

The Organizational Bases of People Power

Leadership, Strategy, and Organization in Four American Cases

2001–2018

In the fall of 2016, the Democracy Research Collaborative of the New Venture Fund funded a study to examine the structures and processes through which movement organizations leverage resources to build political power. This report describes the project, the cases we are examining, and the framework we are using to conduct the analysis. Data collection on the project began in early 2017, and will continue through the end of 2018, when a more formal report with findings will be forthcoming.

Project Leadership:

Hahrie Han

Elizabeth McKenna

Michelle Oyakawa

Last Edited:

8.10.2017

For more information, email: hahrie@ucsb.edu

WORK IN PROGRESS: DRAFT ONLY

This is intended as a short overview and interim description of a much longer, ongoing project. As an interim project description, this report does NOT include findings. Please treat this as draft for comment. All feedback is welcome. Please do not cite without permission.

Report Overview

★ *Our Key Question: What strategic choices can movement leaders make to shape their capacity to build constituency-based political power?*

Background and Context

American democracy is in a moment of great uncertainty. Existing political institutions appear unable to respond to pressures from changing economic, social, and demographic conditions. Rising levels of economic and political inequality and gridlock are symptomatic of (and, in some cases, causes of) the heightened battle between different groups to respond to this dynamic uncertainty. As these groups contest for power, an interesting question arises: how do those with less power contest for power in a system that has traditionally excluded them?

Historical experience and analysis tells us that one crucial mechanism through which power balances shift is when grassroots organizations engage people in ways that give voice to the interests of new or previously excluded constituencies. How do organizations do this, however? How do they engage people in ways that develop, legitimate, and institutionalize alternatives to existing dynamics? Academic research demonstrates that simply engaging people in activity alone is not enough; just having more money, activists, or other resources is not predictive of achieving policy change—or voice for disaffected constituencies. How, then, do organizations strategically translate the engagement of constituencies in ways that develop and institutionalize their political voice (or influence)?

Although one study cannot address all these questions about building power, the project seeks to deepen our conceptual understanding of these questions, but also to (a) provide actionable research to inform strategic choices organizers make, and (b) inform the conversation among funders about how to conceptualize power-building in movement organizations.

Assumptions and Starting Premises

This study seeks to identify places where movement actors have strategic agency to make choices that increase their likelihood of building the power they want. Several assumptions and premises informed our research design:

- » *Strategic Organizational Processes:* Much research and practice focuses on identifying and building the static resources—such as money, people, message—that make activism and influence more likely. We build on research showing that simply having more money, people, or a better message is not enough. Instead, building power for a constituency depends on having organizations that can strategically translate those resources into power (pp. 3–4 further define the terms “organization” and “power”). We seek to identify the dynamic processes by which organizations do this.
- » *Internal Capacities:* Movement organizations work in an environment of constant uncertainty, within a dynamic array of social, economic, and political forces. Much research examines the external, socio-political conditions and resources that shape an organization’s ability to advance their agenda. This study takes a different approach, asking what internal capacities, if any, an organization can intentionally build to increase its likelihood of building governing power for its constituency.
- » *Foundational Choices:* Given the complex, non-linear nature of building power, we assume our findings will not identify formulaic recipes for building power, but instead a set of “foundational choices” that make certain outcomes more likely. In the best case, these are necessary but not sufficient conditions for power.

Research Design

Selecting Our First Set of Cases

Our project started by diving deeply into a set of exploratory case studies, to elucidate how those organizations developed power. In selecting cases, we took a “most-different” approach, to identify four cases that maximized difference on the socio-political conditions, political opportunity structures, resources, and individual traits of constituents known to shape the ability of movements to achieve their political goals. By maximizing difference on external conditions, we wanted to see what (if any) internal capacities were shared across organizations that built power in a diverse array of circumstances. To select cases in the fall of 2016, we interviewed a set of key informants, and analyzed a variety of socio-economic and political data with the following criteria: (a) movement organizations that had built some measure of political power, as defined below, and (b) a set of organizations that were working in vastly different geographies, on different issues, with different political targets, constituencies and so on to see if there were any internal capacities that were shared across these organizations.

Retrospective v. Prospective Analyses

Our research design has two phases: (1) Retrospective and (2) Prospective analysis. Within each phase, we are doing both within-case and between-case analyses.

