of our democracy is really at stake here. So I believe in those things, but in terms of the effort that I want to put into it, it's really with [NC NGO] and the environmental movement (06.24.13).

Though those volunteers I interviewed all spoke clearly about their participation in the context of one or more environmental issues – they were volunteers with North Carolina NGO, after all – each had a slightly distinct motivation for joining and remaining with the organization. Integrating those motivations together on a single set of campaign activities, however, remained the purview of the organizer.

Making valuable participation – the role of the organizer

Though not captured by a simple phrase like value alignment or resource mobilization, a volunteer's experience throughout the span of their participation with a movement organization implies the need for management of some type. How volunteers find value in movement participation – and the role of the organizer in creating and directing that valuing – shapes their retention and depth of involvement. Similarly, integrating volunteers with specific expertise into the movement organization while tapping their knowledge and/or skills presents a sizable challenge. Finally, volunteer participants working to influence a community with an unwelcoming social and political environment

need encouragement as well as strategies for surmounting cultural barriers. Each of these areas of volunteer engagement suggest a pivotal role for the professional organizer.

The personal involvement of an organizer in the recruitment and development of volunteers positively shaped volunteer participation in the movement organization. While my interviews with active volunteers and leaders did not seek to map the social and organizational ties between volunteers, they did identify a distinctive feature of the most involved volunteers. In particular, direct contact with the North Carolina NGO's community organizer, Robin, was a major point of difference between those interviewees heavily involved with leadership responsibilities and those simply participating actively in the campaign activities. Of the seven respondents working on leadership teams, all but one was recruited to the organization by Robin, and each report one or more one-on-one conversations with Robin about their participation on the campaign. As Joan puts it:

> One of the main things is that Robin – she's one of some of these wonderful women that are doing stuff here in Charlotte - I trust them. So when Robin says to me "you need to do this" - I either try to do or ask somebody else to do it, because you know they're not gonna, you know, misuse you in any way (06.20.13).

Even among interviewees who joined the movement organization as a result of being recruited by their good friends, like Sarah was, their involvement deepened as a result of a personal connection with the NGO's organizer:

> I remember the first time she'd ever called me and asked me to come over so she could talk to me. But it did have an effect.... I mean I was pleased to be formally asked like that, I guess. I mean, it was significant: it made a difference in my attitude toward doing it. After I told her I'd do it, you know, I was gonna do it. And I was gonna do the best job I could possibly do. I was gonna do the best job anybody could tell you! And I would do it again. It was kind of nerve-wracking just because it took a lot of time, a lot of time, time to find people to ask, I don't know why it took so long, but yeah I would definitely do it again. I would do anything that Robin asked me, specifically to do. It's very different to be in a group and say "we need, you know, I want y'all to blah blah" than to be called just one person and say "I need

you to do this" it's a very different effect and it's very effective, and she must know that (06.20.13).

As well as serving as the recruiter and coordinator of volunteers, the organizer also shaped the overarching message of the campaign and volunteer work. As the activities of social movements and their participants rarely produce their intended outcomes directly, this often meant putting specific activities and events into a larger narrative of success (Andrews 2004; Ganz 2009). Of course, generating a narrative and achieving full "buy-in" from volunteer participants in the movement organization are two very different things, and Megan cast doubt on Robin's ability to garner full volunteer agreement on the outcomes of the campaign:

> She and I just have a slight disagreement about what counts as success. Because honestly, I worked like a dog organizing around Cliffside[25] and we turned out more people for the utilities commission hearing on Cliffside than we've turned out for anything since Robin came; and we turned out hundreds of people for the march against Cliffside... but I still say it's very hard to organize people here. And so part of what's so interesting to me is what's real and the appearance of things and whether appearance can matter just as much as what's real... I would say it's more appearance than success, but maybe appearance is just as important. You see what I'm saying? 'Cause I think Robin--I mean I am just a huge unbelievably huge fan of hers. I think she is brilliant and kind and wonderful. I just love her. I think she really overstates what's accomplished here. But I think she may be knowingly doing that or she maybe just trying to convince herself, or she may just think it's necessary to convince others to have any hope of it. I'm never sure of exactly why she's overstating it. And she may have a good reason to. But I definitely think she overstates it in every place I've ever been (06.24.2013).

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[25] The Cliffside steam station, renamed the James E. Rogers Energy Complex after the former Duke CEO, underwent "modernization" between 2008 and 2012 that saw the construction of a new 825MW coal-burning unit. North Carolina environmental organizations fought the project in a variety of venues but could not block the construction. For more information on Cliffside, see http://www.duke-energy.com/power-plants/coal-fired/cliffside.asp. Accessed 3 April 2014.

