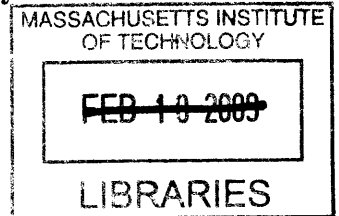


**Analyzing the Critical Success Factors for
Two Distinct Social Movement Case Studies:
Climate Change & the Opening of U.S.-Cuba Policy**

by

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Bachelor of Arts in Government and International Relations
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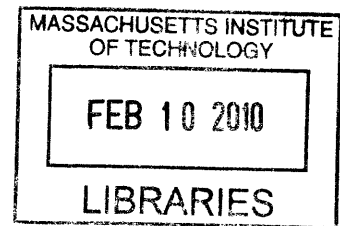


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Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management in partial fulfillment of the
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Analyzing the Critical Success Factors for Two Distinct Social Movement Case Studies:

Climate Change & the effort to open U.S.-Cuba Policy

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ABSTRACT

There are a number of complex and seemingly intractable social problems facing the United States and the world today. Following the election of President Barack Obama in 2008, there was a renewed popular interest in organizing and movement building as effective means of effecting profound social change in the United States.

This thesis explores whether organizing can be used to address social problems today, in addition to elections. Specifically, I try to tackle this question by analyzing two distinct and unrelated movements: climate change and the effort to open U.S.-Cuba policy. First, the basic organizing framework is introduced. Then, each case study is presented with an eye towards how the use of narrative, self-interest, power, moral courage and strategy are being employed. The analysis sheds light on extensive interviews that were conducted with 20 leaders that are part, or have formed part, of these two movements, and focuses on the strategic challenges and opportunities facing a key protagonist in each case.

Finally, the conclusion proposes that organizing can indeed make significant contributions to these specific social problems and offers suggestions for how each movement might incorporate key organizing principles into its work going forward.

Deputy Dean Richard M. Locke, Thesis Supervisor
Alvin J. Siteman (1948) Professor of Entrepreneurship
Professor of Political Science
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Scott Alessandro, who, like Rebecca, is deeply committed to ensuring I graduated on time.

Marshall Ganz, who, every time I hear him speak, makes me want to drop what I am doing and commit to the organizing vocation.

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To everyone who shared their time and knowledge with me throughout my research, for tirelessly working to change the world.

Manny, Bibi, Rosie, Ellie, Mom and Dad, who inspired in me my love for Cuba, my bug for social justice, and for housing me throughout this writing process.

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Introduction

Following the 2008 United States presidential campaign, two things struck observers. First, the country had made history by electing the first African American president, someone who proved masterful at inspiring millions through his power of oratory, charisma and unique story.

Yet for advocates and organizers across the country, on all sides of the isle, there was another side to the story that at once surprised and inspired them. The campaign was different from others we have seen since perhaps Bobby Kennedy's presidential bid in 1968. Barack Obama's campaign had catalyzed an "unprecedented grass-roots electoral movement, including experienced activists and political neophytes."¹ The campaign had 3,000 paid organizers that recruited thousands of local volunteer "Neighborhood Teams for Change," which in turn mobilized 1.5 million volunteers and 13.5 million contributors.

In short, the scale of the campaign's volunteer army and the uniqueness of its strategy made virtually everyone dedicated to some form of social change in the United States – and many around the world – take note. As one organizing veteran leader from the 2004 Howard Dean campaign wrote a month before the 2008 election, "Win or lose 'The New Organizers' have already transformed thousands of communities—and revolutionized the way organizing itself will be understood and practiced for at least the next generation."²

¹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/28/AR2009082801817.html>

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/zack-exley/the-new-organizers-part-1_b_132782.html

One of the key differences between this campaign and others was the degree to which it was personalized. Instead of focusing on the candidate's biography, or statistic filled policy positions, campaign staff and volunteers were trained to tell their own "stories" of what brought them to voter's doorsteps. They spoke of how they lost their cousin in the Iraq War, how their mother could not get healthcare coverage because of her pre-existing diabetes, how the canal down the street from their childhood home was filled with pollution from the local factory. They spoke of their values and personal call to action, which was often fueled by anger over some form of injustice, as well as hope for a better future.

And the result of these conversations with voters and the whole campaign was managed with the rigor and discipline of a Fortune 500 company. This combination of "heart and mind" ensured that the ripple effect of the campaign's organizing strategy would prove vital in moving an unprecedented number of voters.

Can movement building help solve any of today's intractable social problems?

There are a number of complex and seemingly unsolvable social problems facing the United States and the world today. The question this thesis explores is whether organizing and movement building offer the promise of a more effective way to help solve some of these problems. Marshall Ganz, the lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government who was a key architect of the Obama campaign's organizing training and strategy, believes the answer is a resounding yes. Ganz is the first to admit that organizing around vexing social issues can be much harder than presidential campaigns as there is it lacks the clean win-lose binary structure,

finite timeline, and guaranteed near 24 hour news coverage and analysis. Moreover, he and other scholars and practitioners of organizing and movement building are sensitive to the skeptics' many arguments concerning the overwhelming difference between the 1960's and today. Some of these differences include the role of money in politics, the power of national lobbyists defending wealthy interests, the professionalization of the advocacy craft, and the influence of a near ubiquitous media in the age of Internet and cable news.

In order to go after this question, this thesis looks at two distinct and unrelated case studies. The first is the climate change movement, and the second is the effort to change U.S. policy towards Cuba.

The origin of this thesis

The genesis of this thesis came from a training workshop on social movement strategy that I helped design with Marshall Ganz, his assistant Kate Hilton, and Rebecca Henderson, formerly of MIT Sloan and now at Harvard Business School. I co-facilitated this training for social movement leaders from around the country that form part of the "Prime Movers" organization of the Hunt Alternative Fund. For this training, we used the Montgomery Bus Boycott case to drive home key lessons about movement strategy. While it is both a fascinating and inspiring story, it has become almost iconic, and our sense was that many of the social change leaders we are working with in various movements would benefit enormously from "real time" cases that highlight the kinds of strategic issues that confront leaders working for social change today.

The two distinct case studies – climate change and Cuba policy – will hopefully be used in the future to train movement leaders on organizing strategy. I am confident that these cases can help focus the conversation on key decisions regarding goals and tactics for each these movements. Ideally, they would serve as a catalyst for greater resources to be invested in the under-funded (or non-funded in the case of Cuba policy) grassroots organizing aspects of these movements.

The thesis will rely primarily on the organizing framework that Ganz has used for his organizing training and which I have gained an intimate appreciation of through co-facilitating various workshops alongside him, from “Camp Obama” to the Prime Mover strategy trainings to training youth leaders in Massachusetts and civil society leaders from the Middle East. I will also draw on my experience as the Florida Hispanic Vote Director for the Obama campaign and years of organizing experience around U.S.-Cuba issues.

Methodology

I consulted a wide range of primary and secondary research sources for both cases and for the thesis overall.

Interviews and primary research conducted

Climate Change case study:

- Bill McKibben, Co-Founder, 350.org
- Billy Parish, Co-Founder, Energy Action Coaliton

- Jessy Tolkan, Executive Director, Energy Action Coaliton
- Dr. Marshall Ganz, Harvard Kennedy School
- Dr. Rebecca Henderson, Harvard Business School
- Craig Altemose, Head of Mass Power Shift
- Jason Jay, MIT PhD candidate and organizer
- Cara Pike, Director, The Social Capital Project
- Dr. Adria Goodson, Director of Domestic Programs for Hunt Alternatives Fund
- Kelsey Wirth, climate change activist and entrepreneur
- Felipe Witchger, Cambridge Energy Research Associates
- Marcus Ryan, Co-Founder, Weatherize USA / DC Project

U.S.-Cuba Policy case study:

- Carlos Saladrigas, Cuba Study Group, Co-Chair
- Alejandro Barreras, Democratic activist
- Felice Gorordo, *Raices de Esperanza*, Co-Founder
- Ric Herrero, New Cuban+American Majority, Co-Founder
- Andy Diaz, Democratic activist
- Gladys Sanchez, *Raices* member and activist
- Carl Meacham, Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.)
- Fulton Armstrong, Senior Advisor to Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) on the Western Hemisphere to Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Bibi Hidalgo, Co-Founder, En Comuni3n
- Manny Hidalgo, former Executive Director, Cuba Policy Foundation

- Joe Garcia, Director, U.S. Department of Energy
- Attended recent day long Cuba conference at Boston University
- Traveled to Cuba for the Sept. 20th 2009 “Peace without Borders” concert, attended by over one million people, which proved to be a watershed moment for U.S.-Cuba relations. Met with Juanes and Miguel Bosé, the lead organizers and singers.

Three books were of particular use as part of my literature review on climate change were: “Ignition: What You Can Do to Fight Global Warming and Spark a Movement,” edited by Jonathan Isham and Sissel Waage, “The Green Collar Economy” by Van Jones, and “Breakthrough: From the Death of Environmentalism to the Politics of Possibility” by Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger. There were also a number of articles, websites and reports that I read and cited throughout the thesis as appropriate. I also read Taylor Branch’s Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-63.

For the U.S.-Cuba policy case and portion of the thesis, I have conducted twelve interviews with leading activists and thinkers in the movement to further open U.S.-Cuba policy, as well as Obama Administration officials who are abreast of this issue. For my undergraduate thesis at Georgetown, I wrote about Bill Clinton’s Cuba policy and dual strategy of maintaining the economic embargo while also engaging with Cuba’s emerging civil society. Since then, I have constantly kept abreast of Cuba policy issues, reading the latest reports and articles on the issue. I am also a board member of the Cuba Study Group, the Cuban-American organization that is leading the charge to remove the travel ban for Americans who wish to visit Cuba.

Why Climate Change and Cuba Policy?

There are no explicit ties between these two topics, climate change and U.S.-Cuba policy. It may be the case that there are some parallels that emerge, such as the challenge of getting leaders to focus on and invest in more grassroots organizing – in addition to internet based organizing and traditional forms of Washington focused legislative advocacy. What is most important, however, is that these two issues are timely and typically attract great interest and curiosity.

Of course, the climate change movement is one of the most important challenges of our times, and its stakeholders span the globe and ultimately include all of humanity. The U.S.-Cuba issue is interesting because it highlights the problem of how a well-funded, well-organized, and relatively small group of people can effectively commandeer part of this country's foreign policy. The challenge will be to see how a true movement can be formed to counter the overwhelming power of the Cuban-American hard-line power structure and enduring narrative. While the particulars undoubtedly differ, the U.S.-Cuba challenge bears many similarities to other social issues in various contexts.

An introduction to the organizing framework

Marhsall Ganz uses a three-part definition for organizing:

- 1) identifying, recruiting, and developing leadership,
- 2) building community with leadership,
- 3) and building power from the resources of that community.

Leadership

While this definition of organizing is immensely useful, it raises several questions about the definitions of leadership and power and why these three elements are so critical for organizing and movement building. Ganz defines leadership as “accepting responsibility to enable others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty.” Perhaps a simpler definition for a leader is someone who can run into the trenches and persuade others to follow. Whether it was the abolitionists, civil rights, or farm worker movement, or a movement campaign like the 2008 presidential election, all share the common element of having nurtured countless leaders at various levels of the movement’s battles and various points in time.

There is an important distinction between advocacy and organizing as well. While advocacy is speaking on behalf of others, organizing is working in true partnership with others so that they use their own voice.

Power

Perhaps the simplest definition of power in a democracy is the amount of organized people and resources that a group can muster together. To organize people one needs to have clearly identified a community’s self-interest on an issue, as well as it’s most cherished values. This can be done most effectively through 1-on-1 relational meetings, where one person shares their personal narrative of what called them to a given cause and invites the other person to share their

own story, concerns regarding a given issue(s), and potential ideas for what a better future could look like. The common self-interest is the potential area where they can begin to build power together. The power of the community seeking change grows as each new member continues to engage others and commits of their time, talent, and treasure. The clearer the identification of self-interest and the more easily relatable the issue is to other citizen's self-interest, the farther and more effective the community can be at organizing for change around that issue.

Self-Interest

Unlike other organizing causes like a fair living wage or trying to decrease the drop-out rate in schools, the climate change example is particularly challenging because it does not have a large and clearly identifiable constituency of people who feel the effects of the injustice. While many people can show you how their unfair low-wages force them to work a second job while they still struggle to live each month, or while to improve a drop-out rate one can rally parents or community members effected by youth violence or teen pregnancy climate change does not have the same type of easily-identifiable victims that have such a clear self-interest and are adamant about remedying an unjust situation now.

While people can have a deep self-interest in shutting down a coal plant, because of the high asthma rates in the neighborhood and mercury in the fish and deformed babies -those people have self-interest for those reasons. But for the problem of carbon from fossil fuels such coal, oil and gas, where there is no immediate health affect, the self-interest of people has to be rooted in either a sense of global human solidarity, global common good, and/or intergenerational justice.

While all of these goals are worthy and important, it is much harder galvanize a very large number of people who can share deep, painful narratives that inspire or pressure decision-makers in the public and private sectors to change their ways.

Furthermore, it's challenging because virtually all people in the United States have a deep vested self-interest in consuming energy. It makes cooking and eating much easier, it makes shelter easier (heating/cooling), it makes our work (computers, office appliances) easier, and it makes visiting and meeting people (mobility) easier. The energy we consume makes living easier and more enjoyable. Now while all of this energy does not have to be fossil fuel based, the energy density and lower cost of fossil fuels has tended to make them preferred to other alternatives. Not fully understanding the long-term consequences, large industries and infrastructures (roads, interstate highway systems) were developed without an understanding of what that meant in the long-term for the health of the planet and potentially civilization itself.

Strategy

From a strategic perspective, the critical question is how does one create power and change when up against others with significant resource advantages who have a strong self-interest in resisting any change. Ganz defines strategy as “a leadership art that enables us to turn what we have (resources) into what we need (power) to get what we want (desired outcomes)”. As in the story of David and Goliath, the smaller fighter must use creativity and resourcefulness to overcome his opponents overwhelming conventional resources.

After walking through the various components of the two case studies presented in this thesis, I will evaluate them with regards to the following criteria:

- Is the strategy motivated in response to urgent challenges or opportunities?
- Are the anticipated outcomes clear, measurable, and achievable?
- Is there a coherent theory of change that makes explicit assumptions about how the world works? i.e. Can the outcome be achieved by “spreading the word” and raising awareness or will it take some form of power beyond communication?
- Are the tactics of the strategy employing creative use of resources? Does the process of choosing these tactics take into account constraints and opportunities within the environment?
- Do the tactics translate to actions that the movement’s volunteers can experience as meaningful and can grow and learn from? This helps ensure that the movement can generate a collective organizational intelligence and capacity.

Case Study I:

The Climate Change Movement

Introduction

Bill McKibben, a leading climate change author and organizer, read the news with his mouth wide open. The results of the January 19, 2009 Massachusetts Senate special election and the Supreme Court's controversial decision felt like two more blows for the small but growing climate change movement.

First, the Tea-Party supported, GMC truck driving, little known insurgent Republican candidate, Scott Brown, had won the Senate seat that the progressive champion Ted Kennedy had held for 46 years. By all accounts, this was a historic upset that belied the country's anger over Washington's inability to better address the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The newly elected Senator had pledged to be the 41st vote that would break Democrat's filibuster proof majority in the chamber. This could prove to be a death-knell not only on healthcare reform, which President Barack Obama had spent so much of his political capital on during his first year in office, but on the cap and trade climate change legislation that had passed the House of Representatives in 2009.

Secondly, the Supreme decision, issued two days after the electoral blow to the president's agenda, was expected to unleash a new tidal wave of corporate funding directly into national elections. While the proponents of this decision declared this a victory for free speech, it was

very likely that big oil, gas and coal corporations would fight even harder to avoid any regulation. This decision was considered a reversal of 100 years of law in which corporations had never been afforded the same rights to free speech as individuals.

It now seemed clear to McKibben and all in the climate change movement that passing any comprehensive cap and trade climate change legislation in the remaining three years of President Obama's first term in office may be "fifty times harder" as Jessy Tolkan, outgoing Executive Director of the Energy Action Coalition, said. Moreover, the lack of bold action from the U.S. would likely hamper the pace at which other nations take needed actions.

This one-week of events was further proof that while the climate change movement had much to be proud of for its growth in the last few years, it has a long way to go. Although climate change had been on the agenda of the environmental movement for decades, and there has been a flurry of activities and new organizations launched since 2004, success still seems elusive.

There are serious strategic and tactical questions that McKibben and other leaders must address as they seek to develop a social movement that will trigger the actions needed to avert the potentially devastating effects of the phenomenon.

I. DEFINING THE CLIMATE CHANGE ROBLEM

In recent years, concerns for the negative effects of global warming and climate change have entered the American mindset in a way never before seen. In 2006, former Vice President Al

Gore's film on the subject, *An Inconvenient Truth*, won an Academy Award for best documentary. The next year Gore was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, alongside the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), for his work on raising awareness about the threat. Gore and others increasingly argued that global warming was "the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced". The issue was at the height of its media attention, with frequent headlines such as Time Magazine's that read: "Be Worried. Be Very Worried. Climate change is not some vague future problem. It's already damaging the planet at an alarming pace."³

While the vocabulary of climate change became increasingly embedded in American culture and was adopted by many companies seeking to "go green", voters continued to rank it low on the priority list. A 2007 poll showed that global warming ranked as the 21st most important issue for Republicans, 17th for Democrats and 19th for Independents.⁴ Though environmental values have grown more widespread in recent years, people remain reluctant to act on them politically. Cara Pike, an environmental activist and co-author of *Climate Crossroads*, argues that Americans "have deeply held cultural values on environmentalism. The environment is now about my body, my community, more than nature itself. This is radical." The private sector has tried to commercialize these values in many ways. She points to a recent George Mason University study that segments people with some environmental inclination into six groups; five segments want to take consumer action to address the problem, only one segment favors political action.