The first four cases we selected are described at the end of this report. In the first phase of the project, we are examining these cases retrospectively, looking within each case to understand what they did to win the power they gained over time. Then, we will look across all four cases to generate hypotheses about what the internal capacities are (if any) that are shared across these cases.

In the second phase of the project, we will select an additional two cases that, *ex ante*, exemplify these hypothesized capacities. This will allow us to look prospectively at if and how those capacities affect the organization’s ability to develop and wield power. In addition, we will continue to follow our original four cases to develop a within-case analysis of all six cases. Then, based on between-case analyses of all six cases, we hope to identify the shared capacities and conditions that enable these organizations to build constituency power.

Defining Power and Organization

How are we defining—and observing—“power” and how we are defining what a “movement organization” is?

Organization

We use the term “movement organization” or “organization” to refer broadly to the formal or informal infrastructures that are created to organize movement activity around a given agenda. In this definition, we incorporate not only formal 501c3/c4 organizations, but also informal and formal networks and coalitions. We adopt this broader understanding of “organization” because our analytic focus is not on the legal or bureaucratic status of an organization, but rather on the internal operating practices that shape its ability to alter power deficits.

Defining Power

The question of how to define power is topic of copious debate. The methods for assessing power in both academic scholarship and the world of practice range broadly. Among organizers, a conversation around integrated voter engagement (IVE) or independent political organizations (IPO's) has examined various ways of conceptualizing and observing governing power. Approaches for assessing power in academic research include (but are not limited to): examining the visible policy gains or electoral campaigns an organization can win, assessing the extent to which the organization can influence agendas or dominant narratives, or the extent to which the organization develops capacities or resources (such as large numbers of people) known to make long-term policy wins more likely. In this study, we take a different approach and assume that power has two key characteristics:

Relationality

Power is a relationship, not a thing.



Sometimes people mistake resources for power, assuming that more money, more engaged activists, or a better message will lead to the political influence they want. We argue that power is not a static trait or characteristic of an organization. Instead, the extent to which an organization has power is dependent on whether it has resources that can act on and shape a target's interests. A movement organization thus achieves power (or influence) when it alters the pattern of interests its targets use to make strategic choices. We conceptualize the work of movement-building as a process of attempting to shape the interests of the target in a way that makes them more supportive of the movement's stated interests.

Three Faces

Power has three faces that operate at varying levels of visibility.



If power is the ability to shape a target's interests, what are the factors that shape a target's interests? In many cases, those factors are not always obvious. Although we can empirically observe things like whether an elected official chooses to vote a certain way on a bill, there are many other, less visible factors that influence that choice. What was the range of alternatives that were available to the elected official? Who determined which alternatives were available? How did cultural factors, or assumptions and narrative about how the world works affect their choice? Political theorist Steven Lukes refers to these multiple "hidden" factors as the three faces of power. In this framework, power is analogized to an iceberg: we see only the topmost portion protruding from the water, while most of its mass remains submerged. The most powerful organizations are able to act on the visible face of power in a way that simultaneously shifts invisible power.



"Well [to understand power], you have to understand who makes the decisions, [and] you have to understand that you've got to be there alongside whoever the decision-makers are...And power just doesn't exist for power's sake. You've got to build it and that's the organizing. [The power] is the people."

Observing Power

If power is relational and largely obscured from immediate view, to observe it, we must understand:

- » Who is the target?

- » What are the interests of that target?

- » How do those interests shift, or not, in relation to the organization's actions?

- » Does the organization win visible gains (legislation, elections, etc.) for its constituency in a way that shifts the power dynamics among key actors?

