OUT OF MANY, ONE: PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION
IN CONGREGATION-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

By

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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation, which unfolds across three separate documents, takes as its focus the practice of congregation-based community organizing. This form of community organizing combines important elements from the experience and writings of Saul Alinsky with a strong emphasis on relationship building and individual leadership/skill development. As the name would suggest, this form of organizing is based primarily within religious institutions, that is, membership within the major congregation based community organizing (CBCO) networks consists primarily of religious congregations.

This particular constitution gives CBCO projects several distinct advantages compared to other forms of community organizing. Generally speaking, these projects enjoy direct access to well-developed social networks within congregations – a key factor in garnering individual participation. Member congregations support CBCO projects financially, which gives them a degree of independence from typical sources of funding such as foundations and/or social service provision. The congregational basis of this form of organizing brings to the fore a powerful unifying framework; participants approach CBCO campaigns as ‘persons of faith’. Together these strengths have allowed groups practicing CBCO to win substantial concessions in the areas of healthcare, education, access to urban amenities, affordable housing, and employment.

This dissertation comprises three distinct research projects; however it is based upon a single important idea: the vitality and long-term viability of city-wide CBCO federations is of crucial importance to the practice of congregation-based organizing. City-wide CBCO federations serve as the primary arena in which relationship building
and collaboration across diverse groups – a crucial element of the practice of CBCO – take place. It is through issue work at the city level that clergy and lay leaders from historically segregated communities are able to engage in discussions on issues of import, discover sets of common interests, and devise strategies for pursuing those interests. City-wide CBCO federations also serve as the connection point for individual congregations and change efforts operating at the state and national level. Further, it is within the forum provided by the city-wide federation that community leaders and clergy learn the skills necessary for collaborating with groups not situated within their immediate neighborhood – skills which are crucially necessary for efforts to conduct campaigns beyond the metropolitan area.

To date, a relatively small number of studies have been conducted which focus explicitly on the topic of city-wide CBCO federations. The majority of the scholarly work that has been done on these federations has focused on the process of their initial formation and their general organizational structure (e.g., McCarthy, 2005; McCarthy & Walker, 2004; Swarts, 2008; Walker & McCarthy, 2010; Warren, 2001; Wood, 2002). These studies provide a clear delineation of the process of CBCO federation formation, its archetypal structure, and some of the advantages afforded by its overall approach to organizing. However, this developing area of research has yet to explicitly address factors that may explain the relative effectiveness of a CBCO federation over time, or by extension its survival.

Complicating the work of closing this gap in the extant literature is the lack of integration of the multiple sub-fields within social science that pertain to the phenomenon of community organizing. Scholarship that is focused directly upon community
organizing, while often conducted by sociologists, rarely employs the theoretical and empirical frameworks generated by the sociological study of social movements. The rift between these sub-fields is so pronounced that a number of community organizing researchers have written in recent years to encourage increased integration of the thinking and practice of these two areas (i.e., Delgado, 2009; Fisher, 2009; DeFilippis, Fisher, & Schragge, 2010). Conversely, researchers working within the mainstream of social movement research have long tended to focus on social change efforts which ultimately make their way to national-level policy arenas (e.g., the labor movement, the civil rights movement, the suffrage movement, etc.) and with a handful of exceptions\(^1\) have not focused explicitly on the phenomenon of community organizing. Therefore, one of the very important tasks which must be undertaken in research on CBCO federations is to integrate the multiple theoretical frameworks which have been developed in the study of organizing and social movements. In each of the three studies of this dissertation, a considerable effort has been made to integrate these heretofore-distinct sets of theoretical and empirical findings.

**Study One**

The first study, entitled **Organizational correlates of sustained participation in groups practicing congregation-based community organizing**, addresses the issue of participation within social change efforts, but from a novel perspective – that of a community organizer. Rather than address the (typically static) qualities of individual persons which may affect their likelihood of participating in social change efforts, this

\(^1\) See McCarthy, 2005; McCarthy & Walker, 2004; Oliver & Marwell, 1992; Polletta, 2002; Walker and McCarthy, 2010.
study proposes to examine factors at the organizational level that affect participation rates. By doing so, this study frames participation as an organizational-level resource which may be impacted by the particular actions of organizers and community leaders. Of particular interest in this study are the effects of certain organizing practices on participation levels – especially those practices that involve issue framing and the development of individuals’ leadership skills. To these ends, a longitudinal growth curve model is proposed in order to assess the relative contribution of these factors to long-term trends in organizational participation. *This study contributes to knowledge of the long-term viability of CBCO federations by examining factors which impact access to the key resource of voluntary participation.*

Further, this study builds upon existing knowledge on participation in the broader field of social movement studies by furthering understandings of contextual effects on movement participation. Findings generated from this analysis underscore the importance of regular one-to-one meetings between professional organizers and CBCO participants, but also and even equitable distribution of these meetings among the whole active membership of a given group. In a broader sense, this study highlights the utility of examining social movement participation at the organizational level of analysis rather than the individual level which has been the norm. Findings from research on organizational correlates of participation have greater potential for application owing largely to the fact that, relative to the qualities of individual persons, the qualities of organizations are much easier to amend.
Study Two

The second study, entitled *Out of many, one: A network analysis of federation building in congregation-based organizing*, examines collaboration between individual congregations working within a city-wide CBCO federation. Within the scholarly and practitioner literatures on CBCO much emphasis is placed on the relation building aspects of this practice, and the numerous successes enjoyed by its practitioners in uniting historically segregated racial/ethnic, socio-economic, and religious communities into effect political coalitions. However, previous work that has taken up this topic of interorganizational collaboration has constrained its focus to the process of eliciting congregational membership within a given federation. This study pursues more precise understandings of collaboration that occurs after congregations have joined such federations.

Specifically, a statistical network analysis is employed which identifies characteristics of organizations (as well as those of pairs of organizations) that either facilitate or militate against collaboration. *This study enhances understandings of CBCO federation viability by examining the conditions under which collaboration between member congregations is more or less likely.* Findings from this study suggest differing patterns of collaboration between congregations depending on the type of issue work being conducted. For neighborhood-level issues, the racial/ethnic makeup of a congregation was not a significant factor in determining which congregations tended to work together; these instances of collaboration were determined much more by the distance between congregations. Conversely, for issue work which requires the resources
of the entire federation race/ethnicity of each congregation’s membership is a very significant factor in determining which congregations tend to work together.

**Study Three**

The third study, entitled *More than the sum of its parts: Cooperation and mutual commitment in a congregation-based community organizing federation*, expands upon the work of the second study by examining more closely the forms and functions of participation between the congregational members of a city-wide CBCO federation. This study focuses on two aspects of CBCO federations that distinguish them from most social movement collectivities: (a) a multiple-issue focus, and (b) strong task differentiation between professional organizers and general congregational membership. In regard to the first point, CBCO federations (due to their multiple-issue orientation) tend to mobilize over relatively longer spans of time when compared to the more commonly observed single-issue coalition.

Thus the first aim of this study is to describe the primary challenges that a multiple-issue orientation presents to the maintenance of these federations. CBCO federations tend to exhibit very pronounced divisions of labor between the formal SMO entity (from which professional organizers operate) and the numerous congregational members of a federation (McCarthy, 2005; Wood, 2002). The implications of this division of labor have been addressed in part by work within the meso-mobilization context which focuses on the role of the ‘meso-mobilization actor’; however

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2 This term was originally introduced by Gerhardt and Rucht (1992) to describe one social movement organization which coordinates the movement efforts of other formal and non-formal organizations involved in a movement campaign.
considerable gaps remain regarding the form and function of collaboration between informal SMOs. In order to address these points a mixed-method analysis is carried out in order to better understand form and function of interorganizational collaboration within CBCO federations. *This study contributes to current understandings of CBCO federation viability by outlining the challenges posed by long-term multiple-issue organizing and by exploring new dimensions of interorganizational collaboration.* Qualitative findings from this study reveal how a multiple issue orientation within one CBCO federation has led to the adoption of a cooperative division of participatory/labor resources among the various issue committees of the federation. This division of labor allows each issue-specific committee, despite being comprised of just a handful of member congregations, to bring the entire membership and resources of the federation to bear in their particular issue campaigns.

**Summary**

The dissertation outlined in these documents contributes to extant knowledge on both congregation-based organizing as well as the broader field of social movement studies. To this end, the following documents present the reader with three distinct but interrelated research projects. Each of the three analyses addresses issues of direct relevance to the vitality and sustainability of congregation-based community organizing federations in operation at the metropolitan level. The research questions posed in each of these three studies draw heavily upon prior theory and empirical work in the fields of community organizing and social movement studies. The empirical evaluations of these research questions make use of data generated by the daily functioning of congregation-
based organizing in several US cities. By integrating theory from the study of social movements and community organizing together with data collected in congregation-based organizing settings, this dissertation sets out to make contributions to knowledge which are of relevance to practitioners and scholars of both community organizing and the broader field of social movements.
Introduction References


CHAPTER I

ORGANIZATIONAL CORRELATES OF SUSTAINED PARTICIPATION IN GROUPS PRACTICING CONGREGATION-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

As groups engaged in congregation-based community organizing (CBCO) move through the process of making changes in their communities they rely crucially on the resources made available to them. Beyond the modest levels of funding necessary to support organizer salaries, the most important resource that CBCO groups have at their disposal is the voluntary labor afforded by participants within an organizing effort (Osterman, 2002; Wood, 2002). Theoretical discussions of social movement organizations (SMOs) have considered participation as a group-level resource (Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Passy & Giugni, 2001) though the vast majority of treatments of participation are focused at the individual level of analysis (Christens & Speer, 2011; Martinez, 2005; Ohmer, 2008). Among empirical investigations of civic engagement/movement participation, a small number have found significant contextual effects on levels of participation (e.g., Corrigall-Brown & Snow, 2009; McCarthy & Walker, 2004; Perkins et al., 1990).

The extensive literature on participation within social movements, community organizing, and civic engagement has coalesced around several well-established sets of factors that are associated with an individual’s decision to participate. These can be
grouped into four general areas (Corrigall-Brown & Snow, 2009): relatively stable biographic characteristics, social-psychological factors, social network factors, and contextual factors. The follow section features a review of the literature on participation within SMOs which is then used to build a framework by which participation within the CBCO context may be evaluated as an organizational-level resource. By focusing on participation as an organizational-level resource, this study seeks to identify factors that organizers and community leaders may act upon in order to maintain or increase group participation levels over time.

**Literature Review**

**Biographic Correlates of Participation**

One of the most widely-studied areas of participation research has focused on the effects of socio-economic status and education level on the propensity to engage in civic behaviors such as voting, contributing to political campaigns, and contributing volunteer labor within SMOs and civic groups. Verba and colleagues (1995) found that higher levels of education and socio-economic status are associated with higher likelihood of political participation as well as a greater propensity for recruitment to political action (Brady, et al., 1999). The general outline of this argument has been that the act of participation in civic/community life requires a modicum of human capital resources, such that those with low levels of income or education lack somewhat the ability to volunteer (Musick, et al., 2000). Interestingly, a number of studies have examined the intensity or duration of participation among those who made an initial commitment to a
political or community group and find little support for any effect of SES or education level (Barkan, et al., 1995; Brady, et al., 1999; Christens & Speer, 2010; Cohn, et al., 2003).

A related area of participation research focuses on life events that may disrupt an individual’s ability to engage in civic or community initiatives. This ability to engage is referred to as ‘biographic availability’ and is defined as “the absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities” (McAdam, 1986, p. 70). Unlike most factors associated with movement participation, biographic availability is posed as a ‘necessary-but-insufficient’ condition of participation. This form of ability is usually discussed in terms of its impact on an individual’s ability to engage in high-risk or high-cost activism, such as participation in the Freedom Rides campaign of the civil rights movement (McAdam, 1986), or accepting the risk of long-term incarceration as have participants in the Plowshares movement (Nepstad, 2004).

The impact of these biographic correlates of participation is not lost on the ranks of professional organizers working within CBCO contexts. Compared to non-congregational organizing entities such as ACORN (which works mostly with very poor and working class populations), CBCO groups spend relatively more effort engaging working class and middle class populations (DeFillippis, Fisher, &Schragge, 2010; Fisher, 2009; Swarts, 2008a). The motivation behind this tendency relates directly to the amount and quality of resources (both personal and organizational) including participation. However, among CBCO groups, there is considerable variation in these biographic elements -- and so efforts to examine group-level correlates of participation
would do well to control for group-level factors such as median income, income distribution, and education level.

**Social-Psychological Factors**

A second major area of research on participation in social movement organizations seeks to delineate social psychological factors that motivate individuals to give of their time and material resources. Led by Klandermans and colleagues, researchers began by addressing earlier notions of movement participation that were based on theories of relative deprivation and mental illness (van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2007). Beginning in the early 1980s social movement researchers begin to challenge these notions – as well as the ‘free-rider’ assertions of Olson (1965) supplanting them with analyses that draw out the particular perceptions of individuals that impact their participation in movement activities.

*Early advances.*

In an analysis of participation in contentious actions among members of Dutch trade unions Klandermans (1984) found that participants largely based their decisions to engage upon their expectations of others’ participation, as well as their overall expectation of the success of proposed actions. Klandermans and Oegama (1987) expand on this line of inquiry in their study of the Dutch peace movement. Through a series of randomly sampled interviews before and after a major protest event this study found support for a four stage model of participation shown in Figure 1 below. In essence, they found that movement participants must take a sympathetic or supportive stance to
movement goals and methods, they must be in some way targeted or invited to participate in movement activities, and they must be motivated and prepared to participate in said activities. Within their sample Klandermans and Oegama reported that 60% of individuals who met these conditions in fact did NOT participate.

Following up to this work, Oegama and Klandermans (1994) explored factors associated with non-participation (within the same Dutch peace movement) among those who had met the first three of the above criteria. They found that unsupportive or indifferent opinions within one’s social network (related to movement activities) in conjunction with barriers to participation (such as sickness or lack of transportation to movement activities) were most strongly associated with non-participation. Continuing in a similar vein of inquiry, Ohmer (2008) examined cross-sectional patterns of participation in the activities of four non-profit neighborhood organizations and found that positive perceptions of organizational effectiveness were positively associated with individual attendance in organizing activities.
Contemporaneous to these developments Snow and colleagues (1986) introduced the concept of *movement framing*, and the specific ways in which movements and SMOs in particular work toward *frame alignment* with potential participants. The use of the word *frame* in this instance refers to the concept first elucidated by Irving Goffman (1974): “a schemata of interpretation that enable[s] individuals to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large” (Snow, et al., 1986, p. 464). Benford (1997) explained that:

From this perspective, meaning is pivotal. It is particularly fundamental to the issues of grievance construction and interpretation, attributions of blame/causality, movement participation, the mobilization of popular support for a movement cause,
resource acquisition, strategic interaction, and the selection of movement tactics and targets. (p. 410)

The process of frame alignment involves interactions, either through interpersonal communication or mass media, between members of a given movement and those they would seek to recruit as participants. This group described the alignment of frames as occurring through several activities: linking with previously unrecognized populations who hold views sympathetic to the movement (frame bridging), by “clarifying or invigorating an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue” (Snow, et al., 1986, p. 467 – 472) (frame amplification), by the relating of movement activities to previously unconnected social or moral sentiment (frame extension), and by the work of introducing new values or jettisoning older ones incongruent with movement goals (frame transformation).

Research on the construction and uses of various movement frames has proliferated since the concept was introduced; rather than directly engage this varied and somewhat contradictory literature the present discussion would benefit most by picking up on an aspect of framing pointed out by Benford (1997). His argument (among others within a sweeping critique on the subject) is in favor of viewing framing as an ongoing, interactive process in which movement actors bring a “repertoire of socially constructed frames to any particular movement encounter” (p. 422). From this viewpoint the importance of movement framing may be less on the particular content of frames employed, but rather on the intensity of effort devoted to frame alignment on the part of movement actors toward both current and potential members of a given movement.
Frame alignment within the CBCO context: ‘1 to1’ meetings.

As with the biographic correlates mentioned above, community organizers have long been aware of the central importance of frame alignment in stimulating participation at the community level. Alinsky spoke rather candidly on this topic referring to his ambition to organize white middle-class Americans:

Their society appears to be crumbling and they see themselves as no more than small failures within the larger failure. All their old values seem to have deserted them, leaving them rudderless in a sea of social chaos. Believe me, this is good organizational material. The despair is there; now it's up to us to go in and rub raw the sores of discontent, galvanize them for radical social change. (Norden, 1972)

Within the space of just a few sentences Alinsky has presented readers with a frame for mobilizing the middle class, described his organization’s intention to amplify the salience of that frame, and affirmed the value of this activity for the health of his organization.

Organizers working within the congregation-based branch of this practice have maintained a strong emphasis on frame alignment by coupling this work with that of relationship building in a process known as the ‘one-to-one’ meeting. These meetings involve just two persons, usually a staff organizer or member of a local organizing committee (who initiates the meeting) and a congregation member, neighbor, or some other community member. The focus of such meetings is centered on discussion of local issues of importance to congregation/community members to find out “what really motivates the other person, what they care deeply about” (Warren, 2001, p. 35).

In this way, one-to-one conversations build social capital within congregations and communities, but with an explicit ‘moral-political’ content that provides organizers
the opportunity to identify salient frames within a community while at the same time working to communicate empowering framings of community issues that could facilitate action. In the context of a given organizing campaign the one-to-one meeting may serve several purposes: a method of recruitment, a way to exchange information, an opportunity to conduct focused planning, or a way to sustain the commitment of established participants. In an in-depth qualitative study of the one-to-one process, Christens (2010) found that “forming relationships and listening to other people’s narratives push[es] participants toward a systemic understanding of social issues, and a systemic understanding provides motivation for the groups to pursue systems change” (p. 893). Oliver and Marwell (1992) also made reference to frame alignment work in organizing:

Organizers spend much of their time fostering or creating new social relations so that the effective personalized technologies for mobilization can transcend initial social barriers. They also transfer technology and teach people how to raise money or create structures that can effectively use volunteer time. Depending on their orientation, they may also spend a great deal of time in ‘political education,’ talking to people with the goal of persuading them to reinterpret their circumstances and interests. (p. 269)

Seen from this vantage point, the oft stated maxim of CBCO that ‘power is built in relationship’ comes into focus. The relationships built through the countless one-to-ones of a CBCO organizing campaign build power by providing a means for movement participants and community members at large to engage in four important activities. The first of these is that one-to-one meetings allow community members direct method for expressing their values and interests as relate to issues of community concern. Secondly,
these meetings provide an initial opening for individuals to negotiate the many possible narratives of attribution and problem resolution for a given community issue. Third, these meetings are the basis from which bonds of solidarity begin to form on the issues that participants/members are able to agree upon. Finally, one-to-one meetings allow organizers and organizing participants to extend personal invitations to action to large portions of a given community.