³ <http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,20060403,00.html>

⁴ Ted Nordhaus and Michael Schellenberger, "Irrationality Wants to be Your Friend" essay in the book *Ignition*, 2007.

2009 ushered in many changes and events that the climate change movement played a key role in. First was the election of President Barack Obama, who campaigned on the promise that climate change legislation and green jobs would be among his top three priorities. In response to the economic crisis he inherited, the stimulus bill included an unprecedented \$37 billion in grants as a “down payment for a new green economy” and more money in loans. Soon after the transformation of the Department of Energy began, the House of Representative’s passed the Waxman-Markey cap and trade bill, and the Environmental Protection Agency said it would regulate carbon dioxide, methane and other green house gases (GHGs) because of the health threat they pose to citizens. In December, over 100,000 climate change activists descended on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 15th conference of parties in Copenhagen where global policy-makers were to set down targets for mitigation, adaptation, technology and financial transfer for the period from 2012 through 2020. It was also another opportunity for the U.S. to enter an international climate agreement after President Bush rejected the Kyoto Protocol in 2001.

Bad poll numbers despite increased activism

Despite this wave of attention and initiatives around climate change, major public opinion polls showed a significant drop in support for the belief that global warming is occurring. An October 2009 poll by the Pew Research Center found that only 57 percent of Americans believe there is “strong scientific evidence the Earth has gotten hotter over the past few decades, and as a result,

people are viewing the situation as less serious.” The figure is down 20 points from 77 percent in 2006, and 71 percent in April 2008. A November Washington Post-ABC News poll indicated increasing political polarization around the issue. “Since its peak 3 1/2 years ago, belief that climate change is happening is down sharply among Republicans -- 76 to 54 percent -- and independents -- 86 to 71 percent.”⁵

The reasons for the changes vary. One prominent pollster for Congressional Republican leaders does not believe Americans’ questioning of climate change is the main problem. “Where there’s disagreement is how immediate and huge is the threat,” he said. As a result, “the majority of people view it as an economic issue.” The March 2009 Gallup poll reports that more Americans believe economic growth should be given priority even if the environment suffers to some extent (51%) than say protection of the environment should be given priority even at the risk of curbing economic growth (42%). Gallup reports this is the first time in its history that “Americans put the economy before the environment” in this way.⁶

This suggests that the prospects of passing strong climate change legislation may improve once the unemployment figures show significant progress. One problem, however, is that opposition groups funded by the coal, oil and gas industries have become much more vocal and organized. They have mounted multi-million dollar ad campaigns, recruited and provided media training for dissenting scientists, and hired top lobbying firms to protect industry interests and current levels of profitability. This has, according to environmental advocates, sown confusion and skepticism among the public. McKibben and other organizers are not surprised that the opposition has

⁵ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/24/AR2009112402989.html>

⁶ <http://www.gallup.com/video/116947/First-Time-Americans-Put-Economy-Environment.aspx>

grown fiercer as the climate change movement has strengthened. Billy Parish, co-founder of the Energy Action Coalition, believes the “opposition will only get more desperate. The polling numbers are freaking everyone out. Not just in the US, but in the UK too. We thought polling numbers would get better, they’re getting worse.” Both attribute the poorer polling numbers to the opposition’s tactics, in addition to the weak economy.

Recent events at the University of East Anglia, in which hacked e-mails showed climate change professors discussing questionable tactics to bolster their arguments, has provoked a dizzying amount of media attention to the credibility of some climate scientists. Though the hacked emails contain virtually no significant evidence against climate change science, the media’s depiction of the issue has convinced many that other e-mails and documents could be forthcoming and illustrate how over-zealous climate change advocates are trumping up their claims and making the threat of climate change seem bigger than it is.

‘Skyrocketing’ energy costs and charges of veiled socialism

Obama often says there is a “false choice” between economic development and taking strong action on climate change. However, activists must wrestle with the question of how much sacrifice Americans – and people worldwide – would need to endure in order to implement the changes in the timeframe that most scientists recommend?

Economists think taxing carbon is the ideal policy response to the climate change problem, as is the case in France and the United Kingdom where taxes account for approximately 70% of the

price of gasoline at the pump⁷. The specter of raising gas taxes in the United States beyond its 11% rate, however, is a non-starter for most elected officials. This is particularly true during a severe recession in which the President and Democratic leaders constantly remind voters that the stimulus plan lowered taxes for 95% of working Americans.

Even though a cap and trade system aims to put a price on carbon and greenhouse gas emissions, and is not an outright tax, its opponents frame it as a tax that would hit the poor and working class hardest. Former Republican vice presidential candidate Sara Palin argued against the pending cap and trade legislation in Congress in a December 2009 op-ed, employing a message that has gained traction with climate change opponents. She quotes then Senator Obama during the presidential campaign saying “under my plan of a cap and trade system electricity costs will necessarily skyrocket”.⁸

On top of the purely economic arguments against climate change legislation, some argue that climate change threats are exaggerated because the left needed a new excuse to redistribute wealth. As argued by conservative writer Charles Krauthammer: “With socialism dead, the gigantic heist is now proposed as a sacred service of the newest religion: environmentalism.” Writing during the Copenhagen summit, he decried the plan of “political genius” to “transfer of hundreds of billions from the industrial West to the Third World to save the planet by, for example, planting green industries in the *tristes tropiques*.”⁹

⁷ <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1809900,00.html>

⁸ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/08/AR2009120803402.html>

⁹ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/10/AR2009121003163.html>

Where is the ‘fierce urgency of now’ in worrying about 2050 and beyond?

Though climate-related changes pose potentially catastrophic consequences, they are expected to occur far into the future and as a result can feel very disconnected from the reality we live in today and the things we experience and struggle with on a daily basis. As a result, getting people to act on climate change, by decreasing their fossil fuel consumption, pay more for alternative energy, use less convenient transportation, or advocating for policy changes is incredibly challenging.

Some groups of people who have seen the devastating environmental consequences of strip mining, or seen the sky-rocketing asthma rates in children who grew up near a coal power plant, will have reason to take action against coal utilization as our country’s primary source of electricity. But most people do not experience this, and even if they do hear or read about these phenomena, they are easy to forget about, since they are not reminded of these consequences each time they leave their refrigerator door open for longer than they should or their computer on when they’re not using it.

They also do not think about their great grand children potentially facing a world where drought, famine, and fresh water shortages are so widespread that instability, disease, and terrorism seem to pervade thinking about everything from the food they eat to the school they go to, to the work they do.

II. DEFINING THE MOVEMENT'S GOALS

Amidst this complex context, there is a lively debate about what the climate change movement's goals should be. Generally, however, there is consensus that a comprehensive reform of current energy policy is necessary and that actions in the direction of decreasing fossil fuel consumption and increasing the attractiveness of alternatives in electricity production and transportation are the key to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which account for the vast majority of the greenhouse gas problem.

Sticking with the economists: pricing carbon through Washington and the UN

While significant outright tax increases on fossil fuels is not a politically viable option, most of the big environmental organizations and climate change youth movement groups continue to focus on putting a price on carbon as a way to stem GHG emissions. In the Europe Union, for example, the cap and trade system catalyzed a \$150 billion carbon commodity trading industry in just a few years.

For American environmentalists, the principle manner to achieve anything like these policy changes is through Washington DC and the UNFCCC's gatherings such as the 2009 Copenhagen meeting. Even though many youth climate change activists considered Copenhagen a failure or near-failure, the majority of the dominant environmental organizations continue to insist that working through the existing institutions at the national and international level is a goal that must be pursued.

Tackling climate and poverty to broaden the coalition: Green Jobs

Environmentalists and policy-makers have tried to allay fierce opposition to taxes and the costs of a cap and trade system by advocating for the creation of millions of “green jobs” for those who most need them. After climate change organizers such as Green for All’s Van Jones helped popularize the idea, the push for green jobs became a popular mantra during the 2007-2008 presidential campaign among Democrats and even Republican presidential nominee John McCain. Politically, this is considered among the most feasible options because it combines a hopeful message about job creation that is particularly important as the country suffers 10% unemployment rates, nearly 20% underemployment and rates much higher than that in minority communities and poorer parts of the country.

Many of the more progressive climate change groups, such as the Energy Action Coalition and 1Sky, have pushed for the goal of creating 5 million green jobs. These jobs are supposed to focus on lower-skill workers and thus help Americans struggling most economically, including those in outright poverty and minorities that have traditionally ranked environmental concerns quite low on their priority lists. As argued in Time: “Environmentalism has usually been the reserve of the elite — but we’ll never have the power to tackle global warming unless we create a coalition that extends well beyond traditional white-collar greens. Touting green-collar jobs can convince skeptical, blue-collar Americans that they have an economic stake in curbing climate change.¹⁰” This has helped unions warm up to the climate change agenda, as they fear increasing losses of American jobs to outsourcing. The Blue-Green Alliance, a national, strategic partnership

¹⁰ <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1809506,00.html#ixzz0eAFv2uzg>

between labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding the number and quality of jobs in the green economy, is evidence of this synergy.

One example of the Green Jobs push is the “Cash for Caulkers” program announced by the Obama Administration in late 2009. This program would employ people with construction industry skills and provide training for those that want to learn the skills to weatherize and retrofit millions of homes and buildings across the country. This is in contrast to the clean tech R&D message that can conjure up notions of PhD engineers, scientists, venture capitalists and entrepreneurs benefiting most. From a strictly environmental perspective, since homes and buildings represent 40% of GHG emissions, the weatherization focused green jobs can make a significant environmental contribution.

Focusing on the positive: R&D to create the economy of the 21st century

Besides stemming the use of carbon emitting fossil fuels, however, many believe investing in the development of alternative energy is the more important meta-level goal. As described by Time, “while global politics may shape how quickly and appropriately we structure our response to climate change, the actual work of reducing carbon emissions will ultimately be a technological problem.” The International Energy Agency believes \$10.5 trillion in additional investment is needed between now and 2030 to place the world on the path to low-carbon development¹¹.

"Investing in R&D to make clean energy cheap is the most popular energy proposal there is,"

11

http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1929071_1929070_1946649,00.html#ixzz0aHxKv0L1

says Michael Shellenberger of the Breakthrough Institute and author of the famous essay “The Death of Environmentalism.”

Shellenberger and others well versed in political messaging believe cap and trade legislation has proven to be too difficult politically. They point to declining poll numbers showing the hesitation of Americans to do anything which poses costs, and insist that a more hopeful message rooted in technological solutions should be front and center. President Obama has adopted this push in much of his overall energy policy, as he seeks to support the building of what he claims will be the world’s most important industry in the 21st century: clean technology. Schellenberger and Nordhaus have grown increasingly critical of the approach of the rest of the environmental movement. They recently wrote:

The poor are already subject to the droughts, floods, hurricanes, and diseases that future warming will intensify. It is their poverty, not rising carbon-dioxide levels, that make them more vulnerable than the rest of us. The problem is not that most greens are elites, per se, but rather that too few of them acknowledge the material basis for their ecological concern and that too many reject the modern project.

The Breakthrough Institute’s critiques, though criticized for their over-simplification of how technology investment will come about politically, do shed light on a deeper problem with trying to build an international coalition in support of comprehensive climate change policies. The poor in most countries that may be severely impacted in the future are fundamentally going to have a greater self-interest in getting out of their poverty in the near-term, as opposed to worrying about events that may or may not happen in the long-term. This is a question 350 will have to wrestle with.

There's no such thing as a free lunch

The challenge with the views of these “technological optimists,” as Billy Parish calls them, is that the \$10.5 trillion dollars for the new economy will have to come from somewhere. It has been hard enough for the Obama administration to defend the \$37 billion that was allocated to the Department of Energy through the Recovery and Reinvestment Act (“the stimulus package”), as the central concern of Republicans and fiscally conservative Democrats turned to the mushrooming national debt in 2009.

Despite the hopes of many, budget analysts wonder how the country will get close to making its contribution to the \$10.5 trillion that's needed globally for alternative energy development in the next 20 years. The rejection of the 10 year \$1 trillion healthcare reform bill should serve as a warning for how difficult it will be to secure strategic government investments amidst record levels of public debt and concerns over the effect of a falling dollar on the nation's economy and long-term unemployment. The projected 2010 \$1.6 trillion budget deficits added further negative news regarding the nation's economic health, surpassing the projections of White House as well as the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO). The nation's overall debt stood at \$12.4 trillion in early 2010, a figure that had ballooned in recent years with the spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Bush Administration's tax cuts on the wealthy without corresponding reductions in federal spending, and the various bailouts of the financial and auto industries.¹²

¹² <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/02/us/politics/02budget.html?hp=&pagewanted=print>

Moreover, private sector funding of the clean tech sector dropped sharply as the recession began and oil prices lowered from their historic highs. In 2009, U.S. venture capitalists had only invested \$2.68 billion into clean technologies¹³, and well-publicized projects like T. Boone Pickens' 4,000 mega-watt Texas wind-farm were forced to the "backburner" under financing pressures and his renewed preference for the more profitable natural gas.¹⁴

Raising public awareness of the problem

The last 20 years have witnessed an impressive rise in the influence of 24/7 media outlets. From instant Internet news, blogging, highly politicized Cable TV shows, talk radio, YouTube, and social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter, voters are more exposed than ever to sophisticated campaigns to win their hearts and minds. The political world has taken a page from the corporate world in terms of using focus groups and highly detailed polling analysis to identify a citizen segment, understand its values and interests, hopes and fears, and attempt to change its belief-system or behavior in some way. Sometimes this is done through pure information but very often it takes some form of "infotainment."

A concurrent trend has been the steep rise of money in American politics. Political action committees (PACs) and 527s, under the rubric of "independent expenditures", provide avenues for interest groups to inundate elections with vast amounts of money that cannot go directly to candidates campaign. Sometimes, these organizations advance issues on behalf of causes having

¹³ <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126074549073889853.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/14/business/energy-environment/14boone.html>

to do with a certain justice or inequity. All too often, however, corporations seeking to protect themselves from regulations or competition exploit this form of political influence best.

Given this reality, many in the environmental movement have long believed that a successful and well-coordinated national media campaign is the most important goal in order to inform, educate and enlist people to their cause. While environmentalists have always had a disadvantage in terms of spending power, they have chosen to beat might with right. Might meaning money, and right meaning a moral cause where the future of the planet and civilization itself is at stake.

Under this strategy, the details of the actual policies that alleviate climate change are not as important as the need to increase the number of people who believe there is a serious threat and that something substantive and large-scale must be done to address it. Most often, success is measured through opinion polls that then presumably convert into changes at the ballot box and beyond.

At the end of the day, the overarching goal of the climate movement is to stop irreversible climate change by stabilizing the atmospheric concentration of CO₂, which can be done by beginning to decrease the levels of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere.

III. DEFINING THE OPTIMAL TACTICS

The long-term goal of the movement is, in simplified terms, to protect the planet from harmful climate change. The intermediate goals fall, not without overlap, between the following:

- Limiting carbon dioxide emissions through laws and regulations
- Catalyzing the deployment of renewable energy technologies on a massive scale through public and private sector investment. Currently less than 2 percent of the country's energy comes from renewable sources.
- Creating millions of green jobs through a mixture of GHG mitigation efforts that reduce emissions while improving the economy by creating new opportunities for sustained employment, raising citizen awareness of the gravity of the problem and the need for bold actions on all fronts.

Given these complex and challenging goals, there is a wide and spirited debate about what tactics should be used to achieve the objectives of the broadly defined climate movement.

Focus on the Beltway and the Boardroom

Most of the large incumbent environmental organizations believe in a theory of change rooted in their ability to directly influence decision-makers in Washington DC and international forums like Copenhagen. Many of these organizations have multi-million dollar budgets and scores of registered lobbyists, lawyers and scientists. Many leaders from key government bodies like the EPA will come from these organizations. The historic strategy of the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), for example, was to mobilize an army of lawyers to fight environmental law suits. In recent years, its strategy has evolved to focus on the power of partnership with corporate partnerships that can be convinced to take early action to help address emissions reductions.

In partnership with other big environmental groups, such as the National Resource Defense Council (NRDC), the EDF forms part of the U.S. Climate Action Partnership (USCAP). This partnership, which includes Duke Energy, Dow Chemical, Conoco Phillips and General Electric, has called for three rounds of emissions reductions: 14 to 20 percent by 2020, 42 percent by 2030, and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050. USCAP's goal is to “slow, stop and reverse the growth of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions over the shortest period of time reasonably achievable.”¹⁵ Part of the clear self-interest of these corporations is some degree of increased policy certainty that would facilitate their long-term planning .

An example of the tactical debates within this broad advocacy universe is over the messaging it chooses to advance in its media and advertising campaigns and meetings with decision-makers. Do the polls show that it should be more of a national security focus regarding the need to reduce our dependency on oil from the Middle East, or a push to build the Manhattan Project or Apollo Space mission equivalent with next big industry of the 21st century, clean technology?

Building a movement at the grassroots

In contrast to the world of inside the Beltway and inside the boardroom advocacy is the effort to build a grassroots movement. By definition, grassroots means “the common people at a local level (as distinguished from the centers of political activity).”¹⁶ Increasingly, environmentalists are grappling with what a true grassroots focus actually means. Since the first major wave of gains of the environmental movement in the 1960's and 1970's, the center of gravity for the

¹⁵ <http://www.us-cap.org/faqs/>

¹⁶ <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=grass%20roots>

environmental movement has been the centers of political gravity, be it Washington, DC, Sacramento, Kyoto or Copenhagen. With the growth of grassroots organizations in the last few years, there has been a keen debate on the legislative focused *modus operandi* of the environmental movement.