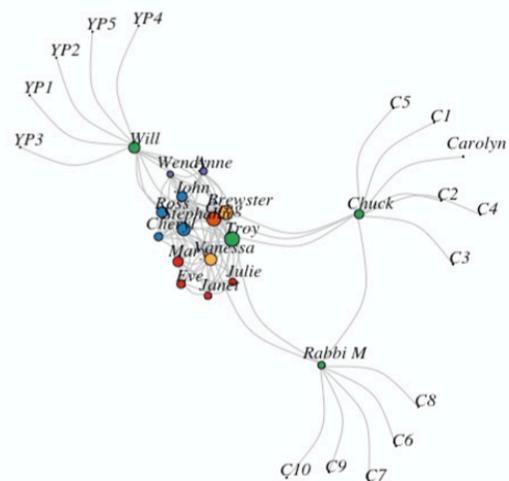
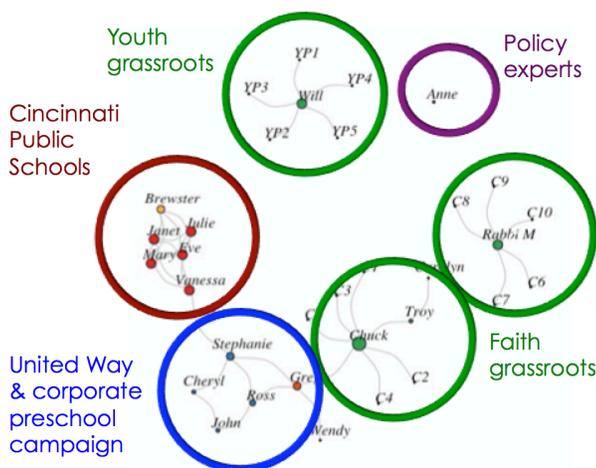
One Example: Shifting Power Dynamics in Preschool Promise

Before AMOS got involved, Preschool Promise consisted of only loosely connected networks that left out low-income people of color.

At the beginning of the campaign, the Strive Partnership and United Way worked with several business leaders to run the campaign, only loosely including schools, grassroots groups, and other stakeholders.

Once AMOS got involved, they brought the networks of previously uninvolved community leaders, including more than 60 churches, into closer relationship with the existing campaign. As a result, the constituents who would benefit most from universal preschool earned a seat at the movement's decision-making table.

By building these relationships, AMOS was able to hold the leaders of Preschool Promise, Cincinnati Public Schools, and United Way accountable to their platform.



★ The pages that follow summarize our four cases, and the way they each achieved power in different ways. Following a short summary of each case, we provide a 1 page narrative description of each case.

Our Cases

Arizona

Arena: Municipal and county-wide elections

Time Frame: 2009–2016

Target: Progressive political infrastructure at state level (including business, big political donors, elected officials, party)

Constituency: Immigrant rights groups (multiple orgs: One AZ, Promise AZ, ACE/LUCHA, CNL, PUENTE, PAFCO) and their bases

EVIDENCE OF POWER BUILT

Target Interests at Time 1: The political class gives limited voice to fragmented immigrant groups; S.B. 1070 passes in 2009/2010 to the shock of many; no investment in fighting for the agenda of immigrant groups

Target Interests at Time 2: Immigrant rights coalitions have a seat at the table with others in the political class, making it in the interests of business, electeds, and state and national donors to put resources into the fight for immigrant rights in AZ

Visible Wins: (1) Electoral and legislative wins such as the recalling Russell Pearce (author of S.B. 1070), defeating anti-immigrant Sheriff Arpaio (11.2% win margin), winning a majority (5 seats) on Phoenix city council, securing municipal IDs, and passing a minimum wage law (Prop 206); (2) Getting state political class to put hard resources into advancing immigrant issues through donors like Soros who poured large money into state in 2016 to secure Arpaio's defeat.

Invisible Wins: Now “undocumented and unafraid” organizers learn to fight for access by expanding the electorate (both defensive and offensive) and using inside/outside “tightrope walk” strategies to pressure for governing wins.

Nevada

Arena: State legislation

Time Frame: 2002–2015

Target: Establishment Democrats (e.g. Harry Reid)

Constituency: Constituents of Culinary Union, PLAN, and other POC constituencies

EVIDENCE OF POWER BUILT

Target Interests at Time 1: Establishment Democrats ignore progressive wing of the party as it tries to wrest more moderates from Republicans. R's held all six constitutional offices; state “deep purple” (Bush won in 2000 and 2002).

Target Interests at Time 2: PLAN and Culinary in new strategic alignment with establishment Democrats. Democrats win up and down the ticket (including taking back the State Senate and State Assembly), break GOP trifecta, key electeds beholden to aligned progressive groups and unions

Visible Wins: (1) \$1.5 billion corporate-profits tax bill narrowly passes in state legislature to fund education and human services in Nevada; (2) Union victories (favorite son Ruben Kihuen wins congressional seat in eight-way primary, Trump Hotel unionized during 2016 cycle) and other Democratic victories in congressional and state races

Invisible Wins: Formal Democratic political leadership structure in the state rooted in and dependent on progressive constituencies from Culinary and PLAN

Our Cases (Continued)

Ohio

Arena: Municipal levy

Time Frame: 2001–2016

Target: Business community, anti-tax groups (COAST), corporate arm of preschool campaign

Constituency: The AMOS Project’s grassroots base: a federation of multi-racial congregations in greater Cincinnati

EVIDENCE OF POWER BUILT

Target Interests at Time 1: Poverty and early childhood education addressed through philanthropic and private investment, such that targets choose if and when to invest resources in addressing poverty, despite the fact that Cincinnati has second worst childhood poverty rate in the nation. Grassroots and progressive advocates have little voice in early childhood efforts.

