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Explaining Retention in Community-Based Movement Organizations

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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May 2004

Acknowledgements

The author owes a debt of gratitude to community organizers Caroline Harmon, Stuart Katzenberg, and Cathy Schap for their generous time, patience, and openness. Thanks are also due to Christopher Goett and Betty Robinson for thoughtful feedback on the idea for this project. I would also like to thank Dr. David Croteau and Dr. Stephen Lyng for considerable assistance with this thesis and for teaching sociology with rare passion and candor. Jamie Carroll also deserves praise for her thorough editing. Finally, interviewing the Baltimore residents who participated in this research inspired love and deep admiration for those who valiantly and tirelessly refuse to accept things as they are in their city; thanks to the visionaries and the fighters.

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ABSTRACT

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ORGANIZATIONS

By Sarah K. Diehl, M.S.

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Major Director: Dr. David Croteau, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and
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An individual's initial acceptance of a recruitment pitch from a community-based social movement organization is usually based upon minimal information about the group and its efforts. It is only during the subsequent period of orientation that new members begin to learn more about the organization. During this period, the retention of new members is dependent on the successful alignment of individual and organizational frames. The failure to achieve such an alignment is likely to result in the new member's departure from the organization. This study explores the frame alignment process during early orientation to community-based SMOs. Using nineteen qualitative interviews with three different community organizing efforts in Baltimore, the study suggests that organizational members feel most motivated to continue involvement when they feel that the organization is effective.

INTRODUCTION

Most community organizers are committed to making new members feel welcome. Retention is especially critical after a new member is initially recruited into the organization. Organizers may encourage new members to participate in leadership trainings and practice for actions to help ease them into organizational activity. During members' early orientation periods into community organizations, the individual evaluates the group and the group evaluates the individual. Part of that evaluative process involves an assessment of the organization's culture. Ideally, organizers would like members to identify with the organization, its goals, and its culture. New members, in turn, usually undergo a negotiation process whereby they develop a comfort level with the organization.

What processes serve to orient new members to the organization? Are cultural issues important for motivating members to continue participating in social movement organizations? Does the membership process vary for differing individuals? If so, why and how? This study examines the ways that individual participants experience the recruitment process, early orientation into the group, and ongoing participation in community-based social movement organizations. The study finds that organizational efficacy is more important for retaining new recruits than cultural issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE SURVEY

This study addresses community organization experiences primarily through a social constructionist approach to social movements. By employing an interpretive approach, this research uncovers the kinds of processes that accompany individual participants' evolutions from being nonmembers to being full members in a community-based social movement organization. New members change their framework as they experience recruitment, early orientation into the group, and ongoing participation. The question remains, how and why do frameworks evolve? The evolution is a process of negotiation between individuals' values, ideas, and beliefs and the values, ideas, and beliefs of the organization; it is best understood as a *frame alignment process*.

Social Movement Framing

The framing concept is borrowed from Erving Goffman (1974). Goffman describes frames as “schemata of interpretation” that people use to attach meaning to events and occurrences (1974: 21). In the context of social movement research, frames have provided a useful theoretical tool for analyzing aspects of organizations such as recruitment messages, calls to action, and portrayals of opponents. William Gamson writes:

Students of social movements need a social psychology that treats consciousness as the interplay between two levels—between individuals who operate actively in the construction of meaning and sociocultural processes that offer meanings that are frequently contested. The concept of ‘framing’ offers the most useful way of bridging these levels of analysis (1992: 67).

Social movement framing provides an entire language and theoretical framework by which to discuss organizational phenomena.

A necessary condition for social movement organizations' frames to be well received is *frame resonance*, the degree to which frames are credible, salient, and effective (Snow and Benford 1988). Frames must resonate when organizations attempt to: (i). convince people about what the issue is; (ii). what should be done about the problem; and (iii). why the issue needs to be tackled. Snow and Benford delineate these three core framing tasks for social movements.

The first two framing tasks attend to the problem of consensus mobilization. The first framing task is called *diagnostic framing*. Diagnostic framing “involves identification of a problem and the attribution of blame or causality” (Snow and Benford 1988: 200). Also a part of consensus mobilization is *prognostic framing*. Prognostic framing “suggest[s] solutions to the problem [and] also identif[ies] strategies, tactics, and targets. What is to be done is thereby specified” (1988: 201). The third framing task, *motivational framing*, attends to the problem of action mobilization. Motivational framing is “the elaboration of a call to arms or *rationale for action* that goes beyond the diagnosis and prognosis” (1988: 202).

Snow et al. (1986: 464) introduce another conceptual tool, *frame alignment*, which they define as “the linkage of individual and SMO [social movement organizations] interpretive orientations such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary.”

This process of frame alignment is an important part of social movement organizations' tasks for the purposes of recruiting and retaining members.

Frame alignment processes involve reactions between individual level frames, *primary frames*, and organizational level frames, *secondary frames*. Therefore, to understand frame alignment processes, one must first understand the primary frames that an individual uses and the secondary frames that the organization uses. Upon understanding these dynamics, one can further specify the content of frame alignment processes.

Snow et al. (1986: 464) identify four types of frame alignment processes. *Frame bridging* refers to “the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem” (1986: 467). *Frame amplification* refers to “the clarification and invigoration of an interpretive frame that bears on a particular issue, problem or set of events” (1986: 469). *Frame extension* is extending the boundaries of a framework “so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to...primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (1986: 472). *Frame transformation* occurs when “activities, events, and biographies that are already meaningful from the standpoint of some primary framework [are redefined] in terms of another framework,” such that participants now understand them as something different (1986: 473). In such cases, it is necessary to introduce new meanings and to dispose of the old ones through reframing.

While the vast bulk of social movement research on frames has analyzed their content (Benford and Snow 2000), much less scholarship has focused on how frame

alignment happens. Frames are often treated as static entities rather than as dynamic and negotiated processes. Additionally, much of the existing empirical research on frame alignment processes examines the organizations' perspectives only. This study explores the individual participants' perspectives on frame alignment processes. For example, how exactly is one convinced to "extend" or "transform" one's frame to encompass movement goals? How do participants' ideas about social movement organization participation change over time? This research addresses these process issues as well as their effects on member retention.

Other Approaches to Organizational Phenomena

The social movement literature on framing is not the only subfield to tackle issues of organizational recruitment, orientation, and motivation among participants. Social psychologists specializing in small group research, often on the fringes of mainstream social psychology (Simpson and Wood 1992), have worked since the 1980s to elaborate the interrelations between group development and cognitive processes among group members. Also, psychologists in the organizational studies tradition conduct research relevant to why individuals feel commitment to their organization. These scholars approach social movement phenomena from a different perspective than sociologists following the social movement tradition.

Small Group Research

Small group research concentrates on identifying group development phenomena and the attendant perspectives of participants. Most often, small group researchers study artificially created work groups, self-help groups, church groups, and groups at the

workplace rather than social movement organizations (Moreland and Levine 1988). However, the dynamics of organization and participant interaction provide another perspective from which to approach recruitment, orientation, and motivation issues.

Specifically, small group researchers theorize that groups go through predictable periods of change (Moreland and Levine 1982; Worchel, Coutant-Sassic, and Grossman 1992). In these models, recruitment is treated as merely a function of alienation combined with a precipitating event, or as social movement theorists would write, a grievance and a political opportunity. What more can we know about why someone would join an organization in addition to simply having a grievance and being a party to a precipitating event? Small group research ignores the social constructionist perspective that focuses on peoples' often-unpredictable perceptions of reality. By doing so, small group research generalizes organizational phenomena and treats individuals as hopelessly succumbed to cost/benefit analyses and to rational choice. In contrast to that approach, psychologists working in the organizational studies tradition address recruitment and commitment to organizations with an interest in measuring attitudes rather than predicting group development.