As 350 co-founder Bill McKibben said upon reflecting on the challenges ahead after Copenhagen, “One of the reasons why it’s so hard in Congress is because they don’t feel any particular pressure. There are lots and lots and lots of groups lobbying Congress, but Members of Congress are good at telling whether there’s anything behind that lobbying or not. I think we have to figure out how to put some pressure behind that lobbying. And the easiest way to do that is movement building.”¹⁷

The idea behind movement building is that the power to effect change will ultimately come not from money and sophisticated organization in Washington, DC but from masses of people throughout the country. In the face of a clash of interests with a well-resourced giant, the ‘underdog’ must rely on resourcefulness, moral courage, and creativity. Even within this framework, however, there is great discussion about how to build this “people power”. While important lessons can be drawn from the civil rights and anti-war movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s, movement leaders must be cautious to adapt to the changed reality of our times and the different nature of this challenge.

¹⁷ <http://www.grist.org/article/2010-01-28-climate-groups-grapple-for-a-path-forward-from-copenhagen/>

Within the world of the youth climate movement, there are a number of strategic questions to resolve. Should it go deeper (within the U.S.), or wider (globally) as 350 has sought to do? If the main focus is the U.S., should it be more locally based or focused on pressuring Washington into action by flooding the halls of Congress and the White House with millions of calls and letters? If it is all about strength in numbers, how can it broaden the coalition to include more race and class diversity? How can it humanize the issue and get away from what can be intimidating and overly technical conversations about science and economic policy? And at what point, if at all, should it turn from indirect action to more direct action such as civil disobedience to shut down coal plants and stop practices such as mountain top removal?

IV. A RANGE OF GROUPS WITHIN THE BROADER MOVEMENT

Since the founding of the Sierra Club in the late 1800's to the proliferation of hundreds of student organizing groups in the last few years, a range of organizations have emerged to tackle the question of how to protect the planet and its people for generations to come. These groups, and their leaders, embody the tensions and opportunities that the movement faces as it tries to tackle what is arguably the biggest collective challenge the world has ever faced.

Al Gore's Alliance for Climate Protection

After Al Gore helped popularize the climate change issue with his 2006 documentary, many environmental activists criticized him for not offering any solutions big enough to meet the enormity of the challenge he depicted so well. His initial message addressed issues such as

changing light bulbs and filling one's tires to the fullest, implying that a problem of potentially catastrophic proportions could be solved with individual and not systemic changes. Skeptics believed he himself was unwilling to take on the powerful interests that stood to lose from sweeping policy changes.

Yet in March of 2008, as he launched a \$300 million dollar three year advocacy campaign, he changed his tune. "The simple algorithm is this: It's important to change the light bulbs, but it's much more important to change the laws," he said. "The options available to civilization worldwide to avert this terribly destructive pattern are beginning to slip away from us. The path for recovery runs right through Washington, D.C."¹⁸ Gore founded the Alliance for Climate Protection to achieve this goal. The core idea for the group's media campaign is to bring the best of Madison Avenue's marketing machine and paid political TV advertising to the fore. The initial campaign ads featured such strange bedfellows as conservative evangelical leader Pat Robertson and civil rights leader Al Sharpton as well as former and current Speakers of the House Newt Gingrich and Nancy Pelosi. The "We Can Solve It" ad campaign is meant to show that the climate change issue can unite people with diverging politics to solve a challenge that affects all people.

Upon the launch of the campaign, the Washington Post wrote: "In an effort to penetrate Americans' consciousness and change lawmakers' political calculus, the group aims to enlist 10 million volunteers through a combination of network and cable commercials, display ads in magazines ranging from People to Real Simple, and online social networks. By contrast, the civil

¹⁸ http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/30/AR2008033001880_pf.html

rights and antiwar movements in the 1960s each boasted about 5 million activists.” The key question would be what counts as a volunteer?

Whether or not the most important metric of the success of a movement is the sheer number of people it can claim as members is a question beyond the scope of this case. It is important to note, however, that the Alliance campaign set out with a distinct notion of the criteria for what a movement “volunteer” is. As the Alliance’s CEO, Cathy Zoi, said at the time of the campaign’s launch in March of 2008, “This is modern organizing,” adding that the campaign sought to recruit what the advertising world refers to as “influencers,” or people who have vast networks that they can reach out to. She added that a main goal of the campaign is to convince voters that “this is a solvable problem.”

One of the outputs of the campaign is the “Repower Wall” website which asks people share their voices about the climate change issue using innovative new Internet tools. As of February 2010, over 5 million people have joined the “We Campaign” online. It was launched in 2006, prior to the Alliance itself.

It is not clear, however, how these 5 million people are actually organizing or translating these voices online in to the type of power needed to produce systemic change.

Natural Resources Defense Council

One of the largest environmental groups is the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), which was founded in 1970 by a group of law students with a passion for environmental issues. According to its website, it is “the nation's most effective environmental action organization” which employs the use of “law, science and the support of 1.3 million members and online activists to protect the planet's wildlife and wild places and to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all living things.”¹⁹ It has an annual budget close to \$100 million, boasts of over 300 employees, which are lawyers, scientists and policy experts. The organization is proud that it has “a MacArthur "genius" award-winner among its staff.

Historically, the NRDC’s strategy was rooted in the conviction that it must fight for change through a legal defense of the environment. The theory of change has been that any large-scale substantive change will occur by working through the system (legal action, federal legislation). NRDC advocates the powers that be – whether governments, markets or multi-national corporations – to adopt change because it believes there are synergies with their own short- and long-term interests.

The overall strategy of the NRDC has been similar to that of other big environmental organizations such as the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). It can be summarized in a three pronged-approach. First, these organizations seek federal climate policy changes, and the cap and trade approach has been the primary policy goal. These groups have launched various

¹⁹ http://www.nrdc.org/about/who_we_are.asp

national awareness campaigns trying to achieve this end. Second, there is an emphasis on “building the change we want to see” by establishing strategic partnerships with leading corporations. Third, NRDC has focused on international policy action, with a primary focus on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which was originally launched at the UN’s first major international climate change summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

In 2010, NRDC launched an ad campaign to push the Senate ‘cap and trade’ bill. This campaign uses celebrities including Leonardo DiCaprio, Edward Norton and Forest Whitaker, as well as well-known academic Cornel West, to advance the cause. The ads feature a combination of substantive policy issues as well as humor to compel people to e-mail their Senators. Policy-wise, the ads talk of the need to limit GHG’s, create millions of jobs, reduce dependence on “foreign countries that do not share our values”, and the need to do so in a deficit-neutral way by “taxing the polluters”.

Perhaps what is most notable about this campaign’s call to action is its singular focus on using of e-mail to influence Washington decision-makers.

Sierra Club

USA Today describes the Sierra Club as “the nation’s oldest and arguably most influential environmental group.” Founded in 1892 by conservationist John Muir, the Sierra club historically focused on facilitating people’s encounters with nature. The goal was for people to

be overcome by nature's beauty and develop a deep passion and commitment to protecting and preserving it. It worked through local activism but also on the national level. Like the other large environmental organizations, its annual budget exceeds \$100 million, and it claims 1.3 million members.

As one example of the group's traditional scope of influence, CNBC's famed stock analyst Jim Cramer interviewed the new Executive Director of the Sierra Club, Michael Brune, in January 2010. After discussing the organization's policy positions on the debate between coal and natural gas, Cramer said "if these guys were to go against natural gas, I would have to sell, sell, sell all the stocks! I want you to be aware that they are the most important force right now for whether natural gas makes it through Congress."²⁰

In addition to its traditional influence as the heavyweight big environmental advocacy organization, the Sierra Club has made a concerted effort to address the disconnect between its leadership and members. In 2005, the Sierra Club turned to Marshall Ganz from the Kennedy School of Government to help understand how to get the club's members engaged with its activities and "fired up again".²¹ Ganz described the effort in the larger context of declining civic activism in the United States:

Traditionally, membership associations, volunteer organizations, and advocacy organizations provided connective tissue between citizens and government, and public policy in general. There's been a substantial breakdown in that over the last 30 or 40 years, and it's left a vacuum. What's replaced the traditional organizations are these mailing-list operations -- Greenpeace, Children's Defense Fund, things like that.

²⁰ <http://www.cnbc.com/id/15840232?video=1397496020&play=1>

²¹ <http://www.grist.org/article/dicum4/>

They're like advocacy firms, where there's a few professionals [who] do lobbying, but they don't really have any kind of mobilizing capacity. They don't provide vehicles for broad participation.

In these groups it's very easy to disappear into an elitist mentality where, "Oh, everybody out there is dumb, so we gotta get with people like us and figure out the smart thing, blah blah blah." Well, that's deadly to a democratic movement that needs to be figuring out how to engage the broad community. What's missing is the link between them and groups that actually get people engaged. That process traditionally had a couple of important features: one was that it linked local with state with national; and secondly it brought people together and trained and developed leadership.

In response to this phenomenon, Sierra Club has tried to adapt its strategy to rebuild that dynamic link between the advocates in Washington and its membership throughout the country. Its "Beyond Coal" campaign best embodies this switch. The campaign was born in 2002 when then Vice President Dick Cheney proposed the building of 150 new coal fired power plants. Since its launch, the group has stopped the building of 110 coal plants. According to the campaign's Deputy Director, Mary Anne Hitt, there are still 25 plants in the planning phase that they are still fighting²². The campaign employs a diversity of tactics, from legal and grassroots organizing to "grass tops organizing" to try secure the commitment of political leadership in a given state to the campaign's goals of opposing coal plant construction. Going forward, the group is hoping to take on existing coal plants on college campuses.

²² Based on notes from a January 2010 interview that environmental activist Kelsey Wirth conducted with the Sierra Club's Deputy Director for the "Beyond Coal" Campaign, Mary Anne Hitt.

350.org

In 2006, Bill McKibben began to write about his concerns with the climate change movement's lagging track record. He wrote: "We don't have a movement. The largest rally yet held in the U.S. about global warming drew a thousand people. If we're going to make the kind of change we need in the short time left us, we need something that looks like the civil rights movement, and we need it now. Changing light bulbs just isn't enough."²³

In response, McKibben, who had authored ten books on global warming over 20 years, felt the need to change his vocation from writer to organizer. Along with a small group of students from Middlebury College, where he is a Scholar in Residence, McKibben first carried out a five-day march on Vermont's state capital. This led to the inspiration for the 2007 "Step it Up" campaign, in which 1,400 rallies across the United States in what was the most widespread day of action focused on climate change.

The group McKibben now leads, 350.org, describes itself as "an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis--the solutions that science and justice demand". Its mission is "to inspire the world to rise to the challenge of the climate crisis—to create a new sense of urgency and of possibility for our planet."²⁴ In 2009, 350 made a significant contribution to bringing awareness to what McKibben calls an "obscure data point" that people can rally around. The goal is to advocate for policy and

²³ http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/14/science/14mckibben.html?_r=1

²⁴ <http://www.350.org/mission>

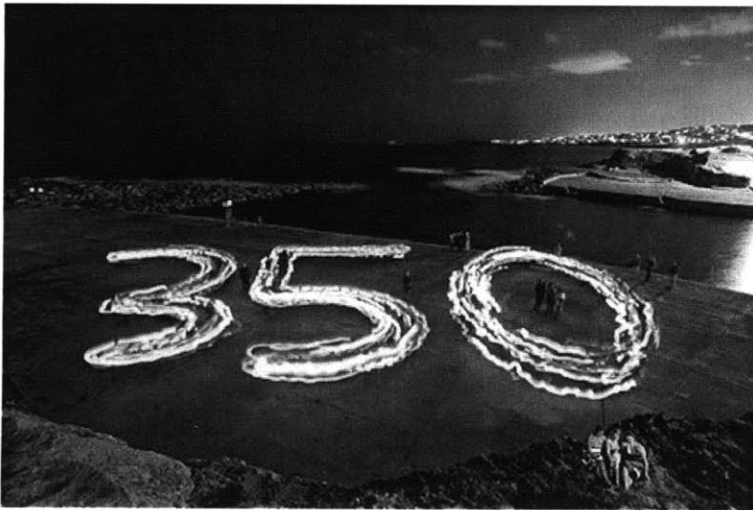
behavioral changes that will lead to 350 parts per million of carbon, a figure that has been cited by leading scientists as the safe upper limit of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

McKibben also chose to focus on this target because it could transcend language barriers and help simplify the typically complex discussions about the movement's varied goals. For example, most carbon reduction goals speak of various percentages of carbon reduction targets in the future that are tied to baseline years in the past, such as the following twin carbon goals agreed to by a coalition of 50 of the more progressive climate change groups in early 2009 in the "National Call to Action on Global Warming": 25% below 1990 baseline carbon levels by 2025 and 80% carbon reductions by 2050, based on 1990 baseline carbon levels²⁵. In contrast, an alliance of some of the more mainstream "Big Green" environmental advocacy groups and big corporations, such as Conoco Phillips, Duke Energy, Dow Chemical and General Electric, call for a different set of goals in the U.S. Climate Action Partnership. This group's blueprint calls for three rounds of emissions reductions: 14 to 20 percent by 2020, 42 percent by 2030, and 80 percent below 2005 levels by 2050.

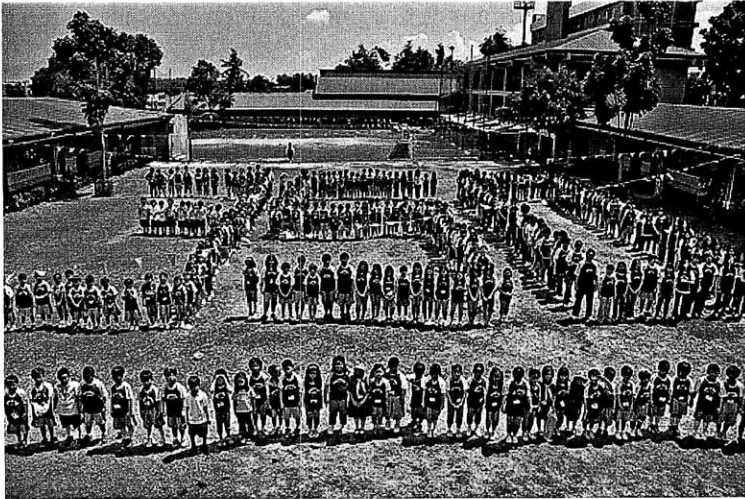
While educating the public on what 350 parts per million actually is poses a challenge as well, McKibben believed that people could more easily rally around a message that is singular, simpler and analogous to the dangers of a fever. Anything too far above a healthy atmospheric carbon level (or body temperature) and we would be flirting with the death of a planet and its people.

²⁵ <http://www.grist.org/article/Green-line-in-the-sand>

In the lead up to the December 2009 Copenhagen UN climate conference, 350 had assembled a global coalition broad enough to hold what Foreign Policy magazine called the “largest ever coordinated rally of any kind.”²⁶ On October 24th, groups of concerned citizens in 180 nations organized over 5,200 events to show their support for the 350 International Day of Climate Action. As 350’s Jamie Henn wrote, “This wasn’t just the US, it wasn’t just Europe, it was everywhere. There are photos [of 350 events] from Cambodia and Rwanda, countries that just years ago were devastated by genocide. Photos from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, places the US media consistently portray as merely hot beds for terrorists. There were hundreds — yes, 100s — of events in China and India, places that didn’t cause this problem but are showing real leadership in solving it.”



²⁶ Foreign Policy magazine



In the end, the team was proud of the thousands of the 25,000 beautiful images of creative displays of the number 350 that were accessible on its website and peppered media around outlets around the globe. At Copenhagen, more than half of the countries agreed to sign on to the 350 CO2 reduction goal. However, McKibben ultimately viewed the outcome of the Copenhagen summit as a failure, writing afterwards: “The president has wrecked the U.N. and he's wrecked the possibility of a tough plan to control global warming. It may get Obama a reputation as a tough American leader, but it's at the expense of everything progressives have held dear.”²⁷

Combined with a loss of hope that anything muscular would emerge from the U.S. legislative process in 2010, McKibben’s team and other grassroots leaders faced a number of pressing questions about what to do next.

²⁷ http://www.huffingtonpost.com/teryn-norris/open-letter-to-bill-mckib_b_398211.html

‘Climate Ground Zero’ in West Virginia

Stories are also emerging of how the children of coal miners in West Virginia are choosing to organize against coalmines and mountain top removal. These youth, more than any outside organizers or professional environmentalists, can speak with a singular moral authority on the issues that directly affect their lives. They are increasingly sharing their perspectives on how the work in the coalmines has physically destroyed or severely affected their families and communities. Says the Energy Action Coalition’s Jessy Tolkan, “They’re not wealthy, Birkenstock wearing kids. And they are radical, these kids in West Virginia and other states. This story is more important than what the professional pollsters are telling us to say on Capitol Hill. These stories are more important in mobilizing the number we need to get out in the streets.”

In recent years, Climate Ground Zero has emerged in West Virginia as an example of the power, as well as the risks, of direct action over writing e-mails to politicians. As described on its website:

Climate Ground Zero is not another environmental organization. It is an ongoing campaign of non-violent civil disobedience in southern West Virginia to end mountaintop removal coal mining and its effects on our future... Tired of writing e-mails and attending meetings? Put on your boots, hit the road and come stand in solidarity with the people of Appalachia. We are going to keep confronting King Coal until we win.”

In the decade leading up to 2009, environmentalists and the mining industry confronted each other in courtrooms and West Virginia’s Capitol, and “arrests were unheard of.” In 2009, however, there were nearly 100 arrests in 20 protests in the state. Climate Ground Zero activists employed creative tactics by chaining themselves to giant dump trucks, scaled 80-foot trees to

stop mountain top removal and paddled into a 9 million-gallon sludge pond. They also carried out roadblocks and staged various sit-ins. Now, there are increasing tensions and threats of violence against protestors.²⁸ Says one activist who was recently slapped by her neighbor during an action, "I feel a sense of dread. You're taking your life in your hands if they know who you are."