Target Interests at Time 2: Historic, multi-sector coalition of business, faith, grassroots, philanthropy, school district, and elected officials win passage of significant public investment in early childhood education.

Visible Wins: (1) Issue 44 passes by a historic 62.2% win margin, raising taxes by \$5.35 per week for a home valued at \$100,000; (2) \$15 million for preschool paid for with public dollars; (3) Key concessions to AMOS’ People’s Platform (coverage up to 200% poverty and \$15/hour wage for providers)

Invisible Wins: (1) Imposition of reputation cost on business community; (2) Defeat of neoliberal exit strategy for welfare provisioning; (3) “Corporate” approach to power-building (United Way, Preschool Promise) cedes ground to grassroots approach (AMOS congregations)

Virginia

Arena: State policy

Time Frame: 2008–2016

Target: Governors McDonnell and McAuliffe

Constituency: New Virginia Majority (NVM) and their grassroots base; returning citizens, POC populations especially in VA northern crescent

EVIDENCE OF POWER BUILT

Target Interests at Time 1: Political costs associated with extending voting rights to former felony offenders outweigh potential benefits of enfranchising this population. Virginia one of only four states that permanently disenfranchised former felony offenders

Target Interests at Time 2: Benefits of restoring civil rights to disenfranchised populations, appealing to the new strategically aligned groups within progressive movement ecology outweighs the costs of alienating people resistant to giving rights to former felons.

Visible Wins: (1) McDonnell restores rights for nonviolent offenders; McAuliffe for more than 150,000 former felons; (2) Turnout among former offenders in 2016 surpasses many demographics (current best estimate 75%)

Invisible Wins: (1) Extension of democratic rights to previously disenfranchised, mostly African American population, beginning to help address Virginia’s Jim Crow legacy; (2) Key grassroots groups (NVM) and progressive allies (e.g. ProgressVA, SEIU) develop new organizers and wield influence in the state legislature and governor’s mansion

Case Study: Arizona

In the first decade of the 21st century, immigrant rights divided and dominated political headlines, intensifying a harsh social and political climate for immigrant families. Concerns about racial profiling, detention, and sometimes deportation became more acute. Like many other border states, Arizona was a hotbed for divisive battles over immigration. A growing backlash against immigrants in the state provided latitude for people like Sheriff Joseph Arpaio, the infamous sheriff of Arizona's Maricopa County.

Against this backdrop, immigrant advocates in Arizona sought to organize in support of national immigration reform following the Obama wave election. In December of 2009, hundreds of immigrant leaders and activists packed a Reform Immigration for America (RIFA) organizing training led by Joy Cushman, then the training director of the New Organizing Institute (NOI). So many people showed up that Cushman had to improvise overflow breakout groups that met in the bathrooms of the dilapidated airport hotel where they held the training.

Despite their organizing efforts and Obama-induced optimism, these leaders failed to build the power to shape state policy. On April 23, 2010, then Governor Jan Brewer signed Senate Bill 1070 (henceforth S.B. 1070) into law. Authored by State Senate President Russell Pearce, S.B. 1070 instituted some of the harshest anti-immigrant policing and enforcement provisions in the country. The Supreme Court would later strike these provisions down as discriminatory and

unconstitutional. In the moment, however, immigrant advocates could not stop the bill.

The day Brewer signed S.B. 1070 into law, undocumented immigrants and supporters staged a massive direct action—cum—vigil on the lawn outside of the Arizona State Capitol building. The occupation continued for 104 days without interruption. During this period in 2010, activists clearly had the capacity to mobilize significant protest in response to S.B. 1070, but they were not able to translate that activity to political power. By 2016, however, terrain had shifted.