Organizational Studies

Although most often concerned with industrial psychology issues like workplace efficacy and employee satisfaction (see for example Mowday, Porter, and Steers 1982), researchers have analyzed commitment in a variety of organizational settings. For instance, Charles O'Reilly, III and Jennifer Chatman define "organizational commitment" as "psychological attachment felt by the person for the organization; it will

reflect the degree to which the individual internalizes or adopts characteristics or perspectives of the organization” (1986: 493). This definition seems to suggest that frame alignment is a necessary antecedent for commitment. Furthermore, O’Reilly and Chatman use a 1958 psychological taxonomy to test for three separate dimensions of commitment in university employees: (i). Compliance, where individuals adopt organizational attitudes in order to reap specific rewards; (ii). Identification, where an individual is proud to be in a group, proud of the group, and has a desire to be affiliated; and (iii). Internalization, where individual values are congruent with organizational values. O’Reilly and Chatman’s approach to organizational commitment ignores the fundamental negotiation that is unique for each individual who joins an organization, a set of negotiation processes that cannot be understood with attitudinal scales alone. This study, unlike that of O’Reilly and Chatman, examines the interplay between both primary and secondary frames.

Although small group research, group development research, and organizational studies address some of the same recruitment and commitment issues that frame alignment processes address, the perspectives of these disciplines differ in vantage point from that of frame alignment. Scholars in the social movement tradition examine frame alignment processes as dynamic and variable phenomena rather than as static and predictable phases or attitudes. In social movement literature, this vantage point has perpetuated the production of a variety of case studies and research on various SMOs and their methods of recruitment and retention.

Recruitment to Social Movement Organizations

Research about recruitment to social movement organizations has mainly focused on two major issues: variables that best predict participants' recruitment to social movement organizations, including why some groups are recruited to social movement organizations at higher rates than other groups (e.g. females versus males, African Americans versus Whites), and what kinds of barriers create obstacles to effective recruitment and mobilization. Research aimed at isolating predictors of recruitment efficacy will be reviewed here first.

Predicting Recruitment and Differential Recruitment

Early research on social movement recruitment analyzed possible psychological or attitudinal predispositions for activism (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). For example, Charles D. Bolton analyzed a potential connection between the degree of alienation that an individual feels and his or her propensity to join a peace movement organization (1972). His results indicated, instead, that individuals' preexisting social networks played more of a role in determining recruitment outcomes than social-psychological orientations (Bolton 1972).

Later research bolstered this finding, and led to the development of *microstructural* theories of recruitment (McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Among the studies aimed at determining predictive variables for successful recruitment, a number of studies conclude that individuals who are recruited through preexisting social networks are more likely to participate in social movement activities than people who learn about the organization by another means. For example, Doug McAdam's several analyses of

recruitment to the 1964 Mississippi Summer Freedom Project indicate that participants' social networks ranked as the highest predictor of successful recruitment and of sustained participation, even in cases of high-risk activism (McAdam 1986; Fernandez and McAdam 1988; McAdam and Paulsen 1993). Other important factors for recruitment success were recruitment context (Fernandez and McAdam 1988) and the content and intensity of one's relationships with those who are part of preexistent activist networks (McAdam and Paulsen 1993).

Other research has unearthed different dimensions of recruitment circumstances. Sherry Cable, Edward J. Walsh, and Rex H. Warland found that antinuclear activists around the Three Mile Island accident of 1979 formed two different organizations based upon differing strategies and differing class positions (1988). Recruitment to the working class organization was motivated by people reacting to local grievances, whereas recruitment to the more highly educated activist group was more so the result of preexisting social networks. Cable et al conclude that differential paths to recruitment should be distinguished in social movement research (1988). In another case study, Thomas E. Shriver found that risk was the most important variable to impact mobilization potential in a burgeoning environmental group in Tennessee; risk of job loss, government retribution, and being perceived as unpatriotic all prohibited individuals from being recruited (2000). This finding supports Wiltfang and McAdam's research on the immigrant sanctuary movement that also found that risk is an important variable predicting participation--the greater the risk, the less participation is easily sustained (1991).

Like McAdam and Wiltfang's work, risk also factors prominently in research designed to investigate the causes of differential recruitment to social movement organizations. For example, McAdam found that women were less likely to participate in Freedom Summer than men because the potential risks of activist work, like volunteering across racial lines and attending movement activities unchaperoned, were perceived as more threatening to women than to men. Echoing the research of Cable et al (1988), which elaborated the need to distinguish differential paths to recruitment, Jenny Irons found that African American women were more likely to be recruited to the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement through having personally experienced oppression than white women who most often came from middle class backgrounds (1998). Consequently, African American women performed movement activities which engendered greater risk than did White women (Irons 1998). Risk evaluations factor prominently in the literature as a predictor of differential participation. However, evaluating risk is a subjective process; many researchers have concentrated, instead, on structural barriers that exist outside of the control of potential recruits that inhibit successful mobilization.

Barriers

Organizers hear excuses all the time from potential social movement participants as to why they won't be able to attend a particular meeting or event. Not enough time, family responsibilities, and work responsibilities are common rationale for nonparticipation. Where researchers tend to agree that social networks encourage participation, only a handful of research has attempted to systematically examine structural barriers to individuals' mobilization potential. David Snow, Louis Zurcher, Jr.,

and Sheldon Ekland-Olson found that the probability of being recruited into a movement is not only a function of what preexisting network connections an individual may already have, but also a function of who is more available for movement participation. They write that of 85 people in their study who were recruited off the street into social movement organizations, all of them were “minimally involved in proximal and demanding social relationships” (1980: 793).

Demanding social relationships like work and childrearing have significant effects on a movement’s ability to mobilize. Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema highlight the importance of recognizing barriers to recruitment with a detailed theoretical analysis (1987). They argue that nonparticipation in social movement activities is the result of an individual, first, not having sympathy for the movement, second, not even being targeted for a recruitment attempt, third, not being motivated to attend, and finally, being encumbered by structural barriers like illness which prohibit participation (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). The implication of this research is that social movement recruiters must be cognizant of the dwindling pool of potential participants and target recruitment efforts accordingly. Similarly, Oegema and Klandermans found that the presence of barriers was one important factor that led people who had signed peace petitions to not participate in more social movement activities (1994). But after overcoming barriers to participate, how does someone become motivated enough to dedicate substantial time and energy to a social movement organization? What keeps that person returning to the social movement organization?

Orientation to SMOs and Commitment

Little research explores the early phases of a new recruit's membership in a social movement organization. This study examines the early orientation phase of membership to investigate whether there are most often radicalizing experiences that increase commitment and align frames dramatically or whether commitment and frame alignment result from a slow process where individuals benefit from a variety of positive experiences.

Some examples in social movement literature indicate that a series of positive experiences increase members' commitment to the organizations and inspire them to change their frameworks. For example, Jo Ann Reger discovered that NOW organizers attributed participants' abilities to learn self-confidence and adopt a fighting spirit to the organization's formalized structure (2002: 177). In Kristina Smock's analysis of community organizing models, she provides testimony from a participant in a community organization who claims that formalized training was helpful in allowing her to transcend the "stay-in-your-place" ideology that initially prevented her involvement in the organization (2000: 53). In these examples, participation in a formalized structure and leadership trainings seem to affect individuals' levels of commitment to remaining active in their social movement organizations.

Other research indicates that radicalizing experiences are what prompt a change in individuals' frameworks. In *The Social Psychology of Protest*, Bert Klandermans writes, "Organizers know that during episodes of collective action, the participants' consciousness is raised considerably, and some grassroots organizations use action

mobilization to create consensus...” (1997: 51). Eric L. Hirsch found empirical support for Klandermans’s theory while studying a student protest movement at Columbia University. He found that commitment to the movement originated from four group-level processes: consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization of the two sides of the issue, and collective decision-making (Hirsch 1990). Although Hirsch’s research is useful for understanding group-level processes, it does not explain the individual-level processes that inspired new participants to respond positively to conditions like collective empowerment and polarization.