William Kovarik, an associate professor at Radford University in Virginia who studies and teaches the history of environmental movements worldwide, believes this conflict is different from past ones because it is between miners and people within their own communities. "Union and nonunion workers are being told by management that their livelihoods are at great risk from out-of-state environmentalists," Kovarik said. "Management is going out of its way to equate them with terrorists, when in reality, they are their own neighbors, grandparents, retired coal miners and college students."²⁹

Inspired by the youth, senior citizens in West Virginia have also joined the cause and begun marching and holding public actions to inspire, or pressure, policy-makers to find alternatives to dirty coal³⁰. These seniors are also beginning to share the stories of what led them to develop their values on environmental issues and the courage to take action in the face of adversity.

²⁸ http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/34492139/ns/us_news-environment/

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ <http://itsgettinghotinhere.org/2009/10/08/senior-citizens-embark-on-25-mile-march-against-mountaintop-removal/>



Mountain top removal protestors engaged in civil disobedience in West Virginia

Energy Action Coalition

In 2004, during his junior year at Yale, Billy Parish had a stirring encounter with climate change that led him to drop out college and commit to helping build the youth climate change movement. He had been studying abroad in India and witnessed the firsthand effects of a receding glacier. This was his “come to the mountain moment.” Ultimately, after he organized a conference for students from Northeast colleges that shared his concern and wanted to take action. Soon thereafter, he and other activists began an effort to make campuses switch to clean energy and launched the Energy Action Coalition (EAC) to coordinate their work. As he saw it, they had to fill “the void of leadership from politicians and corporations”. Building on their mounting campus campaign successes, they mobilized to support the presidential campaign of John Kerry. Kerry’s defeat left Parish and the EAC organizers “really depressed” about the political process and their generation’s ability to develop real power.

At this point, the EAC returned to its roots by focusing on the “Campus Climate Challenge” in order to continue recruiting and developing student leaders around the country to make their campuses climate-neutral. Today, that number stands at 666 campuses. In 2007, the EAC planned its first national conference, “Power Shift,” which attracted 6,000 young people from across the country. As the 2008 elections began to heat up, it decided to return its focus to political campaigning by launching “Power Vote”, which mobilized nearly 350,000 youth to pledge to “vote for clean and just energy”. Parish’s successor, Jessy Tolkan, believed the campaign’s greatest success was that young people felt as if they played a critical role in electing President Obama.

As she describes it, the current generation of youth organizers came of age under the presidency of George W. Bush, with everything from the 9-11 attacks, the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol and the perception that oil companies themselves drove U.S. energy policy. For the millennial generation, helping elect a candidate as inspiring and potentially transformative as Obama was no small feat.

In April of 2009, the second Power Shift brought 13,000 youth to Washington DC for several days of trainings and speeches from high-profile members of Congress and the new Obama Administration. In addition, McKibben, whose group is a member of the EAC, co-organized “the biggest act of civil disobedience against global warming in American history” as a capstone to the weekend. For this event, more than 2,000 youth protestors from Greenpeace and other EAC member groups from around the country, which now totaled 50, marched on the coal-fired Capitol Power Plant that supplied electricity to Congress.³¹ Days in advance of the action, Speaker Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid announced that that Capitol would discontinue its use of the plant.

Going in to 2009 with the election of Obama and a filibuster proof super-majority in the Senate, hopes for Washington driven change were at an all time high for the climate change movement.

³¹ <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1882700,00.html#ixzz0dy9u7mvS>



The Power Shift April 2009 conference in Washington DC

V. SEARCHING FOR A WAY FORWARD

As Bill McKibben contemplated the developments of the last 18 months – from the promise of the 2008 presidential election and growth of 350 and the youth climate change movement to the frustrations with Copenhagen and the bleak prospects for a comprehensive climate change law in the U.S. – he realized that it was time for all of the movement’s leaders to reassess their assumptions and organizing strategies. McKibben is proud of the fact that his Step it Up campaign achieved what it did with only \$200,000 and he planned a budget of \$1.6 million for 350 in 2010. Similarly, the EAC leadership feels that all the PowerShift and other campaigns that it did with a budget of less than \$5 million was the best use of resources in the wider climate

change movement. Going forward, both groups knew that more financial resources would be vital and would have a direct impact on the number of leaders and volunteers the movement could attract. Yet both groups were keenly aware that the challenge of fundraising was just one of many they had to tackle.

In particular, the following questions stood out most: Should the movement grow its ranks deeper in the United States or wider throughout the world? How could he and other leaders continue to humanize what still seemed to be a movement too rooted in the complexities of science and policy and a future too distant to create urgency in the present? How could the movement resist the threats of over-professionalization while avoiding the burn-out and attrition of its mostly young organizers? And, lastly, should its focus continue to be more indirect and directed towards national legislation or should it turn to more direct-action and civil disobedience?

If McKibben is any clue, perhaps the ‘wisdom of the young’ is more inter-generational than is immediately obvious given the number of youth that are involved in the movement. For those like McKibben, that were alive for part if not all of the 1960’s and 1970’s, however, there is at least a lived experience for the power of organizing. While youth may have gotten a taste for organizing and movement building with the election of President Obama, the climate change activists with more experience under their belts have firsthand knowledge of the theory that Obama himself frequently repeats: throughout history, true social change almost always comes from the ground up, not from the top-down.

While Copenhagen may not have been considered a success inside the conference, many of the organizers believe it was a success on the outside, as more than 100,000 people from all walks of life gathered together and deepened their bonds, nurtured a global community of activists, and strengthened their resolve to continue fighting for change. The question for McKibben and other organizers going forward is how to design regenerative types of campaigns, build the training and feedback processes, and create the communities that supply the moral support and energy that will be needed for increasingly tougher organizing challenges.

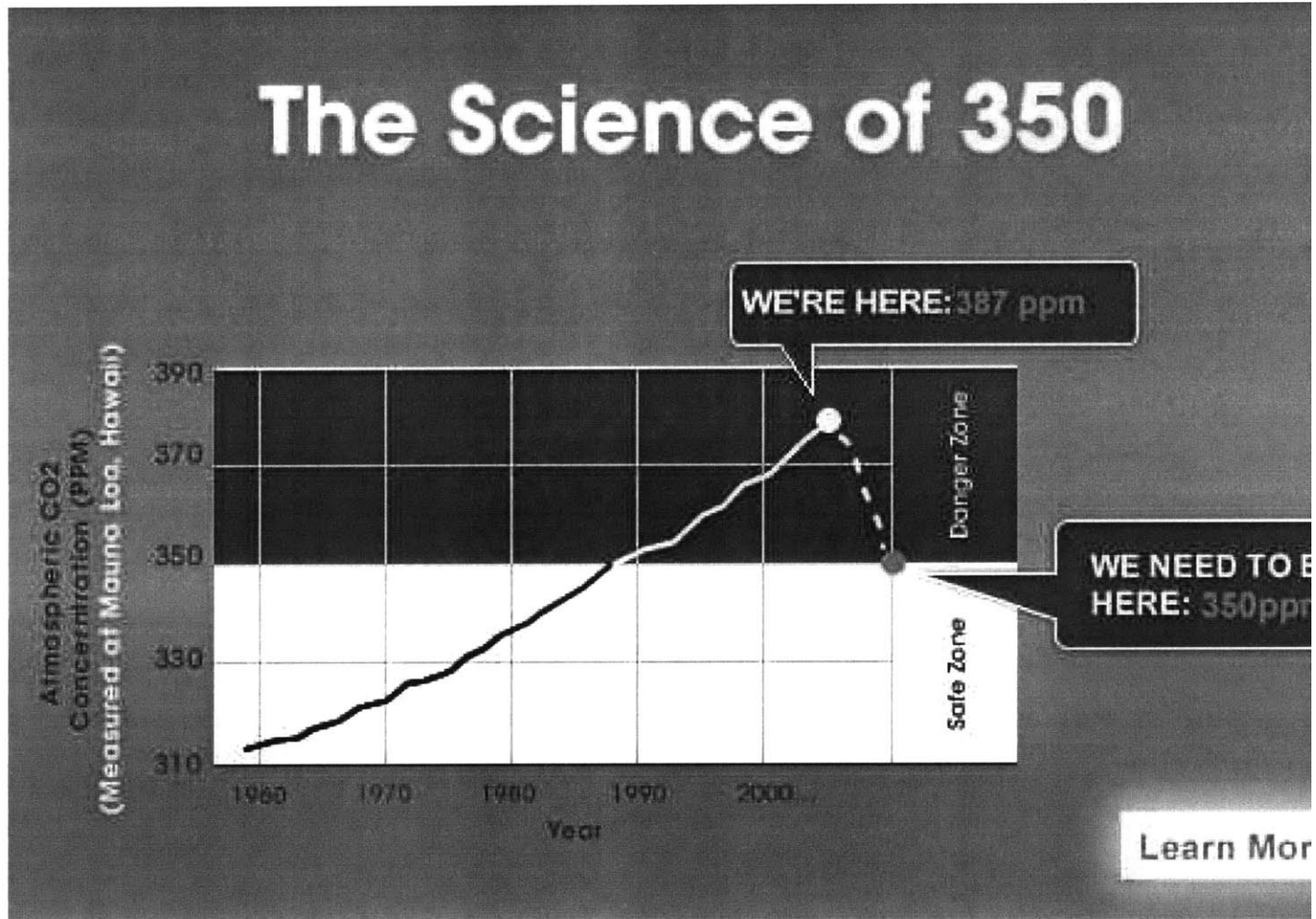
In the face of all of this complexity, however, Ganz also reminds of the need to always remember that “simple is good,” and how resourcefulness must be creatively harnessed to trump the abundance of resources in the hands of those who are resisting positive social change:

Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty organized a revolution around tea. Gandhi organized one around salt. Dr. King organized one around bus fare and, alter, lunch room counters, greyhound busses, and the vote. The farm workers organized one around grapes. Each of these movements found ways that lots of people, contributing a little bit, could create real power; they mastered the art of campaigning, not just elections; and they learned how their own resourcefulness could compensate for vast resources in the hands of their opponents... I really don't think that another media campaign, the timetable for which is being driven by the vagaries of legislative calendars, is going to get us to where we need to go. We'll know that we're there we start setting the time table to which the legislative calendar will have to conform -- just as was so in earlier moments of major reform.

What will the tea, salt, bus boycotts, or grape be for the climate change movement? This is one of the many questions McKibben wrestles with as he and his team chalk out their path for the decade ahead.

Climate Change Case Study Appendix

1) 350 Graphic



2) <http://www.powervote.org/about>

Power Vote: Youth Voters for a Clean, Just Energy Future

On campuses and in communities nationwide, youth are leading the way in responding to the global climate crisis.

Now “Power Vote,” a national non-partisan effort spearheaded by the Energy Action Coalition, seeks to elevate the issue of climate change in the 2008 election by mobilizing one million young “climate voters.” To do this, the Energy Action Coalition and its more than forty partner organizations are organizing young people across the United States to pledge their vote “for clean and just energy.”

Power Vote will:

- Harness the political power of one million young voters who want a bold new vision for America's future that reduces dangerous pollution while creating millions of good jobs.
- Elevate energy and climate issues in this historic election.
- Mobilize grassroots support for bold political action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and invest in a clean energy economy.

This is our moment. The “Youth Vote” is more important than ever before.

- **“Millennial Voters” comprise 25% of the electorate – and counting!** In 2008, a quarter of the electorate will be represented by the 50 million young people, 18-31 years old, who are classified as part of the Millennial Generation. According to a February 2007 Young Voters Strategies report, these voters will number 82 million and make up one-third of the total electorate by 2015. By all accounts, this is a demographic that candidates cannot afford to ignore!

The Power Vote Platform reflects the priorities of young voters.

- **Economy:** Today’s youth may be the first generation to face a lower standard of living than their parents – and currently young people have the highest unemployment rate in the country. Investing in a clean energy future will create millions of jobs and build new industries, revitalizing our sagging economy.
- **Environment:** Young voters are the demographic that polling has shown to care most about environmental issues. A recent survey by Opportunity 08 (a project of the Brookings Institution) found that “an overwhelming majority of young people feel Americans should do whatever it takes to protect environment.” Overall, their polling reveals, young voters “are more concerned about the environment than are their parents and grandparents.” **Recognizing that they will inherit this planet and its climate crisis, the Millennial Generation is demanding bold solutions to begin to address the problem now.**
- **Peace & Energy Security:** Polling reflects that youth support a peaceful, energy independent future. America can break free from its dependence on oil by investing in clean domestic energy sources such as wind and solar.

With Power Vote, young voters will make clean energy and a new green economy top priorities in this year’s election and then hold every elected representative accountable to making our vision a reality!

The Power Vote Platform

Our generation needs a brand new vision for our future. We need to lead the world towards a just, clean energy economy that moves beyond dirty energy, creates green jobs for all, and secures our climate. I pledge to vote, hold our leaders accountable through my sustained involvement, and create a Power Shift!

1. GREEN JOBS NOW

Invest in millions of new green jobs, strengthen the American middle class and create new pathways out of poverty for millions more. By retooling our factories, revamping our schools, and rebuilding our communities, we can create a sustainable, just, and prosperous future for all.

2. INVEST IN A CLEAN ENERGY ECONOMY

Unleash American ingenuity and launch a new wave of affordable clean energy technology. We need more federal and private investments in public transit, ultra-efficient vehicles, and renewable energy like wind and solar.

3. CUT GLOBAL WARMING POLLUTION NOW

To ensure our health, prosperity, and security, scientists tell us we must rapidly drive US global warming pollution towards zero. We can and must accomplish this transition to a clean energy future in an equitable and just manner.

4. END OUR DEPENDENCE ON DIRTY ENERGY

Enact an immediate moratorium on new coal, oil, natural gas, and nuclear plant construction and infrastructure, while phasing out existing plants and fossil fuel extraction and ensuring a just transition for the workforce and communities

5. RE-ENGAGE AS A LEADER IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Global warming requires a global solution. We must shift the focus of American foreign policy from military intervention to international cooperation and join the world in pursuing peace and international development, thereby offering assistance to vulnerable and impacted communities.

6. TAKE DIRTY MONEY OUT OF POLITICS

It's time to make government accountable to "We the People." Put voters first and refuse campaign contributions from dirty energy interests.

Case Study II:

Helping the People of Cuba by Organizing the Cuban-American Community

As Carlos Saladrigas sat in his office preparing for a Cuba Study Group (CSG) meeting, he debated what he could do to ensure that the Obama Administration and Congress kept moving the dial on U.S. policy toward Cuba. Even though his organization was comprised of predominantly Republican Cuban-Americans, the CSG supported legislation to lift the ban on travel for Americans wanting to go to Cuba and all efforts to move from a policy of isolation to one of engagement between the two countries. Carlos worried, however, that Cuba was not getting the attention it deserves with an economy in disarray, intense battles over healthcare and other domestic priorities, and a range of international problems considered more vital to U.S. national interests than Cuba. He was concerned that the great momentum from the 2008 election, in which an unprecedented 35% of Florida Cuban-Americans voted for the President, could be lost.³²

As the co-founder of the CSG, Carlos is among the most respected and out-spoken Cuban-American civic leaders. Since its inception in 2002, The Cuba Study Group has emerged as a leading voice of moderation in the historically tense dialogue regarding US policy towards Cuba. The group's mission is "to facilitate a peaceful reunification of the Cuban nation leading to a free and open society with respect for human rights, the rule of law and a market-based economy."

³² <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122602004920007191.html>

While its actions have historically been geared towards advocating decision-makers in Washington DC, Carlos was inspired by how Cuban-Americans were increasingly willing to speak out on their demands for change with regards to Cuba, from the 2008 election to the outpouring of grassroots support for Juanes' September 2009 "Peace without Borders" concert in Havana. He knew that, in addition to the traditional 'grassroots' work of the CSG, he had to start exploring what could be done from the grassroots in order to have the most impact on the perennial U.S.-Cuba debate.

Since shortly after Fidel Castro's 1959 takeover of Cuba, the U.S.-Cuba relationship has been characterized by isolation and confrontation. Carlos and the CSG members were convinced that the dominant hard-line approach from Miami had proved fruitless in catalyzing any democratic change in Cuba. More often than not, they believed, it was actually counter-productive because it provided the regime with the perfect political excuse for its own failures. In the quest to help usher in a new approach to dealing with Cuba, Carlos dreamed of mobilizing the "silent majority" of Cuban-Americans that did not agree with the dominant hard-line approach. According to the 2007 Florida International University/Brookings Cuba poll, a clear majority (65%) of Cuban-Americans in South Florida were in favor of a dialogue with the Cuban government, up from 55.6 percent in the 2004 Cuba poll. Many argued that change is in the air in Miami, the capital of the Cuban diaspora, and that it was a question of how to help facilitate it and make something of these attitudinal and demographic shifts.

Should Carlos, through the CSG or another entity, fund a well-coordinated grass-roots effort to give voice to those in Miami who want to change U.S. policy in order to help break the Castro

government's grip on the people? Or should he focus his efforts exclusively on a political action committee (PAC) that could support members of Congress that are willing to challenge the hard-line mindset that all six Cuban-American U.S. Senators and Representatives subscribed to? Or should moderates like Carlos work harder to ensure that one of the three Miami Cuban-American hard-line members of Congress is unseated in the coming years? Could he work on all three goals, and if so, which should he prioritize?

Many arguments could be made for these and other goals. Yet a proper read of the history of the complex Miami-Washington-Havana relationship would prove vital to choosing the best path forward.

David vs. Goliath: Mistrust, Isolation and Confrontation

The U.S.-Cuba relationship has been dominated by mistrust and hostility for over 50 years. Soon after Fidel Castro and a band of rebels launched his revolution and allied with the Soviet Union, the U.S. imposed a full commercial and financial embargo on Cuba, banned all travel by Americans to the island and severed diplomatic ties. The original intent of the U.S. policy was to make the situation so difficult for Cubans on the island that they would take to the streets and overthrow the oppressive regime. The basic theory behind the policy was that it would be like turning up the heat on a pressure cooker until it explodes.