Setting aside as much as possible the resources of the organization and the values and motivations of volunteer leaders, the day-to-day, month-to month work of the campaign volunteers offers a unique vantage on the challenges facing the NGO's organizer. A primary role for the organizer is to offer meaningful activities to volunteers and opportunities to develop civic skills and leadership capabilities (Ganz 2010; Han 2012). But focusing on the micro-level of the organization – the on-the-ground work – highlights the challenge of volunteer retention, and in particular moderating the hurdles facing committed volunteers. Volunteers expressed a number of frustrations with the movement organization that occasionally frustrated their participation, most notably with the limited opportunities for meaningful participation within the movement organization. For example, Megan argues that volunteers should have options for multiple roles within the group in order to maximize their skills and impact: "I feel like [North Carolina NGO] in a way doesn't have enough different things to offer people to do… so, I do think one downside about it here is that it's there are not as many layers of the work" (06.24.2013). In addition, volunteers sought consistency in message, event frequency, and the attendance of other volunteers in the organization over time. The organization needed Robin to manage those expectations such that volunteers continued value their ongoing participation in North Carolina NGO's work.

Integrating expert volunteers

Though volunteers like Sarah and Megan had past experience in social movement activities and deep repertoires of civic skills, they relied on the movement organization – and Robin, their organizer – for designing activities that would offset the challenge of organizing in a perceived hostile environment. The development of volunteer expertise – not civic skills or leadership – is a final area for exploring the nexus of volunteers and the organizer that sheds light on volunteer retention. The framework of volunteer leadership development adopted by North Carolina NGO for its climate work relies heavily on the ongoing participation and work of trained and experienced volunteers, who may be said

to develop expertise in community organizing and activism generally. In the community engagement model, volunteer leadership is seen as essential to campaign success: organizers work with volunteers to develop leadership skills - personal narrative, organizing tactics, and campaign responsibilities (Ganz 2010; Osterman 2003; Warren 2010). Holding a house meeting or leading a canvassing event are viewed as leadership activities, though neither demand a specific set of technical knowledge that outside observers would recognize as expertise. Still, the organizer must work actively and continuously to provide these skills to active volunteers, and seek out opportunities where they might be deployed. By developing and implementing expertise in committed volunteers, the organizer retains volunteers engaged in the work of the group and focused on working together to achieve a common goal.

Some volunteers leveraged their existing knowledge or devoted substantial time and energy to develop and apply technical expertise on campaign issues or methods. Steven Epstein's work on HIV/AIDS activists in the 1980s and early 1990s offers the quintessential example of volunteers developing this type of expertise (Epstein 1993). Epstein describes how activist experts studied the science, economics, and politics of clinical trials in order to challenge prevailing (and incorrect) expertise and participate in formal decision-making systems off limits to non-expert participants.[26] Several active volunteers with North Carolina NGO took on the project of developing and deploying this type of expertise. Megan, a retired corporate lawyer and tireless advocate of any effort that might reduce the causes and impacts of climate change, offers the clearest example of technical volunteer expertise, and I quote at length from our interview to illustrate the depth of her knowledge and her efforts to implement it:

> I'm probably a nightmare volunteer! I actually attended a few days of Duke's last rate case in Raleigh at the [North Carolina] utility commission...I spent the whole

[26] Two other STS perspectives on volunteer or activist expertise come from Adriana Petryna's (2001) study of the aftermath of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Russia and from Kim Fortun's ethnography of the chemical spill in Bhopal, India. For Petryna's subjects – unwilling volunteers, they might be called – expertise came from a deep knowledge of human bodies and the categories in which they might be placed. In Fortun's analysis, activist expertise came from contentious politics with corporations and the State that produced new communities and relationships between parties and actors.

> day at the hearing and discovered a really huge issue that goes to the heart of a problem that none of the environmental and consumer groups... are trying to deal with! And so I dug into it and spent hundreds and hundreds of hours. I really went crazy – I talked to experts all over the country. I called just economists out of the blue and they were all so very nice trying to help me. And I wrote a report [that forms the basis for a] case before the utilities commission challenging the way Duke sets its [electricity] rates... Because basically what they're doing is recruiting Apple, Google, Facebook – all of the biggest energy users – and using this way of setting rates that supposedly justifies giving them just rock bottom electricity prices. Charging them, you know, a third as much as they charge senior citizens and people on Medicaid! (06.24.2013)

Megan leveraged her previous experience as a retired corporate lawyer with a determined moral passion to work on climate change-related issues to obtain and deploy the technical knowledge necessary to meaningfully influence the regulatory processes for setting electricity rates. Though this experience kept her deeply engaged with the organization, it did not serve as an easily duplicated path for other volunteers to follow.