Other research has analyzed the question of differential participation rather than differential recruitment. In other words, why is that after being recruited, some people choose to stay in the organization and others choose to leave? Steven E. Barkan, Steven F. Cohn, and William H. Whitaker address this question by studying participation among adherents to a national anti-hunger organization (1995). They find that the same conditions that affect differential recruitment seem to be at play when analyzing differential participation: microstructural factors like network connections are more important in sustaining participation than ideological ones (Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1995). Similarly, Florence Passy and Marco Giugni find that networks and life histories either overlap to sustain social movement organization commitment or diverge to erode commitment (2000). The literature seems to suggest that the reasons individuals may likely be recruited to an organization, preexisting social ties to the organization and structural availability, are the same reasons motivating individuals to remain active participants. This study provides the participants’ perspectives on what keeps them

motivated to continue being a part of a community-based social movement organization. Community-based organizations engender a particularly compelling set of cases to use to study frame alignment processes.

Community Organizations

Community organizations offer a unique perspective on frame alignment processes because potential recruits are identified solely on the basis of geography, rather than on political orientation. Randy Stoecker articulates the unique context of frame alignment for community organizations. He writes, “For neighborhood movements the community is a place people have not usually chosen for political reasons, and it contains both activists and nonactivists networked to each other, thus making political unity problematic” (1995: 112). Indeed, since community organizers concentrate their recruitment efforts solely based on geographic residence, they may find it challenging to frame a recruitment message that appeals to a variety of political orientations.

Community organizations are also interesting settings for frame alignment processes to transpire because they are purposefully multi-issue organizations, often recruiting participants with diverse interests. Community organizing pioneer Saul Alinsky theorized that multi-issue organizations allow more people to feel invested in the organization, thus garnering more organizational power (Alinsky [1971]1989). But how do individuals come to feel comfortable in an organization with such a diverse membership? What are the contents of the negotiation processes that inspire an individual to change his or her framework to match the organization’s frames?

Statement of the Problem

This study analyzes individuals' frame alignment processes in three community-based social movement organizations in Baltimore, Maryland. Specifically, community-based social movement organization participants were interviewed to understand: (i). How they were recruited to the organization, (ii). How they experienced their early orientation into the organization, and (iii). Why they have continued to participate in the organization. The study examines the perspectives of community-based social movement participants with respect to how their frameworks for participation evolved as they became more active organization members, if at all.

This research adds to our knowledge of frame alignment processes as well as contributing to an understanding of real-life dynamics involved with retaining individuals in community organizing efforts. While a great deal of research examines the content of various social movement frames, little scholarship has elaborated the processes by which frames develop. Additionally, this question is potentially relevant to community organizers because they must constantly find ways to overcome the reluctance of citizens to participate in movement efforts. The findings gleaned from this research may prove helpful in making recruitment and retention efforts more effective for community organizing. Additionally, this research may contribute directly to the efficacy of the organizations involved in the study.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

The foregoing research question is addressed using qualitative methods. Qualitative methods are the hallmark of an interpretive approach to research. As Robert Alford writes in reference to Erving Goffman's *Asylums*, interpretive social science allows the researcher to focus on symbolic frames of reference that may involve a special language of interpretation (1998). This approach to data collection is best accomplished using qualitative, in-depth interviews.

Procedures

The data for this research consists of nineteen qualitative interviews with participants from three separate community organizing efforts in Baltimore, Maryland. Each of the organizations uses tactics such as rallies and protests to achieve its goals. The sample includes interviews from members of: the Baltimore chapter of The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) (n=7), The Citizens' Planning and Housing Association's Transit Riders League of Metropolitan Baltimore (n=7), and a Gamaliel Foundation affiliate called Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing Genuine Equality (BRIDGE) (n=5). Time constraints limited my ability to gather seven interviews from the BRIDGE membership. Also of note, during one of the seven ACORN interviews, the interviewee's husband entered and participated in the interview as well, providing some extra data about experiences in ACORN.

Two of the organizations are multi-issue, while The Transit Riders League deals exclusively with transportation issues in Baltimore. Additionally, The Transit Riders

League is the only group in the study that is affiliated with another Baltimore-based organization, The Citizens' Planning and Housing Corporation, rather than with a national network like ACORN or The Gamaliel Foundation. Further analysis of the similarities and differences among the organizations in the study may be found later in the "Organizations in the Sample" section of this chapter.

Organizers from each of the three organizations collaborated on the research project by providing background information, organizational materials, and by facilitating contact with members. In ACORN, I spent a day shadowing ACORN staff members as they organized around water quality issues. A lead organizer then provided me with names of people to contact for interviews. In the Transit Riders League, I attended a succession of general membership meetings to introduce myself to the organization members. The organization's commitment to participate in the research was secured through a vote of the general membership. Transit Riders League members who were willing to be interviewed then volunteered to be contacted by signing a sign-up sheet. In BRIDGE, the organizer provided me with a list of people to contact for interviews. I also attended the end of a BRIDGE meeting and met a participant at that meeting who later agreed to be interviewed for the study.

Upon receipt of contact information for members, I called potential interviewees to set up a time to conduct the interview. All participation was elective, and no monetary or other compensation was offered for involvement. Nine interviews took place at the homes of the interviewees. However, some interviews took place at interviewees'

workplaces (n=4), at organizational offices (n=4), or at restaurants (n=2). Interviews took place during weekends of the months February through April 2003.

Sampling Procedure

The original proposal for this research specified using the snowball sampling process whereby a chain of referral is used to access research participants (Neuman 1999:200). Although a referral was the necessary link to get access to organization members through the groups' organizers, few people interviewed felt comfortable referring me to other potential interviewees. In that sense, the growth of the sample, with the exception of the Transit Riders League members who were self-selected, was reliant on the organizers' willingness and ability to provide contact information for additional members. Each organizer was informed of the characteristics of the target sample. However, with considerable time constraints for both the researcher and the organizers, selection of cases became an issue of convenience more so than a systematic sampling procedure.

Sampling categories potentially relevant to this research include gender, ethnicity, age, religion, or length and type of participation in the organization. I hypothesized that gender and ethnic differences may be relevant because they may present challenges for people trying to fit in with an organizational culture that is different from the culture most familiar to them. I hypothesized that age may be relevant because of potential challenges in assimilating multiple generations. One of the three organizations in the sample is a faith-based organizations; therefore, I posited that individuals' religious identifications might result in important variations in experience. Also, I reasoned that the length and

type of participation each person has experienced might dramatically vary the ways that they understand their early involvement in the organizations.

The Sample

The sample culled from the three organizations consists of seven ACORN members, seven Transit Riders League members, and five BRIDGE members. Ten males were interviewed and nine females interviewed. Fifteen interviewees are African American, and four are White.

Most of the interviewees are aged 41-50 ($n = 7$). Three interviewees are aged 51-60. Three interviewees are aged 61-70. Two interviewees are aged 71-80. One interviewee is in his early thirties. Information on age was missing for three of the nineteen interviewees.

Seventeen of the interviewees indicated an affiliation with some religion. Two of the nineteen did not. Additionally, the length of time that individuals had been involved in their organizations varied. Five interviewees had been involved for over three years. Three interviewees had been involved two to three years. Three interviewees had been involved one to two years. Four interviewees had been involved about one year. And four interviewees had been involved less than one year. The sample was split whereby eleven members occupied some leadership position by the time of the interview, and eight members had not. Many of the interviewees who have been defined as “non-leaders” for the purposes of the study were on the cusp of taking on a leadership role around the time that the interviews were conducted; however, they remain in the “non-

leader” category because they commented on their involvement during the period in which they were not yet leaders. (The characteristics of the sample appear in Table one.)