Many experts believe if this policy were ever to have any chance of achieving its stated purpose it would require multi-lateral support and proper timing. Unlike the case with Apartheid South

states: “At least 300,000 Cubans have come to the United States since 1994, when an accord was signed granting 20,000 American visas a year. The vast majority of newcomers are seeking the economic freedom Fidel Castro has denied them, not political asylum, and retain their strong ties to the island.”

Many of these recent arrivals only experience with politics in Cuba was under the Castro regime, thus they see politics with apathy or mistrust. They often say that they see Cubans in Cuba as being stuck in a prison, and ask why they should further isolate their brothers, sisters, cousins and friends on the island.

Post 1980’s Cubans are larger than historic exile group by population, but not votes

Cubans in the US – 2004

1,448,684

	FL based, born in			
Cubans in FL	Cuba			
985,105	689,574			
		1990s-		
FL Cubans pre	1980s	2004		
1980 arrival	arrival	arrival	Total Post 1980s	
295,531.54	137,914.72	256,127.33		394,042.05

What to do now?

As Carlos deliberated what to do next, he focused on the argument that the problem with U.S.-Cuba policy is at its core a problem of civic engagement. Simply stated, U.S.-Cuba policy does not reflect the values and interests of most Americans and Cuban-Americans, not to mention Cubans in Cuba. Numerous polls have highlighted this point. Seventy-one percent of Americans think the United States should re-establish diplomatic relations with Cuba, according to an April, 2009 CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll, and 64 percent think the United States should lift the travel ban to Cuba for all Americans. A 2009 poll by Miami-based pollster Bendixen and Associates showed 41 percent of Cuban-Americans nationally were against maintaining the embargo, while 40 per cent were in favor of keeping it. As Bendixen's Fernand Amandi stated, "After 50 years, some Cubans have come to the painful revelation that the embargo might not have been the most effective tool against the Castro regime."³⁷

Moreover, even though the 2007 FIU/Brookings Cuba poll shows that a slight majority of South Florida Cuban-Americans continues to support the embargo, there are several hundred thousand Cubans in South Florida who are not yet American citizens whose views on the embargo are fundamentally different. For too long, the policy has been centered on the values and interests of the most vocal, organized and funded faction of the hard-line historic exile. This group is driven by what increasingly seems like a quixotic quest for justice (some argue vengeance) for the pain and suffering it experienced at the hands of the Revolution.

³⁷ <http://www.bendixenandassociates.com/press/reuters-september12009.html>

Africa, the international community has never supported calls to internationalize the embargo on Cuba. In fact, U.S.-Cuba policy is a great source of concern and disagreement for allies in Latin America and Europe. During the annual vote at the United Nations on the embargo, every country votes against the policy except for the United States, Israel. Throughout most of the world, Cuba is touted as an example of U.S. foreign policy gone bad, of Goliath beating up on David. The Castro regime has done all it possibly can to perpetuate this view, mobilizing impressive global support in its constant characterizations of the United States as an imperial power and the exile community as a “Miami Mafia”. The regime line has always been that all Cuban-Americans are *gusanos*, or worms, for their opposition to the revolution and alleged betrayal of their homeland. In Miami, hard-liners often viewed Cubans in Cuba as lazy or incapable of taking action to overthrow the Castro regime. This contributed to a vicious cycle in which the Cuban government exploited the divide between Cubans on either side of the Florida Straits.

The unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and its massive subsidies programs brought the Cuban economy to its knees, shrinking GDP by one-third virtually overnight. Because of the extreme economic hardships of Cuba’s new post-Soviet “special period,” exile hard-liners argued that the ‘Cuban street’ was near a tipping point. In response, Congress passed the “Cuba Democracy Act” in 1992, tightening the embargo further by banning subsidiaries of U.S. companies from conducting business in Cuba. Before this law was passed, an estimated \$400-700 million in annual trade occurred between subsidiaries of American companies and Cuba.³³

³³ Wallie Mason and Stephen J. Kimmerling. 1996. “The United States Embargo Against Cuba: Legal Aspects of the Restrictions on Sales of Pharmaceutical Products, as set forth in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992.” Report prepared in October 1996 by the International Human Rights Consulting Group for the American Association of World Health.

Four years later, as Cuba proved it could muddle through, the most vocal anti-Castro advocates believed it needed to put the pressure on even more. In 1996, Bill Clinton was forced to sign the “Helms-Burton bill” into law after the Cuban military shot down two civilian aircraft from the exile group “Brothers to the Rescue.” All four Cuban-American passengers on these unarmed planes died, as they were on a routine search over international waters for Cuban *balseros*, or rafters, in the shark-infested Florida Straits. This legislation was the first attempt to internationalize the embargo, and Clinton had stated his intention to veto it before the shoot down occurred. Once enacted, the legislation caused a transatlantic rift with allies in Europe who would be punished for doing business with Cuba, by, for example, not allowing European executives or their families to travel to the US within one year of traveling to Cuba for business purposes.

The series of events leading to the passage of Helms-Burton is the most frequently cited evidence that Fidel Castro himself seems to be the most hard-line of anyone involved in the problem of Cuba, since his military’s actions resulted in the most severe tightening of the embargo yet. There have been other incidents that support this theory, including the December 2009 detention of a U.S. AID subcontractor who was in Cuba. Many analysts believe the Cuban government arrested the worker to re-ignite an aggressive posture towards an Obama Administration that was making overtures to the government.

Today, the situation in Cuba remains dire, with workers typically earning \$15 a month through the state-controlled economy. However, through their mastery of the art of survival, the regime have attracted enough foreign direct investment from sources other than the United States and implemented enough minor economic reforms to keep the system afloat and maintain its absolute grip on power. While some hoped that the transition to Raul Castro in the summer of 2006 would lead to greater economic or political openings in Cuba, these hopes have been almost entirely dashed. In fact, towards the end of 2008 there was an increase in repression against the island's dissidents, as the Cuba people faced what is probably the toughest daily reality in the revolution's history.

Why the Cuban-American divide in approach?

In Miami, there has long been a culture of intimidation and apprehension when it comes to questioning the status quo on U.S.-Cuba policy. In the 1970's and early 1980's, the FBI considered Miami a haven for terrorism because of a wave of violence against some who were perceived to be supporting the Cuban government or were advocating an end to the embargo. The peak of this violence was when a Cuban-American killed 73 Cubans that were aboard a flight from Cuba. Other stories of house and nightclub fire bombings abounded. While this violence subsided over time, many Cuban-Americans believe that powerful remnants of this culture remain.

In spite of the fact that the community has grown increasingly skeptical of the policy's effectiveness, many older exiles in particular hold on to their hard-line positions with an almost

religious fervor. The community has survived a brutal regime that has killed, jailed or exiled its opponents throughout its entire rule. Americans and even many Cuban-Americans lament that 50 years is plenty of time to try out a given policy and that it's clear the embargo has not produced the desired consequences of toppling the Castro regime. But an important point is lost here. The embargo started out as the last hope for effecting political change on the island, and over time it became a strong symbol of the community's story of exile.

Ask a Cuban-American, "Why an embargo?" They will often respond with another question, "Do you know what my family and I went through in order to leave Cuba and start all over again? Do you know that I lost my grandfather during the Bay of Pigs invasion?" Like the powerful story of Moses parting the Red Sea for safe passage of Jewish slaves during 40 years of exile, many believe the embargo has kept the community's powerful narrative and determination alive and visible during decades of waiting, hoping and dreaming. As such, many younger Cuban-Americans refuse to travel to Cuba for fear of dishonoring the struggles of their parents and grandparents who fled the revolution in its early days and who view travel as a show of support for the regime.

Today, the embargo is as much about the Cuban-American community's identity as a people in exile than it is about policy. According to the 2007 FIU/Brookings Institute Cuba poll, only 23.6% of South Florida Cuban-Americans believe that the embargo has "worked well". Yet 57.5 percent of this population expressed support for its continuation. There has been a steady decline, however, in these numbers, as the respondents supporting the embargo declined from 66 percent in the 2004 poll.

Perhaps more than principle, however, the staunch support of the embargo by many Cuban-American leaders is an attempt to hold on to their strongest negotiating chip. Some fear that should a movement ever gain enough ground to fundamentally change U.S.-Cuba policy, that the Cuban-American community would lose its leverage over U.S. policy as well the future course of events on the island. This is a view that has been advocated by leaders of the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF). CANF, the largest exile group that was modeled after the famed Israeli lobbying group APEC, was once the backbone of the entire hard-line movement in Miami. Soon after the 1997 death of its charismatic founder and powerful leader, Jorge Mas Canosa, the group splintered and a hard-line faction decided to break off and form the Cuban Liberty Council (CLC). At that point, CANF began to become more moderate, eventually becoming an important de-facto supporter of then Senator Obama's bid for the presidency.

Turning passion into power: swinging presidential elections (and American history)

Last November Obama surpassed most expectations and the highest percentage of Florida's prized Cuban American vote (35%) for a Democratic presidential candidate. Among voters ages 18 to 29 years old, Obama won 55%, while Sen. John McCain received 75% of the vote from those 60 and older. This was hailed as evidence of the changing reality with this community. John Kerry won 26% in 2004 and Al Gore 18% in the bitter 2000 electoral battle. With approximately half a million Cuban-American votes at stake in Florida, the difference between the Gore and Obama results is equivalent to more than 70,000 votes. As Florida is the largest swing state in presidential elections, this constituency group's vote is considered important

enough to swing entire elections, as it did in the case of Al Gore. Gore suffered the wrath of many Cubans as repudiation for how the Clinton/Gore Administration handled the crisis over Elian Gonzalez, the boy that was found at sea in the spring of 2000 and sent back to his father in Cuba after a prolonged and highly dramatic international custody dispute. After a prolonged dispute, Gore lost Florida to George W. Bush by a mere 537 votes.

Obama makes first move by reinstating family visits

In April 2009, President Obama fulfilled a campaign promise by removing the restrictions on travel to Cuba and the sending of remittances for Cuban-Americans. The new regulation undid a 2004 Bush administration measure that allowed Cubans to visit family once every three years and restricted remittances to the sender's immediate family, with a cap of \$300 quarterly. In reaction, one of Miami's Cuban congressman Mario Diaz-Balart compared Cuban-Americans who disagree with his views on U.S.-Cuba policy and support their families on the island as sharing "the same attitude as those who wanted to do business and did business with [Adolf] Hitler and supported that fascist, murderous regime."³⁴

Human Rights Watch (HRW) welcomed the easing of restrictions as "a major break from an ineffective and unjust policy", but argued the U.S. administration should extend it to give all Americans the right to travel to Cuba. "Not only did the restrictions cause considerable suffering and violate the rights of Cuban American families, but they completely failed to bring any change to Cuba," HRW's Americas director Jose Miguel Vivanco said.

³⁴ <http://m.naplesnews.com/news/2009/apr/16/one-one-transcript-us-rep-mario-diaz-balart-interv/>

The growing diversity of the diaspora

While the situation in Cuban Miami has improved significantly in the last decade, the community still deals with systematic intimidation tactics such as the recent Nazi sympathizer comparisons. Many Cubans are still hesitant to voice their true views on Cuba policy issues for fear that it will effect their livelihoods, as the community has benefited immensely from the tight-knit enclave in which Cubans have frequently supported each other through deep business and social ties. Few are willing to risk having their names dragged through the mud in public over their views on an issue that they consider a lost cause. Many Cubans are resigned to the fact that biology – not U.S. policy – will determine Cuba’s future once the Castro brothers either die or are too old to rule. The problem, however, is that it could easily take another 5-15 years before the both of the Castro’s leave the helm. Joaquin Balaguer, a longtime former president of neighboring Dominican Republic, essentially ruled that country from his deathbed until he was 95 years old. Fidel and Raul Castro are 83 and 78 years old, respectively.

The politics of affection vs. the politics of passion

The portion of the exile community that holds the most political power is the *historico exilio* group that migrated in the 1960’s and 1970’s, soon after Fidel Castro’s Revolution seized power, nationalized all private property and jailed or killed thousands of its opponents. With notable exceptions, few members of this first major exile wave have family in Cuba that they are in close contact with. In contrast, the Cubans that migrated to the United States since 1980 – which

recently became a majority of the overall Cuban-American community – are likely to have immediate family members or close cousins and friends in Cuba. They often support their family members through remittances and make up the vast majority of Cuban-Americans that travel to Cuba. It is often said that for these post-1980 Cubans, the politics of affection beat out the politics of passion. The desire to help family and friends in need can trump the longing for justice and isolation. That said, as activist and blogger Alejandro Barreras argues that this delineation must be used with great care, there is far from a perfect correlation between ideology and how someone traces their lineage to Cuba.

The moral case for making Cuba’s bad situation better – not worse

The great tragedy of the Cuba problem is that it is in many ways a prolonged family feud. By all objective accounts, the Cuban economy is practically bankrupt because of its own failings and mismanagement. The Economist estimates Cuba’s GDP per capita at \$3,900, ranking it 23 in a list of 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean³⁵. According to independent Cuban economist Oscar Espinosa Chepe, “Before 1959, the data indicated that the per capita GDP was equivalent to those of Argentina, Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica, at the time the most developed countries in the region, but it is also true that the sectors of the population were deep in poverty, especially in rural areas.” Today there is hardly any incentive for the highly educated engineer or doctor to pursue her profession when she can make more money (and enough to actually live on) playing a guitar for tips from tourists.

³⁵ The Economist, 2009 pocket book edition, based on 2006 figures at purchasing power parity with the U.S.

Most analysts agree that the U.S. embargo and isolationist policy have effectively made a bad situation worse. Politically, the policy has provided the Castro regime with a perfect excuse for its own failings: “Yankee Imperialism.” The regime consistently argues that all of the country’s ills are caused by the embargo and U.S. attempts to undermine the government. Economically, the embargo has prevented massive amounts of trade with the U.S. that Cuba depended on before the revolution. Indeed, other Caribbean islands export the majority of their agriculture products to the United States and earn billions from American tourists. Such was the case with Cuba prior to 1959.

From a humanitarian perspective, the policy has kept the Cuban family divided. Up until the Obama administration move lifted the travel restrictions for Cuban-Americans in April 2009, this group could only travel to see its relatives in Cuba once every three years and it faced harsh restrictions when trying to send remittances. Cases abounded of Cubans in the U.S. having to time their trips carefully in order to see an elderly parent or grandparent before their death. In 2008, three hurricanes caused an estimated \$10 billion dollars worth of damage to the island’s fragile economy. Because of the embargo’s prohibition on the financing of food and medicine sales to Cuba, we were unable to help Cuba in the same way we could have helped Haiti or the Dominican Republic through similar crises.

An often-heard joke in Cuba says, ‘ask a Cuban what the main successes of the revolution are she will answer: education, healthcare, and culture. Ask what the failures are: breakfast, lunch and dinner.’ While the help that Cuban-Americans can provide through visits and remittances is significant, there is still much more that can be done to help the people of Cuba. As Pope John

Paul II said during his historic trip through the country in 1998, "May Cuba, with all its magnificent potential, open itself up to the world, and may the world open itself up to Cuba." He was calling for change from both the dogmatic Cuban regime and the Cuban-American hard-line driven U.S. policy. Orlando's Bishop Thomas Wenski has often echoed this sentiment, as he argued in the Miami Herald in 2009: "Both the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) as well as the Cuban bishops have been opposed to the economic embargo for decades. It has failed to change policy but has inflicted needless suffering on the Cuban population."³⁶

Exiles versus immigrants

The 1960s/70s exiles tended to come from the more educated and middle to upper income groups in Cuba. While most of them lost all their assets and came to the U.S. penniless, many had the educational advantage, entrepreneurial acumen and vast U.S. government support to succeed at a quicker rate than almost any other immigrant group in history. Cuban-Americans of the historic exile have, on average, higher wealth and education levels than Cubans that came after 1980.

Cubans who arrived since 1980 also came penniless but have had less time to get their bearings in the United States. In contrast with the historic exile, they tend to not exhibit the fervor for politics that the historic exile is so well known for. While many that arrived in the 1980's attained middle-class status or greater, most of those that came in the last 20 years are working two and three jobs, struggling to make ends meet like other Latino immigrants. The Economist

³⁶ http://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/other-views/story/1200852.html?story_link=email_msg

From the Miami airwaves to Washington to every corner of the country

To defend the pro-embargo position, there is a complex network of Spanish language Miami radio stations, TV talk shows, and several Cuban-American elected officials at the national and local level that quickly mobilize and coordinate to prevent any efforts to challenge the policy.

The hard-line lobby has played a vital role in electing the five Cuban-American members of Congress. There is one U.S. Senator and four house representatives of Cuban origin. Until Florida's Republican Senator Mel Martinez stepped down from his seat in 2008, there were two U.S. Cuban-American senators of Cuban-American origin, even though this community represents less than 0.5% of the country's population. The members of Congress from Florida are Republican; those from New Jersey are Democrat. All are uniformly hard-line and almost always following the same message when it comes to Cuba. Bob Menendez, the New Jersey U.S. Senator, is the only Latino in the senate and among the most powerful Hispanics in the country. He is on many key committees and runs the important Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), which is charged with fundraising for other Senate Democrats. Menendez is said to hold the keys to blocking legislation on any changes in Cuba policy.

The U.S.-Cuba Democracy Political Action Committee (PAC) ensures the isolation of Cuba by contributing to congressional races in virtually every corner of the country. As stated in the 2009 Public Campaign report entitled *Cold Hard Cash, Cold War Politics*:

Since the 2004 election cycle, a network of Cuban-American donors and political action committees (PACs) has donated in excess of \$10 million to more than 300 federal candidates in order to thwart any changes in the U.S. embargo of Cuba. Recipients are Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate members, rank-and-file members and party leaders. Contributions are sometimes coordinated and mutually reinforcing. These donations were often targeted to members of Congress who changed their positions on U.S.-Cuba policy to align them with opponents of change, sometimes within days or a few weeks of making the switch.