Based on the body of qualitative research that has been conducted on one-to-ones and the functions they serve, one would reasonably expect that engagement in one-to-ones would be facilitative both of recruitment and sustained participation among those already involved in an organizing campaign. Christens and Speer (2011) have provided what is likely the only quantitative analysis of the impact of one-to-ones on levels of participation over a four-year period. After controlling for biographic and setting-level factors they found that the number of one-to-ones that individuals engaged in at a given time had a positive and significant impact on participation rates in subsequent years.

Applying this finding to participation at an organizational level, one would expect that the aggregate level of one-to-one meetings conducted with members of a given group would have a positive overall impact on group participation. The results of several program evaluations of CBCO practice support this notion, and further have shown that there tends to be wide variation within and among congregations in the distribution of these meetings across individuals (Speer, personal communication). In essence, all congregations exhibit skewed distributions of one-to-one meetings (a handful of participants and leaders being engaged much more than the majority of participants) while at the same time there is variation across congregations in the extent of this skew.
Given the important substantive role of the one-to-one process and these supportive empirical findings, future investigations of CBCO participation would do well to include this facet of organizing work.

**Social Network Factors**

Participation in social movement activities and organizations has long been thought to be impacted by the particular qualities of the social networks of potential participants (Diani, 2004). A number of studies have shown empirical evidence for the importance of personal relationships as vehicles for movement recruitment (Diani & Lodi, 1988; Fernandez & McAdam, 1988; Passy, 2003; Snow et al., 1986). In addition to increasing the likelihood of participation, the level of network-mediated support for participation in movement activities has been shown to have a strong impact on longevity of participation in forms of activism both high and low in risk/cost (McAdam, 1986; Nepstad, 2004; Oegama & Klandermans, 1994; Passy, 2003). The social network perspective on movement participation would appear to share much in common with the social-psychological perspectives described above. Social ties between those involved in movement activities and those who have the potential become involved enable approaches to frame alignment, recruitment, motivation, and social support for movement activities that are tailored to the specific needs, interests and values of individuals.

Within the CBCO context, social networks play a crucial role for several reasons. The first of these is that congregations as community-based institutions work to foster and strengthen social networks among their membership. The positive effect of such integrated congregation-based networks on the overall quality of participation was first
written about by McAdam (1982). In his analysis of participation in the civil rights movement he found that the social integration and trust bound up within southern black churches facilitated the ‘bloc recruitment’ into movement activities. Recognition of the role of religious congregations in this kind of recruitment partially explains why the Industrial Areas Foundation under the leadership of Ernesto Cortes and Ed Chambers was keen to shift their efforts to work with congregations. In short, congregations tend to have relatively well-connected social networks among their membership – especially within urban contexts, and thus efforts to recruit and sustain engagement among such members benefit as a whole (Speer, et al., 2011). Perhaps due to the difficulty of collecting social network data on the scores of persons who could be considered members of a given congregation at any one time, full network-analytic investigations have not been published in this context, though they remain an area of theoretical interest.

**Contextual Factors**

In addition to work that links participation to biographic, social-psychological, and social network factors, qualitative accounts of movement participation have long attributed contextual factors to participation.

*Free spaces.*

In the most general sense, the ability to conduct movement activities without fear of repression or retaliation has long been recognized as key to any form of participation (Alinsky, 1989/1971; Corrigall-Brown & Snow, 2009; Piven & Cloward, 1977). Beyond this very general notion, the ‘free spaces’ concept put forth by Evans and Boyte (1986)
highlighted the way that various physical, cultural, or conceptual arenas are facilitative of movement involvement:

Particular sorts of public places in the community, what we call free spaces, are the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, values of cooperation and civic virtue. Put simply, free spaces are settings between private lives and large scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision. (p. 17)

Religious congregations have consistently been included as salient examples of free spaces. As such, they have served important roles within several of the social movements of the previous century (McAdam, 1982; Polletta, 1999); scholars of community organizing have found the concept equally applicable (Fisher, 1994; Stoecker, 1994; Wood, 2002). Extending this logic slightly, it follows that if free spaces facilitate movement participation, then the particular qualities of free spaces created by movement organizations should have some impact on the level or quality of participation facilitated.

Working along these lines, Christens and Speer (2011) examined the relationship between attendance at various types of CBCO meetings and trajectories of individual participation over time. Within their statistical analysis of the attendance patterns of over 10,000 individuals in 5 CBCO city-wide coalitions over a five-year period, they included dichotomous variables to indicate whether in a given year a particular person has attended one of two meeting types: ‘actions’ and ‘research actions’. Actions are the kind of large public meetings typically associated with protest activity where large numbers of people are brought together largely to affirm the strength of the organization and the need
for its proposed initiatives. Research actions “involve leaders and key members of institutions with knowledge on the topic that the group is pursuing and involve gathering information pertinent to the community issues around which the organizing is taking place” (p. 256).

The key difference between research actions and other forms of participation is in the way that each member of the organizing committee is assigned a specific role to carry out in the course of the meeting. Typical examples of roles assigned include posing specific, often challenging, questions to invited experts, working to keep the meeting on topic and on schedule, or to listening for and pointing out anticipated contradictions in a policy maker’s account of the topic at hand. Through the intentional involvement of a wide range of organizing participants, these meetings provide a context for participants to further develop their own political skills – a notable facet of the free spaces argument. Christens and Speer (2011) found that attendance at research actions increased the likelihood of future participation by approximately 30% -- a finding that held over the five year duration of the study.

McCarthy and Walker (2004) examined various facets of the CBCO approach to organizing as exemplified by the Industrial Areas Foundation network, and the community organizing work of ACORN. This team found wide divergence in the practices of these two national networks, most importantly that IAF groups tended to focus much more energy on leadership development within local communities and also enjoyed much higher rates of individual participation. It should be noted that these differences were found within separate analyses and thus do not carry the same weight as a single statistical model including both. Nonetheless, these findings and especially those
of Christens and Speer (2011) highlight the potential utility of examining setting-level factors such as the availability of active/distinctive roles and leadership development in sustaining the crucial resource of individual participation.

*Influences on participation from the built environment.*

Within the literature on social movement participation, there are few examples of research that attempts to identify the particular facets of the built environment that may influence participation. In the related field of civic engagement and volunteering several studies have explored these factors (Perkins, et al., 1990; Wilson, 2000) though little consensus has been reached to date within this field. Nonetheless, some observers of community organizing practice have commented that many of the communities in which organizing is currently practiced differ substantially from the densely developed urban areas in which most community organizing practice was established (Fisher, 1994). Orr (2007) noted that the “city that community organizers and activists now inhabit is vastly different in many ways from the ‘hog town’ Alinsky found himself organizing in the late 1930s” (p. 12). In particular, modern metropolitan areas now tend to cover much larger physical spaces, and in many cases have become markedly less dense in their development. The effects of variations in residential density on SMO participation have not been examined in the extant literature.

In a recent study of SMOs working with the community organizing framework, Walker and McCarthy (2010) found that urbanicity significantly increased the likelihood of organizational survival over a 14 year period. To extend the logic of this finding slightly, it seems at least plausible that the built environment has a direct impact on the
propensity for individuals to participate in CBCO activities in that this is a determining factor in the spatial dispersion of the workplaces, homes, and importantly to their places of worship. Thus a reasonable general hypothesis might be that the further potential participants must travel in order to participate, the less likely they will be to do so. Warren (2001) spoke somewhat to this point in his description of the differences between various types of congregations involved in CBCO efforts of the Southwest IAF network. Relative to larger Mexican American Catholic parishes, African American churches tended not only to be smaller, but also to include members who live in disparate portions of a given city. This was attributed mainly to middle class African-American families migrating out from distressed urban areas. Mok, Wellman, and Basu (2007) examined the effect of increasing geographic distance on the frequency of contact between individual persons (nominated as friends or family members) and found a significant and negative relation between these factors. Engaging this logic at the organizational level leads one to the notion that congregations with members that live on average longer distances away from the congregation may have in general lower levels of participation compared to those congregations that draw from more dense/closely-situated neighborhoods.
As has been shown above, the extensive literature on movement participation and civic engagement, while usually rooted in phenomena other than community organizing nonetheless provides a number of useful starting points for examining participation in the CBCO context. Research from a range of contexts has suggested that biographic correlates such as socio-economic status and education level are positively associated with the initial propensity to participate (though not necessarily the intensity or duration of participation) (Brady, et al., 1999; Verba, et al., 1995), while biographic availability/lack of barriers seem to play a more important role in longitudinal patterns of participation (McAdam, 1986; Nepstad, 2004).

Social-psychological analyses of participation suggest that four factors are required for movement participation: (a) sympathy/agreement with movement goals and tactics, (b) an invitation to participate, (c) motivation to participate, (d) a lack of barriers to participation (Klandermans, 1984; Klandermans & Oegama, 1987; Oegama & Klandermans, 1994). Recent research has also highlighted the role of perceptions of organizational effectiveness in facilitating participation (Ohmer, 2008). Early research on frame construction and alignment processes within CBCO initiatives (through one-to-one meetings) suggests that they are strong facilitators of sustained participation (Christens, 2010).

Studies of social networks and participation in movement activities have highlighted their importance in recruitment, provision of social support necessary for sustained participation, and the ways in which they can provide avenues for ‘bloc
recruitment’ (McAdam, 1986). Research on contextual factors related to participation suggests that organizations may facilitate greater participation through their provision of a ‘safe space’ in which persons may develop political skills and movement identities (Christens & Speer, 2011; McCarthy & Walker, 2004). Finally, research on factors within the built environment, while still nascent, suggests the possibility that increasing distances between participants and sites of participation may have a negative effect on participation (Walker & McCarthy, 2010; Warren, 2001).

At the outset of the article, the question was posed: which factors of movement participation are expressed at the organizational level such that community leaders and professional organizers may act upon them to increase or sustain participation? Answering this question in earnest will require further empirical studies of CBCO organizations, though the extant literature provides some useful points of departure for this analysis. Biographic correlates of participation, (while beyond the control of CBCO organizers) do appear to have effects on initial participation and thus should be included as necessary control variables. At the organizational level this could take the form of the actual median income and average education level of membership, or in place of such data, the corresponding figures for the community immediately surrounding a given organization. The range of social psychological factors associated with participation find a natural home in the process of ‘one-to-one’ meetings such that one would expect the intensity and distribution of such work among members of an organization would be predictive of the intensity and duration of participation at the organizational level. The importance of free spaces, especially their skill building and leadership development components, are reflected at the group level in the presence or absence of meeting types
that facilitate these activities. Thus the extent to which an organization engages in regular ‘research actions’ should predict sustained patterns of participation. Finally, the built environment, to the extent that it situates a given organization’s members in varying levels of spatial dispersion should impact participation levels: organizations with higher levels of dispersion among members should have lower overall levels of participation.

Beyond the modest levels of funding necessary to support organizer salaries, the most important resource that CBCO groups have at their disposal is the voluntary labor afforded by participants within an organizing effort (Osterman, 2002; Wood, 2002). Theoretical discussions of social movement organizations (SMOs) have considered participation as a group-level resource (e.g., Edwards & McCarthy, 2004; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Passy & Giugni, 2001) though the vast majority of treatments of participation are focused at the individual level of analysis (Christens, 2011; Martinez, 2005; Ohmer, 2008). The present study seeks to identify factors expressed at the organizational level of analysis that are associated with increased levels of participation over time. The extensive literature on participation within social movements, community organizing, and civic engagement has identified several well-established sets of factors that are associated with an individual person’s decision to participate. These can be grouped into four general areas (Corrigall-Brown & Snow, 2009): relatively stable biographic characteristics, social-psychological factors, social network factors, and contextual factors.

**Research Question and Hypotheses**

Following from these precedents in the organizing and social movement literatures, several research questions and hypotheses come into focus. Of interest in this
study are factors which explain differential participation among organizations which remain viable over time.

**Research question one: What is the effect of one-to-one meetings conducted within a group (over a given time period) on that group’s participation level (over the same time period)?**

Given the importance of one-to-one meetings as a form of frame creation and alignment one would expect that the overall number of one-to-one meetings between professional organizers and individual participants would have a positive effect on participation rates. However, at the group level of analysis further elaboration of this hypothesis is necessary due to the fact that some members of a given group may receive a disproportionate number of organizer one-to-ones, thus increasing the likelihood of participation for a certain few persons, while having no effect on those individuals not engaged by organizers. Notions of *average* number of one-to-one meetings per person as well as the *distribution* of one-to-one meetings within a group are incorporated into the first two hypotheses for this analysis.

**Hypothesis 1a.**

The average number of organizer one-to-one meetings per individual member per unit time will have a positive effect on group levels of participation with the same unit time.

**Hypothesis 1b.**

In addition to the effect predicted in H1a, a positive effect on group levels of participation will be shown as the distribution of one-to-one meetings becomes more
even across the organizational membership (as reflected by relatively lower standard deviations in one-to-one meetings per person.

**Research question two:** What role do the various ‘free spaces’ or behavior settings created within the typical CBCO organizing process play with respect to group levels of participation per unit time?

Previous research on CBCO participants has shown that attendance at a research meeting increases the likelihood of future participation. One way to examine this notion at the group level would be to note those groups which do or do not host research meeting and/or a large action meeting in a given period of time.

Hypothesis 2a.

The hosting of at least one research meeting in a given time period will have a positive effect on participation rates within that time period.

Hypothesis 2b.

The hosting of at least one action meeting in a given time period will have a positive effect on participation rates within that time period.

**Research question three:** What effect does spatial dispersion of organizational membership have on participation rates at the group level?

Given early findings in social network research, one would expect that greater distances between participants and the site of participation would be associated with lower overall levels of participation. At the group level of analysis, this would be reflected in the average travel distance between member residences and the site of the organization/congregation.

Hypothesis 3
Larger average spatial dispersion (evidenced by average minutes driving time between member residences and their respective organization’s location) will have an overall negative effect on group-level participation rates.

Method

In order to evaluate these hypotheses a multi-level regression model of the attendance levels of 50 organizations over eight consecutive six-month periods is carried out. The data for this analysis come primarily from meeting attendance records at community organizing events, with supplements from the US Census. Two unique statistical models are proposed following the two distinct operationalizations of participation within this context.

Data

The data used for these analyses were collected in the course of a large multi-site program evaluation of community organizing processes within the PICO national organizing network. The bulk of this dataset consists of sign-in sheets created at organizing events and meetings which uniquely identify participants, their organizational affiliations, meeting location, the organizational sponsor or host, as well as the type of meeting. Complementing this sign-in sheet data are records of ‘one-to-one’ meetings conducted by professional organizers. These records indicate the unique individuals engaged in one-to-one meetings with professional organizers, each individual’s organizational affiliation, and the date of the meeting. In total, this dataset contains
information on the attendance of over 10,000 individual persons at community organizing activities in five U.S. metropolitan areas over a period of four years.

In order to examine longitudinal patterns of participation as a group-level phenomenon, these data are first aggregated into regular six-month time intervals using the date recorded for each meeting in the organizing meeting database. Next, the data are aggregated at the congregation level. Once aggregated, meeting sign-in sheet data reflect the attendance patterns of 545 organizations with at least one participant at a community organizing event, meeting, or activity over a four-year period. Included within this pool of 545, there are a number of organizations that are only tentatively or intermittently engaged in organizing activities. As the focus of this study is on factors which predict differential levels of participation rather than those which are associated with organizational survival, only those organizations that meet the requirement of having 1 or more attendances in four consecutive six-month periods are maintained within the final sample. This process yields a collection of 50 organizations.

Dependent Measures

The outcome of interest in this study is group-level participation in organizing activities. Using the data available, one could conceivably define participation as the number of unique persons participating in a given time period, or alternatively one could choose to measure the number of instances of participation which occur among members of a given group over a given time period. The relative paucity of prior quantitative research on participation within this context leaves little information to guide the operationalization of this dependent variable. For these reasons two sets of statistical
models are pursued. The first set (models A, B, and C) predict the number of unique participants per six-month time period; the second set (models D, E, and F) predict the number of instances of participation per six-month time period. Dependent variables for each of these analyses are created by simply tabulating for each of the 50 organizing groups the number of unique participants and instances of participation within each six-month time period (respectively). By pursuing distinct statistical models for each of these dimensions of participation, the idiosyncrasies of each should become more apparent, thereby strengthening the validity of findings.

**Independent Measures**

In addition to documenting the participation of individual persons within organizing groups, sign-in sheet data also include information on the organizational host of each meeting as well as the type of meeting being held. Using these pieces of information, three variables were created in order to reflect the number of meetings hosted by a given organization, as well as the type of meetings hosted. One of these variables indicates the number of large public actions hosted by a given organization over a six-month period, a second indicates the number of research meetings. A third variable captures the number of regular business meetings held by each group in each time period as an indicator of the overall activity level of each group in each time period.

Data on one-to-one meetings with community organizers are likewise aggregated and matched to each of the 50 organizations included in this sample. For each organization, the mean number of one-to-one meetings per participant is calculated according to the number of one-to-ones conducted with the members of a given group in
a given time period divided by the total number of persons from that group who participate in organizing activities over the corresponding time period.

This same logic is used to create a measure of the equality or evenness of one-to-one meetings with organizers among active members of a given group in a particular time period. For the purposes of this study, this measure is defined as the inverse of the standard deviation of one-to-one meetings across active individuals within each group and six month time period. The resulting measure represents the equity of distribution of one-to-one meetings within a group such that a larger value of this measure indicates greater in-group equality of distribution.

Also included in the PICO evaluation data are the home addresses of individuals who participate in organizing activities. These addresses have been used to calculate the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Independent variables: means and standard deviations.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group-level variables: time-varying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action meetings hosted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research meetings hosted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other meetings hosted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean One-to-ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one Inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-level variables: time-invariant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean travel time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Income(^3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) Figures for median income were log-transformed and centered before use in analyses.
corresponding number of minutes travel time (via auto) between a participant’s residence and the congregation to which they are affiliated. These figures were then aggregated at the group level. For each of the 50 organizations included in the study, the central tendency of the distribution of travel time is calculated by taking the average of the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile values in the distribution of travel times for each organization. This variable is included in the multilevel model as a method to assess the impact of geographic dispersion of potential participants on group-level participation over time.

Finally, participant addresses were also used in order to create a variable to reflect the overall socio-economic status of participants within each of the 50 congregations included in this sample. These congregation-level average income figures consist of the median household income for each census tract in which members of a given congregation reside, that are then combined into an average figure which is weighted according to the number of congregants living in each census tract. Tract-level median household income figures were taken from the 2000 U.S. Census.