Table 1: Sample Demographics

	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
Gender				
Male	3	3	3	9
Female	4	2	4	10
Total	7	5	7	19
Race				
African American	7	4	4	15
Caucasian	0	1	3	4
Total	7	5	7	19
Age				
31-40 years old	0	1	0	1
41-50 years old	3	1	3	7
51-60 years old	0	2	1	3
61-70 years old	1	0	2	3
71-80 years old	2	0	0	2
Missing Information	1	1	1	3
Total	7	5	7	19
Religiosity				
Religious	7	5	5	17
Nonreligious	0	0	2	2
Total	7	5	7	19
Length of Participation				
In organization <1 year	1	2	1	4
In organization 1 year	2	1	1	4
In organization 1-2 years	0	1	2	3
In organization >2-3 years	1	1	1	3
In organization <3 years	3	0	2	5
Total	7	5	7	19
Type of Participation				
Leader	4	3	4	11
Nonleader	3	2	3	8
Total	7	5	7	19

Instrumentation

Interviews were conducted in person using semi-structured interview schedules. Interviews of community organization members took approximately one to two hours. The interview schedule included questions about recruitment to the organization and early experiences as a new member, with specific attention to the interpretive processes

that allowed people to feel comfortable identifying with the community organization and its activities. Participants were also asked about what was important to them about their involvement and what was motivating them to continue participating in the organization. (See appendix A for interview schedule.) After each qualitative interview, participants were asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire. See appendix B for the demographic questionnaire.

Using a semi-structured interview guide allowed for the line of inquiry to be open-ended, freeing the participants to mention the issues of most significance to them, individually. In this way, qualitative interviews provided the appropriate structure to pursue an understanding of the meaning that individuals construct around their formative experiences in community organizations.

All interviews were recorded using a mini-disc recorder. Directly following each interview, I wrote down all of my impressions of the interview for later reference for data analysis as well as for improving subsequent interviews. (See appendix C.) After completion of the interviews, they were transcribed.

Additionally, confidentiality was assured to all individual research participants. Specifically, a code was assigned to each interview. That code will not be able to be traced back to the individual's name. All research participants signed a consent form to ensure their agreement to the terms of research participation. Appendix D includes a copy of this consent form. Upon completion of the interviews and their transcription, the data analysis process began.

Data Analysis

In order to analyze the interview data, it was coded based upon the inductive coding technique described in Miles and Huberman (1994:58). The authors describe this technique as follows:

Initial data are collected, written up, and reviewed line by line, typically within a paragraph. Beside or below the paragraph, categories or labels are generated, and a list of them grows. The labels are reviewed and, typically, a slightly more abstract category is attributed to several incidents or observations (Miles and Huberman 1994:58).

In inductive coding, a preliminary coding scheme is considered limiting to the data collection process. Therefore, codes were developed once the interviewing was complete.

To increase the efficiency of data analysis, I used HyperResearch qualitative data analysis software. HyperResearch allowed me to code electronically, making recodes easier and more consistent. The software also provides systematic frequency counts that aid in data analysis by helping to determine the most common responses. Once major codes were delineated, the material was recoded in an effort to collapse categories and distinguish lines of theoretical import. The final code list was then analyzed to extrapolate the major themes of the research findings. These themes comprise the results.

Limitations

One limitation of qualitative research is that it often necessarily engenders small samples. Time constraints and the often-limited accessibility of interviewees created barriers to obtaining a well-balanced and representative sample. The nineteen person sample in this research is inadequate for generalizing to the entire population of

community organizing participants in Baltimore. Also, the fact that fourteen interviews are split evenly between two of the organizations in the study whereas five members represent one organization impairs my ability to make generalizable comparisons among groups. Furthermore, time constraints necessitated that the sample be a convenience sample. Interviewees are self-selecting and therefore may have had experiences that are somehow unique from people who would not choose to participate in the study. The sample also does not include people who have left the organizations after the recruitment phase, so the study cannot address issues of failed frame alignment processes and failed retention efforts. Additionally, the sample does not include participation from anyone thirty years old or younger, so the study fails to represent younger perspectives among community-based social movement participants.

In social movement studies, it would be nice to think that research results could be generalized across various kinds of movement activity. However, it is important to note that the data for this study was culled from community-based social movement organizations in Baltimore, Maryland in the spring of 2003. Therefore, results reflect the unique nature of community organizing initiatives in Baltimore, where organizers operate in a traditionally democratic-leaning city, and where organizing is a customary part of most urban communities. Also, being a product of 2003, the results reflect the sociohistorical climate of this time by discussing issues and perceptions that are important to people now, but may have held little importance to Baltimoreans in the past and may hold little importance to the city's residents in the future.

One final limitation of the study is that it is not longitudinal, so participants described frame alignment processes to the best of their memories, but their conceptualizations of the processes may have changed over time. Interviewees may have developed different vocabularies of motive to explain why they participate in their organization after having been involved for some length of time. The sample reflects people in various phases of membership, from members of three months to members of four years. It is reasonable to assume that peoples' perceptions of how they got involved may change over time to some degree. Not having longitudinal data makes it impossible to discern what kind of effect time has had on peoples' accounts of their recruitment and early involvement with their organizations.

Organizations in the Sample

The three organizations in the study share important similarities and represent important differences. The first task is to analyze the organizations. Table two illustrates the basic similarities and differences among the three Baltimore community-based social movements. Additionally, in order to fully understand frame alignment processes among participants in these three groups, it is essential to have an understanding of the frames that the organizations employ. With what frameworks did participants align their ideas, beliefs, and values? What frames did the organizations use to recruit participants, orient them to the organization, and sustain their participation?

Table 2: Characteristics of Participating Organizations

CHARACTERISTICS	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE
Scope	Local chapter of national org	Local chapter of national org	Local organization; affiliate of larger local organization
Recruitment Methods	Doorknocking, petitioning, face-to-face flyering	One-on-Ones	Through existing orgs, tabling at events, recruiting at bus and subway stops, recruitment events
Key Tactics	Demonstrations	Meetings with people of power	Consultation with MTA and rallies at state capitol
Issues	Predatory lending, trash, city council reform	Housing, crime and drugs, education	Transit improvements: subway, MARC train, light rail, and buses
Membership	Low and moderate income Baltimoreans	Baltimore metropolitan clergy leaders and their congregations	Baltimore metropolitan citizens from diverse backgrounds; transit riders
Age	Established 1995	Established 2001	Established 1999
Staff	Staff of approximately 15 local organizers	Two paid organizers	One paid organizer and one paid youth organizer

ACORN

ACORN is a national organization which describes itself as “the nation’s largest community organization of low and moderate-income families, with over 150,000 member families organized into 700 neighborhood chapters in 51 cities across the country” (ACORN.org 2004). The Baltimore branch of ACORN has been in existence since 1995. Since that time, neighborhood residents have fought elected officials, landlords, and corporations over the following issues: trash, rats, delinquent landlords and housing code violations, predatory lending and racial discrimination in lending practices, the closing of nine Baltimore City schools, Baltimore city library branch closures, and lead paint and lead water. Recently, Baltimore ACORN members won a crucial victory with an issue called Question P, wherein ACORN managed to get their proposal for Baltimore city council restructuring onto the ballot and garnered a majority vote. At the

date of this writing, Baltimore City restructured the city council and elected its first round of single-member district council people.

ACORN members are recruited almost exclusively through doorknocking, a recruitment method upon which ACORN prides itself. Organizers go door to door in low to moderate income neighborhoods telling people about the organization and asking them to become involved. Members pay monthly dues of \$10.00 at a minimum. The Baltimore chapter of ACORN reports that over 3,000 families are members.