The time, effort, and resources required to acquire the technical expertise necessary to make a case for joining state-level processes governing electricity rate setting, power generation regulation, or renewable energy production were out of reach for most volunteers. Still, this did not prevent some participants from trying. Another active volunteer in Charlotte, Sue, entered the organization with a very different background than Megan, but also began to develop the technical knowledge she thought necessary to effectively engage with the work of the campaign. As a cancer survivor, Sue brought an extensive body of medical research into the byproducts of coal-fired power plants to the group, combining that knowledge with her own personal experience:

> I live within site of the Riverbend coal plant. We've lived here for twelve years; we knew the plant was there because we could see it but beyond that really didn't know much about it. And I have recently learned a lot of bad things about it... there are two very large coal ash ponds there that have toxic metals in them and

> that Duke [Energy] is legally allowed to release water from these ponds into the lake which serves as our drinking water for this region - for more than 750,000 people. And also it emits more mercury than the other two coal plants in this area combined. So, as a cancer survivor – I had cancer five years ago – I am very concerned about the health impacts of that plant and want to see it closed.... [My involvement] started out with just talking with some neighbors--well actually it started out doing a lot of research and really looking into what is at Riverbend coal plant, and then finding out about the coal ash ponds and then finding out well what is in coal ash, and researching and researching and calling people, I called the Catawba Riverkeeper and I called the Charlotte Water Quality folks, just trying to get answers and immerse myself in as much knowledge as possible... And now I'm just trying to get some people in the community to join forces. I think we have strength in numbers and I think that the way for this to happen is the way that anything really happens in a community is for the actual citizens to get involved and get behind something and to make it move (06.14.2012).

Expert volunteers like Sue and Megan bring a demonstrated commitment to the goals of a movement and movement organizations like North Carolina NGO. In addition, both volunteers brought more than just their technical expertise to the organization, participating in canvassing, holding house meetings, and speaking at public hearings alongside other volunteers. Integrating these two conceptions of expertise – civic and technical – together was the work of the community organizer, making each form legible to volunteers and the outside world.

Managing Environmental Challenges

A final area of frustration for committed volunteers that begged the professional organizer's intervention was the challenge of doing organizing work in the city of Charlotte, NC. One primary strain of research on social movements argues that political realities and opportunities shape social movement mobilization; for the example, the environmental movement in the United States achieved greater victories under the

progressive politics of the 1970s than after the conservative turn in the 1980s (McAdam 1999; Meyer 2004). At the local level, the social and political culture of a city – its receptiveness to being organized – is one aspect of understanding the political opportunities open to movement organizations and their volunteers. In my interviews with North Carolina NGO volunteers, I sought impressions of organizing in Charlotte. Megan suggested that the difficulties of building a committed group of volunteers stemmed from a non-confrontational Southern ethos:

> [It's] hard to get people engaged here is that it's the South. And it's honestly, almost considered impolite for me to go and speak out about Duke Energy… I honestly have gotten to the point of not caring what people think of me. But most people do care, and like my best friend around the corner… I mean I still love her to death, but I can't get her to care about this at all, or ever to come to anything. 'Cause it's almost considered in the South impolite to even be political… And that is honestly, part of the problem of movement building here. And I think that's more the South (06.24.2013).

Sarah echoed this complaint about organizing in a conservative, Southern city:

> Most of the people I know are pretty conservative just because they're typical, they're just Charlotte. And in my experience people here, are interested in money, looking good, being polite, not making waves, not being inappropriate, going to church… and it's inhibiting. Like it stops me from asking my friends to go to the hearing because--one thing I know that none of them would want to, and it would probably make them uncomfortable (06.20.13).

But Jonathan offered a more optimistic view of the organizing climate in Charlotte, arguing that the city's very culture of insularity offers activists an opportunity: "I've also heard that Charlotte is very ripe for that because people aren't used to it here and they are maybe in some ways more willing to hear what you have to say (06.21.13)." Prior to Robin's arrival in Charlotte, positive thinking about the area's potential for organizing and collective action was in short supply. Though the city presents plenty of future challenges for the movement organization, the presence of a professional organizer offers the active and potential volunteer base a bit of hope for movement-driven change.

Conclusion

This chapter describes one U.S. environmental organization's efforts to identify, recruit, and sustain a volunteer base for activism on climate change. In it, I look specifically at North Carolina NGO's community organizing activities to understand their role in catalyzing volunteer engagement in nascent social movements in sites with little history of activism. Examining volunteer participants of a single organization over an extended period of time as well as their different pathways to involvement in collective action, I draw on two years of participant observation with the NGO's organizer and volunteers, a survey of the active volunteers, and semi-structured interviews with organizational staff and volunteers, to find that even in these sites, volunteer recruitment follows similar patterns as in past social movements. The most active and committed volunteers in my research had greater civic skills, organizational ties, and experience with activism.