Analysis Strategy

Hypothesis testing was carried out by means of a generalized linear mixed modeling procedure as implemented in the ‘glmmADMB’ analysis package (Skaug, et al., 2011) within the R statistical computing suite (R Core Team, 2012). glmmADMB was chosen for its multilevel analysis capabilities for count data which feature over-dispersion. Over-dispersion is a characteristic of the distribution of a count variable in

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4 This conversion was carried out using the ArcInfo GIS software package and the Network Analyst toolbox.
which variance substantially exceeds the value of the mean, thus violating an important assumption of classic poisson-based regression methods and compromising the accuracy of any associated regression estimates. Recent work suggests that over-dispersion tends to be observed in the majority of count data in the social sciences and so the use of routines which properly account for this condition is advised in most cases (Snijders & Bosker, 2012; Venables & Ripley, 2002; Zheng, Salganik, & Gelman, 2006).

The statistical models below were estimated using a negative binomial distributional assumption for the dependent variable, with the explicit inclusion of a negative binomial dispersion parameter to account for overdispersion. Models presented below were estimated using the Laplace approximation which, compared to the more common penalized quasi-likelihood estimation method is generally understood to provide more accurate results as well as allowing for likelihood-based comparisons of post-hoc model fit (Bolker, et al., 2009; Raudenbush, et al., 2000).

Two sets of models are presented below. Table 2 conveys the results of models A, B, and C – each of which predict the number of persons per organizing group who participate in at least one organizing activity in a six-month time period. Table 3 summarizes the results of models D, E, and F – each of which predict the number of instances of participation per group in a six-month time period.

**Results**

Results for models A, B, and C predicting the number of unique persons participating per group and six-month time period are given in Table 2. Model A, is an unconditional means model and is given as a baseline model so that the utility of
additional parameters in subsequent models can be evaluated. Model B adds a level-one term to capture the effect of elapsed time on participation. The parameter for time ($\beta = -0.101, p<.001$) is significant and negative indicating that despite the fact that some groups increased their participation levels over time, the overall trend for these 50 organizations is to lose some portion of their participants every six months, holding all other factors equal. The addition of a time parameter improved model fit as indicated by a reduction in Aikake Information Criteria, or AIC.

Model C is given as the ‘full’ model which includes all independent variables necessary to test hypotheses outlined above. The coefficient for mean one-to-ones ($\beta = 0.087, p<.001$) is positive and significant indicating that every one-unit increase in a group’s mean number of one-to-one meetings is associated with a 9% increase in the number of persons participating in that group’s organizing activities. Thus hypothesis 1a is supported. The model term reflecting the overall equality of one-to-one distribution within groups was not found to be significant, nor was the interaction term between mean number and equality of distribution in one-to-one meetings. These findings suggest that the number of persons participating in organizing activities is not likely to be associated with the distribution of one-to-ones within groups, and thus hypothesis 1b is not supported. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were evaluated using model terms to capture the number of research and action meetings (respectively) that each group held in each time period. The model term for research meetings did not attain statistical significance – and thus hypothesis 2a is not supported.
Table 2. Parameter estimates for Models A, B, and C predicting persons participating per six months per group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Parameter</th>
<th>Model A: Unconditional Means</th>
<th>Model B: Unconditional Growth Model</th>
<th>Model C: Full Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects: time varying, level-1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>$\gamma_0$</td>
<td>2.694 (0.098)**</td>
<td>2.919 (0.110)**</td>
<td>2.500 (0.141)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-101 (0.022)**</td>
<td>-0.086 (0.020)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research meetings conducted</td>
<td>$\gamma_{20}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.025 (0.023)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action meetings conducted</td>
<td>$\gamma_{30}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.477 (0.109)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other meetings conducted</td>
<td>$\gamma_{40}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.037 (0.011)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean one-to-ones</td>
<td>$\gamma_{50}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.087 (0.023)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one Inter-individual Equality</td>
<td>$\gamma_{60}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.063 (0.071)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean One-to-ones * One-to-one Equality</td>
<td>$\gamma_{70}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.071 (0.053)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fixed effects: time invariant, level-2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logged Average Median Income</td>
<td>$\gamma_{01}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.058 (0.739)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average travel distance</td>
<td>$\gamma_{02}$</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.017 (0.013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Random Effects</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random intercept for groups</td>
<td>$r_{0j}$</td>
<td>0.348 (-0.590)</td>
<td>0.398 (0.631)</td>
<td>0.238 (0.488)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effect of time by group</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.006 (0.074)</td>
<td>0.003 (0.054)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative binomial dispersion parameter:</td>
<td>10.980 (1.088)</td>
<td>9.025 (0.955)</td>
<td>6.955 (0.743)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td></td>
<td>2447.46</td>
<td>2421.08</td>
<td>2339.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The model term for action meetings ($\beta = 0.477, p < .001$) was significant and positive indicating that each action meeting held per time period was associated with an approximately 61% increase in the number of persons attending organizing activities, and hypothesis 2b is supported. The level-two parameter for average travel distance between participant residence and congregation location was non-significant, thus hypothesis 3 is not supported. The time parameter ($\beta = -.086, p < .001$) maintains its significance, sign, and magnitude, indicating that holding all other factors constant these groups tend to lose approximately 9% of their participants every six months. The AIC for Model C is smaller than that of models A and B, indicating that the inclusion of the full set of independent variables and controls improved overall model fit.\(^5\)

Results for models D, E, and F predicting the number of unique instances of participation per group and six-month time period are given in Table 3. Model D, is once again presented as an unconditional means model to evaluate the utility of additional parameters in subsequent model. Model E adds a level-one term to capture the effect of elapsed time on participation. The parameter for time ($\beta = -0.070, p < .001$) is significant and negative indicating that despite the fact that some groups increased their participation levels over time, the overall trend for these 50 organizations is to lose some portion of their participants every six months, holding all other factors equal. The addition of a time parameter improved model fit as indicated by a reduction in AIC.

Model F is given as the ‘full’ model which includes all independent variables necessary to test hypotheses outlined above. The coefficient for mean one-to-ones ($\beta = $\end{verbatim}

\(^5\) Average years of education for census tracts of participant residence was proposed as a control variable as suggested by previous research. However this term was found to be strongly correlated with average income at the census tract level and thus led to poor model convergence and unreliable results due to co-linearity. This term was omitted and average income alone was used.
0.063, p<.01) is positive and significant indicating that every one-unit increase in a group’s mean one-to-ones is associated with a 6.5% increase in the number of instances of participation in that group’s organizing activities. Thus hypothesis 1a is again supported. The model term reflecting the overall equality of one-to-one distribution within groups was not found to be significant. However, the interaction term between mean number and equality of distribution in one-to-one meetings ($\beta = 0.104$, p=.0532) was found to be relatively large, positive and significant. These findings suggest that the number of instances of participation in organizing activities is likely to be associated with the distribution of one-to-ones within groups, and that this association also depends on the mean number of one-to-ones conducted within the group.

As an illustration, consider an organizing group consisting of ten persons and a total of 20 one-to-one meetings between them. Scenario one pictured below in Figure 2 is an example of a common distribution of one-to-one meetings within such a group while scenario two represents a more even redistribution of the same number of one-to-one meetings equal to a one-unit change in the interaction term included in Model F. By simply redistributing the one-to-one meetings already being conducted, this group could expect to see a 15% increase in the number of participations in that time period. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were once again evaluated using model terms to capture the number of research and action meetings (respectively) that each group held in each time period. As in Model C, the term for research meetings did not attain statistical significance – and thus hypothesis 2a is again unsupported.
Table 3. Parameter estimates for Models D, E, and F predicting number of participations per six months per group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Model D: Unconditional Means Model</th>
<th>Model E: Unconditional Growth Model</th>
<th>Model F: Full Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( \beta ) (s.e.)</td>
<td>( \beta ) (s.e.)</td>
<td>( \beta ) (s.e.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed effects: time varying, level-1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>( \gamma_{00} )</td>
<td>3.717 (0.114)***</td>
<td>3.886 (0.129)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>( \gamma_{10} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-0.086 (0.026)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research meetings conducted</td>
<td>( \gamma_{20} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action meetings conducted</td>
<td>( \gamma_{30} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other meetings conducted</td>
<td>( \gamma_{40} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean one-to-ones</td>
<td>( \gamma_{50} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-to-one Inter-individual Equality</td>
<td>( \gamma_{60} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean One-to-ones * One-to-one Equality</td>
<td>( \gamma_{70} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed effects: time invariant, level-2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Logged Average Median Income</td>
<td>( \gamma_{01} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Travel Distance</td>
<td>( \gamma_{02} )</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random intercept for groups</td>
<td>( r_{0j} )</td>
<td>0.528 (0.727)</td>
<td>0.634 (0.796)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Random effect of time by group</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.014 (0.12)</td>
<td>0.011 (0.105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative binomial dispersion parameter:</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.842 (2.726)</td>
<td>20.182 (2.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIC</td>
<td></td>
<td>3078.02</td>
<td>3041.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The model term for action meetings ($\beta = 0.415$, $p < .001$) was significant and positive indicating that each action meeting held per time period was associated with an approximately 51% increase in the number of instances of participation, and hypothesis 2b is once again supported. The level-two parameter for average travel distance between participant residence and congregation location was non-significant, thus hypothesis 3 is not supported. The time parameter maintains its significance, sign, and magnitude, indicating an overall trend of diminishing participation over time in these 50 groups equal to approximately 7% per time period. The AIC for Model F is smaller than that of models D and E, indicating that the inclusion of the full set of independent variables and controls improved overall model fit.

**Conclusion**

This study sought to examine factors in operation at the group level which impact the levels of participation in community organizing activities. Participation is one of the key resources available to groups of ordinary citizens working to improve conditions.
within their own communities. Much has been written in the social movement literature to conceptualize the various resources needed by social movement organizations in order to carry out their work, but little of it has focused on the important resource of volunteer participation as such. By further refining our understanding of factors which facilitate sustained participation, this study is able to suggest several ways in which such groups can further expand their own ability to achieve the goals of their particular change effort. To that end, this work has contributed several points to consider.

This study has shown the importance of the particular kinds of framing efforts that organizers undertake with rank and file participants in organizing activities. Whether considering participation from the perspective of unique persons attending organizing meetings, or the perspective of total instances of participation the overall number of one-to-one meetings within a given organizing group has a consistent effect. Considering the analysis of instances of participation (which may be thought as repeat-participation) this study finds support for the notion that the evenness of the distribution of one-to-one meetings plays an important role in further cultivating participation. The strength of this effect was second only to that of holding a large action meeting – a noteworthy fact given that measurable improvement in participation can be achieved in many cases by simply reallocating the relative numbers of one-to-one meetings within a group.

The second set of factors that this study highlights have to do the particular contexts or ‘free spaces’ which these groups create in the process of pursuing their social change goals. The hosting of large public action meetings was found to be significantly associated with on both the number of persons participating, as well as the number of
participations garnered by a particular organizing group in a given time period. Surprisingly, results from this study differ somewhat from those of Christens and Speer (2011) who found that individuals who attend research meetings have an increased likelihood of future participation. This study’s findings suggest that at the group level, research meetings (as a particular form of free space) do not have any discernible impact on participation levels. One potential reason for this derives from the particular sample selected for the current study – which, as stated above, excluded groups which had fewer than four consecutive periods with measurable participation and thus restricts this study’s focus to groups which are necessarily well-established as movement organizations.

Neither of the full models presented above support the notion of a meaningful association between geographic dispersion of participants and participation levels within these movement organizations. The use of simple a simple distance measure between participants’ places of residence and the location of their respective congregations may prove to be an entirely too rudimentary measure of the range of urban geographies that these congregations operate within. Finally, findings from the present study also confirm those of several recent analyses of movement participation\(^6\) which call into question the continued inclusion of socio-economic status as a factor impacting participation levels.

One of the primary limitations of this work is that it is unable to account for variations in mobilization potential for each of these groups over time. Certainly, when an experienced organizing group recognizes a viable political opportunity participation is likely to increase; this viewpoint has been confirmed in recently conducted qualitative analyses.

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interviews with members of CBCO groups (Tesdahl, forthcoming). One way that this threat to validity was mitigated within this study was to examine participation over the somewhat extended time period of four years – in the hopes that variations in political opportunity would in a sense even out over time. Future work in this area would do well to employ measures that account for political opportunity at discrete points in time.

In contrast to previous work which has often focused on factors affecting participation that cannot reasonably be impacted by either organizers or members of social movement organizations (i.e., socio-economic status of participants, interpersonal networks of participants), this study has identified several factors which organizers and participants themselves can act upon in order to secure their access to the most fundamental resource of a voluntary organization: participation.
Chapter I References


CHAPTER II

OUT OF MANY, ONE: A NETWORK ANALYSIS OF FEDERATION BUILDING
IN CONGREGATION-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

Community organizing is a practice that relies on the will and leadership of socially marginalized persons to make improvements on issues of local concern, primarily by making demands on relevant decision makers. It is a democratic tool that disenfranchised groups in the US have often used to win concessions that provide for their social welfare, economic security, and safety while remaining distinct from programmatic efforts to administer such concessions. As such, the practice of community organizing represents a salient counter-example to the patterns of civic disengagement described in well-known treatments of social capital (e.g., McCarthy 2005; Putnam 2000; Skocpol 1999). While remaining conceptually distinct from movements, the practice of community organizing has been an important element in the most of the major social movements in the U.S. over the past century (Fisher 2009; Fisher and Shragge 2007; Stall and Stoecker 1998).

Among the various schools of organizing recognized in the scholarly literature (i.e., relational, race-based, congregation-based, neighborhood-based, and transformative, to name a few) one observes considerable variation in tactics, recruitment strategies, emphasis on leadership development, and issues selected. Congregation-based
organizing, currently one of most widely-practiced variants (Warren and Wood 2001),
derives many of its features from the writing and experience of Saul Alinsky and his
trainees. It is distinguished from other forms of organizing in its nearly exclusive focus
on religious congregations as sites for organizing work, its intentional efforts to build
broadly-based coalitions that cut across lines of race, class, and religious denomination,
its consistent focus on leadership development and organizing activity within local
communities, its multi-issue orientation, its use of professional community organizers,
and its non-partisan approach to politics at all levels of government (Wood and Warren
2002). As with the majority of approaches to organizing, congregation-based community
organizing (CBCO) tends to be strongly rooted within political scales which can be
described as ‘local’\(^7\) and thus relies heavily on face to face meetings in order to
accomplish its objectives. Congregation-based organizing groups have a long history of
winning improvements at the neighborhood level; campaigns for increased access to
affordable housing, healthcare, and municipal infrastructure make up the majority of the
campaigns taken up by these groups (Swarts 2008a; Warren 2001; Wood 2002).

However, many of the challenges faced by these groups, while experienced within
individual urban neighborhoods, require political action at scales far removed from the
neighborhood. Several observers of community organizing have commented on the ways
in which patterns of economic globalization have shifted many forms of political decision
making away from the traditional arenas & arbiters of neighborhood and city affairs such

\(^7\) For the purposes of this discussion, I use the word local to describe areas of physical geography which are
compact enough to allow persons within them to meet face to face on a regular basis.
as city councils and mayors (Orr 2007; Swarts 2008b; Wood 2007). This shift away from neighborhood and city-based political fora (the traditional power base of most community organizing groups) brings an important question into focus: by what means will a collection of neighborhood-based organizations come to influence political processes within metropolitan, state, or national arenas?

The response of early congregation-based organizers was to adopt a federated network form of organization – a form which has become the norm in this subfield of community organizing. As federations, CBCO national networks (e.g., Industrial Areas Foundation, PICO National Network, Gamaliel Foundation, DART) operate as organizations of organizations; federation membership is comprised of individual congregations or allied organizations.8 Within this organizational form, each member congregation makes independent decisions regarding which change efforts to pursue at a given time, the level of congregational resources to devote to those efforts, and whether/when to withdraw from the federation (Warren 2001). These organizations form an interdependent network by virtue of the fact that each member congregation, while free to determine its own priorities on issues of concern to its membership, relies heavily on the coordinated efforts of other congregations when seeking to effect changes beyond the neighborhood level. In this respect, they can be considered a typical case of a meso-mobilization context. In the case of the major CBCO networks, congregations are further bound together through a system of nationally-coordinated training events which

8 As the name would suggest, congregation-based organizing is made up primarily of religious congregations, however Warren and Wood (2001) reported that 13% of CBCO membership is comprised of school districts, labor groups, and other secular organizations. In this paper the words 'congregation', 'organization', and 'group' will be used interchangeably to refer to CBCO federation members.
reinforce the particular organizing philosophies, techniques, and strategies emphasized by each network (Delgado 1994). Professional organizing staff at the national, state, and metropolitan levels work to coordinate the efforts of individual congregations seeking to work on a given issue; their salaries are derived in part from the dues paid by each member congregation (Warren and Wood 2001).

The process of building CBCO federations at the metropolitan level is an especially noteworthy example of social movement coalition building. Such federations provide an important mechanism by which diverse groups of politically active congregations can work to understand their common interests, forge trustful working relationships, and engage in deliberation on strategies, issues, and tactics (Wood 2002). CBCO federations have made significant progress in building connections across diverse groups of people despite the high degree of racial and socio-economic segregation commonly observed within religious congregations in the U.S. (Chaves 1999; Christerson and Emerson 2003; DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim 2003; Dougherty 2003; Emerson and Kim 2003). It is within the metropolitan federation that individuals and organizations first learn the necessary skills for collaboration that make state and national campaigns possible. As such, efforts to build CBCO federations provide a crucial foundation for local groups seeking to impact extra-local processes (Osterman 2002; Warren 2001).

Despite the central importance of the metropolitan federation to this form of organizing, little of the scholarship focused on CBCO groups has been focused explicitly on this phenomenon. Of particular interest to this analysis are the ways that
neighborhood-focused congregations are impacted by urban physical geography in their attempts to form coalitions at the metropolitan level. The following sections review relevant literature from the community organizing, social movements, and organizational networks literatures with the goal of assembling a working model of CBCO federation formation and structure. From this working model, a set of research questions and hypotheses are derived; these relate to the effects of physical geography on the likelihood of interorganizational collaboration in the CBCO federation context. These hypotheses are tested by means of exponential random graph techniques applied to 12 months of meeting attendance data from a CBCO federation in a mid-sized US city. Finally, results from this analysis are discussed in light of previous findings in the community organizing and social movement literature.