In that six year period, a strategic coalition of immigrant rights groups emerged that won a series of important local and state victories. They helped entangle S.B. 1070 in lawsuits, recall Russell Pearce, win five seats on Phoenix's city council, and revive and pass policies like municipal IDs to support immigrant communities. In 2012, the coalition sought to oust Sheriff Joe from office, but lost by six percentage points. By 2016, however, this coalition had built enough power that they were able to attract national political money to the effort to defeat Arpaio, ousting him from office with an 11.2 percent win margin. These local political victories were not only about the policy and electoral gains they made, but the way they were able to earn a seat at bargaining table for immigrant groups, build collective capacity as a coalition, hold elected officials accountable over time, and shape the interests of national donors.

Case Study: Nevada

Shortly before midnight on June 2, 2015, minutes before last day of legislative session ended, the Republican-controlled Nevada state senate voted in favor of the state's first-ever corporate profits tax bill to allocate approximately \$1.5 billion to education and human services in Nevada. Anti-tax conservatives had lobbied aggressively against the measure. Nonetheless, after what Republican Senate Majority leader Michael Roberson called "very hard work," Republicans also joined the vote. Republican State Senator Joe Hardy called the deal "monumental," arguing that it showed that Republicans "can vote for a tax...and still get re-elected."

This dramatic day of deal making represented the climax of a decades-long effort by a progressive coalition of PLAN, the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, and the Culinary union. As PLAN wrote to their funders in 2015, "Our communications and field efforts over the past two decades have helped reframe the debate in Nevada on corporate taxes. We helped create a new imperative in Nevada where even the Chamber of Commerce agreed new revenues must be found to fund education." The next year in 2016, the Culinary union elected its favorite son, Ruben Kihuen, as representative of Nevada's 4th Congressional District, even as Trump swept the national election.

These victories in 2015 and 2016 were not preordained. From 1968 to 2004, Nevada went Republican in every presidential election except 1992 and 1996. Although Nevada went Democratic in 2008, 2012, and 2016, partisan

control at the state level remained split. In 2015, Republicans swept state offices, winning unified control of the governorship and both houses of the legislature. It was under unified Republican control, then, that the education spending bill and 2016 victories took place. From a demographic standpoint, although Nevada is a state that is likely to be majority minority within the next decade, constituencies of color have little voice in the political system, lacking infrastructure to support them. Nevada has the highest percentage of undocumented immigrants, the largest share of undocumented workers, and in 2000, Nevada ranked 47th in the nation in terms of per capita density of civic organizations.

In this environment, however, PLAN and Culinary 226 worked in alliance with each other and other grassroots groups to build capacity among immigrant and POC communities in the state. Their continued ability to bring grassroots pressure to electoral and issue campaigns in the state forged a close relationship between their work and Democratic state party leaders, including elected officials like Harry Reid. The ability of this coalition to engage traditionally marginalized communities, develop leadership within those constituencies, and leverage its grassroots infrastructure to elect their chosen leaders to office and hold them and other policymakers accountable—as evidenced by improbable victories like the corporate tax in 2015—demonstrate marked shifts in the state's balance of political power.

Case Study: Ohio

In 2001, Cincinnati had the largest urban disturbance in the United States since the 1992 Los Angeles uprisings, following a police shooting of a young black man. This disturbance sparked a widespread discussion in the city about ways to combat persistent poverty. Decades of research demonstrated that early childhood education was one of the most effective possible interventions. In response, the United Way, a privately funded social service organization, “put a stake in the ground” and committed to making early childhood education its highest priority.

For over a decade, however, the United Way’s effort languished. They led a campaign that, as interviewees described it, was “out-of-touch” and unable to generate private investments at the needed scale to make preschool universal. In 2012, they realized they needed public dollars to fund early childhood education. In the years that followed, the Strive Partnership and United Way led a coalition called Preschool Promise that used a variety of tactics to try to build support for public investment in early childhood education. They ran a pledge campaign, community forums, and press conferences that some interviewees called “corporate marketing” to try to generate public support. Lacking a real grassroots base, Preschool Promise was not able to generate the public will needed.

All this changed when the AMOS Project became part of the coalition in 2014. AMOS is a faith-based grassroots organizing network focused on developing the power of low-income people of color in Cincinnati. This was the constituency that would benefit most from early childhood education, but they had largely been excluded from the campaign. When AMOS decided to partner with the Preschool Promise campaign, they did so conditionally. After a series of meetings with 400–500 constituents, AMOS drafted what they called the “People’s Platform.” The platform’s final version made explicit demands about allocating funds to ensure that levy resources directly addressed the racial disparities in Cincinnati and guaranteed a minimum base of



\$15/hour, paid sick time, and affordable health insurance for preschool providers.