Building on the literature on volunteer recruitment to low and high-risk activism and the research on political participation, I look at the community organizer as not only a recruiter, but also as a volunteer leadership and expertise development agent. Organizers must integrate differing motivations across participants, convince volunteers to join their organization over others, manage constant turnover while building leadership and civic skills in those activists that remain, and work to slowly overturn cultural mores against public organizing and protest. I argue that considering volunteer participation in movement organizations as a form of dynamic self-expression suggests an important role for trained community organizers in creating and cultivating value within the participation itself. For the case of the North Carolina movement organization, the arrival of an experienced organizer in 2011 helped to establish and cultivate a thriving, committed base of volunteer leaders in a challenging environment for activism.

Conclusion: A meditation on social movement success and failure

As to the question of climate change and urgency, it seems like everything should be happening right now! But if you aren't ready to get big, it doesn't matter what the external factors are." – Beth (12.15.2011)

"Some people would argue that you won't have a movement unless it taps into some ethos of discontent in the country. And so if fundamentally we are skeptical that our issue will ever reach that point, then you could say that we'll never build a movement on coal and climate. Or you could make a different argument: that you do have to start further back and you have to dry out the underbrush - you have to create the conditions so that it will, you know, engulf itself in flames when you throw that match into it. I don't know the answer by any means, but it's one of the most important questions. Are we fooling ourselves that we can build a movement? Or is really what we're trying to do is create the conditions for the movement to potentially take place? And if it catches, it catches." – Robert (02.09.2012).

"We're in a movement era. While before we were trying to make ripples, to make waves: now it's time to surf! The waves are there" – Dan (02.09.2012)

When is the appropriate time to end a story? Over the course of this dissertation, I offered one narrative of the Climate Coalition, its organizations, and its volunteers. My story began in April 2010, picked up steam with the kick-off of its pilot organizing campaigns in June 2011, and came to an abrupt halt in February 2012. Though the members of the Climate Coalition may have agreed to think of the collaboration as a grand experiment, none of them expected the network to dissolve after only nine months of on the ground organizing. As the weeks went by, the organizing campaigns struggled to gain traction on the ground, recruiting few new volunteers and not fully able to execute the community engagement model. Similarly, the organizations themselves struggled to both figure out how to integrate the organizing model into their existing structures and practices, and incorporate newly recruited and empowered volunteers into organizational decisions

about goals, strategy, and tactics. For all intents and purposes, ending the story of the Coalition at its formal dissolution leaves no space for any result other than utter failure.

Telling only that simple story, however, misses much of the nuance of the Coalition and its significance for the organizations and volunteers involved. In the first part of this conclusion, I look more closely at the last few months of the Coalition. I explore the justifications offered by Texas NGO[27] when it withdrew from the collaboration in late December 2011 and the discussions of the Organizing Committee that led them to pull the plug on the network in February of 2012. I focus on the implications of the Coalition's dissolution for the organizational staff involved, and seek to better understand what came next in terms of community organizing and climate work for the two organizations, Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO. In other words, I try to understand whether the failure of the Climate Coalition really was a failure, or simply a first step for these environmental organizations in the long road to a climate movement.

The Beginning of the End

The first five months of the Climate Coalition's active organizing work gave no hint of the tumult of the network's final four months. Between the kickoff event in June 2011 and the Organizing Committee's in-person meeting in October –the four organizing campaigns slowly and steadily reached out begin the base-building process in local communities. The Campaigns Team met weekly, and each organizer and their manager had weekly or bi-weekly sessions with Elizabeth, the network's coach. In advance of the October meeting, the Coalition's Network Administrative Organization (NAO) staff – Elizabeth, Jerry, Tim, and me – reached out to the four groups running organizing campaigns for detailed information on the resources dedicated to and the organizing outcomes of each campaign to date. As Jerry, a founding member of the Climate Coalition and expert on the community engagement organizing model, described at the October Organizing Committee meeting:

[27] As in the rest of my dissertation, I have anonymized the names of the NGOs and all respondents.

> I guess the object of this exercise was to make transparent how the organizing was going, and how our time is being used. Because we need to make choices about how we invest our time - where it's gonna be most productive - and what's in the interest of the whole project (10.19.2011).