The structure of ACORN is, at its most local level, a web of individual neighborhood-level organizations within Baltimore City. There is also a Baltimore City board, and a national board. (See Table three.) Additionally, a staff of about fifteen paid organizers keeps recruitment efforts ongoing in the Baltimore office.

Figure 3: ACORN's National Mobilizing Structure^a

National Association Board
Statewide Board
Citywide Board
Organizing Committee
Neighborhood Chapter

^aadopted from Delgado 1986 and ACORN.org 2002

Once neighborhood residents join ACORN, few formal mechanisms exist to educate them about the organization's culture and image. Among the methods of formal education are national leadership training sessions held annually for all ACORN chapters. Members also gain leadership experience by chairing meetings and serving on committees. But much about ACORN's culture seems to be transmitted informally through neighborhood level meetings, interactions with fellow ACORN members, and participation in rallies and protests. The most distinctive element of ACORN's

organizational culture is that it emphasizes political democracy for low and moderate income people, meaning that low and moderate income people should have access to equal resources, an equal voice in local and national politics, and should also govern the organization at all levels. This is formally proclaimed in organizational materials and also implemented in neighborhood meetings where healthy dialogue and disagreement are encouraged among members.

BRIDGE

Compared to the other two organizations in the study, BRIDGE is a relatively new organization in Baltimore. BRIDGE is an affiliate of the Gamaliel Foundation, a national community organizing institute which has been working to provide resources to faith-based organizing since 1986. Its stated mission is “to be a powerful network of grassroots, interfaith, interracial, multi-issue organization working together to create a more just and more democratic society” (Gamaliel.org 2004). BRIDGE is an initiative that was organized in 2000 and formally came into existence in 2001. All of the interviews in the study occurred prior to the organization’s first large action, a critical period for both the burgeoning organization’s growth and for the new members to get a sense of their experiences as participants.

BRIDGE’s mission statement reads, “The ultimate objective is to reverse regional and state policies that create, promote, or perpetuate social, racial, and economic inequalities. BRIDGE will span the gulf between the region’s marginalized people and places and the region’s structures of social and economic opportunity” (BRIDGE fact sheet 2003). BRIDGE organizes by first recruiting church leaders like pastors and

reverends. Once the church leaders are committed to working with BRIDGE, they recruit their congregation members to join. Membership requires dues from the member congregations, which pay one percent of their operating budgets minus any school budgets. BRIDGE reports a current membership of 30 member congregations.

BRIDGE selected three issues through a democratic process involving all of its members. The three issues that were first selected are housing, crime and drugs, and education. At the time of this writing, BRIDGE had just begun formulating a strategy to tackle these issues. BRIDGE is also distinct from many traditional community organizing efforts in that it takes a regional approach to organizing. Therefore, many members of BRIDGE are residents of the counties that surround Baltimore City. BRIDGE has two main staff members, both organizers. In addition, BRIDGE members serve on steering committees and issue committees.

BRIDGE offers members a weeklong national level training, which is their primary tool for teaching members about the Gamaliel Foundation's philosophies and strategies. Additionally, many local Baltimore BRIDGE meetings entail visiting speakers from other Gamaliel affiliates presenting the lessons learned in other cities. Like the other organizations, members may also learn about the organizational culture of BRIDGE through meetings, interactions with members, and through larger events. One such event of note was BRIDGE's March 2003 Issue Convention, where the organized members met and finished the process of choosing issues.

One unique characteristic of BRIDGE's organizational culture is what study participants came to describe as a "culture of accountability." BRIDGE members learn

that they will be held accountable for turning out the numbers that they say they can turn out to meetings and to major events. Oftentimes at BRIDGE meetings, members are asked to report the number of people they said they would bring along and the number that they actually recruited. Members who meet their own standard are congratulated whereas members who fail to meet their standard are made to understand that it is very important to live up to your word within the organization. The third organization in the study is the Transit Riders League.

Transit Riders League of Metropolitan Baltimore

The Transit Riders League is unique to this study for several reasons. First, unlike the other organizations, The Transit Riders League is not affiliated with a national organization. Instead, The Transit Riders League is an outgrowth of a Baltimore organization called the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association (CPHA.) CPHA was established in 1941 to help create "a well-planned Baltimore region with equity among jurisdictions, where citizens respect diversity and have access to responsive government and quality housing in vibrant neighborhoods" (CPHAbaltimore.org 2004). Today, CPHA tackles several community issues including affordable housing, sprawl control, drug treatment, trash, crime, and transportation advocacy. The Transit Riders League was begun in 1999 when CPHA's Transportation Board affirmed that a people's lobbying organization would be necessary to push for change in the transportation system. The Transit Riders League is also unique to the study because rather than being a multi-issue organization, The Transit Riders League organizes exclusively around issues with the Baltimore metropolitan area's transit systems, including buses, light rail, subway, and

MARC train. The most galvanizing issues thus far have been raises in fares and cuts in services. One of The Transit Riders League's largest victories was pushing for the subways to provide service on Sundays.

In terms of staff, a lead organizer and a youth organizer assist The Transit Riders League. The organizers have, in turn, facilitated the establishment of a leadership structure and committee structure within the organization. At the time of this writing, the Transit Riders League had two volunteer co-chairs, a steering committee, an outreach committee, a driver relations committee, a bus service committee, and a MARC train committee.

Issues are formed by open discussion of the membership about their personal negative experiences on transit and recent policy changes in transit systems. The Transit Riders League tends to work primarily in collaboration with Baltimore's Metropolitan Transit Administration, acting in an advisory role and facilitating compromises between bus drivers and administration. Most of the group's usage of confrontational tactics involves rallies at the state legislature where they lobby the government for additional transit funding.

The Transit Riders League employs a host of methods to recruit new members. The group's outreach committee approaches citizens at bus stops and subway stops to invite them to get involved. The group also sets up booths at city fairs and large city events in order to attract new members. They also hold their own recruitment events, like "Free Dinner and a Movie" nights. Additionally, CPHA's relationships with a vast network of community organizations often allows staff members to steer interested

community leaders from across the city toward involvement in the Transit Riders League. And some members of The Transit Riders League report that they were referred to the organization through their involvement in other transit related organizations, like the MTA Citizens Advisory Council.

Once someone becomes a member of the Transit Riders League, the bulk of their orientation into the organization seems to take place informally at meetings. Transit Riders League meetings often entail training sessions, but these trainings seem to emphasize raw skill building, such as learning to speak to congress people, far more than organizational philosophy. Additionally, most of the preparation for rallies occurs during meetings whereupon the slogans and chants are practiced and meeting attendees discuss the rally agenda.

The predominant aspect of The Transit Riders League culture seems to be a melding of diverse backgrounds and interests into the unifying goal for improved transit systems in Baltimore. Although a quick scan of the membership reveals tremendous diversity in terms of the kinds of transit that people use, their immediate goals, and the array of Baltimore neighborhoods from which members hail, the organization manages to coalesce around an acknowledgement that transit systems need to improve. The organization accomplishes this by sharing common frames. Frame analysis constitutes a major part of this study's results; a summary of the three organizations' predominant frames follows. The organization's membership consists of approximately 1000 members with an active core of about 30 members.

RESULTS

Certainly no formula for ideal social movement initiation and retention emerged from the nineteen interviews. But what did emerge from the interviews is an idea of what encourages members and motivates them to continue in community-based social movement organizations as well as what hinders them from continuing. The results, in essence, comprise a constellation of experiences that propelled participants' involvement to varying degrees.

I proceed through the results by first analyzing the frames that the three organizations in the sample use to communicate their messages. Second, I examine the kinds of experiences that prime an individual for community activism and the organization's recruitment methods. Third, I analyze the frames that people employ to talk about the purposes of their organizations. Fourth, I recount peoples' experiences in early participation with the groups and the most common descriptions of what is important for retaining members. Finally, I analyze the barriers that restricted participation and what kinds of hesitation people reported feeling about getting more involved in their social movement organizations with an emphasis on whether confrontational tactics inspired hesitation.