Once AMOS and 60 affiliated congregations got involved, they provided the “old fashioned organizing muscle” that the coalition needed. With AMOS’s work, the campaign was so robust that the chairman of the Ohio Democratic Party told us that he directed his staff to funnel resources to them because “they had the best on-the-ground operation of any effort in Cincinnati.” AMOS only provided their support to the extent that their constituency-generated platform was reflected in the levy language. Throughout the campaign, they fought to hold business leaders and the United Way accountable to the People’s Platform. When the coalition threatened to stray from the ideals of the platform, AMOS organized community meetings and sit-downs between coalition leaders and faith leaders in the black community, threatening to publicize the fact that any leader who refused or was unwilling to engage with them was anti-black.

Even as Donald Trump won Ohio by eight points, 62.2% of Cincinnati voters voted to pass a municipal levy for preschool that raised taxes by \$278 dollars per year for every \$100,000 dollars of the value of a home. The levy included key concessions to AMOS’ People’s Platform, including coverage up to 200% of the poverty line and a \$15/hour wage for preschool providers. Perhaps more importantly, the victory gave grassroots faith leaders a seat at the political decision-making table.

Case Study: Virginia

In 1902, Virginia state leaders gathered for a state constitutional convention, plainly proclaiming their intention to suppress the black vote. Convention delegate R.L Gordon put it bluntly when he said, “I told the people of my county before they sent me here that I intended, as far as in me lay, to disenfranchise every negro that I could disenfranchise under the Constitution of the United States, and as few white people as possible.” This legacy persisted throughout the twentieth century. By 2014, Virginia tied Kentucky as the state with the highest disenfranchisement rate in the nation.

The constitution did, however, grant the governor the authority to restore voting rights for individual felons. Between 1938 and 2014, governors used that authority sparingly, restoring rights to 22,367 felons over a 76-year period, only a tiny fraction of the total number of disenfranchised citizens. In the first decade of the 21st century, state and federal voting rights advocates became frustrated by slow progress in the courts and state legislatures, and increased pressure on governors to use their executive authority. Facing political pressure not to seem too “pro-criminal,” however, Democratic and Republican governors alike moved slowly. Progress was incremental.

In April of 2016, Governor Terry McAuliffe bucked this trend, however, issuing a blanket order that restored voting rights to more than 200,000 people with previous felony convictions. With one order, he restored voting rights to ten times more people than the combined total of all his predecessors. Although the order was later invalidated by

the Virginia Supreme Court, McAuliffe responded by issuing individual executive actions to restore rights to tens of thousands of formerly incarcerated citizens.

What changed? Public opinion data shows that public support for rights restoration had not changed much between 2002 and 2014. So why did McAuliffe take the political risk? In the 2013 election, an organization called the New Virginia Majority worked in coalition to pressure gubernatorial candidates to take a stand on rights restoration. NVM did this work with a very clear sense of where their power to influence candidates was: “It’s not enough to just rally and protest and do these actions, but at the end of the day a lot of these elected officials also care about who’s voting and their power, right?” one interviewee told us. In the 2013 election, NVM sought—and earned— commitments from leading candidates that, if elected, they would use their authority to enact rights restoration. Then, they organized their constituency to turnout for the election.

When Terry McAuliffe was elected in 2013, NVM worked to hold him accountable to his promises. In the first two years of his administration, McAuliffe issued clemency orders in piecemeal fashion. But NVM “[showed] up at every committee meeting, whether it was at 7 in the morning or at 8 o’clock at night...We kept showing up because [we wanted McAuliffe’s people to think], ‘Okay they’re not going to let us get away with anything.’” Through this work, NVM developed a close relationship with McAuliffe’s office, pressuring him to take more sweeping action. When he did, he did so knowing that NVM would not rest until their POC base had voice.