With support growing for reforms of U.S. policy toward Cuba, including lifting the ban on travel by all Americans to the island, and with congressional hearings on travel to Cuba about to take place before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the question is whether reasoned policy or old-style politics driven by the corrosive influence of campaign donations will prevail.³⁸

The head of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) argues that while members of Congress are still receiving checks for a few thousand dollars from the PAC, they are unlikely to take on the status quo on Cuba policy. Indeed, in the horse-trading that often dominates congressional dealings, Cuba is not an important enough issue for members to challenge the status quo. This is especially true when they will not see any political benefit in terms of votes or campaign dollars.

If the Obama administration wants to take bold steps on Cuba policy, it will likely need a certain amount of visible support, or cover, from the Cuban-American community to do so. Advocates on Capitol Hill who have worked for a different policy on Cuba have often been told by members of Congress that it is difficult for them to justify their votes when every single Cuban in

³⁸ <http://www.publiccampaign.org/cuba>

Congress is uniformly hard-line. President Obama did make significant gains with the Cuban-American vote during the election, particularly given that he was clear he sought a whole new approach to dealing with rogue nations around the world, not just Cuba. In a famous 2007 YouTube presidential debate, Obama was asked whether he would be willing to meet with dictators of Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, North Korea and Syria during his first year as president, “without preconditions”. His response, without hesitation, was an emphatic yes.

A new theory of change: reinstating people-to-people exchanges and more

The Obama Administration’s initially sought a rupture from the Bush years, where unilateral hawkishness was the modus operandi for dealing with difficult international challenges. Cuba was no exception, as Bush had rolled back all of the openings in Cuba policy that Clinton had put in place, and tightened sanctions to their utmost. Bush reversed Clinton’s “Track II” approach that combined the economic embargo with the promotion of “people-to-people” exchanges. This policy was modeled on successful engagement policies that played vital roles in other countries’ democratic transitions following communism, including *Ostpolitik* in Germany. Such a policy allowed for the free flow of ideas – allowing the exchange of students, academics, scientists, religious and humanitarian groups and a wide variety of other groups that would engage in some form of “purposeful travel”. The theory of change behind such a policy is that by exposing the people to new ideas regarding political and economic openness they are more likely to fight for such ideas.

Since Cuba is an island, the Castro regime has found it relatively easier to cut people off from the outside world. It has developed a repressive apparatus that restricts Cubans access to books, internet access, websites, or ideas that are deemed “counter-revolutionary” or “imperialistic”. Through engagement and people to people contact, the theory goes, ideas can flow more freely to the Cuban people. While the Administration indicated that it would re-instate the people-to-people exchange programs that were prevalent under Clinton, as of early 2010 it had been slow to do so.

Change for Obama, but not in Congress

Carlos was a significant donor and surrogate for the Obama campaign in South Florida. As a long-time Republican businessman, his views on Cuba demonstrated that the community was not a monolith. Even some within the ‘historic exile’, of which Carlos is a member, were helping chart a new path. The support of Carlos and others like him showed that the Cuba issue need not be a partisan issue. 2008 helped prove that being against Castro and communism need not equate to always voting Republican.

On the contrary, as many Cubans said during the campaign, this is a discussion about means, not about ends. The argument goes: We all want the same thing in the long-run, a free Cuba, where Cubans can author their own future. A future in which, at the very least, they will want to stay on the island instead of taking to shark infested waters to seek a more free and opportunity filled life in Florida. No one wants dictatorship. We need a civil debate about the best means to get there, about what is even possible for U.S. policy. We have tried one dominant approach for fifty years

and have not had an impact. Fidel Castro smoothly handed power over to his brother once he fell sick in 2006, and the exile community nor the U.S. government had a single thing to do with that successful succession of power. Does that not mean that we owe it to the Cuban people to try something different?

2008 Congressional Elections: So close, yet so far

Unfortunately for the cause of moderate Cubans in Miami, the three challengers to the hard-line congressional representatives did not emerge victorious on November 4th, 2008. At the start of 2008, many thought that Martinez had the best shot at beating Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart. He spent 24 years as Mayor of Hialeah, a predominantly working class and highly Cuban city within Miami-Dade County. Yet he lost by the same margin (58-42) that a virtually un-known and poorly funded candidate lost by two years earlier. A string of past corruption charges haunted him in what was considered the most negative congressional race in the country in 2008.

Joe Garcia was the candidate who came closest, losing to Lincoln's brother, Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart in the 25th district of suburban Miami-Dade. Garcia was the executive director of the Cuban-American National Foundation (CANF), and had experience working on energy and Hispanic political empowerment issues.

Looking forward to the 2010 election cycle, it looks to be more challenging for Democrats nationwide and in Miami. The first election after a new president takes office typically favors candidates of the opposing party. Turnout will be lower without the epic drama of the 2008

presidential election, another factor that typically helps Republican incumbents. The bench of candidates on the Democratic side in Miami is also sparse. Joe Garcia, now an Obama appointee with the Department of Energy, said he believed that if 15,000 new voters are registered in District 25, where he ran, that the Democrats would take that seat in 2010.

The University of Miami Institute for Cuban and Cuban-American post 2008 election report argues that while there was no “seismic shift” in Cubans political preferences in that election, there was a significant shift in Cuban voters’ views on Cuba policy. In 2004, over 50% of Cuban-American registered voters in Miami favored a continued tightening of the embargo and the travel ban. In 2008, however, this number fell to 28%. This was particularly revealing since the Institute traditionally leans towards the hard-line faction.

527 experience during the 2008 election cycle

During the 2008 election, two young Cuban-Americans started a 527 to support the challengers to Congressmen Lincoln and Mario Diaz-Balart. Initially, donors were very excited about funding ads that would challenge the Diaz-Balart brothers for “dividing, not uniting, the Cuban family” through the congressmen’s staunch support of highly restrictive travel and remittances regulations for Cuban-Americans. Yet private polling showed that this issue would not move actual Cuban-American votes, and that they were thinking overwhelmingly about bread and butter economic issues. When the 527 founders told their Cuban-American moderate donors that it did not make sense to run ads on Cuba, many of them rescinded their support. In September, once Bear Sterns collapsed, many of the donors returned and ended up spending approximately

\$250,000 on the 527's non-Cuba focused ads. By that point, however, it may have been too little too late. Many of these donors were from the Cuba Study Group (including Carlos himself), the centrist Cuban American National Foundation and others who were more recent arrivals from Cuba, such as the heads of the travel agencies that arranged flights to Cuba. Even though there was a growing group of potential Cuban-American donors to challenge the Diaz-Balarts, they were still outnumbered when compared with the hard-liner donors to the US-Cuba Democracy PAC.

From grasstops to grassroots: moving beyond the quest to turn Little Havana blue

Perhaps Mauricio Claver-Clarone is right. The head of the hard-line U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC argues that the November 4th election, in which all three Miami Cuban-American members of Congress were reelected, is an endorsement of their hard-line Cuba views. The media has talked up a potential “sea-change” in the Cuba American electorate every election cycle since 1985. The New York Times 2008 article, “Will Little Havana Turn Blue?” is but one example of the narrative that the anti-embargo mainstream press loves to run, he argues.

If it is true that the 2010 will likely turn out the same way as 2008 for the Miami congressional seats, and with no indication that Cuban-Americans in Congress are open to changing their views, then what should be done? In the face of complex and costly political realities, perhaps another route to hasten action on U.S.-Cuba policy is to organize the community around a common cause. Perhaps the community needs to think beyond zero-sum elections and try to realize what power it can wield the non-electoral route. A vibrant grassroots movement could

demonstrate to decision-makers in Washington that they need not take their cues solely from the Cuban community's hard-liner faction.

There are a number of goals, tactics and narratives that could help spark a meaningful mobilization for change in the Cuban-American community. Just as there has been a dominant narrative that demonstrated force against the Castro regime through the embargo, the community can develop a new narrative to embody this new grassroots mobilization. This new narrative could celebrate the origins of the Cuban community in Miami, focusing on the common bonds that all Cubans share of having to find their way and succeed in a new country. Yet this narrative can also acknowledge where the community may have gone wrong, how it has allowed itself to be held captive by those leaders that are pursuing their own interests above those of the Cuban people. This new narrative would have to be driven by a dynamic new coalition comprised of Cubans that came in recent years, youth and historic exiles that have adapted their views to time's changing realities. It would be an opportunity for all Cubans to get it right, an opportunity for renewal, not by going back but by going forward.

Learning from Oswaldo Payá's and Yoani Sanchez's organizing efforts in Cuba

A vibrant movement could demonstrate to elected officials in Washington that they need not take their cues solely from the more organized and experienced hard-liners. One idea is to organize a petition drive, or 'a Covenant with the Cuban people', around issues and opportunities with clear moral resonance across both sides of the Florida Straits.

Perhaps a page can be taken from what Oswaldo Payá has done in Cuba. A leading dissident who received his training in the Catholic Church, Payá's "Varela Project" is an organizing effort to build support to get the Cuban government to enact certain democratic reforms. The Varela Project collected 25,000 signatures from Cubans on the island and presented them to the government in an appeal for legislative changes via a national referendum. Cuba's constitution allows citizens to put to a national referendum any proposal that receives at least 10,000 signatures from Cuban citizens. This effort built great momentum until many of Paya's top leaders were imprisoned in the "Black Spring" of 2003, as the world's attention was focused on the recently launched Iraq War.

Yoani Sanchez, a 34-year-old Cuban blogger, has recently emerged (to the international community) as the face of the opposition within Cuba. Her frequent blog posts about the trials of daily life in Cuba have won numerous international accolades, including being named among the Time 100 most influential leaders. In November 2009, President Obama applauded her efforts to "empower fellow Cubans to express themselves through the use of technology." Sanchez's video of dozens of Cubans expressing support for the Juanes Peace without Borders concert played an important role in the effort to save the concert as it faced a litany of criticisms and calls for its cancellation in Miami.

If these leaders have been able to do what they have done in Cuba, facing the threat of beatings, imprisonment or worse from the government, what is possible with the silent majority in the Cuban diaspora?

Learning from progressive diaspora organizing efforts

In 2002, *En Comuni3n* launched as a group of Miami religious and community leaders with two goals. First, they sought to create a safe space where people could freely discuss and work on Cuba issues free from fear of judgment. Second, it sought to build stronger ties between the Churches and people of Cuba and Miami. This project was commissioned by the Archbishop of Miami and comprised of key priests and lay leaders from the Catholic Church. Based on the work of Bibi Hidalgo's Harvard masters thesis, the project pulled together concepts from community organizing models and drew on successful international conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives. 50 lengthy one-on-one interviews were conducted with leaders across South Florida, and small group sessions were led throughout four churches in Miami to carefully deliberate what *En Comuni3n's* vision and strategy should be. The group was deliberately chosen to represent the historic exile, second generation Cubans and recent arrivals, as well as a range of views on the embargo.

In 2004, Bibi and Patrick (one of the authors of this case), who had led this project, were invited by the Cuban Bishops Conference to present the work of the group to the bishops and leading lay activists throughout the country. It was the Conference's first ever invitation to a Miami-based organization, and it generated excitement for the potential of this project to help with the goal of reconciling Cubans in Cuba and Miami. Ideally, *En Comuni3n* would have grown in concentric circles to reach thousands in Miami and create several new leaders that could continue to push the mission forward. Faced with an extreme financial situation and forced to make layoffs across the archdiocese in the face of the sex-abuse scandal that rocked the Church, the Archbishop

halted funding for this initiative in 2004. Yet the effort had set the precedent for a new model of organizing and consensus building around the Cuba question.

In 2005, some of the church leaders used the organizing and facilitating skills they developed through *En Comuni3n* and founded *Consenso Cubano*. *Consenso* is an umbrella group of 25 moderate Cuban-American organizations that seek reconciliation and engagement with the people of Cuba. To deal with the passions that can consume many Cuba discussions, *Consenso* decided to hold all its meetings at Saint Brendan Catholic Church and follow the same facilitation approach that *En Comuni3n* used. *Consenso* was a historic first, in which a broad array of Cuban-American leaders agreed in writing to not re-claim residential properties in a future Cuba. They also pledged to fully support universal health care and free public education in a future Cuba. They wanted to send the signal to Cubans on the island that they were not the stereotypical self-interested *gusanos* that the government there portrayed them as. These were positions that were considered unthinkable just a few years earlier for many in the exile community.

While *Consenso Cubano* has brought a new face to the silent majority and promoted its views on reconciliation, it has been harder to achieve consensus on issues of U.S. policy. The Cuban American National Foundation, the largest of the 25 groups with approximately 10,000 members, for example, has stated that it is “adamantly opposed” to the lifting of travel restrictions for all Americans.

Miami Church leaders have over the years grown more assertive in their belief that the moral implications of Cuba policy require that they get involved in the debate. In the spring of 2009 Miami Bishop Felipe Estevez spoke at a rally on Capitol Hill and lobbied members of Congress for legislation to lift travel restrictions for all Americans seeking to go to Cuba. Fr. Fernando Heria, the pastor at Saint Brendan's Church in Miami, has also been an outspoken critic of the embargo. Both were key leaders of *En Comuni3n*.

The Juanes concert and youth mobilization in the diaspora

Roots of Hope, or *Raices de Esperanza*, began in 2003 as a group of students committed to empowering Cuban youth to "be the authors of their future". The non-partisan group has held several conferences at universities around the country and created a virtual network of over 2,900 mostly Cuban-American students and young professionals. Its speakers have included Cuba experts from a wide range of perspectives, as well as Cuban-American celebrities Andy Garcia and Gloria Estefan.

In August of 2009 Juanes, the 17-time Latin Grammy winning rock star, announced that he would perform in a *Paz sin Fronteras* (Peace without Borders) concert in Havana. While Juanes himself is Colombian, this was significant because he lives in Miami and mainstream Latin artists have always avoided anything that could stoke the flames of the Cuban exile. The announcement immediately revived the old debate about the merits of artistic exchanges with Cuba. Juanes was "hit hard by an avalanche of criticism from Cuban exiles, he faced a public relations nightmare — calls for a boycott of his music and anonymous death threats sent to his

Twitter account.”³⁹ The leaders of *Raices de Esperanza*, the group of Cuban-American youth, came out in favor of the concert and advised Juanes through the two-month series of debates leading up to the concert.

This was an unexpected move because the group’s leadership includes members that work for elected hard-liners and are committed to their views. *Raices* mobilized hundreds of members to sign on to a Facebook group that showed support for the concert and coordinated numerous members to speak to the Spanish press in Miami and publish op-eds. "They were his life jacket," says Juanes' manager, Fernan Martinez. "When no one was there for him, Roots was there."⁴⁰

As chronicled in the St. Petersburg Times:

An opinion poll [by the Cuba Study Group] afterwards found support for the concert leaped from 27 percent to 53 percent. The biggest shift came from older exiles, who went from only 17 percent in favor before the concert to 48 percent afterward.

Among the converts was businessman Sergio Pino, president of Century Homebuilders of South Florida. "Juanes opened the door to change; it is time to rethink our strategy," he wrote in the Miami Herald. "With three Cuban-American members of Congress, and one in the Senate, and many well-meaning Cuban-American leaders ... of political organizations in exile, it is time for one of them to come forward and unite us behind a new and more effective approach that focuses on the Cuban people first."

³⁹ <http://www.tampabay.com/news/world/cuban-american-generational-shift--brings-new-attitudes-toward-cuba/1043290>

⁴⁰ *ibid*

The group has also launched a “cell phones for Cuba” program that was featured on CNN in August. The project aims to collect and refurbish old cell phones and send them to people in Cuba. The goal is humanitarian in nature while also contributing to increasing the connectivity of Cubans on the island. With each of its projects, *Raices* has grown more skillful at garnering press coverage and using social media to engage people in its work.

The question for *Raices* going forward is whether its members would agree to support an organizing project that would address issues of U.S. policy towards Cuba. Many of the group’s more progressive members have talked of how they want to do this but do not want to split apart their membership. The group has made a great contribution to promoting travel to Cuba by Cuban-Americans and greater understanding of youth on both sides of the Florida Straits. Many fear, however, that its name would be dragged through mud if it were to engage questions of policy and politics head on. Felice Gorordo, the group’s co-founder, says *Raices* will consider doing voter registration drive of newly arrived Cubans in the future, as a way to boost civic engagement in Miami. If the group can follow through on this hope to register new Cuban-American voters, that could be a powerful way to build power in the segment of the community that came from Cuba in recent years.

New organizing ideas in the diaspora

An organizing effort in Miami would have to be built around an issue that can have enough meaning and motivation to drive people to action. Such a campaign could be called “Vida” (Life), and focus on what Cuban-Americans could do to improve the daily lives of their

struggling family and friends on the island. The key would be to translate policy and technical terms into real human stories. Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers did not go after the biggest and strongest companies first as they fought for labor rights. They focused on smaller wins and had a flexible mindset that allowed them to experiment and engage in inclusive and creative strategic deliberations. They discovered key pressure points of their opponents while building a tight-knit community and helped develop an army of new leaders along the way. Any serious organizing effort in the Cuban-American community might benefit from drawing on these lessons.

Furthermore, such an effort could harness almost unanimous moral support of leading dissidents, independent journalists and religious leaders in Cuba. Lining up the support of leaders in Cuba with impeccable anti-Castro credentials would help mitigate some of the attacks from hard-liner diaspora leaders. From an implementation perspective, with the advent of social media the possibility of mustering tens of thousands of signatures for a petition, for example, could be more doable than expected. It would not be too difficult to make campaigns spread virally. People could either sign the petition directly online or indicate that they want to sign it in person in which case a team of organizers can go to the houses of those who have already agreed to support the petition or pledge to support the people of Cuba. The question would be how to identify and train committed organizers to help steer this initiative – in Miami and ideally New Jersey.