Additionally, most of the study participants have stayed in their organizations while other members have come and gone. Many interviewees provided insight about why they believe these other people don't stay in their organization for the long haul. A quick review of this data provides some anecdotal evidence about the causes of

organizational attrition. The story begins, however, with the messages that the organizations communicate.

Frame Analysis of the Sample Organizations

Each of the three organizations in the sample portrays itself quite differently from the others. Mission statements and organizational descriptions reveal real distinctions among the groups in terms of how they would like to be perceived by the public, by opponents, and by potential adherents. The messages that the groups convey about “who we are” are frames that new members are encouraged to adopt. The following section analyzes each organization with respect to identity framing, diagnostic framing, and prognostic framing, that is, how they define who they are, what the issues are, and what should be done about them. The first organization to be analyzed is ACORN.

Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now

Two frames dominate ACORN’s identity. The first frame that ACORN employs repeatedly is that social change should come from the bottom up. The organization’s newspaper boldly proclaims, “The People Shall Rule!” ACORN promotes the improvement of conditions for low to moderate income people through organizational democracy. Their website touts the fact that their structure mandates that average citizens govern the organization and that the organization is 80 percent financially self-sustaining through membership dues and membership fundraising.

The second most dominant frame in ACORN’s identity is that the group is confrontational. The website states that ACORN is “a direct action organization” that confronts decision-makers face to face. The value of cultivating an identity that emphasizes confrontation is that it has built ACORN a reputation as a major player in the

Baltimore political environment. State Senator Ralph M. Hughes told *The Baltimore*

Sun:

Their tactics sometimes I disagree with. They're quite confrontational sometimes. Sometimes I think they might be too aggressive...(But) I do think they're a good group and *will have to be reckoned with* (quoted in Vozzella 2002, emphasis added.)

ACORN promotes the idea that you sometimes have to make some noise to get some action.

ACORN frames all the issues it undertakes, be it trash or predatory lending, as an injustice. Doing so allows ACORN to vilify opponents and polarize the issues. For example, when ACORN organizers called residents of low-income neighborhoods to get them involved in the lead water issue in Baltimore, a common question to residents was: "You don't think the city would let this happen in [a wealthy Baltimore neighborhood], would it?" ACORN frames issues as a matter of inequality and injustice and is always certain to pinpoint the blame on a specific party. BRIDGE's frames are very different.

Baltimore Regional Initiative Developing Genuine Equality

Most of BRIDGE's frames are a direct result of being an affiliate of the Gamaliel Foundation. Three features of the Gamaliel Foundation heavily influence BRIDGE's frames. The first influence is the foundation's religious imagery. According to the Gamaliel Foundation's website, the foundation "...intends to be a powerful network of grassroots, interfaith, interracial, multi-issue organizations working together to create a more just and more democratic society." The name Gamaliel comes from a biblical verse that describes the power of doing God's work rather than man's work. This religious tone permeates all of BRIDGE's organizing and framing. For example, in May 2002, the

group came together for a covenanting event to affirm members' commitments to making change through the organization. What may have been considered a regular business meeting by another organization in this case was termed a Covenanting Service by BRIDGE and involved a pledge, which began:

We are people of faith gathered from [Baltimore and surrounding counties] to covenant one another to make BRIDGE a powerful organization that creates change in a mighty way in this region. We will hold each other accountable to do God's will and to build a bridge that crosses the gulf which divides us by race, class and jurisdiction.

The second characteristic of the organization is its interest in finding regional solutions to problems that beset urban and first ring suburban communities. The Gamaliel Foundation and BRIDGE are heavily influenced by academic writings that assert that regional solutions are the best possibility for metropolitan improvements. Therefore, all BRIDGE issues are framed as regional problems that require the unification of people of faith from the entire Baltimore region.

The third characteristic is the organization's emphasis on accountability within the group. BRIDGE leaders ask members to be held accountable for performing the organizational tasks to which they agree. If members do not follow through with their obligations, they are asked about their failure to do so at meetings. Internal accountability is a major component of the organization's mobilization process.

In determining what the issues are that should be addressed by the region and what should be done about those issues, BRIDGE is reluctant to communicate any certainties. Instead, the organization advocates investment in a preset process by which issues are selected by all of the organization's membership at one time and by which

courses of action are determined. At the time of the study, the group had just chosen three issues to tackle but had not yet decided on a course of action for those issues aside from creating working groups and speaking with officials and other power brokers about the possibilities for change. Procedural details were the most commonly communicated ideas about what should be done about the issues. The Transit Riders League, on the other hand, synthesizes a variety of frames and tactics.

Transit Riders League

The Transit Riders League is unique from the other organizations in the sample in that it is a single-issue organization. The organization's mission statement clearly explains that the League "is dedicated to improving public transit in the Baltimore region through informed citizen action." It continues:

We demand equity and justice in transportation policy and funding; we demand a public transportation system that serves the needs of all people; and we demand full access to and involvement in decisions affecting users of public transit.

The organization employs a *mélange* of frames to advocate for better transit. Evident in the mission statement is an injustice frame that treats transit inadequacies as an issue of unequal access to policy decisions. But the mission statement also clarifies the issues: transit policy and transit funding. In meetings, the group often hammers through technical, dollars and cents type arguments to advance the issues, citing ridership numbers and revenue numbers.

This reliance on technical arguments to frame the issues is bolstered by the group's affinity with pro-transit policymakers and Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) officials who meet with the organization to discuss possibilities for

improvements. Because the organization functions as a blend of citizen action group and citizen advisory council, the organizational frames about who is to blame for inadequate transit emphasize state government's transit cuts and the highway lobby.

As an affiliate of Baltimore's Citizens Planning and Housing Association, the group's reputation benefits from the immediate credibility that CPHA's over 60 years of activism and urban problem solving bring. However, the League also steers away from using risky or overtly confrontational tactics because CPHA bears a reputation as being a partner to many Baltimore policymakers whom they would not want to alienate. In result, lobbying and attention-getting rallies are common tactics for CPHA groups rather than more confrontational direct action tactics like picketing.

Recruitment

One of an organization's biggest hurdles is the task of recruiting new members into its ranks. With an understanding of the organizations' frames, the following section explores the experiences that happen before an individual is approached that prime that person to receive an organization's message. Also, the recruitment method may have a tremendous effect on whether or not someone joins the organization. What appealed to interviewees about certain recruitment methods? What was it about recruitment messages that resonated with participants and made them want to join? The recruitment story begins well before a person knows that the organization is even in existence.

Pre-Recruitment Activities

Most participants in the study had experiences and impressions about community work before they were ever even approached for recruitment by ACORN, BRIDGE, or The Transit Riders' League. The most common place where community-based social movement members start their story of involvement is with explaining prior community activities. Only three people in the study said that they had no prior organizational or community involvement. Seven interviewees mentioned being involved in their local, traditional neighborhood association before joining a community-based social movement organization. Others explained how they had been involved in other community activities like volunteering for a literacy program, church activities, coordinating children's activities, or participating in the Baltimore Afro-American Clean Block Campaign. Two interviewees participated in political organizations. Three people had

public service type jobs (including two pastors in BRIDGE) that primed them for community work. (See Table four for a complete breakdown of interviewees' prior community activities.)

Table 4: Pre-Recruitment Activities

	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
Neighborhood Associations	4	0	3	7
Transit Organizations	0	0	3	3
Job	1	2	0	3
Political Organizations	0	1	1	2
Other Community				
Volunteerism	0	1	0	1
None	2	1	0	3
TOTAL	7	5	7	19^a

^a Members who participated in more than one pre-recruitment activity are counted in only one category.