As this story foreshadows, our data collection and presentation exercise for the October meeting offered the first real hint of trouble with the Climate Coalition. As I discuss in Chapter 2, looking closely at the resources devoted by each participating organization to their organizing campaign showed that Texas NGO chose to split multiple organizers on the project rather than dedicate a single organizer to the Austin project. Questioned strongly by the NAO staff and the other members of the Organizing Committee, Texas NGO representatives pushed back against the idea that their participation in the network would shape the ways in which the organization chose their organizational structure or strategy. At the end of the meeting, Sally – Texas NGO's decision-making representative on the Organizing Committee – explained to the group that her organization had begun to question their participation in the network all together, noting that "we have been asked by our conservation director to make a decision by December if this Coalition is the right fit or not" (10.19.2011). This first indication of doubt within the Coalition set the stage for further discontent and eventual dissolution.

Though the local organizing campaigns continued to slowly forge and strengthen relationships with new and existing volunteers, the Climate Coalition continued to slowly unravel. Jerry decided to leave the Coalition between the October and December meetings. He explained his decision by citing a minimum commitment to the goals of the network that he did not feel like all of the participating organizations were willing to make:

> To have a reasonable shot at figuring out how to do this successfully, there is a minimum commitment that it takes: from an organization and from individuals. But just speaking for myself, for it to be worthwhile for me to invest my time in something, there has to be enough mutual commitment from the other party for it to be worthwhile... That's that ante (10.20.2011).

At the Organizing Committee's next meeting, just before the holiday season in December 2011, Texas NGO had yet to finalize a decision to stay with or leave the network. In addition, as Chapter 1 of this dissertation discusses, the Organizing Committee had discussed inviting new organizations to join the Coalition at its October 2011 meeting, but eventually decided to wait. Against the backdrop of that uncertainty, and held over the phone as the video-conferencing software failed to work, the December meeting was a tense affair. Given the slow progress of the organizing campaigns, the NAO staff had generated alternate concepts for using the resources of the Coalition, settling on an apprentice program that would bring a number of novice organizers to one of the Coalition-funded organizing campaigns to learn collaboratively the community engagement-organizing model. However, the organizational representatives quickly pushed back against the idea; for example, Sally from Texas NGO questioned the potential for disruption of her organization's existing activities: "I'm thinking of existing coal plant campaigns... they all have coalitions and sensitive internal dynamics. I wonder if injecting a large number of people into a campaign might be counter-productive" (12.15.2011). Going further, Wendy noted that her organization might not be willing to support switching Coalition goals mid-stream: "looking at this proposal on paper, I can see it making logical sense at the beginning of the Coalition and that's not where we're at – we're 6 months in at this point – what is our commitment to the longevity of the [Coalition]?" (12.15.2011). Despite the sense that the Coalition's original plans might not be progressing quickly enough to sustain each organization's commitments, efforts to change the direction of the network failed to gain any traction.

Texas NGO left the Climate Coalition at the end of December 2011. While I was not privy to the conversation between Jessica, one of the Coalition's founding members, and Sally of Texas NGO, the decision surprised no one. Even Susan, an organizing manager of Texas NGO, had expected her organization to leave the network when I asked her about it later on. As she explained, she and her staff had tired of the constant tension with the network's coaching staff, who did not believe that Texas NGO had made a sufficient commitment to the Coalition: "there was just this constant head-butting between like Rick (of Texas NGO)

and Jerry. Because it was like, you know, we're doing this work, but like they weren't seeing the buy-in from the top of the organization" (06.29.2012). Texas NGO's departure initiated a two months process of the Coalition's dissolution. Ohio NGO quickly followed Texas NGO out of the group, though for different circumstances. Ohio NGO's organizing campaign sought to build a local base of volunteers to press for the closure of four coal-fired power plants around the city of Cleveland; the investor-owned electrical utility announced the closure of those four plants immediately after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued new regulation of airborne mercury in power-plant emissions in late December of 2011. As a result, Ohio NGO no longer had viable targets for its organizing campaign, and as a result it decided to suspend the campaign and leave the Coalition. While this decision lacked the acrimony and disappointment of Texas NGO's departure, it left the network with only two functional campaigns.

The Climate Coalition's final Organizing Committee meeting took place in Charlotte in early February 2012. I'd never been to Charlotte before, and as my plane descended through a thin layer of clouds toward the airport on the morning of February 8th, a thick layer of brown smoke – or perhaps it was smog – that seemed to hover over the city on out to the otherwise endless horizon reinforced the local organizing campaign's goal of shuttering the four nearby coal-fired power plants. A similar haze hung over the Climate Coalition's meeting; Wendy, the Organizing Committee representative of California NGO, one of the two remaining organizations running an organizing campaigns, cited illness in choosing not to attend the meeting and did not send anyone in her place. Elizabeth, the network's coach, explained to the Organizing Committee that she too had no contact with California NGO for several weeks (02.08.2012). With only one active organizing campaign remaining in the Coalition, continuing to run the network made little sense to anyone. Jessica laid out the situation to the Organizing Committee:

> The Ohio project is basically done. [Texas NGO] is no longer officially a part of the Coalition. I guess the [California NGO] project is going on, but with [Wendy] not having been here these last few days, we don't have a whole lot of information. And the only project with the most traction… is [North Carolina NGO]'s project here.