**Literature Review**

**Insights from the Study of CBCO Federations**

Within the literature on community organizing, several treatments of CBCO federation formation have been given - most notably Warren (2001), Wood (2002), Warren and Wood, (2001), and Swarts (2008a). These pieces – which make up the majority of the scholarly work devoted explicitly to CBCO federations – tend to focus on the ways in which these federations have linked historically divided racial/ethnic and religious communities. Summarizing the results of a national study of CBCO federations, Warren and Wood (2001) found that approximately half of the 82 metropolitan
federations which provided data could be considered multi-racial or bi-racial\(^9\) in their organizational membership. Less than 20% of these federations were comprised of just one predominant\(^10\) racial/ethnic group. With regard to religious denomination, these authors reported that 71% of the CBCO federations surveyed had two or more denominations significantly represented in their congregational membership. This ability to bring together historically divided communities is an important source of bridging social capital.

One of the key elements in successful efforts to connect these diverse communities is the initial modicum of trust afforded by participants’ common identity as members of faith communities. As Swarts (2008a) described it, congregation-based organizers consistently “reinforce a common identity as people of faith who seek what is right and just for their families, neighborhoods, and city” (p. 55). Cortes (1996), himself a long-time CBCO federation director, described the role of faith traditions in these federations: “In this context, the term faith does not mean particular religious beliefs, but rather a more general affirmation that life has meaning” (p. 183). One of the ways that this meaning is reaffirmed in federation work is by opening organizing meetings with a prayer or reflection that expresses the values which motivate the work being done.\(^11\) By focusing on the common values which lead congregations to make changes in their

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\(^9\) Wood (2002) describes the categorization used: multi-racial federations were those where at least three racial/ethnic groups contributed 15% or more per group to the overall institutional membership, while bi-racial federations were those where two racial/ethnic groups met this threshold.

\(^10\) Federations with membership of 80% or more from one racial/ethnic group were included in this category.

\(^11\) Wood (2002) explains that this usually takes one of two forms: either these prayers are recited in such a way as to be general enough to include all faith traditions represented at a given meeting, or multiple more specific prayers are recited.
communities, congregation-based organizers are able to facilitate the initial conversations between leaders of historically divided communities – conversations which often lead to the identification of common interests and potential avenues of collaboration. As Warren (2001) described it: “A certain degree of trust is necessary to get the process going. But, then, cooperative action offers the context for building greater trust, relationships, and mutual understanding” (pp. 99-100).

Given that federation members tend to be religious institutions, they usually avoid working on divisive social issues such as abortion or gay rights as their membership tends to hold positions on both sides of such issues. While recognizing that racial discrimination is indeed a major form of social exclusion, explicit efforts at organizing on issues of racial justice have, until very recently, been rare among CBCO federations as this has traditionally failed as a strategy for building majority political coalitions (Swarts 2008a). Rather, these federations tend to focus on issues which can be found within the social justice teachings of most faiths and those that are faced by the vast majority of their membership (i.e., access to quality education, housing, healthcare, and employment).

Another motivating factor in the formation of these diverse federations is sheer political necessity. Warren (2001) gives a detailed account of federation building of the Industrial Areas Foundation affiliate in San Antonio, Texas. Initial organizing efforts, while very successful in the Latino community, were unable to attract the participation of 

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12 Beginning approximately in 2011 the PICO National Network and Gamaliel Foundation have begun to engage explicitly with issues of race within the various aspects of their work.
13 For a discussion of some consequences of this strategy see Warren 2001, pp. 124 – 155.
African-American congregations. For their part, clergy of African-American congregations were eager to form a federation of their own. Over a multi-year period of relationship building and minor collaborations, these faith communities eventually merged into a single organizing federation as neither was able to influence a sufficient portion of San Antonio’s city council to achieve their goals. In San Antonio, as in other cities around the US, the ability to influence policy decisions on issues important to working and middle class persons is dependent upon the building of large, diverse, majority coalitions (Swarts 2008a).

**Insights from the Study of Social Movement Coalitions**

Extant research in the sub-fields of social movement coalitions and meso-mobilization has produced several findings which are applicable to the study of congregation-based organizing federations. Previous work on movement coalitions tends to focus on three general factors which impact coalition formation: (a) opportunities or threats in the political environment, (b) racial/ethnic identity, and (c) previous working relationships. The general thinking on political threats/opportunities and movement coalitions was summarized by McCammon and Van Dyke (2010): “Political and mortal threats generate shared interests and an urgency to collaborate. …this may be due to the threat heightening the intensity of an existing set of common interests” (p. 295). The positive effect of threats/opportunities on coalition formation has been described in studies of the pro-choice movement (Staggenborg 1986) suffrage and temperance
movements (McCammon and Campbell 2002), as well as within neighborhood-based organizing contexts (Henig 1982; Stoecker 1994).

Two studies have examined factors which impact coalition formation between organizations with divergent racial/ethnic identities. Chung (2001) examined the case of an interethnic coalition formed between Korean Americans and African Americans in Los Angeles in order to institute a community policing program. Making use of qualitative interviews and archival documents, she found that the key factors in facilitating collaboration between these groups were (a) the recognition of specific weakness within the organizing base of each group that would be remedied through collaboration and (b) a strong ‘framing’ effort to downplay ethic differences and recast the two groups as common members of a wider urban community facing a common set of threats. Okamoto (2010) examined rates of cross-ethnic coalition formation among Asian Americans in 30 U.S. cities between 1970 and 1998. She found that instances of cross-ethnic collaboration were most likely when various ethnic groups shared some overlapping or geographically proximate areas of residence or employment. In her review of previous work on pan-Asian ethnic coalitions, Okamoto concluded that in the vast majority of cases, coalitional work was made possible by the existence of fora in which members of diverse groups were able to discern and elaborate both their common interest and the value of combining collective action resources.

A third area of interest to scholars of movement coalitions has been the role of prior working relationships in coalition formation. In a study of interorganizational networks in three metropolitan areas, Turk (1977) found that communities with high
numbers of previous linkages between organizations working on various social welfare initiatives were significantly more likely to form coalitions in response to emergent community needs. In elaborating upon these results, Turk explained that these previous working relationships aid in ongoing attempts to form single-issue coalitions in that they provide involved parties with a working understanding of the organizational structure, goals, and resources of would-be coalitional partners. By having this information ahead of time, the leadership of individual organizations were able seek partnerships with organizations that were likely to have the interest, expertise, and resources necessary to act effectively on issues of common concern. Working in a similar vein, Henig (1982) also found that previous experiences of collaboration among neighborhood organizing groups provided an informational network by which such groups could more quickly assemble information about the nature of a given political threat. Corrigall-Brown and Meyer (2010) confirmed these early findings in their study of the Win Without War coalition concluding: “we show that coalitions are not de novo formations but instead are created out of existing relationships and ties that are activated in conducive political contexts” (2010: 16).

In addition to research on social movement coalitions, a parallel body of work within social movement studies has focused on what have alternately been described as ‘meso-mobilization structures’ and/or ‘social movement communities’. Both of these terms are used to reflect the diversity of organizations involved in a movement campaign, both formal and informal, SMOs and non-SMOs, sympathetic institutional actors, and even networks of individual persons. Within this line of research, an emphasis is placed
on the form of relations between the various entities at work within a movement community, especially as these may affect a movement community’s ability to address relevant threats or opportunities.

**Insights from the Study of Interorganizational Networks**

An alternative line of research within sociology has focused on the formation and structure on interorganizational networks as they relate to various forms of collective action (Knoke 1990). The move to conceptualize organizations as nodes within networks of exchange and interdependence grew largely out of critiques to traditional organizational analyses (Granovetter 1985; Polyani 1957), which overlooked the embeddedness and interdependence of organizations (Monge and Contractor 2000). Early work on interorganizational networks tended to focus on the effect of an actor’s structural position within a network on some attribute of interest or vice versa (e.g., Burt 1977; Knoke 1990; Laumann, Galaskiewicz, and Marsden 1978). Statistical analyses of these earlier works was limited to cross-sectional description of network structures due to the incompatibility of classical regression techniques and network data, with its inherent non-independence between actors/units of analysis. Beyond this issue of compatibility, classical regression methods are unable to account for the non-trivial network structures which are observed within a wide variety of social systems (Monge and Contractor 2003;  

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14 Social network methodologists have long warned against the use of techniques grounded in classical regression methods with relational data as they are unable to account for the complex dependencies and structural regularities observed among networked entities. Misapplication of these methods has been shown to lead to an inflated rate of falsely-significant results (Borgatti & Snijders, 1999; Contractor & Faust 2006; Krackhardt, 1988; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).
Morris, Handcock, and Hunter 2008; Snijders, van de Bunt, and Steglich 2010). These include tendencies toward the reciprocation of social relations, attribute-based homophily, and transitive closure.\footnote{15 Transitive closure refers to the tendency of a ‘friend of a friend to become a friend’.
}

Recent advances in the statistical modeling of social networks, most notably exponential random graph (ERG) models and stochastic actor-based models, have made possible analyses wherein complex interdependencies between social entities can be modeled as a series of actor-driven decisions regarding which ties to create, maintain, or dissolve within the defined network. Exponential random graph modeling allows for the simultaneous estimation of these complex dependencies together with actor attributes to determine the relative import of each in determining the joint probability of observing a tie or set of ties within an observed network (Goodreau et al. 2008). The utility of this approach is that a wide range of theoretical assertions from the social movements, community organizing, and organizational network analysis literatures may be tested against observed patterns of collaboration among community organizing groups while controlling for known recurring structural patterns.

To date, ERG methods have been used to analyze interorganizational networks in the fields of public health (Brownson et al. 2010; Harris et al. 2011; Luke et al. 2010) and regional policy formation (Laven et al. 2010; Lubell, Robbins, and Wang 2011). Across these varied research settings two network structural properties, reciprocity and transitive closure have been found to play a significant role in the process of interorganizational tie
formation. This suggests the utility of including these terms as control variables within an exponential random graph model of CBCO federation formation.

Importantly, several studies of interorganizational networks have found a significant effect of geography on the likelihood of collaboration. In a study of interorganizational collaboration in the response to hurricane Katrina, Butts and colleagues (Butts, Acton, and Marcum 2012; Butts et al. 2012) found that increasing geographic distance between the headquarters of would-be organizational partners greatly reduced the likelihood of collaboration. In their study of collaboration in a national network consortium on tobacco control Luke and colleagues (2010) similarly found that increased geographic distance greatly reduced the likelihood of collaboration. Lubell et al., (2011) examined the network of organizations working on water management issues in the areas surrounding the San Francisco Bay finds evidence of this same effect at the regional scale. While none of these examples have explored the potential effect of geography on interorganizational collaboration at the scale of a single metropolitan area, they do certainly suggest the utility of such an approach.

**Synthesis: Working Model of Collaboration in CBCO Federations**

Through a synthesis of the major findings from relevant research on CBCO federations, social movement coalitions, and interorganizational networks it is possible to construct a working theoretical model of CBCO federation formation. Building diverse and broadly-based coalitions is a difficult but crucially necessary task; in order to successfully influence policy decisions these federations must be able to make the claim
that they speak for a majority of the residents of an area (in this case, metropolitan cities). The example given by Warren (2001) illustrates the difficulty of accomplishing federation aims without the participation of the multiple populations which make up a given polity. Within the context CBCO federations there are several factors which can aid in the building of such majority coalitions. In areas where two racial/ethnic communities have little history of collaboration or prior relationships, organizers tend to focus on the common identity these communities share as persons of faith. By emphasizing the common values held by these groups potential federation members are able to afford each other an initial modicum of trust. Research on social movement coalitions suggests that in cases where prior collaborations or relationships have formed across distinct communities they can be a very helpful starting point in forming new collaborations.

Research on movement coalitions also suggests the importance of political threats or opportunities which equally impact potential collaborators. One way that these common threats/opportunities are experienced within the CBCO federation context is through metropolitan-level decisions regarding urban land use and resource allocation. In the case of collaborations between distinct racial/ethnic groups, shared spaces of physical geography have been shown to increase the likelihood of collaboration, due to the common interest held by multiple groups who make use of the same urban spaces (Chung 2001; Okamoto 2010). More generally, the interorganizational networks literature suggests that collaborations of any kind will be less likely as the physical distance between would-be partners increases. These findings suggest the importance of further examining the ways that CBCO member organizations are connected through physical
geography. Finally, research on collective action within interorganizational networks suggests the need for robust statistical methods which directly account for common structural patterns such as transitivity and reciprocity which occur in a wide range of organizational networks.

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Each of the elements in this working theoretical model of CBCO federation formation are derived from distinct research settings and have yet to be incorporated into a single analytic framework in the social movement context. A series of research questions and hypotheses are formulated which examine the ways that physical geography may impact the likelihood of congregation to congregation collaboration.

**Research Question One**

What is the role of geographic dispersion of members in a CBCO federation? Previous research has shown that increased geographic distance between would-be collaborators has a negative effect on the likelihood of collaboration. This finding has yet to be replicated within the peer-reviewed literature on organizing and/or social movements.

*Hypothesis 1a:* Increased distance among pairs of congregations (as expressed by minutes driving time between various organizational meeting places) will be associated with lower overall levels of collaboration.
**Hypothesis 1b**: Geographic centrality (the overall distance between any one congregation and all others) will be positively associated with the overall tendency to form collaborative ties.

**Research Question Two**

What is the role of geographic proximity in mediating the effect of racial homophily in CBCO inter-organizational collaborations? Previous research on religious congregations shows a strong pattern of racial segregation in American religious institutions (Chaves 1999; Christerson and Emerson 2003; DeYoung et al. 2003; Dougherty 2003; Emerson and Kim 2003). The findings of Okamoto (2010) suggest that the sharing of physical urban geographies among divergent groups provides a means to overcome this trend. Thus, an examination of this effect of geography on interracial collaboration within the CBCO federation is warranted.

**Hypothesis 2a**: Overlapping or adjacent geography between organizations (as indicated by binary coding of organizational dyads which do/do not occupy adjacent census tracts) will increase the likelihood of collaboration.

**Hypothesis 2b**: Overlapping or adjacent geography between organizations will significantly increase the likelihood of collaboration under conditions of racial/ethnic difference.

**Methods**

Hypothesis testing was carried out via a series of statistical models that estimate the likelihood of collaboration between CBCO congregations. The data employed in
these analyses are derived from meeting attendance records from a single metropolitan 
CBCO federation over a single calendar year. These data are analyzed as two distinct 
cross-sectional networks of collaborative relations among congregations, each addressing 
unique aspects of collaboration at the inter-congregational and federation levels 
respectively. Hypothesis testing was carried out independently on each of these cross-
sectional networks using exponential random graph techniques as implemented within the 
statnet statistical package (Handcock et al. 2003) within the R statistical computing 
environment (R Core Development Team 2012).

Data

The data used for these analyses was collected primarily as a part of a large multi-
site evaluation of congregation-based community organizing practice within a nation-
wide community organizing network. Specifically, a collection of records of meeting 
attendance were used to infer the network of collaborations between congregations 
participating in a single metropolitan CBCO federation over a one-year period in 2010. 
These attendance records indicate for each meeting its organizational host, the type of 
meeting (large public action, research meeting, planning meeting etc.), names of 
individual attendees, the congregations to which these attendees affiliate, and in certain 
cases the substantive issues addressed within the meeting. A record of each 
congregation’s attendance at meetings held within the federation over a given year is 
obtained by aggregating these records by congregation. In addition to these data, a series 
of qualitative interviews was conducted in the early spring of 2012 on the topic of
collaboration with the same CBCO federation. Findings based on the analysis of these qualitative interviews were used in the operationalization of the dependent measures used in this study, as described below.

Dependent measures

The use of network analytic methods for research requires careful attention to decisions surrounding the operationalization of the dependent variable, that is, the network itself. First among these decisions is the determination of which nodes to include within the network – a process sometimes referred to as ‘bounding the network’ (Hanneman and Riddle 2005; Knoke and Yang 2008). Nodes within the networks analyzed in the present study have been defined as those congregations which have logged at least five attendances at federation events over the course of the 2010 calendar year.\(^\text{16}\) Formal membership within the federation was not a pre-requisite for inclusion within these analyses as many congregations that are not yet or not currently considered formal members nonetheless engage in sustained collaborations within the federation. Using this definition, 37 organizations were identified for inclusion. This group of 37 includes the non-profit organization which employs the professional organizers working within the federation.\(^\text{17}\)

\(^\text{16}\) This could have been satisfied through the participation of one person at five events, the participation of five persons at one event, or combination of these.

\(^\text{17}\) From a statistical standpoint the inclusion of the professional organizer’s organization may seem an unlikely choice; the role of this organization is in part to maintain direct connections with all other organizations working with the federation. Tie variables between this organization and all others are, in a sense, variables that don’t/can’t vary. However, this level of connectedness has potentially non-trivial
The second important set of decisions surrounding the operationalization of the dependent network involves defining ties between each of these 37 congregations. Analysis of qualitative interview data collected with federation members suggests the importance of at least two general modes of collaboration: that which happens around issue-specific work, and participation in large federation-sanctioned public events. An important feature of many federation-sanctioned events (especially large public rallies) is that participation is often a minimum expectation of those affiliated with the coalition; thus the vast majority of congregations that seek to maintain a working relationship with the federation tend to participate in the majority of these events. Participation within these events constitutes what some organizational network scholars have referred to as an expressive tie, or a tie which affords a sense of belonging, identity, and serves to transmit normative expectations (Brass et al. 2004; Coleman 1988). Using this particular form of relation to define ties among the 37 organizations working in the federation in the year in question yields a completely interconnected graph, due to the fact that such relations are largely an outcome of federation affiliation, rather than an indicator of substantive collaboration. Thus, the inclusion of records of this form of collaboration would necessarily obfuscate the structure of relations in this study. For this reason, they were omitted from the construction of dependent network variables.

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18 This process proceeded with guidance from the findings of a concurrently-conducted qualitative study of collaboration among congregations within this federation. A total of 18 in-depth interviews were held with organizers and community leaders on the topic of collaboration and federation participation.
The second general form of collaboration evinced in these qualitative interviews relates to participation in the various forms of issue work that are conducted among the membership of a congregation-based organizing federation. This work tends to be taken up by member congregations on a completely voluntary basis and according to the interests of the membership of each congregation (Warren 2001). Ties forged in the course of this kind of work have been referred to in the network analytic literature as *instrumental ties*, or ties which facilitate the “gathering of information, advice, or resources necessary to accomplish a task” (Umphress et al 2003: 742)\(^{19}\). The federation examined here exhibited this form of collaboration at two general levels of analysis: between pairs of congregations working on issues of very local concern, and among larger agglomerations of congregations working on issues of concern to larger proportions of federation membership. Collaboration among congregations in this study was operationalized in each of these modes, resulting in two dependent network variables, and the pursuit of two distinct sets statistical models.