In four cases, participation in neighborhood associations engendered such disappointing experiences for members that it affected the way in which they received the new organizations' recruitment messages. For ACORN, negative neighborhood association experiences primed residents to join an organization that takes a different approach to community problems. One ACORN member explains:

And then he explained what ACORN was, and I liked the idea because I was very frustrated with the community organization that was present here. There was a local community group... basically was—told you what day the bulk trash was gonna get picked up and you know, talked about some volunteer programs that four teenagers attended on a regular basis, and you know and basically had the police officers come around so we could bitch at them, and that was about it! It just basically was like that and really didn't have any force for change, wasn't willing to say, 'No. We don't like this and we don't have to stand for it.' It was more like, 'Let's work through channels and let's beg and let's plead and let's do this and maybe they might give us a crumb off the table sometime every once in a while if they feel like it. But we won't complain too much cause we might not get that crumb!'

Members reported a variety of reasons that neighborhood associations proved too frustrating: being ignored when they tried to call the city, corruption and poor decisions,

declining association membership, and being involved in a seemingly ineffective association. These experiences made community-based social movement recruitment messages refreshing and inviting. Another ACORN member says:

But, I had thought about it, and I thought about all of the things in my community that at times I had called downtown for, had gotten no results. And other people also. I said, ‘This is something I would like.’

For many ACORN members, people’s experiences in neighborhood associations prepared them for a more confrontational approach to the issues with which they had already been dealing.

Where members had been previously involved in political organizations, transit organizations, or community-minded jobs, those experiences gave them a unique framework for approaching membership in a new community-based social movement organization. One BRIDGE member explains how her involvement in political organizations prepared her for the rocky features of organizational life:

Well I guess it’s really given me the framework to know that even if it appears disorganized, to hang in there, especially if it’s new. Because especially with [one political organization], I was a part of that shortly after its inception. And after that, we created the steering committee, and we just created a hiring committee to hire our executive staff. And it’s been a lot within, because you have people with passion and ideas, and they get so emotional on the issue sometimes. Sometimes personality can also clash. And I know that I’ve learned through working with that that you’ve got to put personalities to the side and just stay focused on the issues all of the time.

For the Transit Riders League, where mass transit reliant citizens and savvy transit visionaries intermesh, recruiting people from other mass transportation organizations in addition to recruiting people from bus stops and subways stations creates a blend of experience levels that may be difficult to achieve otherwise. Three of the

members that were interviewed reported having gotten involved through previous involvement in transit organizations. One member explains the effects of having technically sophisticated Transit Riders League members who have dealt with transit issues through previous organizational experiences:

It has allowed the organization to focus on the how and not just the why. And so when we go to meetings with the people at the MTA, we can say, 'This isn't working. We think this is why it's not working. We think this can work if it's changed in this fashion.' Whereas before it was just, 'This isn't working and we don't like it and we want you to make it better.' Obviously if you walk in and say, 'This is what's not working and we have this suggestion,' you know, they might accept it. They might say it won't work for the following reasons, but now there's a basis for discussion and you're farther along in the process.

In the case of the Transit Riders League, recruitment efforts shape not only the membership but also the kinds of strategies that the group pursues. Recruiting technically savvy members places the organization in a consultant role with the MTA rather than a consumer role. Therefore, the group works in compromise with the MTA rather than confrontation. For all members, even those frustrated by poor service, determining possible systematic improvements for mass transit becomes the focus of the group.

Sixteen of the nineteen people interviewed reported having had some kind of organizational or community-related experiences before joining the organizations in the study. These experiences affected the way participants interpret and relate to organizational activity. Many peoples' experiences as community-minded citizens began, however, well before even adulthood.

Pre-Existing Frameworks: Childhood Political Experiences and the 1960s

Another set of observations from the data seems to support the idea that organizational recruitment efforts end up appealing to a special group of people that were ready to receive the message before they even heard it. Six people, four from ACORN, one from BRIDGE, and one from the Transit Riders League cited experiences they had as children and/or as part of activist oriented families as important in making them want to be involved in their social movement organization. One Transit Riders League member describes the framework that she and her husband share:

I mean, he's interested also in transportation, but I think the big thing is we have a desire to want to give back to our community, and a lot of that has to do with how we grew up. That's the way we were brought up.

Interviewer: How did you learn that growing up?

Church. I grew up in a church, and community service is big.

For one BRIDGE member, it was not the way he was raised that piqued his interests in social justice issues so much as it was what he observed. He explains:

Well, it came from, when I was in grammar school, we lived in a part of New Jersey that had two sides of town. There was a side of town where the white people lived, and then there was "the other side of the tracks," they called it, where the black people lived. And we went to school together. And I just noticed, I can even remember back in first and second grade, the different treatment that the kids would receive depending on whether they're white or black. And I guess they call that cognitive dissonance. You just see the contrast. And for some reason, I asked the question "Why?"

As opposed to learning about community service through church life or through independent observations, in all four cases of ACORN members who talked about

activism in the family, influential adults shaped the way that they came to approach the world and community issues. One ACORN member describes her family:

When I was a kid, my family always talked about issues such as what can be done to make it better. My grandmother, I have a grandmother here, my mother's mother, eighty plus years old. She's still a barber in her barbershop...I've seen people come and go in that barbershop, and you hear issues all the time. People talk in the barbershop. And my father's mother was a beautician. She had her own beauty shop. I grew up underneath all that. She would do the teachers' hair, and the people in the neighborhood, the people would come in talking about stuff. And I always sat around with my great grandparents. My great grandmother, when she passed and my father did her eulogy, he said, 'she was a doctor, she was the lawyer.' She was! She was the advocate. That's just the way we came up. And my father was always talking about his job and how this man got a bad deal and how he went to the man to speak on his behalf, you know, made a difference. And that's I think where I got it from, where well, I want to be that kind of person.

Another ACORN member felt profoundly influenced by his mother. He explains:

I come from—there's a picture in my mother's photo album of her carrying me at three years old. That picture was taken in Washington, D.C. at Martin Luther King's march on Washington...She made sure she kept that picture of the march on Washington. She didn't lecture me. She showed me in the best learning tool a parent can give to a child: she showed me. In her own quiet way. My mother was not by anything a radical marching along. She was too busy raising three sons. She didn't have time to march a lot, to be at a lot of those things. But she made sure she kept her membership in CORE, NAACP...She made sure that the newsletters and the magazines were around...

For this member, it was his mother's participation in the activism of the 1960s that helped shape his ideology. He is not alone. Seven of the nineteen interviewees made at least some reference to events of the 1960s. Three of the seven related to 1960s activism as people who lived through it and learned from it. One of those three is a BRIDGE member who explains how living through the 1960s taught him that change can only be accomplished with people working together. He articulates:

You know, I knew I guess from growing up in the '60s and seeing the civil rights struggle that you need masses of people. In order to make any kind of substantial change, you need the people to be in force. If thousands upon thousands of people that were a part of civil rights struggle, if they hadn't been doing the things that they had been doing and didn't have the big numbers of folks, it never would have happened. And so I was seeing that and it was really beginning to become really clear to me that that was the only real way that kind of stuff would happen.

As previously noted, it was one ACORN member's understanding of his mother's activism in the 1960s that affected his approach to social justice issues. But for three other interviewees, two Transit Riders League members and one BRIDGE member, they felt a natural connection between their organizational involvement and icons of 1960s activism.. One Transit Rider enthuses:

...the state of Alabama passed a law where state funds cannot be used for transit...That's the same city where Rosa Parks was told to give up her seat and of course if she was around down there now she'd really have something to be up in arms about now.

Two other interviewees related their activism to Martin Luther King, Jr. Clearly, the 1960s is such an influential period in history that it provides a framework for people to understand their own experiences in social movement organizations. Other participants related their experiences to qualities about themselves that they felt were influential to their participation.