The dissolution of the Climate Coalition arrived much more quickly than anyone expected. Less than nine months after kicking off four community organizing campaigns that aimed to build the volunteer base for a climate movement, the participating organizations decided to abandon the collaborative effort. But community engagement organizing campaigns often take years to achieve their objectives, slowly building volunteer leadership and power to effect a community's desired change (Warren 2001). The participating organizations in the Coalition knew of this long road to potential victory, talking extensively through the decade-long development of the Civil Rights movement out of the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956 (Ganz 2009a; Morris 1984). Yet the ambitious goals of the Climate Coalition's organizing campaigns – to close coal-fired power plants within a year or two at most – seemed on the surface strangely unaware of the possibility of a slow path to victory. When the initial organizing results reported at the October 2011 Organizing Committee meeting failed to meet these ambitious expectations, no one spoke up for a long-term vision that might have kept the Coalition together.

Despite the suddenness of the Climate Coalition's demise, Coalition members seemed resigned to end of the network. Compounding the declining number of campaigns was their limited outward success, which limited the Coalition's ability to raise money to support ongoing operation. The Coalition supported the initial operations of its NAO staff, in particular Elizabeth's full-time coaching work, by raising close to $600,000 from foundations and other donors. Though Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO provided the financial support for their participation in the Coalition – covering the costs of their organizing staff – Ohio NGO and California NGO received substantial financial assistance from the Coalition in order to support the full-time activities of their community organizers. With the Coalition's need to raise funds from donors outside the network came promises made about the progress of the Coalition's organizing campaigns, or lack thereof. At the February 2012 meeting, nearly nine months into the first year of the Coalition, Jessica bluntly assessed the network's funding situation, saying: "we have nothing to speak for ourselves, really. We have a lot of interesting lessons we've learned,

but we don't have a lot to show to funders" (02.09.2012). Without ongoing financial support for network-wide commitments like Elizabeth, the coach, the Coalition ended up with little choice but to dissolve. As Robert noted to widespread laughter, "there's a lot more examples of things fizzling 18 months after they should have than 18 months sooner than they should have" (02.09.2012).

Though the Climate Coalition ceased to operate as a network after its February 2012 Organizing Committee meeting, it continued to offer lessons and resources to the organizations that comprised it. While two of the four community organizing campaigns that began under the Coalition's auspices in June 2011 had folded prior to or around the time that the network itself dissolved in February 2012, the remaining two campaigns continue their work to this day. Though no longer participating in the network, Texas NGO continued to experiment with the community engagement organizing model in Austin and other communities in its efforts to fight against coal-fired power plants and climate change. As Susan, the manager of Texas NGO's organizer, explained to me, she remained committed to the idea of organizing a base of volunteer leaders: "we have to figure out how to keep it going, and we have to figure out how to keep growing this across the organization - we're committed to that." Though Maria left Texas NGO for graduate school at the end of the summer in 2012, the Austin campaign continued to use the community engagement model in surrounding communities. Similarly, Robin remained with North Carolina NGO, organizing in Charlotte and the surrounding communities. Committed to the community engagement model, Robin continued press her organization to support and develop its volunteers. Finally, for the ongoing campaigns of both Texas and North Carolina NGO, the failure of the Coalition had virtually no impact on the volunteer participants. The Coalition sought from the beginning to be mostly invisible to the relationships between the volunteers on the ground and the organizational campaigns they participated in. The dissolution of the Climate Coalition may have removed the coaching and knowledge capture roles, as well as the number of weekly organizational meetings, but it passed unnoticed by even the most involved volunteers in both Texas and North Carolina.

Rethinking Failure

As the story of the Climate Coalition suggests, thinking about social movement failure is complicated for any number of reasons. First of all, the vast majority of social movement and collective behavior scholarship focuses on a small number of visible movements – labor union (Dubofsky & Dulles 2010; Voss & Sherman 2000), women's suffrage (Clemens 1993), farmworkers (Ganz 2009a; Pawel 2009), civil rights (Morris 1984; McAdam 1986; Andrews 2004), environmental (Bosso 2005; Brulle 2000), Occupy (Brown 2011; Castells 2013) – all of which reflect at least some degree of success, however defined. As a result, failure in this context appears mostly in comparative accounts examining why mobilization happened in some places and not in others (Andrews 2004; Warren 2010). But little research has explored failure in the context of movement building efforts. A second complicating factor for considering failure is that social movements have any number of goals – from concrete to symbolic – and defining failure on the basis of not achieving those goals does not necessarily get us much analytic traction (Andrews 2004). Similarly, movements can be comprised of multiple campaigns, and the extent to which one campaign unfolds differently than another can be described as failing. But as neither factor neatly applied to the case of the Climate Coalition, I looked to the few existing studies of social movement failure for insight.