A (very) Preliminary Framework

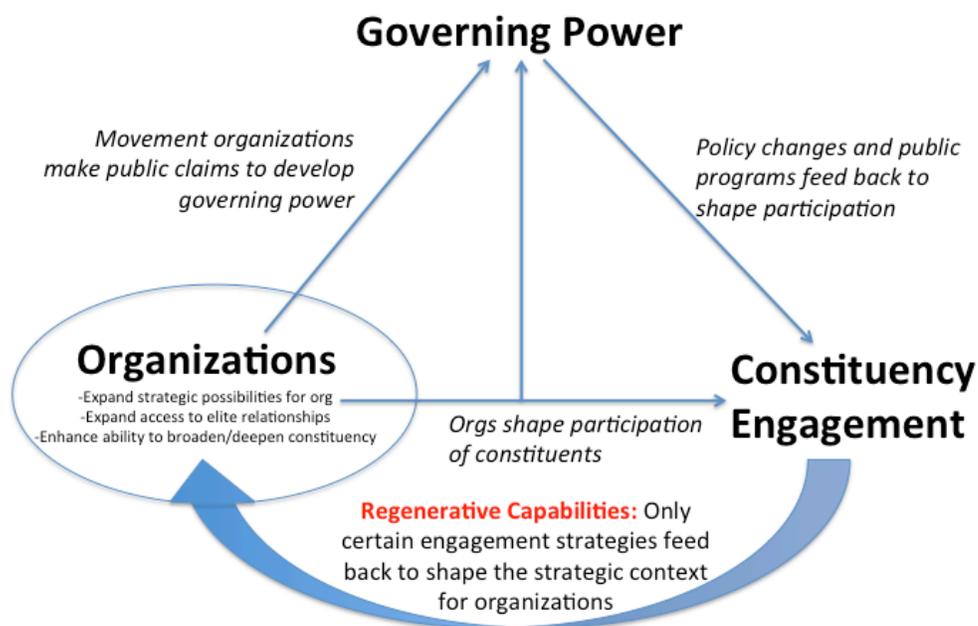
Across our four cases, we observe voters, business leaders, and elected officials making choices to support the rights and needs of traditionally marginalized constituencies. What did the organizations in our study do to change the interests of leaders and elected officials? Some VERY preliminary observations are below.

Are “civic feedbacks” an important capacity for building power?

- » As we look across all four of our cases, one emerging commonality that we may be seeing across all four cases is a pattern we are calling “civic feedbacks.”
- » *What is their competitive advantage over time?* All four anchor organizations were working over long time horizons in competitive environments, in which they had to compete for resources to influence their political targets—not just once, but over the long term. For these organizations, their competitive advantage depended on the extent to which they could harness constituency-based resources that their targets needed and otherwise could not access. Targets wanted access to constituencies that would provide loyal, active, and consistent support for their work, and insulation from constituencies that threatened their power.
- » *How did organizations build a loyal, active and consistent constituency?* These organizations cultivated elite relationships by demonstrating their ability to consistently move a constituency. First, they had to build the commitment among their constituency that was their key resource. Second, they had to ensure that the commitment would grow over time. Constituencies can be fickle and unpredictable; the key resource for an organization was thus commitment. Organizations built commitment through regenerative capabilities—as they engaged in any strategic action (from working with the media to contacting elites to organizing a constituency action), they constantly did that work in a way that would build the size, leadership capacity, and political consciousness of their constituency, to constantly renew and regenerate their constituency resources after each political win or loss.
- » *What processes enabled organizations do work in ways that generate civic feedbacks?* Some preliminary ways that we are seeing these organizations build these feedbacks are through: (a) strong relational ties in the constituency, (b) clear mechanisms of accountability between the constituency and organizational leadership, (c) investment in leadership development, and (d) strategic recognition of the downstream impacts of their organizing and relational work. As we move forward with the study, we hope to examine more closely the strategic decision-making processes that enable these capabilities and develop indicators of the meso-level practices that constitute them.

Visualizing Civic Feedbacks

In both research and practice, we commonly assume that there is a three-way relationship between constituents, organizations, and power. We see organizations constantly making public claims on power. We also know that organizations are crucial for shaping the participation of constituencies. Civic feedbacks examine the way that constituency engagement feeds back to shape the strategic capabilities of the organizations that engage them. Only certain kinds of engagement have those feedback effects.



Next Steps

- » Our work thus far has focused primarily on within-case analysis to uncover the way power shifted over time within each case.

- » We are currently looking across our cases to examine what commonalities, if any, exist across these organizations, and what hypotheses we can generate to shape the selection of our additional cases.

Selecting Additional Cases

- » Based on those hypotheses, we will select additional cases to examine in the fall of 2017.

- » We will then follow all six cases over the next year to track both shifting power dynamics and the strategic capacities these organizations deploy to move their agenda.



For additional questions or feedback, please contact Hahrie Han (hahrie@ucsb.edu).