Collaboration between pairs of congregations on localized issues was operationalized by making use of a portion of the meeting attendance records were selected which pertained to local-level meetings hosted by individual congregations. Ties among congregations were defined as instances where one or more members of a particular congregation are recorded as having attended the local in-house organizing meeting of another congregation. This results in a directed one-mode network in which

\(^{19}\) The terms ‘*instrumental*’ and ‘*expressive*’ serve here as useful short-hand to describe dominant tendencies in the style of relations built through engaging in various types of organizing events. Their use is not intended to suggest that any one type of organizing event may exclusively build one or another type of relation.
incoming ties are defined for a given congregation as those instances where members of other congregations attend one’s own local organizing meetings, and an outgoing tie is defined as those instances of members of the focal congregation attending the local organizing meetings of another congregation.

Ties between congregations working on metropolitan-level issue work were operationalized by selecting that portion of meeting attendance data which pertained metropolitan-level issue work. This form of meeting was denoted as a kind of ‘federated’ event, thus blurring any useful distinction between meeting hosts and attendees. Unlike the local-issue network described above, these meeting records yield a two-mode network of congregations which are connected through their common attendance patterns at federated issue meetings. The vast majority of network analytic and statistical methods (including exponential random graph modeling techniques) have been developed specifically for one-mode networks, necessitating a projection of these two-mode data into a one-mode format. This is traditionally accomplished through the inference of a tie between organizations in instances where each organization is present at one or more of the same meetings. Bonacich (1972) proposed a principled method of projecting a one-mode network from two-mode network data. This method, often referred to as the Bonacich ’72 normalization, involves assigning a value to each tie variable that indicates the degree of correspondence between the patterns of connectedness in the two-mode network for each member of a given dyad in the projected one-mode network. As the degree of correspondence between patterns of meeting attendance increases, so does the

20 See Diani (2002, p. 178) for a discussion of direct vs. indirect ties.
value of the tie between them, on a scale from 0 to 1. Recognizing the oft-cited critique that un-normalized one-mode projections of two-mode data often over-estimate the actual number of ties within projected one-mode networks, a high threshold was set for determining a tie between organizations. Only those organizational dyads whose patterns of attendance at federated issue meetings met or exceeded a correspondence of 0.75 using the Bonacich ’72 normalization were coded as having a tie in this second dependent network.

**Independent measures**

In addition to records of meeting attendance, the original project dataset includes indicators of each congregation’s street address, denomination, and primary racial/ethnic makeup. This information was used to construct a series of independent and control variables. In order to evaluate hypothesis 1a (that increased distance between congregations has a negative effect on the likelihood of collaboration) a matrix denoting minutes driving time between congregations was created using GIS mapping software. This independent network variable is denoted in the tables below as ‘Minutes Driving’. A negative and significant coefficient for ‘Minutes Driving’ will be evidence to support hypothesis 1a. Hypothesis 1b (that the overall geographic centrality of a congregation will increase the overall number of ties it has to other congregations) was tested using a node-level variable to indicate the inverse of the average number of driving minutes between each congregation and all others. This independent node-level variable is

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21 A score of 0 denotes no overlap in attendance and a score of 1 denotes perfect overlap of attendance.
denoted in the tables below as ‘Average Nearness’. A positive and significant coefficient for ‘Average Nearness’ will constitute evidence to support hypothesis 1b.

Evaluation of hypothesis 2a (that overlapping neighborhood geography will increase the likelihood of collaboration) was carried out using a network variable where a tie between congregations is indicated only in cases where two congregations occupy the same or bordering census tracts; this variable is denoted in the tables below as ‘Tract Overlap’. A positive and significant coefficient for ‘Tract Overlap’ will indicate support for hypothesis 2a. In order to evaluate hypothesis 2b (that overlapping neighborhood geography will increase the likelihood of collaboration in cases of racial/ethnic heterogeneity) was carried out using a network variable where a tie between congregations is indicated only in cases where two congregations occupy the same or bordering census tracts and have differing racial/ethnic background of membership. This variable is denoted below as ‘Overlap * Heterogeneity.’ A positive and significant coefficient for this variable will indicate support for hypothesis 2b.

*Independent Measures*

A number of control variables were included in the exponential random graph (ERG) models presented below. These variables fall into two general categories: controls which account for network structural properties, and controls which account for theoretically motivated competing explanations. First among the network structural controls are terms that account for the overall number of ties observed in each dependent network compared to the total number of ties that are possible among all nodes in the
network. This variable accounts for the overall tendency to form a tie within the dependent network in question; its inclusion is considered mandatory in ERG modeling (Handcock et al. 2003). The second network structural variable (also considered mandatory) included in the models below accounts for geometrically-weighted edgewise shared partners, or ‘GWESP’, a term which accounts for the very widely-observed tendency for triadic closure. In the direct ties network, a structural control was added to account for the tendency to reciprocate ties of collaboration. Additional controls were included to account for the unique status of the organizing organization (‘Is Organizer’), the increased likelihood of collaboration among congregations with high levels of participation (Participation: Out-Degree, and Participation: Degree), the increased likelihood of forming ties among organizations that host many meetings (Group activity: In-degree, Group activity Degree), the increased likelihood of collaboration where prior collaborations have taken place (Past Collaboration), the effect of racial/ethnic heterogeneity, and the effect of denominational heterogeneity. See methodological appendix for full details on the operationalization of these controls.

Results

Analysis of each dependent network began with a collection of descriptive analyses and data visualizations before continuing on to ERG modeling.

22 The number given in parentheses following the word GWESP, (e.g., GWESP(0)) represents the rate of geo-metric decay of the effect of triadic closure as a given dyad accumulates increasing numbers of shared partners. All models within this study set this parameter to zero indicating no increased effect for triadic closure after the first shared partner. See Snijders et al. (2006) for more details.

23 This term wasn’t used in the federated-issue network as it consists of ties which are by definition mutual.
Descriptive analyses

Figure 1 features data from the local issue collaboration network in two formats; the diagram on the left depicts ties between organizations with nodes arrange using a spring-embedding algorithm that seeks maximize the ‘readability’ of the graph. The diagram on the right hand side of Figure 1 displays the very same data with nodes arranged according the driving distance between them – a very close analogue to their arrangement in physical space. In both diagrams node shape and color have been chosen to reflect the primary racial/ethnic makeup of each congregation. The diagram on the left side of Figure 1 clearly shows the very high degree of centralization with the node representing professional the organizers connected to all other nodes. This visual cue is born out in descriptive analysis\(^{24}\) which indicated a centralization score of 89.8%.

The geographic layout of these same data show that while there are a few ties between congregations which are separated by larger distances, these are not the norm. Ties within this network do not appear to show any strong tendency toward racial/ethnic homophily. However, patterns of spatial segregation do appear very prevalently in this diagram. In total, the local issue network exhibits 130 ties indicating an overall tie density of 9.8%.

\(^{24}\) Unless otherwise noted, descriptive network analyses were carried out in UCINET version 6.275 (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman 2002).
Figure 1. Network diagrams of local-issue collaboration

Figure 2. Network diagrams of federated-issue collaboration.
Figure 2 features two visual representations of ties within the federated issue network with the diagram on the left depicting federated issue ties and nodes arranged according to a spring-embedding algorithm; the nodes on the right are arranged according to their relative positions in physical space. Looking to the spring-embedded layout of federated issue collaborations, one notices what appears to be a very strong tendency toward the formation of homophilous ties according to racial/ethnic makeup of congregations. This was born out by relational contingency analysis which showed that (excepting multi-ethnic organizations) within race/ethnic group ties were between 1.5 and 6 times more frequent than would be expected by chance (p=.002), depending on the particular group in question.

The number of ties observed within the federated issue network is somewhat smaller than for the local network at 106, for an overall network density of 7.8%. This network also exhibits a very low degree of centralization – just 12.1%. The geographic layout of collaboration in the federated issue network does not appear to suggest any compelling relationship between geographic distance and likelihood of collaboration.

Hypothesis testing

Tables 1 and 2 summarize the ERG results for models fit to the local issue and federated issue network datasets respectively. In each case, a control model is estimated along with a series of models that test each of the above hypotheses. These hypothesis-testing independent variables are added sequentially in order to show relative changes in
overall model fit, as indicated by the Aikake Information Criteria score, or AIC.\textsuperscript{25} Results from all models estimated are shown, however final interpretations of this analysis are based upon the model which best matches each empirical data sets. All of the ERG models estimated conformed to acceptable standards for model degeneracy and goodness of fit for network structural properties.\textsuperscript{26}

Hypothesis 1a

The effect of physical distance on the likelihood of collaboration was tested in models A for the local issue network, and E for the federated issue network. In model A (Table 1) the ‘Minutes Driving’ parameter is given as negative and significant ($\beta = -0.785, p<.05$). The AIC value for Model A improves relative to the local issue network.

\textsuperscript{25} Relatively lower AIC scores indicate improved fit between model and data. See Aikake (1981).

\textsuperscript{26} See Appendix A for full details on Markov Chain Monte Carlo diagnostics and goodness of fit plots.
Table 1 Exponential random graph parameter estimates for neighborhood-level issue network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>LOC Control Model</th>
<th>LOC Model A</th>
<th>LOC Model B</th>
<th>LOC Model C</th>
<th>LOC Model D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>-6.132 (0.705)***</td>
<td>-5.389 (0.792)***</td>
<td>-5.141 (1.138)***</td>
<td>-5.133 (1.153)***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWESP (0)</td>
<td>0.355 (0.271)</td>
<td>0.355 (0.268)</td>
<td>0.359 (0.267)</td>
<td>0.357 (0.274)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>1.494 (0.483)**</td>
<td>1.441 (0.484)**</td>
<td>1.471 (0.478)**</td>
<td>1.445 (0.467)**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Organizer</td>
<td>2.204 (0.539)***</td>
<td>2.205 (0.522)***</td>
<td>2.186 (0.514)***</td>
<td>2.238 (0.519)***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Out-degree</td>
<td>0.769 (0.313)*</td>
<td>0.743 (0.316)*</td>
<td>0.763 (0.311)*</td>
<td>0.758 (0.309)*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activity: In-degree</td>
<td>3.025 (0.335)***</td>
<td>2.988 (0.329)***</td>
<td>3.019 (0.333)***</td>
<td>3.019 (0.346)***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Collaboration</td>
<td>-1.164 (1.182)</td>
<td>-1.181 (1.097)</td>
<td>-1.319 (1.134)</td>
<td>-1.358 (1.099)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Heterogeneity</td>
<td>-0.537 (0.264)*</td>
<td>-0.385 (0.269)</td>
<td>-0.361 (0.266)</td>
<td>-0.361 (0.264)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination Heterogeneity</td>
<td>-0.323 (0.278)</td>
<td>-0.297 (0.279)</td>
<td>-0.284 (0.279)</td>
<td>-0.287 (0.273)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Effects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes Driving</td>
<td>-0.785 (0.386)*</td>
<td>-0.866 (0.444)</td>
<td>-0.865 (0.444)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average nearness</td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.073 (2.739)</td>
<td>-1.003 (2.814)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract Overlap</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.381 (0.734)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap * Heterogeneity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AIC 489.23 486.4 488.36 490.14 -

Statistical significance denoted above: p<.001 "***", p<.01 "**", p<.05 "*".
Table 2 Exponential random graph parameter estimates for federated-level issue network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Variables</th>
<th>TOC Control Model</th>
<th>TOC Model E</th>
<th>TOC Model F</th>
<th>TOC Model G</th>
<th>TOC Model H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β     (s.e.)</td>
<td>β     (s.e.)</td>
<td>β     (s.e.)</td>
<td>β     (s.e.)</td>
<td>β     (s.e.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edges</td>
<td>-5.078 (1.868)**</td>
<td>-4.984 (2.169)*</td>
<td>-3.525 (2.824)</td>
<td>-3.502 (2.306)</td>
<td>-3.514 (2.337)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWESP(0)</td>
<td>1.164 (0.349)***</td>
<td>1.163 (0.366)**</td>
<td>1.161 (0.357)**</td>
<td>1.158 (0.355)**</td>
<td>1.149 (0.358)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolates</td>
<td>0.539 (0.749)</td>
<td>0.549 (0.765)</td>
<td>0.513 (0.712)</td>
<td>0.499 (0.772)</td>
<td>0.509 (0.766)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is Organizer</td>
<td>0.686 (0.585)</td>
<td>0.689 (0.576)</td>
<td>0.707 (0.608)</td>
<td>0.645 (0.598)</td>
<td>0.659 (0.589)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: Degree</td>
<td>0.854 (0.568)</td>
<td>0.847 (0.525)</td>
<td>0.876 (0.506)</td>
<td>0.893 (0.506)</td>
<td>0.878 (0.506)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group activity: Degree</td>
<td>-0.489 (0.449)</td>
<td>-0.489 (0.382)</td>
<td>-0.492 (0.403)</td>
<td>-0.498 (0.396)</td>
<td>-0.487 (0.387)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past Collaboration</td>
<td>0.354 (1.223)</td>
<td>0.379 (1.269)</td>
<td>0.376 (1.276)</td>
<td>0.417 (1.238)</td>
<td>0.385 (1.312)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial/Ethnic Heterogeneity</td>
<td>-1.078 (0.274)***</td>
<td>-1.057 (0.278)***</td>
<td>-0.985 (0.299)**</td>
<td>-0.987 (0.299)**</td>
<td>-0.984 (0.288)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denomination Heterogeneity</td>
<td>0.122 (0.433)</td>
<td>0.138 (0.433)</td>
<td>0.187 (0.453)</td>
<td>0.206 (0.448)</td>
<td>0.215 (0.456)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Effects</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minutes Driving</td>
<td>-0.088 (0.538)</td>
<td>-0.669 (0.746)</td>
<td>-0.709 (0.664)</td>
<td>-0.701 (0.646)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average nearness</td>
<td>-4.422 (3.579)</td>
<td>-4.712 (2.859)</td>
<td>-4.526 (2.857)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tract Overlap</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.642 (0.82)</td>
<td>0.813 (1.262)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlap * Heterogeneity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.299 (1.739)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| AIC                     | 326.96            | 328.82      | 328.1       | 329.66      | 331.2       |

Statistical significance denoted above: p<.001 "****", p<.01 "***", p<.05 "**".
control model with the addition of ‘Minutes Driving’. Taken together, the improvement in model fit and statistical significance of this parameter provide support for hypothesis 1a within the local issue network. This suggests that a ten-fold increase \(27\) in distance between congregations is associated with an \(e^{-0.785}\) or 64.3% reduction in the likelihood of that tie. In other words, a tie between congregations which are three minutes apart is more than twice as likely as a tie between congregations which are thirty minutes apart.

However, within the federated issue network the results are somewhat different. The parameter estimate for Minutes Driving within model E (Table 2) is non-significant (\(p=.869\)), and model fit as indicated by AIC deteriorates with the addition of this variable to the federated issue network control model. Thus, hypothesis 1a - that physical distance impacts the likelihood of collaboration - is not supported within the federated issue network.

Hypothesis 1b

The effect of overall geographic centrality was evaluated for the local and federated issue networks in models B and F, (Tables 1 and 2 respectively). In model B (and in all subsequent local issue network models) the parameter for Average Nearness was negative and non-significant. The inclusion of this parameter in model B degraded overall model fit compared to model A as indicated by the increase in AIC score. In model F, we see that the inclusion of the Average Nearness parameter gives a very small improvement in AIC model fit, however the parameter estimate is quite far from attaining statistical significance. Hypothesis 1b is not supported by these findings.

\[27\] A one unit change in dependent variables which have been transformed using logarithm base 10 is interpreted as a ten-fold change in the untransformed measurement unit.
Hypothesis 2a

The effect of overlapping neighborhood geography on the likelihood of collaboration was tested in model C for the local issue network and model G federated issue network. Model coefficients for Tract Overlap in each these models fail to attain statistical significance. This was also the case in the subsequent model H for local issue collaboration. Further, addition of the Tract Overlap variable degraded overall model fit in both models C and G. Hypothesis 2a is not supported.

Hypothesis 2b

Evaluation of this hypothesis within the ERG models presented was only partially achieved, as attempts to assess the likelihood of ties in situations of overlapping census tracts and racial/ethnic heterogeneity led to intractable problems with model convergence within the LOC network model. A descriptive analysis of the LOC network revealed only two collaborative ties of this nature of a possible 26. The same pattern was found within the TOC network, however the ERG models pertaining to that network did exhibit satisfactory convergence statistics when testing hypothesis 2B. The coefficient for ‘Overlap * Heterogeneity’ in Table 2 negative and non-significant, and the addition of this term further degraded model fit relative to model G. Hypothesis 2B is supported neither by ergm analysis in the federated issue network nor by descriptive analysis of the local issue network.

Overall results of ERG modeling

Bearing in mind the maxim that a statistical model is only as good as its fit to empirical data, the selection of models for final interpretations was based on AIC score.
Using this criteria, the best model of the local issue collaboration network is Model A, which includes all control variables and an effect for geographic distance. For the federated issue collaboration network, the control model provided the closest match to the empirical data.

Local-issue collaboration network

Looking to Model A one notices a negative and statistically significant parameter for Edges – or the overall propensity to form ties within this network. That this parameter would be negative is very much expected due to the particular manner in which it is operationalized within the ERG analytic framework, however, it is the magnitude of this parameter which is noteworthy. The large size of this parameter relative to all others indicates that even under the best of circumstances (the case where all other positive model parameters are in play) collaboration is still rather unlikely. This is borne out by the earlier mentioned descriptive finding that density within this network was just 9.8%. A second noteworthy finding was that transitivity, as modeled by the GWESP term, was non-significant – a highly unusual finding for any socially-mediated form of network. Several alternative specifications were attempted in order to capture the effect transitivity within this network, most of which led to serious model degeneracy. One possible explanation for the very low tendency for transitive closure within this network may be the very high degree of centralization. The organizing entity (the center node in the spring-embedded diagram of Figure 1) has ties to every single other node in the network.

28 By definition, the edges term is negative for any network with less than 50% overall tie density – which is itself an unusually high level of connectivity within any network of more than just a few nodes.
In the literature of interorganizational network analysis there are few examples of such extreme centralization; further examination of this pattern in future work seems warranted.

Controls for reciprocity, Is Organizer, Participation: Out Degree, and Group Activity: In Degree all attained statistical significance at the p<.05 level or higher, and conformed to their expected directions and magnitudes. The largest single predictor of the likelihood that members of another organization would attend the meeting of one’s own organization was Group Activity, (β=2.98, p<.001) or the number of meetings a congregation hosted. Similar to the Minutes Driving variable, the Group Activity variable was transformed on a log base 10 scale; thus a ten-fold increase in the number of meetings was associated with an increase in the likelihood of receiving an incoming tie by e^{2.98}, or 19.6 times. The coefficient for Is Organizer suggests that organizers were e^{2.21} or 9.1 times more likely than congregations to send and receive ties within this network. Somewhat surprisingly, the coefficient for Previous Collaboration did not attain statistical significance. This finding is confirmed in the descriptive analyses that showed only eight of the 37 organizations included in the present analyses were active in the period covered by the Previous Collaboration network. Among these 8 surviving organizations in the present analysis, there were a total of seven ties of collaboration in 2005, four of which were active in the 2010 local issue collaboration network.