One of the most detailed explications of movement and movement building failure is that of Winnie Breines (1989) in her detailed historical analysis of the New Left movement in the 1960s United States. Breines offers more than a narrative of the New Left's failure, looking closely at the movement's efforts to introduce and practice a "prefigurative" – that is, democratic and participatory – form of politics. Aiming at a broad understanding of movement outcomes and a creative accounting of movement aims, activities, and results, she argues that at the highest level – that of social and cultural change – the New Left movement played an important role in bringing the Vietnam war to an early end, in advancing arguments about equity and social revolution that were more fully realized in

the 1970s and beyond. Below the level of lasting cultural and political change, however, the New Left movement and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) faced two failure-inducing challenges: one of organizational structure and one of prefigurative politics.[28] Breines argues that SDS failed to sustain the New Left movement not because of a lack of organizational structure itself, but rather the incompatibility of standard organizational structures with the practices and ideology of the movement, particularly that of prefigurative politics. More specifically, if the New Left movement were to remain true to its goals of practicing a different vision of politics – and not merely seeking to obtain power and effect discrete change – any non-localized decision-making authority would subvert this vision. Ultimately rejecting a move toward hierarchical organization, SDS then lacked the necessary coordinating mechanisms to retain movement participants, and thus struggled to translate the prefigurative politics of democratic engagement into meaningful relationships between movement participants. Like the Climate Coalition, the New Left movement failed because it could not find a structure suitable to its goals of integrating the voices of movement participants into a movement capable of systemic as well as local change.

But what if questions of movement success and failure aren't even worth asking at all? Looking not at existing movements but rather sites of possible contention, some social movement scholars approach the question of movement failure from a different angle. Rather than considering failure an isolated experience, attributed to highly unrealistic project goals and misalignments between movement goals and SMOs, they posit that failure is instead the most common outcome of social movement action (Walsh et al. 1997). Through a comparative analysis of 20 possible sites of contention around energy,[29]

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[28] Bound up with the idea of participatory democracy, prefigurative politics may be understood as "an ongoing opposition to hierarchical and centralized organization that requires a movement that develops and establishes relationships and political forms that "prefigure" the egalitarian and democratic society that it seeks to create" (Breines 1989; 6). Breines contrasts prefigurative politics with "strategic politics," which is based on a commitment to build formal organizations to achieve major structural changes in the political, economic, and social orders.

[29] In an earlier project, McAdam et al. (2010) examine energy project siting in the developing world to highlight two "causal conditions" of opposition that most frequently explain mobilization: Western funding,

McAdam and Boudet (2012) argue that while the three main traditions of social movement studies – political opportunities, resource mobilization, and political economy – shed light on the dynamics of movements, they lack clarity on the question of why some episodes of contention blossom outside of a local geographic context, or why many possible sites of contention end up seeing none. Instead, they describe three levels of potential failure facing the Climate Coalition, and all potential movements: first, a failure to mobilize against a possible collective threat; second, failure to link mobilization to a successful outcome; and finally, failure to convert successful mobilization into a movement.

Using this framework for considering failure, most sites of potential contention – and the Climate Coalition – never approach the final step of mobilization into a social movement. For most possible episodes of contention, McAdam & Boudet argue that collective action rarely even takes place (2012; 8). Even when a community does successfully mobilize, it may fail to prevent the desired outcome. For the case of Texas NGO and North Carolina NGOs, this would be the closure of the nearby coal-fired power plants, which did not occur during the duration of the Climate Coalition. McAdam & Boudet suggest that only mobilization with some local support/leadership and that leverages some conflict between government agencies/entities avoids outcome failure (2012). For the Climate Coalition, while the Austin, TX organizing campaign gained the support of the local city council, the Charlotte campaign met neither condition. It seems hardly surprising, then, to suggest that the Climate Coalition dissolved while far from its goal of building a social movement to confront the problem climate change.

Looping back to the beginning, when is the appropriate time to end a story? The narrative arc of the Climate Coalition may have ended with its dissolution in February 2012, but the community organizing campaigns of Texas NGO and North Carolina NGO did not.[30] Freed

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and a public consultation process. However, they don't explain the conditions under which collective action does not occur; scenarios taken up in their U.S.-focused study.