Likely responses

The likely response to any effort to lift the travel ban and move towards the lifting of the embargo would be a fierce counter-campaign. Big companies, such as Archer Daniels Midland, have become some of the key opponents of the embargo as they seek new markets for their food products. Hard-liners say these companies are guided solely by profit, and are amoral with regards to supporting a barbaric dictatorship. It is likely that some hard-liners would paint anti-travel ban or anti-embargo organizers in the diaspora as being allies of these companies, in addition to being Castro sympathizers.

The potential political risk of any major effort is that it mobilizes the hard-line base to come out in greater numbers during the 2010 and 2012 elections because the opposition will paint election as a battle for justice against the Castro regime. As one doctor and activist recently said, “all Cubans suffer some degree of post-traumatic stress disorder.” The emotions behind the pain of having to leave one’s country are often tapped by hard-line leaders to respond to any threats to the status quo. Beyond that, the ‘get out the vote’ programs that are firmly in place in the neighborhoods of older Cubans are a potent force.

Conclusion

Both as candidate and as president, Obama has repeatedly referred to the fact that throughout history real change has almost always been driven from the ground up. The question before those who want to see real change on U.S.-Cuba policy is where the leadership will come from to drive

the needed bottom-up change in Miami and beyond. The Obama Administration and Congress are waiting for signals from the Cuban-American community. The Juanes concert stirred a heated debate in Miami, with detractors crushing Juanes CD's with a steamroller along the City's famed *Calle Ocho* (8th street) Versailles restaurant. However, concert proponents waged a strong defense, including hundreds of Cuban-Americans showing up spontaneously to protest the steamroller effort and demonstrate their support for the historic event that drew over 1 million people in Cuba and was viewed by 75% of Cuban-Americans. The Miami Cuban community's approval of the concert increased significantly as a result of all the support that was exhibited. This indicates that the voices are there in the heart of the diaspora to send needed signals to Washington on what else may need to change in the fractured U.S.-Cuba relationship. Carlos knew that the community needed to build on the growing momentum.

Surely, a group of well-organized and committed Cubans marching and holding vigils in front of Senator Bob Menendez's office would put him in an awkward position that he has never before had to confront, while garnering the attention of the national press. An effort to target the biggest donors to the Cuba Democracy PAC might make them re-think their contributions. During the 2008 campaign one political strategist wanted to organize Cubans to stand in front of the dealership of Gus Machado, the treasurer of the PAC, with signs saying "Gus Machado does not want you to visit or support your family in Cuba". Machado's dealerships are based in predominantly Cuban neighborhoods and frequented by recent arrivals from Cubans, most of whom are likely unaware of his political activities.

One idea Saladrigas had grown excited about following the reform movements in Iran that begin in 2009 is the use of social media. He believes Facebook and Twitter can be used to target members of Congress who have switched their votes on Cuba policy because of donations from the PAC. Perhaps what is needed is some fusion of a modern civil rights movement in Miami with the effective use of social media that groups like *Raíces de Esperanza* had used so well in the lead up to the Juanes concert. Perhaps an effort like *En Compañía* is needed anew, with targeted one-on-one interviews to rally a new community of activists around their personal narratives and dreams for a future Cuba. However, this time it could be secular, focus on youth and those that will take public actions to inspire change in the community and help catalyze change in policy.

A community of organizers would have to be deliberately built and trained, and that community would need to write its own narrative and build real power out of its numbers. It would have to act with a strong moral purpose in order to have an enduring impact on both the diaspora and Cuba itself.

There are a wide number of creative tactics that could be employed that could have great impact on the debate and ultimately, the political dynamic in Cuba where the regime has always relied on the excuse of the embargo for all of the country's many problems. Are the urgency and financial support there to build the community that that can unite around a new set of goals for the Cuban-American diaspora? Are there leaders willing to take the political risks involved, knowing that the retaliation would likely be fierce?

The Cuban-American historian Marifelli Perez-Stable has argued: “Because opening up to Cuba presents more of a threat to the regime than the status quo, this may be the real hard-line” against the Cuban government. As Carlos Saladrigas sat back in his office, he had to consider what he could do to help usher in the day when Americans can test this theory out.

Indeed, 50 years was too long a time to not try something new with one of the last vestiges of the Cold War. To help lead the Cuban community in a new direction would give new life not only to its history, but also to its future.

U.S.-Cuba Case Study Appendix:

1. From the 2007 Florida International University (FIU) survey of Cubans in Miami:

“There were no surprises associated with the political affiliations reported by the respondents, although the number of Republican registrants continues to drop. About 65 percent of the respondents are U.S. citizens. Of these, 91.1 percent report being registered to vote. And of these, 66.1 percent are registered with the Republican Party 18.3 percent are registered Democrats and 15.2 percent are registered as Independents.”

2. Signatories of “Pilares para un Consenso Cubano”⁴¹

Political Parties

Coordinadora Social Demócrata

Byron Miguel

Partido Demócrata Cristiano de Cuba

Marcelino Miyares

Partido Social Demócrata de Cuba

Antonio Santiago

Unión Liberal Cubana

Carlos Alberto Montaner

⁴¹ <http://www.consensocubano.org/eng/signatories.htm>

Academic and cultural institutions

Bibliotecas Independientes de Cuba

Ramón Colás

Instituto de Estudios Cubanos

Enrique Patterson

Instituto Jacques Maritain

José Ignacio Rasco

Other organizations

Acción Democrática Cubana

Juan Carlos Acosta

Agenda Cuba

Tomás Rodríguez

Arco Progresista

Lino Fernandez

Christian Commitment Foundation

Lorenzo de Toro

Comité Cubano Pro Derechos Humanos

Ricardo Bofill

Confederación Campesina de Cuba

José M. Pou Socarrás

Cuba Study Group

Carlos A. Saladrigas

Flamur Cuba / Federación Latinoamericana de Mujeres
(FLAMUR)

Magdelivia Hidalgo

Fundación Nacional Cubano Americana

Jorge Mas Santos

Hermanos al Rescate

José Basulto

Movimiento Democracia

Ramón Saúl Sánchez

Solidaridad de Trabajadores Cubanos

Pedro Pérez Castro

Todos Unidos

Juan Carlos Acosta

Women For Human Rights International

Marivi Prado

Organizations that participate as observers

CAUSA

Raul Moas

FADIRAC

Victoria Ruiz

Proyecto Democrata Cubano

Rafael León Rodríguez

Movimiento Cristiano Liberación

Julio Hernández

Raíces de Esperanza

Tony Jiménez

Sociedad Académica Euro Cubana

Carlos Estefanía

Chapter 4:

Conclusion

Both the climate change and U.S.-Cuba policy cases present movements that are struggling to identify the self-interest, clearly articulated values, and scaled leadership development capacity that will lead to the building of real power to challenge the status quo. Each movement taking on an intractable social problem must believe it is building what Ganz would call an “irresistible constituency that can change the world” – and not just a single law. Each effort must be able to develop a virtuous circle where organizers can grow capacity, evangelize and gain more power. In order to do this, organizers must be explicit about how its chosen tactics, campaigns and various actions will draw more and more people in to the fold in meaningful ways.

I will first turn to the climate change movement in light of this framework and then look at the Cuba case.

I. Critical success factors for the climate change movement

Though the climate movement is still young and focusing much of its energy on new media and online organizing strategies, it is slowly realizing that these techniques are only so effective. To produce the kind of societal change achieved in the civil rights movement, a base of people must be built. Leaders must be trained in large numbers. Relational meetings, where people can see

each other eye to eye, must engage people from all walks of life. People have to connect what is at stake with the fiber of their being and their own personal purpose for living.

If more people are not able to clearly identify their self-interest in the movement, then it simply will not build real power. Training people to tell their personal narrative in public settings, identifying their common self-interest, speaking to their values, building their own following through relational meetings with others – that is the critical work of movement building that has still yet to be done on a large scale and coordinated nationally. During the Obama campaign we had a glimpse of the possibilities when 22-year-old field organizers were leading armies of adults with decades of experience more than them. State after state, young organizers were turning inspiration and emotional connection into tight-knit communities that wielded real electoral power.

These base-building tactics are the crucial building blocks to create a large and powerful movement. But the effectiveness of the movement depends on its “strategic capacity,” or its “ability to capitalize on opportunities by turning the resources one has into the power one needs”.⁴² The tactics deployed most flow from the creative ideas generated by each of the movement’s members in response to challenges that arise along the journey, as the stakes grow higher and the opposition more fierce.

⁴² Marshall Ganz, 2009. “How David Sometimes Wins”.

I. Climate Change movement: challenges and opportunities ahead

Using ‘story of self’ to humanize the movement

In Mary Lou Finley’s essay, “Shaping the Movement”, in the book “Ignition: What You Can Do to Fight Global Warming and Spark a Movement”, she speaks of the need for movement goals to be framed in terms of widely held values. She writes, “movements should clearly articulate the connection between current issues and values such as democracy, the protection of children, preservation of life, love of nature, and social justice.” While love of nature may have been an important enough value for the early environmental movement to accomplish what it did, it is the more deeply personal values that will need to be clearly articulated and harnessed in order for the movement to reach millions going forward.

This is a point that Ganz affirms from his experience training climate change leaders. During organizing trainings that he led with the Sierra Club, he heard various “stories of self” of individuals who were inspired to join the movement because of an experience in the outdoors that captured their appreciation of nature and affirmed the value of life. One of the most moving stories, however, was of a young mother who said she began to understand the urgency of the movement when she gave birth to her first child. For this segment of society, the year 2050 does carry real meaning since that is when a mother’s newborn will be middle-aged and, ideally, in the prime of his or her life. The natural instinct of mothers to protect their young is, of course, a value that all can agree is both critical and widely shared. Based on this experience, Ganz

believes “It has to be mothers who own this. It must be about people, not policy. It’s a moral issue, and science is just a tool. There is enormous ends/means confusion.”

While in the course of researching this thesis I did not come across any widespread climate change effort led by young mothers, the leaders I interviewed all believed that bringing personal narratives more explicitly into their work would be vital going forward. The EAC’s Jessy Tolkan expressed particular frustration with the big environmental group’s reliance on pollsters, “spending tens of millions telling us what to say.”

The movement has not just relied on its access to high priced polling data through its relationships with the Big Greens. Tolkan recounted her own story of what called her to this work, which she increasingly finds herself sharing with others in her meetings. Her grandfather, a Holocaust survivor, came to the United States and opened up a car dealership in Wisconsin. He was brimming with pride that he and his son could sell American cars and provide a good life for their families. Recently, Jessy’s father, received a one page letter via FEDEX saying that the dealership had to close down. As Tolkan says, “our country missed the boat of doing something new, on adapting to the new economic and energy realities. Now my father, who is 57, has nothing to do.”

From Washington's legislative battles back to all politics being based locally

In drawing parallels between the Obama campaign and the youth climate change movement, Ganz reminds that the biggest takeaway is not about Obama as charismatic leader but how his campaign evolved into a movement in its own right.

In the Obama campaign, young people, for example, never before engaged in politics became engaged, not because of the Obama "brand", but because he inspired in them a sense of hope, significance, and connection; offered them training, coaching, and leadership; and afforded them a significant role to play in the campaign as organizers, volunteers, etc. This is much closer to the reasons for which people became involved in the civil rights movement, the farm worker movement, the environmental movement, etc. In organizing, doing things with lots of people is good, not bad, because for a movement people are the primary asset, not a cost. The job of movement leadership then is to build this constituency, build its power, and use that power to achieve movement goals -- enrolling more participants, participating in local action, and collaborating in state and national goals.

Framed this way, the question then becomes: what will lead to the most people – youth and not so youth – committing to the climate change movement in a meaningful way? How can the climate change movement better combine anger and hope, while providing coaching and the ability to turn young activists into leaders?

While the Tolkan believes the Power Vote campaign was a success in many regards, she thinks that the three months it took to secure agreement on the campaign's six-point pledge⁴³ required

⁴³ Power Vote: *Youth Voters for a Clean, Just Energy Future*. Pledge found in appendix and online: <http://www.powervote.org/about>

more time and effort than it was worth. The pledge “lost its effectiveness” because there was “too much disagreement” among the 50 diverse organizations that make up the EAC. This served as a reminder to the EAC leadership that the building consensus on the complexities of the various policy approaches to climate change could bog down the grassroots work of actual movement building.

Despite the success of Power Shift 2009, Tolkan says the level of engagement from EAC member groups “plummeted” when EAC’s focus was almost entirely on passing the House of Representative’s Waxman-Markey bill. The coalition is now regrouping and, Tolkan believes, will be much more focused on what’s going on outside of Washington. It will zero in on how to mobilize people in their own communities around more tangible goals, as she believes that this is what is most motivating to the young people who have been involved in the movement to date.

The EAC is calling its new campaign “Define Your Decade”, with the idea that each person has the power to define the coming decade and does not have to sit around waiting to see what happens in Washington. She recounts how when she joined the climate change movement, after having achieved enormous success as a political organizer, she thought she knew more than Parish. But, as she recalls, the most important lesson he shared with her was the need to “trust the coalition and trust the coming together” of the diverse groups that make it up. This, Tolkan said, is what the EAC must do more of. This is an important learning because it highlights the importance of being responsive to the needs of the community that one is building and trying to help organize.

Alchemy and the merits of direct action

For Tolkan, the experience of the last few years has confirmed her belief that “the fear of asking people to do too much is totally the opposite. The real fear is asking people to do too little.”

Asking someone to shut down a coal plant, for example, is “way more attractive” than asking them to call their Senators repeatedly. People would prefer to take on the challenge of “talking to thousands of people in their neighborhoods, going to every town meeting that happens and potentially chaining themselves to a bulldozer.” With the coal plant example, we can say to someone “this is how many people will be saved right here. Eventually, we will ensure this never happens again. In the civil rights movement, they did it one lunch counter at a time.” She adds, “people could see the connection” to the bigger goals of changing national laws and policies.

Moreover, the types of actions the EAC is planning on supporting going forward will do a better job of building leadership than the traditional call-in days to Congress. As with the Climate Change Ground Zero examples, there are a number of creative tactics and campaigns that can be waged across the country. It is developing a plan of targeting the 65 coal plants on university campuses going forward, which will dovetail with the Sierra Club “Beyond Coal” campaign.

Tolkan and McKibben both agree that movement needs to better understand and engage in civil disobedience going forward. Indeed, with the exceptions of scattered examples such as the current West Virginia campaigns, this seems to be an area where there will be much room to grow. One funder recently told Tolkan that “no one even brings me a proposal saying civil

disobedience would work. I want to be able to go to my board and make a fight for this. Is it that you all are afraid or don't get it?"

This sentiment is widely echoed in the climate change movement discussions online.

What follows is a quote from a blog post from the youth climate change site "It's Getting Hot in Here", which was part of a series of reflections on the movement called "Climate Generation" which ran following the Copenhagen summit. Here, a college aged organizer analyzes the difference between direct and indirect action and argues for the former:

Alchemy, a predecessor of the scientific method, was a medieval practice in which people tried impossible feat of transmuting common materials into valuable minerals, such as led into gold. Our movement structures its strategy around alchemical assumptions about the interaction of advocacy and power. For example, if our goal is an ambitious and binding climate treaty and we gather 25 million petition signatures, generate 5 million phone calls, thousands of press hits, hold citizen lobby weeks, wine and dine key climate champion senators, publicize studies on green jobs, release green job video advertisements, and hold photogenic citizen day of action, there is still no reason to think it will produce the desired result. A leap of faith stands between our tactics and our goals.

Building the 'irresistible constituency' and capacity building

350 and EAC leaders all acknowledge the fundamental importance of focusing on developing others and themselves. As McKibben himself admits, "I am a writer by training, not an activist." Adria Goodson, who runs the Prime Movers program at the Hunt Foundation, has spent much time facilitating this type of leadership development with climate change movement leaders such as Van Jones, McKibben and Parish. In 2009, Ganz led trainings for the group on "Public

Narrative” and “Movement Strategy”. For McKibben, an author of various well-regarded environmental books, it was not natural for him to use his own personal story when he speaking about climate change. Goodson did note, however, that following the training he made a concerted effort to use his personal narrative of what called him to this work. This, she added, was a welcome balance to his emphasis on the urgency to fight for solutions that are consistent with science.

When asked whether McKibben has been able to incorporate the tactics of one-on-ones and house gatherings or organizational meetings in to 350’s work, he responded by pointing out that “problem with organizing in America is that you must re-create community before you can do something. This is sort of artificial. There are very few places in the world where that’s true. In most places, everyone knows everyone already.” This is part of the reason that McKibben his leadership team at 350 decided to focus the vast majority of their efforts in the two years leading up to Copenhagen on identifying people in every country around the globe that would lead actions during their international day of action in the lead-up to Copenhagen.

McKibben takes pride in the fact that the “barriers to entry are low for the organizing work we’re doing.” His group organized training workshops in the in the Caribbean, Central Asia and Africa which focused on sustainable development, climate change issues, organizing and the use of media. The media training was particularly important for 350, as McKibben believed that by “doing things that are big and beautiful, it would be not be hard to get good coverage.” He added, “Most of these people had never left their countries before, or never been on an airplane.” Beyond the media focus that occurred around the 350 day of action, McKibben points to other

results of the campaign. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, more than 15,000 young people marched in support of the 350 PPM goal. Reflecting happily on his first international campaign he comments that this event, organized by two Ethiopian sisters, “wasn’t supposed to happen”.

McKibben believes creative use of the arts is perhaps the most important tool that the climate change movement has at its disposal. He takes great pride in the 25,000 pictures of 350 actions that are on the organization’s website and available through Flickr. The question is, what challenges lie ahead in turning this loose global network of 350 activists that took all of these pictures into a united base of power that can demand bold action on climate change? It appears that future 350 trainings and activities will need to focus more on capacity building and organizing training in order to do more with its global network.