**Federated-issue collaboration network**

Among the models estimated for this collaboration network, the control model fit best to empirical data. Similar to the findings for the local issue network, the coefficient
for Edges (β= -5.08, p<.01) is large, negative, and statistically significant indicating that collaborative ties in this network are on the whole, unlikely. Unlike Model A, the coefficient for GWESP attains statistical significance (β=1.16, p<.001) indicating that nodes within this network tend to make transitive ties at a rate comparable to findings reported elsewhere in the inter-organizational network literature. Perhaps relatedly, centralization in this network is quite low, at just 12.1%. In contrast to the findings on local issue collaboration, controls for Participation and Group Activity fail to attain statistical significance. The coefficient for racial/ethnic heterogeneity (β= -1.08, p<.001) was relatively large, negative, and statistically significant indicating that relative to racially homophilous ties, heterogeneous ties were \(e^{-1.08}\) or 66.1% less likely. This confirms the visual pattern evinced in spring-embedded diagram of Figure 2. Finally, as in the local issue collaboration network Previous Collaboration fails to attain statistical significance; with none of the three collaborative ties present in previous years survived into the current analysis.

**Discussion**

Taken as a whole, the results of these two statistical models provide some interesting points of comparison between these networks. First, and perhaps most fundamentally, these two networks appear to form according to quite different logics. In the neighborhood-level network, relations are primarily formed between congregations which are quite active (both in number of meetings hosted, and overall attendance levels) and physically near each other. In the federated-level network, tie formation appears to be
very strongly driven by racial/ethnic homophily and little else among the factors considered in this study.

That these networks exhibit such divergent patterns of tie formation highlights the importance of examining collaboration between movement organizations according to the multiple dimensions of collaboration which they may engage in. For example, the logic of collaboration at the neighborhood level within CBCO federations often centers upon issues of the immediate neighborhood environment (traffic flow, crime, zoning disputes, etc.). The overall difficulty of addressing these issues, as well as the required level of inter-group coordination and trust necessary to successfully address them are arguably lower than that of an issue typical of metropolitan level work. Conversely, metropolitan-level issue work within CBCO federations tends to focus on long-standing problems, for example the treatment of migrant populations within a city or state, the reform of unfair lending practices in the financial sector, and the provision of important human services such as health care or education. The timelines over which such issue campaigns unfold is relatively much longer than that of a typical neighborhood level issue campaign.

Additionally, the kinds of systemic interventions which are usually at the heart of metropolitan-level work are much more difficult to achieve as they involve taking stances on issues which are opposed by powerful and well-organized interests. One reason for the stark difference in collaboration patterns between these two networks with respect to the primary racial/ethnic makeup of congregations could be that collaboration across racial difference - being a challenging activity to engage in - is much more likely to happen when the issues involved are relatively more tangible, achievable, and short-term in nature. According to this logic, racially heterogeneous relations among congregations
would appear to be easier to manage at the neighborhood level, and for that reason are much more likely to be observed. Further work will be required to more explicitly establish reasons for this difference between the neighborhood and metropolitan level issue work.

Another striking difference between these networks in terms of overall network structure is in the overall levels of centralization observed in each. The spring-embedded diagrams in Figures 1 and 2 give compelling visual evidence of this difference. What is perhaps most surprising about this difference is that the federated issue network is not also highly centralized. Most discussions of meso-mobilization contexts and social movement communities seem to take for granted the existence of one central organization which works to organize/aggregate the efforts of other organizations within the context. That this pattern is not observed within the federated network requires further examination to determine whether this observed structure can be verified by qualitative accounts of federated work, or if this pattern represents some form of measurement artifact in the operationalization of the federated issue network. If indeed this pattern can be confirmed in the practice of the federation, one may proceed by examining the apparent link between centralization and transitive closure observed in these networks. In the local issue network, one observes a pattern of high centralization, and no discernible effect of transitive closure; as noted above, this is a very unusual finding for transitive closure. Conversely, the federated issue network conforms to patterns of transitivity observed elsewhere in the interorganizational network literature, and with a very low level of centralization. Further complicating this issue is the fact that these two networks do not exist independently of each other, but are simultaneous expressions of these
congregations need and ability to collaborate in order to achieve their goals. Future work in this area would do well to combine each of these networks into a single analytic framework, which would allow for testing of potential impacts on the likelihood of observing a tie in one network given the existence of a tie in the other.

Another somewhat surprising finding was the lack of significant effect on current collaboration from previous collaboration. Of all the control variables added to these ERG models, this indicator of whether or not a given dyad had worked together previously seemed most likely to have a positive impact on the likelihood of current collaboration. As was noted above, the actual number of congregations (and thus dyads) in the current networks which were also active in the previous network was quite low. This finding suggests a modification to the conclusion of Corrigall-Brown and Meyer (2010) within the context of informal movement organizations; past collaboration is predictive of current collaboration among those organizations which remain active in their pursuit of movement goals. The considerable rate of turnover in the non-formal SMOs actively working in a given context represents a countervailing force in the broader effort to build meso-mobilization contexts characterized by dense patters of interconnection between the organizational actors involved.

Finally, the findings related to hypotheses 2a and 2b merit some discussion. These hypotheses sought to test for the effect of shared neighborhood geography on the likelihood of collaboration – an effect which was operationalized through the coding of dyads which shared the same or overlapping census tracts. Research on neighborhood composition has revealed a pattern of increasing heterogeneity within some census tracts since the 1970s (Galster and Booza 2007; Galster, Booza, and Cutsinger 2008). The
choice of census tract as a signifier of neighborhood (and more specifically as a signifier of shared use of certain urban amenities) represents a limitation of this study as few other alternatives were available. However, a case for tacit support of Hypothesis 2b can be made if one compares results from each of the two final models presented above. In the federated issue network, the final model indicates a moderate preference on the part of congregations to collaborate with others who share their own racial or ethnic background, yet in the local issue network race and ethnicity do not appear to impact the likelihood of collaboration. While the examination of collaboration across race/ethnic difference within census tracts found no effect, there is a greater propensity to collaborate across racial or ethnic difference on local as compared to federated issues.

**Conclusion**

This study examined patterns of inter-organizational collaboration within a form of meso-mobilization context found in dozens of metropolitan areas in the United States – a congregation-based community organizing federation. Specifically, this study contributes to the literature on meso-mobilization contexts by further refining several theoretical assertions on the role of urban geography in the formation meso-scale social movement coalitions. Geographic dispersion within a metropolitan area was shown to negatively affect the likelihood of collaboration on neighborhood-level issues, while having no discernible effect on the likelihood of collaboration on issues taken up by the federation as a whole. Neither geographic centrality nor census tract overlap was shown to impact the likelihood of collaboration in neighborhood or metropolitan level work. Collaboration between congregations on federated issues was shown to be negatively
impacted by racial heterogeneity, whereas collaboration on neighborhood-level issues was not. More broadly, findings from the statistical analyses pursued in this study suggest the utility of examining multiple dimensions of collaboration within meso-mobilization contexts, as each of the two networks examined were shown to form according to unique logics of collaboration. The use of exponential random graph modeling techniques in concert with traditional network analytic methods provides a potentially fruitful avenue for hypothesis testing and theory building within the area of social movement meso-mobilization contexts.
Chapter II References


Chapter II Methodological Appendix

Goodness of model fit simulation tests

The process of fitting an ERG model involves the careful selection of a set of model parameters from a very long list of possibilities. As described above, the selection of a particular model specification for interpretation (among the many competing model specifications) is driven by Aikake’s Information Criteria (AIC) as well as simulation tests of goodness of fit. The plots below summarize the results of simulation-based goodness of fit tests for each of the final models chosen for interpretation in the results section. The boldest line in each of these plots represents observed values within the network in question on the measure stated. Error bars and light grey lines indicate the 95% confidence interval for values observed through 1000 simulations of the network in question, based upon the parameter estimates for that model. A good fit between model estimates and empirical data is indicated where the observed network values fall within the 95% confidence intervals generated by the simulation test. These plots indicate acceptable levels of model fit on all measures for each network.
Figure 3. Neighborhood-level issue network Model A: Goodness of fit simulation results.

Figure 4. Federated-level issue network Control Model: Goodness of fit simulation results.
CHAPTER III

MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS: COOPERATION AND MUTUAL COMMITMENT IN A CONGREGATION-BASED COMMUNITY ORGANIZING FEDERATION

Community organizing is a practice that employs the collective will and leadership of marginalized groups in order to make tangible improvements on issues of local concern. Distinct from both social service provision and issue advocacy, community organizing groups in the U.S. work to engage large numbers of ordinary persons in the civic affairs that directly affect them and thus serve as a poignant counter-example to the widespread civic disengagement decried by social capital scholars. A survey of the scholarly literature on community organizing reveals a number of unique approaches to the practice (i.e., neighborhood-based, relational, race-based, transformative) each with their own particular tactics, internal political process, emphasis on leadership development, and issues of primary concern. Among these, one of most widely-practiced variants is congregation-based community organizing (CBCO) (Warren and Wood 2001).

Drawing heavily upon the writing and experience of Saul Alinsky, CBCO is distinguished from other forms of organizing in its emphasis on religious congregations as sites for organizing work, intentional efforts to build coalitions that are socio-economically, racially, and religiously diverse, and multiple issue orientation (Wood and Warren 2002). CBCO groups have a well-established track record of improvements at the neighborhood level; efforts to increase access to affordable housing, healthcare, and
municipal infrastructure are among the most common action targets for these groups (Swarts 2008; Warren 2001; Wood 2002).

In recent decades, practitioners of all forms of community organizing have increasingly recognized that many of the challenges they face, while encountered in individual neighborhoods, are largely controlled by political bodies operating at scales far removed from such locales (Orr 2007; Rusch 2012). This recognition pushed early congregation-based organizers to adopt a federated-network organizational form – something which has become the norm within congregation-based organizing (McCarthy 2005; McCarthy and Walker 2004; Warren and Wood 2001). As federations, the major CBCO national organizations (e.g., Industrial Areas Foundation, People Improving Communities through Organizing, Gamaliel Foundation) operate as extended networks of organizations; at the metropolitan level, federation membership consists primarily of religious congregations and allied organizations. While each of the major CBCO national networks has engaged to some degree in policy change at the statewide and national levels, the majority of their efforts are focused at the neighborhood and metropolitan levels (Warren 2001; Wood 2002).

The following section reviews literature focused directly on CBCO federations, as well as relevant work from the broader area of social movement research. Previous research on social movements has focused on the collections of organizations and individual persons that work together in pursuit of movement goals; these have been referred to alternately as social movement coalitions, meso-mobilization contexts, and

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1 Warren and Wood (2001) found that while the vast majority of CBCO federation membership in the U.S. is made up of religious congregations, approximately 13% of CBCO organizational membership comprises school districts, labor groups, and other secular organizations. In this article the words 'congregation', 'organization', and 'group' will be used interchangeably to refer to CBCO federation members.
social movement communities. A consistent finding in this field has been that the particular form of relations in such a meso-mobilization structure tends to have a strong influence on its ability to respond to political threats or opportunities.

*It is one of the arguments of this paper that several key characteristics of the CBCO meso-mobilization context have received little attention in the extant literature, thus their effects on mobilization potential are not well-understood.* The first of these characteristics is a multiple-issue orientation; CBCO federations tend to mobilize over very long periods of time as various issues of import to their organizational membership become active in public arenas. Related to this point is the fact each congregational member of a federation will have its own level of interest, resources, and experience with a given issue. Taken together, these points suggest the need for better understandings of the dynamic nature of organizational participation over time, and the methods used by professional organizers to maintain federation membership. A second important characteristic of CBCO federations is that they feature very strong task differentiation between congregational members and professional organizing staff. Preliminary analyses\(^30\) suggest the structure of a CBCO federation is typically a highly centralized one where professional organizers play an important coordinating role throughout individual issue campaigns. Importantly, this study advances understandings of the form and function of inter-organizational collaboration given the active role that organizers take in coordinating these collaborations.

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\(^{30}\) Archival data on collaboration between member congregations have been examined by the author using social network analytic techniques. These have shown a consistent tendency toward strong centralization within metropolitan networks of CBCO organizations.
Literature review

A number of previous studies have addressed the organizational structure of CBCO federations, the usual process of their formation, and common practices in recruiting a diverse array of organizations to a federation. The broader field of social movement research similarly attends to processes of coalition formation and structure, as well as factors which tend to predict collaborative vs. competitive approaches to pursuing movement goals. However, the review below illustrates that previous literature has tended to overlook processes of federation operation beyond their formation. Specifically, little is known about (a) the implications of extended mobilizing timelines of CBCO’s multi-issue approach to organizing, and (b) the form or function of inter-congregational collaboration given the strong coordination role played by professional congregation-based organizers.

CBCO federations: Formation and structure

A small but growing collection of research has focused directly on the topic of congregation-based community organizing. The majority of these treatments provide a description of CBCO federation structure and formation, as well as their focus on the building of coalitions that bring together diverse racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups.
The first step in the formation of a new metropolitan CBCO federation is for clergy and/or lay leaders working on an issue\textsuperscript{31} to contact one of the national CBCO networks (i.e., PICO, the Industrial Areas Foundation, etc.). Senior staff from such an organization will usually conduct a series of meetings with clergy and congregants active in order to determine the levels of support which can be called upon in forming a new federation. Key factors include the level of interest in collaborative work expressed by the faith community of a given city, and the ability of potential federation members to commit the necessary resources to hire one or more professional organizers (McCarthy and Walker 2004).

If it is determined that the interest and ability to commit congregational resources is sufficient to sustain organizing activities for some minimum length of time (usually between one and three years) then the national network in question will usually decide to move forward with the formation of a new federation. Professional organizers then begin the process of identifying potential additional congregational members of the federation, as well as leaders within individual congregations. Representatives from each member congregation are trained in the particular methods, tactics, and ethos of the CBCO network in question – often through a multi-day national organizing training (Speer and Hughey 1995). Further, each congregation selects a representative to serve on the executive board of the organizing federation. This board oversees the work of the federation and retains the ability to hire and fire members of the professional organizing staff and devise long-term strategies (Warren 2001).

\textsuperscript{31} This could be within a single congregation or among a collection of congregations.
Within member congregations, local organizing committees are set up to work on the specific issues of concern to members of a particular congregation. These committees work together with their associated clergy to identify the issues of greatest importance or relevance to their congregation, engage a broad cross-section of congregational membership in action campaigns, and manage decision making related to federation membership (Wood 2002). Within federations, each organization makes autonomous decisions related to which change efforts to pursue, the proper level of organizational resources to devote to those efforts, and whether or when to withdraw from the federation. These organizations form an interdependent network by virtue of the fact that each member congregation, while free to determine its own priorities on issues of concern to its membership, relies heavily on the coordinated efforts of other congregations when seeking to effect changes beyond the neighborhood level (Swarts 2008; Wood 2002).

In addition to describing the process of initial federation formation, several of the pieces focused directly on CBCO organizing have outlined the efforts made by professional organizers to build and maintain a broad membership base of in terms of race/ethnicity, socio-economic class, and religious denomination. This is an especially noteworthy task given the high degree of racial segregation within religious communities in the United States (Christerson and Emerson 2003; DeYoung, Emerson, Yancey and Kim 2003; Dougherty 2003; Emerson and Kim 2003).

One of key assets that professional organizers within this model of organizing are able to use in uniting such disparate communities is the initial modicum of trust that participants afford members of other groups by virtue of their common identity as
members of faith communities. In practice, organizers and participants tend to open meetings and events with prayers or reflections that speak to the values motivating the work being done.\textsuperscript{32} By emphasizing the commonly held values that motivate congregations to take action, CBCO organizers make possible the initial conversations between clergy and lay leaders of historically segregated communities. These conversations often lead to the recognition of common interests and possible modes of collaboration. Warren (2001) describes this process: “A certain degree of trust is necessary to get the process going. But, then, cooperative action offers the context for building greater trust, relationships, and mutual understanding” (pp. 99-100).

Studies conducted to date that focus directly on congregation based organizing have done well to describe the form and everyday functioning of this practice. However, with few exceptions\textsuperscript{33} they have not incorporated the theoretical constructs or empirical findings from mainstream social movement research – an area of study that has considered phenomena very similar to that of CBCO federation formation/operation.

**CBCO federations: Through the lens(es) of social movement research**

At its most general level, the current analytic project involves inter-organizational collaborations within a social movement milieu. A growing body of research from the field of social movement studies has considered this sort of collaboration in detail. Studies in this field tend to be aligned with one of the two major theoretical approaches to social movements: resource mobilization theory or political process theory.

\textsuperscript{32} Wood (2002) wrote that these prayers take one of two forms: prayers are recited so as to be broad enough to include all faith traditions represented at a given event, or multiple specific prayers are given.\textsuperscript{33} See McCarthy and Walker 2004; McCarthy 2005; Polletta 2002.
Studies which work within the resource mobilization approach tend to employ the term *social movement coalition* in describing this phenomenon, and focus on the factors which impact the likelihood of collaboration between social movement organizations. This body of research has established several factors which make collaboration between social movement organizations (SMOs) more likely, key among them are exceptional political threats or opportunities (Henig 1982; McCammon and Campbell 2002; McCammon and Van Dyke 2010; Staggenborg 1986; Stoecker 1994), and previous interorganizational collaboration (Corrigall-Brown and Meyer 2010; Henig 1982; Turk 1977; Van Dyke 2003). Of particular import to CBCO federation research, two studies have examined conditions under which collaboration between historically divided racial/ethnic communities has taken place (Chung 2001; Okamoto 2010). These studies have found that shared collaboration between disparate groups in an urban environment often stems from shared use of particular urban amenities (housing, transportation, retail, employment, etc.) and attendant shared interests.

However, the applicability of these findings to the CBCO federation context is limited due to a tendency in this sub-field toward examining and theorizing collaboration among *formal SMOs* that engage in *single-issue campaigns* which unfold over *relatively short spans of time* (Rohlinger and Quadagno 2009). Following one of the central tenets of the resource mobilization perspective - that social movement organizations compete for access to necessary resources - these studies tend to focus upon the abundance or scarcity of resources available to SMOs working on given issue as a key factor in their decisions to compete or collaborate. However the organizational members of CBCO federations exist primarily as religious institutions - thus they do not operate under the
same assumptions as a formal SMO. CBCO federations are built upon collaboration between a single formal SMO (that of the professional organizing staff) and multiple informal movement organizations. To the extent that these organizations work to procure monetary resources they do so in concert and mainly in support of the single formal SMO that supports the federation and employs professional organizers. This situation is fundamentally distinct from that of the formalized SMOs described in most studies of SMO collaboration and coalition building.