[30] Cleveland NGO, on the other hand, found itself lacking meaningful campaign targets around the time that the Climate Coalition dissolved. As a result, the organization reverted back to its pre-Coalition strategies and tactics rather than continue with an emphasis on community organizing.

of their weekly commitments to Coalition conference calls and NAO coaching sessions, the organizers for each campaign continued to identify, recruit, and develop volunteer leaders. They also continued to struggle against prior expectations about the role of community organizing – and volunteer engagement – within and against existing organizational expertise. Midway through the spring of 2014, nearly two years after the demise of the Coalition, both NGOs and their respective organizing campaigns had notched a number of noteworthy successes – for example, a closed coal plant[31] in Charlotte – and a cadre of committed volunteer leaders. While neither NGO would claim to have catalyzed a climate movement, neither could they be said to have ended in failure.

Though the Climate Coalition did not survive even its first year, its lessons have the potential to meaningfully shape a future social movement on climate change. At the Coalition's final meeting in February 2012, members of the Organizing Committee reflected on two ways in which the failure of their collaborative endeavor might offer useful lessons. First, echoing the rise of new organizations like 350.org that bypass traditional environmental positions (see, e.g., Vig & Kraft 1994) to focus on climate change as a multi-issue conundrum, the Coalition's community organizing campaigns sought to build a base with a bigger picture. As Jessica, one of the network's founding members, described:

> I've never believed this is just an environmental issue and I don't believe we can keep the conversation in the environmental community. I think one of the problems for dealing with climate change is that it has been labeled as an environmental issue and attacked as an environmental issue and defended as an environmental issue. But it's part of a strategy that runs into a dead end, and we've got to get it outside of that community (02.09.2012)

Second, the Coalition sought to translate the challenges faced by the network, the organizations, and the volunteer participants into useful lessons for other environmental organizations and groups working on climate change. Specifically, Beth from North

[31] http://www.charlotteobserver.com/2013/11/04/4439501/riverbend-power-plant-to-come.html. Accessed 16 April 2014.

Carolina NGO focused on communicating to other organizations the vast gulf between their existing knowledge and the expertise they need to manage and integrate movement-building organizing in an environmental context:

> We know that there are lots of large and small environmental groups now talking about movements. But frankly they don't quite see how it's in conflict with some of their modes of operating. And so it does seem like there's an opportunity to at least take a lot of the work that we've done and try to give those groups the opportunity to see how they might have to change their operations – or the ways that they have to approach their campaigns – if they're really interested in movement building. Because right now it's the hot topic (02.09.2012).

As Beth and the organizations of the Climate Coalition learned from their short-lived participation in the network, movement building is more complicated than it sounds. For individual environmental organizations, working in active concert with other like-minded organizations toward a common goal demands careful consideration of the collaboration mechanism. I've argued that giving up full control over activities previously undertaken solely by an organization – campaign strategies, for example – may produce more tension than a collaborative network can survive. In addition, environmental organizations must weather the disruption of integrating a new activity – movement building organizing – into their existing repertoire of strategies. But democratizing the distribution of expertise within an organization requires existing staff to relinquish control over organizational strategies and tactics to community organizers and volunteer leaders – not a minor change. Finally, for the environmental movement to embrace movement building also calls for widespread adoption of community organizing. Though environmental organizations may easily attract like-minded volunteers able to dedicate substantial personal time to the cause, they will need trained organizers with a volunteer-leadership-development focus to cultivate the volunteer base necessary to support a social movement aimed at climate change.

Surveying the landscape of environmental organizations working on climate change offers a more positive perspective on the impact of the Climate Coalition. In 2010, the Coalition's founders conceived of bringing multiple organizations together to deploy community organizing as a strategy to build a social movement around climate change. Outside of the successful but dwindling labor union organizing activities, the 2008 presidential election campaign for Barack Obama represented the only large-scale use of the model at that time (Ganz 2009; Voss & Sherman 2000). Four years later, the major organizations that comprise the environmental movement recognize the contributions of a new organization – 350.org – to advancing the public conversation about climate change (Wright et al. 2013). Most notably, 350.org and more recently other environmental NGOs have taken up community organizing as a movement building mechanism, generating meaningful public spectacles around the Keystone XL pipeline and fossil fuel divestment campaigns (Smith 2014). A coalition of U.S. environmental organizations supports the annual PowerShift conference, where thousands of youth gather for training on community engagement organizing and direct action to build a base for "the next environmental movement."[32] Taken together, these developments suggest a shift in focus of the environmental movement away from Breines's "strategic politics" to the slow process of building a grassroots base for change.

[32] Available from: http://www.wearepowershift.org/about/history. Accessed 16 April 2014.

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