Reflecting on what he thinks the movement’s top priorities should be going forward, Parish puts organizing and leadership development training at the top of the priority list. Parish is still involved in advising various grassroots climate change organizations around the country, and was at the Copenhagen summit. While he says he still sees himself “primarily as an organizer”, he has taken a keen interest in social entrepreneurship and is writing a book on green entrepreneurship. He believes that the skills for organizing and starting a business are similar, and believes “we can do more with a larger framework of capacity building that covers both of these skill-sets.”

Tolkan’s agrees with critical nature of engaging in more training, not just for general skills building but for creating unity and greater understanding within the larger environmental

movement. She pointed to the EAC national leaders doing a two-day training on oppression in January 2010, to ensure that the youth climate change movement continues to build the bridge with the environmental justice movement.

The danger of professionalization and the ‘wisdom of the young’

As one organizer said, “there are insane amounts of money sloshing around” to the big environmental groups “and these groups are not doing much.” McKibben believes that “Everyone spends time lobbying. But they don’t accomplish much because they don’t have many people behind them. They’re stuck in this. It all comes back to organizing.” In contrast, he takes pride in what his group has been able to do with what he calls a “shoestring budget”. The first “Step it Up” campaign in 2007 was achieved for under \$200,000. He fears being micro-managed by donors and wasting precious time “begging for money.” As he argued, “Autonomy is the highest organizational value us. We see a clear trade-off between autonomy and raising money.” Despite this fact, McKibben said he must engage in fundraising to build the approximate \$1.6 million annual dollar budget he believes they will need going forward. Part of this funding will be used to support 350’s seven-person staff, which is “ridiculously underpaid” and works without health insurance.

Jessy Tolkan, the 28 year-old Executive Director of the Energy Action Coalition (EAC), also sees the double-edge sword of fundraising and organizing. The EAC has a \$5 million budget, of which the majority of its funds are redistributed to its 50 member organizations. For Jessy, who has spends much of her time fundraising, the resources are “critical for rapid growth but can

stifle the creativity and passion of the movement.” In her eyes, “too many non-profits are beholden to fundraisers who have a very short attention span for issues and organizations. A donor will often say: ‘we want to fund you to pass this bill right now.’ Perhaps it is the wisdom of the young, the knowledge that we will be fighting this fight for the rest of our lives.” Tolkan echoes McKibben’s view that, “the over-professionalization of the movement is extremely problematic.” (polling line)

Tolkan argued that she would “fiercely defend the infrastructure that we have built. You can’t employ 22 year olds until past 24 when they’re making \$25,000 a year. Pay is a problem.” As she prepares for her transition to head the Washington office of “Green for All” she said the EAC has had difficulty trying to find someone to replace her because so many that have the needed experience have left the movement. She believed much more could be done to help youth figure out how to make a career out of this work.

Billy Parish echoed Tolkan and Bill’s beliefs about the impressive resourcefulness of the youth climate change movement. “I’ve been struck with what EAC has done with \$3-4 million dollars a year, compared with what others have done with many hundreds of millions. We could do so much more if we had more funding. The Bang for the buck of organizing young people is pretty huge.”

Why climate change leaders and funders must insist on getting movement building right

As some of this country’s founding fathers used to say of our democracy, it’s essence is

compromise, compromise, compromise. Thus even if the big environmental groups, in combination with partner corporations, are successful that may mean that we will likely get something half way between what they want and what the fossil fuel lobby wants.

Is that good enough? What would that actually mean in 10-20-40 years?

It is often said that Martin Luther King could not have accomplished so much without the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and similar grassroots groups. At times, the NAACP and other Washington DC based advocates would appear to bend too easily in the face of demands from political elites. Are 350 and EAC member organizations willing to increasingly play the role of a SNCC to help broaden the spectrum of the movement? This does not mean that they should use violence as a tactic. But there is enormous room to experiment with non-violent civil disobedience to advance the goals of the movement.

In the "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King challenges white moderate ministers, almost as if to echo the Bible refrain that God prefers hot or cold but will spew lukewarm out of his mouth. He almost showed a certain respect for the sheer honesty of the outright racists, but it was the leaders that knew the extent of the moral injustice of racism – yet did not act – that he was most appalled with. That is, it seems, where the climate change grassroots movement is going. The leaders are appalled and frustrated that liberals and average Democrats that “get it” are not doing more in the face of potential catastrophe. They wish that someone as intelligent and empathetic as Obama had expended his first year’s political capital to take on climate change. They wonder how long it will be before the electoral political power of

progressives will be as high as it was in early 2009? They fear it could take a decade or, even worse, a generation.

Regardless of the differences and nuanced challenges of movement building today versus the 1960's, the people that "get" the extent of the problem have no choice but to invest the time, moral energy and economic investment to figure out how to take these efforts to scale.

Based on this analysis, if I were asked what my recommendations would be, I would humbly offer the following set of recommendations that can be summed up with: Humanize and Professionalize while focusing on Grey Coal and Green Jobs

Recommendations 1: Continue to humanize the movement as much as possible

This is a point that has been sufficiently touched on throughout. Instituting more one-on-one and small group meetings, as opposed to what appears to be an over-reliance on social media, will be vital. All organizers should make a conscious effort to reflect on and develop their personal narratives of what drove them to this movement and incorporate that it into their core language about the work.

Recommendation 2: Professionalize without losing the movement's soul

A. We can draw the analogy between what needs to happen with the climate change movement and where the "sweet spot" is an industry value chain in business terms. Tolkan agrees with this

assessment. The advocacy work and national TV ads may end have a significant impact, but we cannot know for sure. We do know, however, that the investment in movement building has been tiny compared with investment in the big greens. People like Billy Parish and Jessy Tolkan may not have left the EAC and the direct organizing work had there been more support for them and had they deemed it more normal to stay in the direct movement building work past age 27 or 28.

B. Pay better salaries to retain and develop leaders past their mid-20's. Cesar Chavez and the UFW leaders wanted "zealots" and a "critical community" that was committed to doing the work at subsistence levels, living off of food stamps and tiny stipends of a few dollars a month. They specifically recruited people with a "love for the fight" who would be willing to sometimes "starve" for the cause, as Chavez did with his multiple fasts. This is sharp contrast with relatively high-paid "professionals". In today's world, this stands in sharp contrast to the culture of the vast majority of non-profits and social entrepreneurs who seek relatively higher paid "professionals" as leaders and staff. Can there be a middle ground? This is surely an issue that need not lie at extremes.

C. Professional facilitation skills – in addition to the core organizing skills, leaders should be trained in the art of facilitation and consensus building. Reports from an EAC national leadership call on February 3 were that it was as well-run as it should have been, with tangential comments that were not reined in, use of technology that did not work, and lack of a clear sense of direction and next steps. Perhaps this is a function of the leadership transition there as they search for a new executive director. As the young organizers take on tougher assignments beyond college

campuses, in states that are not their own, these skills will be increasingly vital to gain the trust of new communities they engage.

Recommendation 3: Show power through direct action and civil disobedience (not just the ballot box)

Currently, when the EAC says it had 350,000 people sign their Power Vote pledge, its hard to verify what the really means. I would not be surprised if Democratic political operatives take for granted that the people who signed that pledge are part of their segment of base voters that are highly educated, middle or upper-middle class and very likely to keep turning out for their candidates regardless of how much they really push the climate change envelope.

This is where the power comes in. The movement needs to do more to be noticed and taken more seriously. The civil disobedience on the 65 campus coal plants will certainly help achieve that. It will garner much media attention, and if they can achieve a national consensus to keep the focus on coal that could potentially be the ‘salt’ or ‘tea’ or ‘grape’ of the climate change movement. Movement leaders can not get distracted with the debates over which fossil fuel is worse (even if new scientific findings are unveiled), they will have to be resolved that they need to stick with coal.

As the opposition, which may work through the Tea Party movement and have its message hammered home by Fox News, will try to paint these organizers as elites that are taking jobs away from the working class, this is yet another reason to have the national strategy focused

squarely on green job creation. Even if the science and environmental purists believe doing something else reduces GHG's more than a program like "cash for caulkers" – the economic and political reality must take precedence.

This will also make the work more meaningful. Jamie Henn, one of McKibben's right hands with 350.org, described the work of organizing for the October 24, 2009 day of action as "boring". Without knowing the full extent of everything team 350 did to prepare for that day, it appears that one drawback of online organizing is precisely that it can become boring. Most community organizers talk of the fulfillment of holding numerous one on one meetings with people in a community, and the thrill of speaking before groups and watching one's self grow increasingly more confident and adept at the art of looking someone in the eye and persuading them to join you to fight for a cause.

Recommendation 4: Green jobs: zero in on self-interest to build a stronger and more diverse coalition

The movement should connect more with these professional organizing groups like Saul Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, the Gamiliel Network which Obama used to work for in Chicago and a host of others. This will help build the movement's strategic capacity and sense of creativity. Most of these groups, however, work on economic development and social justice issues for impoverished or low-income people that are often minorities.

The climate change movement should proactively develop or deepen relationships with these communities where the professional community organizers are operating. Youth leaders from around the country could begin reaching to professional organizers and trying to understand how they can jointly make a compelling case for green jobs programs. This will capture the self-interest of both the organizing groups and the communities they serve. This will be truer than ever given the current economic and political climate.

A benefit of expanding the community that cares about climate change issues is that it will broaden the coalition, and again, ensure that it is not taken for granted by elected officials and business leaders.

Lastly, the relationship with faith communities should be explored to the fullest. This is something the Obama campaign did very effectively in a very short period of time. Because this work will take enormous sacrifice and courage, it is important to find some sort of spiritual or structured contemplative support for those involved. As highlighted by the case of the United Farm Workers, “moral resources” grow – rather than diminish – with use. The sense of solidarity, hopefulness and commitment would continually build on itself, so long as it is thoughtfully and strategically cultivated.

II. Critical Success Factors for the opening of U.S.-Cuba Policy

If we return to the simple lens of democratic power through A) financial resources or B) through people, the Cuba case is daunting as well. Because the financial power is not there to create a PAC that would counter the hard-liner U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC, and because the prospects of unseating one of the Miami members of Congress are very low in 2010, the grassroots community organizing option continues to look like the most attractive one for leaders that want to change policy towards Cuba.

The ideal next step would be to have a small team of people trained in organizing conduct one-on-one interviews with a wide cross section of community leaders in the Cuban-American community. Ideally, it could be a process like *En Comunion and Consenso Cubano*, where initial meetings are held in people's homes and in churches. But it should not have to have a religious foundation. Moreover, if this initiative could incorporate the community building that *Raices* has mastered through its parties, softball and domino tournaments and online presence, that foster the growth of a real community.

The proposed individuals to reach out to should include the following:

- **Members of *Raices de Esperanza*.** Members of the youth group that mobilized to support the Juanes "Peace without Borders" concert who have shown an interest in changing the status quo on Cuba policy. In particular, during the debates over what the group should do during the lead-up to the Juanes concert, I was told that virtually

every member that was born in Cuba was for taking a bold stance in support of the concert. In contrast, almost all of those that had issues with supporting the concert were children of exiles born in the United States. That can provide a roadmap for who to begin with.

- **Consenso Cubano members.** As I learned during the Obama campaign, a number of the leaders of the 25 organizations that make up *Consenso* are actively searching for a more aggressive way to change Cuba policy.
- **Former leaders of En Comunion.** Some of the original 25 lay leaders of En Comunion had a keen interest in changing U.S.-Cuba policy. They are all intimately connected with the Church and the networks in various parishes. This would, of course, include Bishop Felipe Estevez, Father Fernando Heria, Father Juan Sosa and other clergy.
- **The Archdiocese of Miami.** It has many ties to the Catholic Church in Cuba and has a strong base of Cuban American faithful willing to follow Church leaders and rationalize their change in ideology as a result of their allegiance to the Church.
- **Protestant faith leaders.** There is a vibrant community with outspoken leaders, some of which expressed during the Obama campaign that they wanted the embargo to end.

- **Organizers of the 2012 Pilgrimage to Cuba**, which is being lead by the faithful on the island and in the Diaspora. Already there are groups of Cuban Americans who have never returned to the island since the 1960s preparing to return in 2012 to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of *La Virgen de la Caridad*- the patroness saint of Cuba based in El Cobre in the province of Santiago

- **Tinta y Café *tertulia* (teach-in) regulars**. This café in downtown Miami was intended to be a gathering place for progressive Cuban Americans already engaged with people in Cuba, particularly in the arts.

- **Blogging community**. Alejandro Barreras and Andy Diaz, who emerged as two outspoken advocates for the Juanes concert, used to write regularly for online blogs.

- **Cuban-American National Council**. It focuses on organizing Cuban Americans on domestic issues including economic opportunities and job creation.

- **Pro-Juanes Protestors**. The more than 100 protestors who went to the streets in favor of the Juanes concert and stand in contrast to the Virgilia Mambisa group's protest which used a bulldozer to crush CD's of the performers.

Self-Interest

As I heard through anecdotal accounts with young Cubans that were born in Cuba, it is very difficult to persuade recently arrived Cubans to commit to taking action on Cuba policy issues.

As Alejandro Barreras said:

Cubans in the US aren't affected by the embargo. It's not a sit-in-the-back-of-the-bus, every day problem for us. We can travel to Cuba. We can send money, even in excess of the current regulations, with minimum effort through other countries. (Bush handed us a great opportunity with the travel and remittance restrictions, but we weren't organized enough to take advantage.) We aren't convinced that our families in Cuba would do better without the embargo, at least not in the short term, at least not until Raul Castro shows that he's willing to let them have a bigger part of the pie.

Despite these obstacles, it would be well worth exploring what the self-interest is of more recently arrived Cuban-Americans. One point he and others agree on is the need for citizenship and voter registration drives. There are many benefits, beyond the U.S.-Cuba policy questions, that come with citizenship and being engaged with the political process. This is particularly true given that many Cuban-American recent arrivals may benefit from certain economic policies.

Ultimately it is in the Cuban-American community's overall financial interest to lead economic investment in Cuba. The longer they wait to engage at an economic level the more foreign companies are able to dominate the market. In a depressed U.S. economy the case for investing in Cuba in order to capitalize on a burgeoning tourism industry, which will no doubt flourish

with an end to the U.S. travel ban, may become harder to resist. Already there are a number of major U.S. companies sending Cuban American businessmen to research the Cuban market and develop relationships with those they would do business with in the future.

Power

A voter registration drive targeted at the hundreds of thousands of Cubans that arrived in the last 15 years could go a long way to building power for the community as a whole. Democracia USA, the leading Latino civic engagement organization in the country, is based in Miami and run by a progressive Cuban-American. While this group does register many Cubans, it has never conducted a campaign tailored specifically at this community.

Further, the poll numbers that continue to show an upward trend in Cubans who want to open policy to Cuba are positive developments but insufficient for demonstrating any real power. An Obama Administration official made this point once, citing the concern that the poll numbers are sometimes unpredictable because a high number of people may simultaneously support lifting the embargo while also supporting military strikes on the country.

Those in favor of changing U.S. policy towards Cuba must show that there are enough people willing to shift their opinions to elect a member of Congress committed to challenging the 50-year status quo.

Strategy

The initial focus should be on doing quality one-on-one meetings and getting the right people in the room to build the group's strategic capacity. This will in turn lead to moral courage, creativity and resourcefulness.

As with En Comunion, there should be a structured interview that guides people in telling their own narrative. The types of questions that would prove fruitful are:

- How did you leave Cuba?
- What was it like making your way in the U.S. for the first time?
- What was it like returning to Cuba?
- If you were born in the U.S., what was it like traveling to Cuba for the first time?
- What concerns do you have for the future Cuba?
- What hopes do you have for Cuba and the relationship with the Cuban-American diaspora?
- What can we do to contribute to creating this reality?

Initially, the organizers can have a hypothesis that the group could lead a humanitarian support project for Cuba and voter registration drive for Cuban-Americans. These are two campaigns that can produce measurable results and provide some measure of meaningful work where volunteers can take from start to finish. But the group should be bought in to these projects.

While a bill to lift the travel ban is currently being debated in Congress, its odds of passing are low. This group should resist the urge to make a national legislative push right away, as that is what so many other groups have done unsuccessfully. This project should be about more than changing the law. Building the community of those who want this change is a first step.

Tactics & Action

An initial campaign could be all humanitarian focused. Like the Raices “Cell Phones for Cuba” campaign but with much more aggressive goals. Even though this does not directly affect policy, it builds community, gets a success under the group’s belt, and allows relationships to be formed and solidified while they strategize on what to do next.

The initiative should also consider individual actions geared at individual donors to the US-Cuba Democracy PAC, such as the Cubans standing in front of Gus Machado Ford with signs saying “Gus Machado does not support your right to visit your family in Cuba.” These actions would have to be very clear in stating that the terms of the debate should be redefined. The new “hard-line” is in fact those who want to do the opposite of what the Cuban dictatorship has thrived on for 50 years. That should argue that by lifting the travel ban for all Americans, for example, we will help hasten democratic change in Cuba.

One campaign Carlos Saladrigas wanted to run is an online campaign against members of Congress that appeared to have been “bought” by the hardliner U.S.-Cuba Democracy PAC. The group would have to think through how it could create enough public pressure to potentially

shame other members from not following suit, or get votes actually reversed. The group should think through how it could identify the self-interest of any members from within these Congressional districts that could support these efforts. They could reach out to other Latino groups or Latin American studies departments at area universities as a start.

Leadership Development & Capacity Building

New leaders must continue to be cultivated, particularly the progressive students that attend Raices events, and those that came from Cubans who have arrived in the past decade.

It would be great to invest in the capacity of organizers and potential organizers with a training led by Marshall Ganz or one of his affiliates. This could have a significant morale effect on the whole initiative.

Geography

Don't forget New Jersey. Because Senator Bob Menendez holds so much power over Cuba policy, a parallel organizing project should be cultivated in Union City, the heart of the NJ Cuban-American diaspora.

Similarly, there are a number of outspoken advocates for change in Cuba policy in the Washington DC area, New York and other cities. They could run similar campaigns wherever

they are, helping to build a stronger and more cohesive community that can help build the change they seek.