Complementing the findings of movement coalition research is a parallel body of work, built upon political process theory, which describes movement collaboration in terms of *meso-mobilization contexts* and/or *social movement communities*. Within this line of research, explicit attention is given to the makeup of the organizations involved within a given set of movement activities – or mobilization. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988) describe their interest in this level of analysis: “…we can no more build social movements from the individual up than down from some broad societal process. We believe the real action takes place at a third level, intermediate between the individual and the broad macro contexts in which they are embedded” (p. 711).

Perhaps in response to the implicit focus of movement coalition research on formal SMOs, the meso-mobilization/movement community perspective begins with the assumption that any given mobilization will include a diverse array of organizational types, from formal SMOs, institutional actors with affinities for movement goals, informal organizations, and even extended networks of individual persons (Staggenborg

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34 It should be noted that the professional organizing staff as an organization are indeed a formalized SMO, and would be expected to operate in a manner consistent with that described in the social movement coalition literature - especially when partnering with other SMOs which are outside of its own federation or umbrella organization (i.e., Gamaliel Foundation, PICO National Network, Industrial Areas Foundation).
One of the key methods by which these meso-mobilization actors are able to unite a wide array of movement participants is to actively pursue framing practices which unite the disparate goals and identities included in a given movement community into a single master frame (Chung 2011; Gerhardts and Rucht 1992; Ratner and Woolford 2008; Staggenborg and Lecomte 2009).

By recognizing the diversity of organizational types involved within a given mobilization, this perspective explicitly allows for the possibility that individual organizations may play unique roles deriving from their level of connection to the issue at hand, resources, expertise, access to relevant elites, etc. Such an approach recognizes the complementary relations which often take place between religious congregations, their denominational organizations, and formal SMOs in pursuing movement goals. The presupposition of a certain degree of asymmetry between organizations in a given meso-mobilization context has been accompanied by an interest in the pattern of collaborative relations among such organizations working on a particular issue campaign - as well as the effect that a particular form of organization may have on the effectiveness of a campaign. As Staggenborg (2002) characterizes it: “Characteristics of movement communities, including internal networks, central gathering places, SMOs, ties between national and local activists, and overlaps with other movement communities, affect the mobilization of a new campaign in response to critical events” (p. 133).

Research in this area has recognized a frequent pattern where one formal SMO serves as a kind of hub, broker, or coordinator for movement activities – these have been referred to as meso-mobilization actors (Gerhardt and Rucht 1992). Jones, Hutchinson, 35 Examples of these complementary relations are prevalent in accounts of the involvement of religious organizations; see Zald and McCarthy (1987).
Van Dyke, Gates and Companion (2001) pursue directly the question of relational structures among members of a meso-mobilization context. This group differentiates between two general patterns for inter-organizational collaboration. The first is a highly centralized pattern of relations where one organization plans and coordinates the mobilization of multiple others, which they dub the ‘network-invocation’ pattern. The second pattern they describe features “two or more groups that jointly share in planning and mobilizing” (p. 209) around a given issue, which they refer to as the ‘alliance’ pattern. Their analyses of protest attendance levels suggest that the ‘network-invocation’ division of labor tends to be more effective at generating high levels of turnout compared to the ‘alliance’ arrangement.

**Synthesis and Research Questions**

By integrating the perspectives offered by research on congregation-based organizing, social movement coalitions, and meso-mobilization, we are able to begin assembling a coherent framework for understanding the formation and general structure of congregation-based organizing federations. Previous research on CBCO federations themselves suggests the crucial importance of building diverse and broadly-based coalitions at the metropolitan level – for it is often the case that the majoritarian nature of these federations lends them a necessary degree of electoral influence, and political capital in achieving their goals. Congregation-based organizers work to unite such diverse coalitions by building relationships between members of disparate faith communities through dialogue on issues of common concern, and the promotion of a common identity of all involved as ‘concerned persons of faith’ (Swarts 2008; Warren
Previous work on movement coalitions has suggested the importance of shared interests based on shared reliance upon particular urban spaces/amenities in the process of building inter-racial/inter-ethnic civic coalitions (Chung 2001; Okamoto 2010). These findings align well with the broader tradition of neighborhood-based community organizing (Alinsky 1989/1971) from which congregation-based organizing was formed, and they remain important in the current practice of CBCO.

Research on CBCO federations has made apparent the relative advantages of conducting organizing work within congregation-based settings. By including religious congregations as primary federation members, CBCO federations benefit from congregations’ extended social networks, thus making bloc recruitment of individual persons a regular occurrence (Polletta 2002; Warren 2001; Wood 2002). Congregations’ provision of financial support for professional organizing staffs also helps to strengthen federation efforts by reducing their reliance upon foundation support. However, the diversity of religious traditions and racial/ethnic identities within these federations means that they tend to shy away from issues related to sexual/racial/ethnic identity, or religiously sensitive topics such as abortion, etc., which would necessarily divide such coalitions (Swarts 2008; Wood 2002).

Finally, among the various approaches espoused within the social movement literature, the meso-mobilization perspective likely holds the greatest potential for advancing research on CBCO federations. Unlike approaches to movement coalitions which focus implicitly on formal movement organizations, the meso-mobilization approach explicitly recognizes the diversity of organizations which collaborate in pursuit of movement goals. Similarly, the concerted framing efforts undertaken by professional
organizers in CBCO federations conform generally to depictions of meso-mobilization actors encountered in the social movement literature. The meso-mobilization perspective moves beyond the link between opportunities/threats and movement activities by suggesting that the particular make-up of and relations between organizations (formal and otherwise) involved in a given set of movement activities, is very influential to whether and how a given movement community will respond to such threats or opportunities. To date, the field has produced relatively little empirical research which directly employs a meso-mobilization lens. However, the studies which have been conducted suggest that in general more formalized movement organizations will coordinate the efforts of less formalized movement organizations, and that the sharing of planning and framing activities among meso-mobilization entities may lead to inefficiencies and lower overall effectiveness.

Contributions from the social movement and community organizing literatures have elaborated the process of CBCO federation formation, as well as some of the general features of their structure. However, there are at least two key aspects of CBCO federation structure which have not been adequately addressed in previous research. The first aspect stems from the pronounced division of labor and highly centralized nature of inter-organizational relations within this form of movement community. The second pertains to the unique orientation of CBCO organizing efforts as multi-issue in scope.

**Research question one: Delineating the forms and functions of collaboration**

Prior research on inter-organizational collaboration in social movements and community organizing would suggest that not all instances of collaboration would
operate under the same sort of relational logic. In some instances, collaboration may be quite instrumental to the goals/survival of a movement, SMO, or campaign, such as when two congregations which are heavily invested in a particular issue campaign work together to identify appropriate action steps to pursue. In other instances one may reasonably expect to observe collaboration which is aimed more at creating, strengthening, or maintaining a sense of solidarity between groups, such as when one group attends the rally of another in order to support their efforts. Yet the extant literature does not examine in great detail differences in the meaning or uses of collaboration. This is seen in the lack of theoretical discussions which delineate distinct forms of collaboration, as well as in the particular data used in the studies on collaboration. The majority of data used in these studies treat instances of organizational co-presence at a particular rally as a unit of analysis – thereby treating a potentially diverse collection of collaborative acts as a homogenous group (e.g., Van Dyke 2003).

Further, organizing practitioners such as Kahn (1991) have highlighted a range of factors that leaders of organizing groups consider when entering into a federation or coalition: (a) the centrality of a particular issue to organizational goals, (b) the level of participation/resources available that an organization has to work with, (c) the level of benefit to be gained from a particular collaboration or action, (d) the amount of media or other 'credit' afforded to a particular organization, (e) the level of control of the particular message/tactic/overall strategy being employed. From this list of very practical concerns one observes the potential for various roles to develop among organizations working in concert, as each organization within a social movement community will tend to have its
own particular measure of commitment and relevant resources to work on any particular issue.

Finally, qualitative accounts of CBCO practice (e.g., McCarthy and Walker 2004; Swarts 2008; Warren 2001; Wood 2002) have shown a pattern of strong task differentiation among organizational members of a CBCO federation. Preliminary quantitative analysis of interorganizational network structure within these federations has likewise revealed a relatively centralized system of relations among member congregations in which professional organizers occupy the central position. Research conducted within the meso-mobilization framework has recognized the role of coordinating organizations (or meso-mobilization actors as they are called) but has not yet focused on the form or function of relations among non-central actors. These points motivate the first research question pursued in this study: from the perspective of organizers, leaders, and participants in CBCO federations, what are the functions of certain collaborative acts, and what are the potential roles involved in both forming relationships and directly working with others organizations?

**Research question two: Implications of a multiple-issue orientation**

One aspect of congregation-based organizing federations that has been relatively understudied is that they tend to engage in multiple ongoing issue campaigns. Swarts (2008) described the motivation of a multiple issue orientation: practitioners of congregation-based organizing, while often experienced in other forms of activism see most social movements “as based on single issues, and thus they are vulnerable to decline when the issue disappears. CBCOs see multi-issue organizations based on shared values
and social networks as a more stable basis for activism, a way around built-in obsolescence” (p. 7). The topic of multiple-issue social movement organizations has rarely been addressed in previous literature; CBCO federations by contrast feature more collaboration on planning and framing than most other kinds of movement communities described in the literature.

This, combined with a multiple issue orientation suggests that coordination and negotiation could present some unique challenges for CBCO federations. Extant literature has not yet explored the dynamics involved in maintaining such a federation over the extended timeline of multiple issue organizing. This paper seeks to contribute to knowledge in this area by posing the research question: what are the specific strategies pursued in maintaining the commitment and sense of shared purpose of member congregations over the multi-year time horizon of multi-issue organizing?

Methods

In order to address these issues, a series of qualitative interviews was carried out with clergy, organizers, and lay-leaders working with Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO), a CBCO federation based in Kansas City, MO. In addition to these interviews, the current analysis draws upon participant observations of several federation events over an 18-month period including a large public rally, two meetings of the federation’s board, and a day-long federation strategy session. Records of attendance at federation meetings
(part of a large and ongoing program evaluation data set) were also shared with the author.  

**Interview data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the professional organizing staff, clergy of member congregations, community leaders active in the organizing activities of the federation, and a number of participants who do not fit into one of the previous categories. Participants in this study were approached for interview such that the final sample would reflect the denominational, class, and racial/ethnic diversity of the coalition as a whole. In total, 18 interviews were conducted: four with professional community organizers, five with clergy members, and nine with participant leaders from various congregations. Among these interviewees, half were male, 11 were Caucasian, six African-American, and one Latino. Interviewing began with members of the professional organizing staff with whom the researcher has previous working relationships. Interviews took place at the location of the participant’s choosing, and ranged from 25 to 65 minutes in duration.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. Each interview began with the respondent giving some account of their own personal introduction to community organizing in general, as well as organizing work with their congregation specifically. The majority of each interview consisted of respondents giving accounts of organizing campaigns which their congregation was a part of, with special attention to

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36 Additionally, the author’s background knowledge of particular principles and techniques of CBCO organizing was buffeted by attending the week-long training of organizers conducted by the PICO National Network (the national-level affiliate of CCO) in the summer of 2010.
descriptions of collaboration between congregations. Interview transcripts were analyzed for salient themes using qualitative coding software. An initial round of coding was conducted in order to identify passages which related to each of the above research questions, with a second coding which employed a grounded theory approach in order to capture the broadest possible range of themes discussed in each interview.

Findings

Before proceeding with a discussion of this study’s main findings, it will be useful to establish some background information regarding this particular federation and its development over time. Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO) is the current day iteration of an organization founded in 1977 under the name Kansas City Organizing Project. Since its earliest days, this organization placed a strong emphasis on issues relating to neighborhood-level development and blight. Fr. Thomas Stockton, a founding clergy member of the organization, explained that a key catalyst in the formation of the organization was the widespread practice of block-busting which was impacting the neighborhoods of Kansas City in the late 1970s.

“I was trying to counter block-busting and trying to get the [white] community to be open to the black community that was coming in, and not to run off, but to just stay there and have some stability… I realized after a while that we had to organize. And about that time, Rockhurst University was also trying to stabilize their neighborhood and their community and so was the University of Missouri across the street. They had a call from California, from John Baumann [founder of PICO National Network], saying that he had three guys who had trained in community organizing and that they would like to come to Kansas City and create an organization here.”
In 1989, the KCOP became the Kansas City Community Church Organization (CCO)\(^{37}\), reflecting the shift within the PICO National Network to a more explicit focus on congregation-based community organizing. CCO has successfully organized on a host of neighborhood-level improvements, won permanent funding for home repair and improvement programs, and has more recently won funding for improving access to primary health care in low-income neighborhoods. Over its three decades of continuous operation CCO has gradually moved into organizing campaigns in the areas of healthcare, public safety, immigration, and fairness in lending practices. However, issues relating to housing and neighborhood development have retained an important place on the federation agenda to the current day.

Collaboration in CBCO federations: Roles, forms, and functions

Throughout the course of interviewing members, leaders, and organizers within this federation respondents’ input tended to center on descriptions of current and previous issue campaigns. In these descriptions participants outlined the various activities that they and their congregation undertook as a part of these campaigns. The particular sorts of activities that were described typically fell into one of two categories depending on the whether a congregation was filling a leading or supporting role with respect to a particular issue campaign.

Congregations taking a leading role on a particular issue are often those whose members have initially worked to bring the issue to the attention of the federation, those that work directly with professional organizers on framing and ‘issue cutting’ and

\(^{37}\) This moniker was later adapted to Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO) in 2007.
strategy, and those that maintain a focus on a particular issue in times of relative inactivity. Elder Henry Thompson, a long-time clergy leader and member of the federation describes the way that congregations which take leading roles on particular issues serve as stewards for their issue:

“The people who do the work lead the group… The best way to give you an example is to describe the research process, we have a research action. We just had one not too long ago with the Secretary of Prisons for the state, you see. When we decided to have that, before we go to that meeting, we come together and we talk about what it is we're going to... what kind of questions we want to ask, what it is we're trying to find out. We collaborate together and we come up with a list of questions of what we're trying to ask of what we're wanting.”

Later in our interview, Elder Thompson continued:

“A good example I think is St. Bonaventure. St. Bonaventure is the one who started payday lending over fifteen twenty years ago and look at them today… St. Peters didn't allow the issue to go dead is what it is. You see, there's been some waves and some even some setbacks in moving forward with payday lending… It was kept alive you see. Same thing with First Baptist and the health issue. You see, they've been, that been at that issue for five or ten years or more.”

As Elder Thompson describes it, the leading congregations on a particular issue are the ones who do the day in and day out work of devising strategy, identifying needed information and seeking out expert sources of that information, and selecting achievable action steps which address some part of the issue at hand. Congregations working together on these items do so with the close collaboration of professional organizers in all phases of the issue campaign. The various developments, set-backs, and challenges which arise during the course of an issue campaign provide opportunities for leadership development, political skill building, and strategizing among congregational leaders and organizers. It is this interplay between congregations taking a leading role on a given
issue and the involvement of the professional organizers themselves that produces the vast majority of the strategic decision making in a given CBCO issue campaign.

For a particular congregation to assume a leading role on an issue at the federation level can require a significant commitment of time and effort. Trevor, a long-time organizer with the CCO federation spoke directly to this point:

“At every meeting we have there is a next step. So part of that, the commitment if you will, is to participate in those next steps. Sometimes its, who's going to call this person that the chief asked us to meet with or the city council person told us, they recommend we meet with. Who is going to call this person? Who else is missing from this room that you want from your congregation or your community to be a part of the next meeting. Will you invite them? That's part of the next steps.”

Thus within CCO a given issue tends to attract the regular efforts of just a few congregations. A good illustration of this is found in an analysis of meeting attendance records at the four active issue committees currently working within CCO. Figure 1 below is a depiction of the congregations heading up work on particular issues within this federation in the calendar year 2010. The vast majority of congregations engage in one or at most two different issue committees. For congregations that are involved directly in multiple issue committees, there is a tendency to weight the allocation of resources (conceptualized here as meeting attendance) more heavily toward one individual issue committee.

These leading congregations are driven to engage in a particular issue through the direct experiences and interests of parishioners themselves. Susan, a lay-leader with the federation for the past several years, describes her own introduction to organizing:

“… my husband was really sick, and he would go into the donut hole, and we had lots of medical expenses because of his illness. And I didn't really have an illness, but I had some things going on and I did a number of tests that cost me about $16,000. And so, that
was my concern. How do you pay this? How do you get around it? I almost lost my husband because he didn't want to incur any more medical expenses, didn't want to go through emergency. So that’s how I got introduced [to congregation-based organizing], through Matt [a former organizer], invited our congregation, and me telling my story to him. He asked me to tell my story to another group of people, and then someone that was in that group asked me to tell my story in Topeka at the state Senate, and then I’ve told my story in front of - we had a gathering there were over 1000 people here at the Union Station, and I told my story there. Each time I would tell my story I became involved in things that are going on that are just not quite right.”

Figure 1. Federated issue committee meeting attendance, 2010.

![Diagram of federated issue committee meeting attendance, 2010.](image)

Note: Red nodes represent individual congregations. The white node at center represents the professional organizing entity. Thicker lines denote more frequent attendance at committee meetings/events on a scale ranging from 2 to 15 organizational attendances. Data source: CCO federation meeting attendance records.

Trevor gave an account of the formation of one of the main federated issue committees - the housing and home maintenance committee. During the course of his work, Trevor encountered a member of one of the congregations he organized with who had received a seemingly incredible offer for home repair which was accompanied by a kind of financing plan:
“She went to her son and her son looked at it and said, ‘Oh, no. This is predatory lending.’ She brought it to her [congregation’s] local organizing committee. They talked about it, did more listening in the neighborhood and found out that there were several elderly citizens that were being targeted for that. They brought that question to the federation meeting one day and there were folks there at the meeting who were saying ‘Yeah, we've experienced the same thing.’ Look, these were vulnerable communities, low-income communities, senior citizens and what-have-you that needed minor home repairs, but they were being preyed upon at the same time. So, that common issue is really what surfaced a listening campaign that took place in four congregations. It was that mechanism that we had where we were bringing them together where they were in relationship and they could share these type of questions, these type of issues, and then go on a joint kind of campaign, a listening campaign, [followed by] research campaign, and then eventually have an action together. So that’s kind of how our federation operates.”

Through her own personal connection to issues of health care affordability and access, Susan was driven to take an active role in the budding organizing efforts of her congregation. After sharing her story in these public settings, others in her community and congregation began to share with her their own similar experiences. Trevor illustrates this very same process at the outset of the federation’s work to address the need for minor home repairs among its members. The salience of these individual experiences with the health care system led members of Susan’s congregation to take a leading role in the health care issue campaign being undertaken by the federation.

On those federated-level issues for which a member congregation does not take a leading role (i.e., they are not connected to a particular issue committee in Figure 1) they are strongly encouraged to fill a supporting role. Activities that typify the supporting role often include the provision of voluntary labor, willingness to advance the work of another congregation by sharing professional or personal contacts, as well as through attendance at public actions organized by other congregations or issue committees. Susan describes an issue for which her congregation plays such a supporting role:
“So for people who may not be in a community such as this, their issue may not be a financial issue, they may have never had to go to the payday loan. So that may not be their issue, but because its somebody else's issue, then you’re joining together. For instance, in Kansas City, MO they are working on the payday predatory lending, and uh, raising the minimum wage, from $7.25 to $8.25. So they have petitions and they have to have so many petitions. Well the citizens in Kansas can't vote, but we can register people. So we were trained to register people. I've already started. I think there were maybe three in our LOC who went through the training. And there were a couple more who want to be trained and reach out... so it’s like you come together because even if it’s not your issue, you want to help someone else with theirs.”

Despite the fact that her congregation is focused intently upon issues of health care affordability and access, Susan and her counterparts are contributing their time and energy to advance the work of another issue committee in a critical period. Trevor, described the supporting role this way:

“Other kinds of next steps or commitments that we ask from folks is to take this information that you have received back to your community or your congregation or to your LOC and then help them to understand what we are trying to do, report back what we just learned and what our next steps are.”

When a federated issue campaign reaches such a critical period organizers encourage all congregations to step in and become engaged; Olivia, director of CCO, referred to this stage as ‘all hands on deck’. If a particular congregation is unwilling or unable to contribute they have the option to abstain from action, however attendance and contributions of voluntary labor at these times are strongly encouraged from all congregations.

Sandra, another long-time clergy member of CCO, described another facet of the supporting role of a CCO member. Federation members often have professional or personal contacts which can be shared with other members of the federation:
“The other participation is if people can speak with some of the powers that be because of their position, or where they work. You know you may not, be working in a [particular committee], but say you've got a relationship with a council person, and you want to introduce somebody else, or you want to bring an issue to that council person, you're able to do that because you already know that decision maker or you already know that council person.”

Sandra’s comment was echoed by several interviewees, particularly members of middle-class or more affluent congregations. Ann spoke of the effort among those leading the organization to connect to the group of decision makers that were invited to a large public action:

“Certainly in the planning for the big event last October, during the general planning sessions, for that event, when it came to the list of elected officials we are going to invite, [the question was asked] ‘Now from all of you gathered here, who has a relationship with Representative X? Does anyone know Senator Y?’ We did bring our own personal relationships to bear in that way.”

The ability to leverage such weak ties (Granovetter 1973) to persons holding unique information, resources, or a position of power is a key element of the social capital that members of CBCO federations exchange in the pursuit of their goals. Charles, a lay-leader and former CCO board member, described a supporting activity that nearly every respondent mentioned: turn out.

“Those meetings which are federation based issues are presented and we're always, (the federation is) always advised when a particular [congregation] is conducting an action and urged to turn out and support it, and I think there is a good response to that. They have strong support, even on issues that are more unique to a particular neighborhood or [congregation] that is doing it.”

Dorothy, a relatively new participant within her congregation’s organizing committee echoed Charles’s statement:

“We're supportive of other issues that are going on. As far as the pay day loan [issue], it's just not the one that we're actually taking the lead on. So, I think all of
us will be supporting the other issues, and if a congregation reaches out to us I think we'll try to support it as we can.”

When asked to elaborate on the kinds of activities that her congregation would typically engage in when fulfilling a supportive role she responded:

“I think that it would be to help with numbers, to help with solidarity, to give testimony to leaders, or to legislators. I think we would offer help if it's something we believe in and something we want to help with. I think that we would participate in any way that we could, and that they asked for.”

Reverend Jones, a long-time clergy leader within the federation spoke at length on this issue:

“And then we, when we have a gathering, when we have an action, we participate in each other's actions. We go to support the other group in whatever, action that they have going on. That’s very important for us to be able to do that because we want the other congregations to know that they're not in it by themselves. We understand what you're going through, and we understand what you're doing. We also understand that there may come a time when we want you to support us as well. There’s a mutual understanding that we're in this thing together, and that we're going to support each other. That’s what brings a different congregation, that brings different religious people, different religious beliefs together, and it helps to solidify the organization, and it takes place over a number of years. We've been working with each other for a number of years. That mutual respect and understanding of each other's needs is there, and we support each other as best we can. That’s why we had over 1100 people, down at the Union Station. People were able to see the strength of the organization.”

The importance of this turn out support is difficult to overstate. CCO’s ability to turn out large number of people at its public actions is quite effective at building its reputation in the Kansas City community. As Reverend Jones points out, CCO successfully organized a large a rally in November of 2011 which drew approximately 1100 members and clergy. In fact, the number of organizations which supported this rally was far greater than the number pictured in Figure 1. Elder Thompson spoke to this point:
“If there is an action, people will come out and support it - especially federated actions. Definitely the congregations come out if the federation moves you see and, and when that happens, we can count on the people, you see. At the last action we had here we had put all together over a thousand people and over a hundred clergy. You see in that, although [my congregation] doesn't have an active committee, we had about thirty people present.”

For events such as this, a large group of formerly active and affiliated congregations also contribute to the overall turnout. The substantial turnout attracted coverage from two local televisions and several pieces in the state’s daily newspaper. By garnering such strong support from all of its congregations, CCO was able to attract greater media attention and thus amplify the framing efforts of those particular issue campaigns which were the focus of the event.

Taken as a whole, this division of labor within the federation between leading and supporting congregations allows CCO to maximize the use of its most precious resource: voluntary labor and participation. Relative to single issue advocacy campaigns, voluntary labors are pooled across a wider range of participants/institutions. Compared to single-issue coalitions, a large CBCO federation is able to generate greater participation over time due to the fact that there is almost always an issue within the federation that is ready for a kind of action. The fact that members operate under the assumption that they will support the work of the issue committee which is best situated to ‘move’ on an issue means that the federation as a whole is largely able to overcome the boom-and-bust cycle of single-issue campaigns. Such an arrangement allows this federation to act with the full complement of its large membership base across an impressive range of issues.
Coordinating the movement(s): Differentiation and re-integration

While it is true that multiple-issue federations such as CCO enjoy the benefits of a flexible source of voluntary labor and relatively stable levels of participation, it is also true that these benefits come at a cost. The necessary counterpoint to these benefits is a greater difficulty in coordinating the multiple concurrent issue campaigns within a single federation. Specifically, a multiple-issue orientation makes more difficult the task of defining which functions and priorities should be carried out by the full membership of the federation. Further, such an orientation risks the opening of divisions among federation membership along issue-based lines. Olivia, CCO’s director, spoke directly to the challenges of becoming a multi-issue organizing federation and coordinating multiple unique issue campaigns.

“When we moved to being multi-issue, our federation meetings at first were pretty strong because they had clarity of housing agenda; we always had about thirty strong leaders participating in that. Well, over that year when [we] became multi-issue, we saw a slow decline in participation. In retrospect it was because we had so much meat in each of these three issues… you'd come and it would just be information overload. People didn't know how to access it, and how to engage. So I would say from 06, 07, 08 we had really strong federated work that verged out into [the issue-specific committees]. We'd have 12, we'd have 17, we'd have 8 people at a federated meeting, and it hurt.”

Peggy, a current board member of the federation, described the issue this way:

“People are pretty aware that there are multiple issues, but I don't know if most people involved in the federation would be able to tell you which congregations are doing what. I don’t think so. Especially the congregations that are new, they

38 The process of adopting a particular issue focus at the federated level is somewhat complicated. A simple heuristic for this process: federated-level issues tend to be more complex, challenging to intervene upon, and systemic in nature than those issues which are moved by individual congregations. In this sense, Olivia’s reference to moving to ‘being multi-issue’ refers to the transition into moving multiple complex issue campaigns at the federated level, each of which pertains directly to the interests of only a subset of the entire federation.
are just dealing with their own issues. Our federation, our leadership, our meetings have become much less frequent, we used to have those meetings monthly.”

From these accounts, one can see that a key challenge in moving to a multiple-issue orientation within such a federation was to re-establish the purpose of meeting as an entire federation. Prior to adopting multiple-issue stance, issue-specific deliberation and updates at the federation level were necessary and useful in moving aspects of the federation’s housing agenda that were either too broad or too complex to be taken up by individual congregations. In a sense, every congregation had a direct stake in the happenings of every federation meeting due to the fact that the federation worked so consistently on housing and neighborhood development issues.

When the multiple-issue orientation was adopted, congregations began to tailor their interests and participate in the particular federated-level issue work that resonated most strongly with the experience of their own congregants and neighbors. With this shift, there began for the first time to be decisions and happenings at the federated level (again, due to their scope and/or complexity) which did not directly impact the agenda or interests of every individual congregation. Thus interest and attendance in these fora began to wane. Olivia continued:

“So then we in 2008 we started a conversation about how to dramatically restructure our federation. We decided to get together for quarterly federation meetings, which we eventually started to call leadership assemblies, and they would have two things that are very distinct. There would be an action item, and a decision made at each federation agenda that advanced our work together, that required the federation together, and there would be some kind of development opportunity.”
In response, federation members and organizers decided to reorganize their federation meetings such that the majority of deliberation on particular issues occurred within issue committees, and that federation meetings would focus on issues which truly pertained to the interests of all federation members. Removing some of the minutiae from the forum of federation meetings appears to have increased the efficiency and salience of this forum. However, such adaptations would appear to have the potential to lead to a second and perhaps more insidious danger: disintegration of the federation into a collection of single-issue coalitions.

Olivia continued:

…there are some congregations increasingly that are going to just be interested in reaching out to their specific neighborhood on a very specific issue - and what we're starting to say within PICO is that if that doesn't fit into our larger narrative then it doesn't help us build the kind of power we need to achieve our mission. Whereas we used to be really open to congregations coming to us [and we’d respond by saying] - ‘yeah, we'll staff you for wherever you want to take us’ - [now] we're being a little more explicit. There is [still] so much room to shape the CCO agenda, but the reality is that we have a history and a track record and we have agendas that have already been shaped by the congregations around the table. We need to prioritize so that we don't become a disaggregated group of people working on all sorts of different things… We are very much an organization that today that says that people of all congregations are welcome at our table if you do the work, you are in relationship with others and you deliver those relationships to the mission.

The reference at the end of this passage to being ‘in relationship’ is a key principle within the mainstream of congregation-based organizing. Interpersonal relationships between members of different congregations represent the bridging ties described by social capital scholars as being so necessary to the strong functioning of a democratic society (Warren 2001). Within the congregation-based model of organizing much the work of building up such bridging relations is accomplished though collaboration on issue campaigns. It is somewhat ironic then that increased complexity
and scope of issue work within CCO has actually represented a challenge to this sort of relationship building.

The need to separate issue work into distinct committees has meant that bridging relations have greater potential for development within issue committees, and reduced potential across committees. Several of the organizers interviewed spoke about their own role in explicitly working to compensate for this lost potential for relationship building across issue committees. William, an organizer with CCO for the past five years, explained it this way:

“I think for us, it is being really strong and intentional on that one to one relationship building between the different folks, but not just one to ones. Make it experiential learning so... you know one of the things that I'm trying to do with my congregations now is if there is a training that I'm doing for St. Bonaventure, I want to invite the other congregations to come and be a part of that. If I've got a research action that's focused on education, I want my healthcare people to come, and I want my education people to go if there is a food access issue, that they can begin to just interact. So I think its about kind of taking the issue silos off. I think as staff we have to lead that and let people naturally develop those relationships inside of those particular experiences.”

Stephanie, another CCO organizer, pointed out the important role of building relationships between clergy - a point that William and Olivia mentioned as well:

“Ideally in our model you begin building [relations between congregations] with clergy.”

This stems at least in part from the fact that clergy hold such important positions of influence and leadership within their respective congregations. Indeed organizers and clergy alike gave many accounts of the various meetings, dinners, activities, and co-attendance of worship services that clergy have been engaging in over time. Through such events, organizers and clergy alike work to reinforce the perennial master frame of congregation-based organizing, namely that member congregations are united in their
determination to enact their commonly-held faith values within their own communities (Wood 2002). Reverend Jones described this frame:

“I think that another thing that helps us work together as congregations is that we are people of faith. As people of faith, we, in some ways we are drawn together. It may not be the same faith, but never the less, its faith. and we are putting faith in something besides ourselves and we recognize that other people have faith as well, as well do. And so all of that helps us to be able to look at each other as brothers and sister, and when we look at each other as brothers and sisters, we recognize the relationship that God has given us as his people. Whether that god be Allah, or the God we know, as Christians, there’s still a bringing together that helps us to be able to sit down at that table together and work through whatever solution to problems there may be.”

Whether or not organizers and clergy are able to maintain robust relations throughout the federation would appear to be quite consequential for the continued viability of conducting simultaneous issue campaigns at the federated level. The relative contribution of these relationship building opportunities to the overall cohesiveness of the federation remains to be seen. Bridging relations throughout the federation are important to its continued strength. One of the primary benefits of the multiple-issue orientation is the flexible and cooperative application of voluntary labors from a large pool of federation members. This cooperative arrangement is quite likely to break down in the event that federation members, especially those congregations being asked to fill a supporting role, fail to be able to define the interests of other federation members as, at least in some small part, their own.

Conclusion

This study makes a needed contribution to the literature on CBCO and social movements by further contextualizing interorganizational dynamics at play in the
operation of a CBCO federation. Interview and archival data have revealed a cooperative
distribution of labor and resources within one such federation. Congregational members
of this federation adopt distinct repertoires of action depending on whether they play a
leading or supporting role on a given issue. Those congregations in a leading role for a
given issue tend do the vast majority of planning, information gathering, and execution of
necessary action steps. Congregations working in a leading role also tend to have a
considerable number of parishioners that are directly impacted by the issue at hand and
often serve as stewards of that issue in times of relative inactivity.

As shown in Figure 1, issue committees formed at the federation level involve
collaboration between a handful of congregations and the professional organizers, or
what Jones et al., (2001) refer to as an ‘alliance’ structure. Collaboration between
multiple congregations and professional organizers in the planning and framing of a
particular issue is an explicitly-defined element of the general CBCO model.
Congregation-based organizing tends to rely upon the indigenous efforts of ordinary
persons to plan and frame change efforts as a way to make such efforts maximally
sustainable. Jones et al. (2001) concluded that such an arrangement is likely to reduce
overall turnout at large public events, however the timeframe for their data collection was
restricted to a three month period. Future research may do well to explore differences
between the ‘alliance’ and ‘network-invocation’ structures in event turn-out and overall
participation across extended time periods. Previous accounts of CBCO issue campaigns
(i.e., Speer and Hughey 1995; Swarts 2008; Warren 2001; Wood 2002) would suggest
that the ‘alliance’ form of interorganizational collaboration would out-perform the
‘network-invocation’ structure over the long term.
Complementing the work of issue leaders are congregations which take up a supporting role - a position which often involves the contributions of voluntary labor to complete necessary tasks, sharing of personal or professional contacts which may advance the agenda of a leading organization, and support of leading organizations though turn out at public actions. The majority of congregations within this federation tended to get involved in just one or two of the four currently active issue committees.

Such an interorganizational structure allows this federation great maximal use of its most important resource: voluntary labor. Within this arrangement, issues which directly impact only a limited number of congregations can be addressed with the full voice and impact of the entire federation. Importantly, this arrangement also has the potential to reduce the level of disengagement which occurs at the end of a typical single-issue campaign. In periods of relative abatement on a given issue federation members are compelled to remain informed and involved and take steps to support the work of issue committees at other points in the action cycle. The cooperative division of labor observed within this federation allows the ‘whole to become more than the sum of its parts’ so to speak in that the full voice, resources, and impact of this federation may be brought to bear on a number of issues, despite the fact that any one of these issues may directly impact only a handful of federation members.

The multiple-issue orientation observed in this federation presents real challenges to the maintenance of a unified federation structure in terms of the coordination of multiple activities, and the maintenance of relations between organizations working on distinct issues. To date, organizers have made adaptations to the format and purpose of broad federation-level meetings which have increased their efficiency and utility for
accomplishing the federation’s goals of pursuing issue work and strengthening relations between congregations. Organizers and clergy alike have worked to build bridging relationships that span the boundaries of issue, geography, denomination, race, and class that situate these congregations within the Kansas City metropolitan environment. Unfortunately, statistical modeling of patterns of collaboration between congregations on federated-level issue campaigns suggest a troubling trend toward racial homophily (Tesdahl and Speer, 2013). The effectiveness of these efforts to further integrate the federation despite its multiple-issue orientation remains an open question to be answered by further study.

Perhaps more fundamental than this, an open question remains regarding the developmental process which leads a federation (or a congregation for that matter) from initial experiences with relatively simple ‘stop-sign issues’ through to taking a leading role in long-term, complex, and relatively risky issue campaigns. Social psychologists and social movement scholars have made advances in establishing a progression through which individual persons may find their way into ‘high-risk’ or long-term activism. However, current literature on this subject does not address how this process might unfold at the organizational or interorganizational level. A better understanding of this developmental process would appear to address many of knowledge gaps highlighted by McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1988) in their call for increased attention to meso-mobilization phenomena.

In conclusion, this study builds upon previous understandings of the functioning of metropolitan level CBCO federations, and by extension meso-mobilization contexts in general. Findings reported here contribute to the literature on CBCO federations by
improving understandings of the division of labor within a well-established CBCO federation and illustrating the existence of a cooperative distribution of leadership and supporting duties. Participants described this division of labor on each issue topic as being driven largely by the level of personal connection that members of a given member congregation have to a particular line of issue work at the federated level. By replicating this division of labor across multiple issue campaigns, CBCO federations are able to leverage the considerable voluntary resources of a large number of member congregations in service of the particular issue which exhibits the greatest potential for tangible gains. The analysis presented here also contributes to the understanding of meso-mobilization contexts by demonstrating the importance of relations that are not simply between the primary ‘meso-mobilization actor’ and other organizations in a given movement community, but also among the various organizational actors themselves. The considerable advantages afforded by a cooperative division of labor as employed within this movement context require the building and maintenance of cross-cutting relations of mutual commitment and investment across the full range of member organizations.

**Chapter III References**


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