Identity

In addition to factors like experiences in previous organizations or childhood political experiences, many interviewees mentioned aspects of their identities that they feel affect their willingness to get involved in social movement activities. (See Table 5 for a display of relevant identity characteristics.) One ACORN member said that he is

involved because he is a caring person, while another ACORN member said that she stays involved because she is a patient person. The most common perception mentioned, however ironically, is introversion. Three Transit Riders League members and one BRIDGE member talked about how being introverted affects their participation in their organizations. One Transit Rider comments:

...I have a commitment or a sense that I should be volunteering my time to help others in one way or another, but I also, I'm an introvert. I like to spend time alone. I don't like to spend time with others. And so, what little time I have, I don't really want to spend volunteering with other people.

The three Transit Riders League members who talked about introversion all indicated that they valued the ability of the Transit Riders League to get results because of having a mass base of supporters. For them, getting results for transit is more important than nurturing their own introversions by avoiding time (and organizational life) with other people.

Table 5: Identity Perceptions that Affect Organizational Life

IDENTITY TRAIT	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
Never worry about fitting in	3	0	3	6
Worry about fitting in	0	1	0	1
Introverted	0	1	3	4
Caring	1	0	0	1
Patient	1	0	0	1
Total	5	2	6	13

For the introverted BRIDGE member on the other hand, he views his participation as an important step in becoming more sociable. He explains:

...I'm an at home person. I'll stay indoors. I don't answer the phone. I don't talk. Unless it's my mother or my father or my sister or brother, I'm just not a phone person. I'm not an out person. And I guess I really need to get out of that shell of being indoors. And I've gotten to know quite a

few people [through BRIDGE] and they're not bad people, which is a good sign.

Before being approached for recruitment into an organization, most people have already established the patterns by which they relate to other people. In four cases, being introverted affects the way those members orient themselves to their organizations. However, when I asked people if they worried about fitting in, their responses revealed remarkable confidence.

Nine people commented on whether or not they initially worried about fitting in with the organization. Seven of those nine people said that no, they had never worried about fitting in. Three ACORN members said that they had never worried about fitting in. When asked why she had never worried about fitting in with ACORN, one member jokes, "Because we're all poor! We're all there for a reason..."

In BRIDGE, one member worried about fitting in based on physical size, race, and a worry that he did not know the bible as well as he should. Another BRIDGE member reported feeling no worries about fitting in.

In the Transit Riders League, three members said they felt no worries about fitting in with the group. Two of those three people were members who had discussed their introversion. For example, one of the introverted members said, "No, I never worry about fitting in no matter what group I'm in—I guess because I'm an individual, aren't you?"

One Transit Rider admitted that she initially wondered whether or not she would fit into the group, but clearly overcame any kind of hesitation that she initially had before attending because people gave her positive feedback about her contributions to the group.

So although potential organization members may identify as introverted, it does not necessarily mean that they will avoid organized activities. A combination of organizational efficacy and encouragement help introverted individuals to acclimate to an organization.

Recruitment Framing

A host of factors may prime an individual for organizational participation before being recruited, but how important is the recruitment method itself in influencing whether or not someone will get involved? Participants in the sample revealed that the recruitment method affected their decisions to get involved tremendously. Interviewees were recruited to the three organizations in the study in a variety of ways. Six out of seven ACORN members were recruited when an organizer knocked on their doors to tell them about the organization. One ACORN member learned about the organization through involvement in his neighborhood association.

Three out of five BRIDGE members were recruited when someone from the organization conducted a one-on-one meeting with them to learn about their passions and ambitions. One BRIDGE member was asked to join by her pastor. One member was previously familiar with the Gamaliel Foundation and was not formally recruited at all, but instead invited himself to join BRIDGE.

The Transit Riders League members were recruited in the widest variety of ways. The League contacted two of the seven members because they had previously been members of other transit organizations, one by postcard and one by telephone call. One member learned about the League through her neighborhood association. Another

Transit Riders League member recruited one of the interviewees while riding the bus. One member was asked by his neighbor to attend a meeting. Another Transit Riders League member was recruited by talking to the organizer at a booth at an outdoor fair in Baltimore. And finally, one member started attending after seeing an ad for the organization in a community newspaper. (See Table 6.)

Table 6: Recruitment Methods

	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
Doorknocked	6	0	0	6
One-on-one Meeting	0	3	0	3
Learned about Org. Through Neighborhood Association	1	0	1	2
Invited Because of Participation in Transit Organization	0	0	2	2
Recruited by Member	0	1	2	3
Recruitment Booth at Event	0	0	1	1
Ad in Newspaper	0	0	1	1
No Recruitment- Member Sought Out Organization	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	7	5	7	19

The organizations in the study use different recruitment methods and also have different kinds of messages. For ACORN, the message is usually somewhat the same. Most ACORN members reported that the organizer who recruited them asked them what they wanted to see changed in their community. They then had discussions about the issues that mattered most to the residents. For ACORN members interviewed for the study, the message was refreshing. One ACORN member explains:

They said that they were gonna be working in neighborhoods, gettin' on these here landlords where it's no good, don't do nothin' for the property, and trash, and rats, lead, just about anything you can call for, even to predatory lending. That's terrible. So I mean, all they had, we was very much interested in it. They seemed to be getting off the ground where we wasn't, so we jumped right in.

Interestingly, what appealed to members about ACORN's message varied. For one ACORN member, the organizer who recruited her at her door inspired her:

...the girl that came here and talked to me, she talked positively. She talked with such assurance. And I like that. And that made me want to get in there and talk with that kind of assurance...

Another ACORN member was targeted for recruitment because she was a victim of predatory lending. For her, it was the personal nature of the recruitment message that impressed her. She explains:

The young girl...she said, 'We're from ACORN and we wanted to talk to you about predatory lending and flipping, and we found out that your house was involved.' And I said, 'What?' I said, 'What is this?' And I said, you know, 'Stop. Hold that thought.' And I ran down the steps to open up the door and let them in, just because it had caught me by surprise. Just when it was just so personal, and they had paperwork, documentation.

For another ACORN member, it was not the verbal recruitment message that attracted him to the organization as much as it was the other members. He spoke about his initial experiences with the organization:

[The organizer] laid out what they were, what ACORN stood for, and it was a variety of things. But it was more of what they were doing. It was not mostly what they were saying. It was what they were doing, what I had observed them doing, and some of the people being—I mean, I think seeing people like [the chair of the Baltimore chapter] and some of the other people that were involved, I think that had more influence on me than anything...just from being a casual observer, it's obvious that a lot of these people—they didn't go to Harvard. They didn't go to Yale. And they might not have gone to the Polytechnic Institute here in Baltimore. And they may not have even finished high school. But for some reason, they have been pushed to the edge where they feel they have their back up to the wall and said that they're not gonna take it anymore.

For the ACORN members in the study, the traditional community organizing approach whereby organizers try to appeal to people by discussing with them the most important issues in their communities certainly works. However, the message appeals to people for different reasons.

In BRIDGE, recruiting new people is an exercise in which all members participate; it is such an institutionalized part of the group's organizing process that all members are trained on how to recruit new people and a full period in the organization's germination, the "in-reach," is dedicated solely to recruitment. BRIDGE members recruit new members to the organization by identifying their self-interests. This is accomplished by meeting with potential members in "one-on-ones," usually within the church, to find out what their self-interests are and to build relationships. If the member's self-interest and the organization's self-interest seem to share commonalities, the potential member is invited to come to a meeting. BRIDGE's lead organizer recruited one pastor early in the process. The pastor recounts:

...he said, 'I want to sit down and talk with you. I may have something that you might be able to use in your ministry.' And he came, and he did a one-on-one with me. And then from there he called me and he said, 'I may have a vehicle that can help you to do what you're looking to do in your ministry.' And so, this was before BRIDGE was even formulated as BRIDGE. We began to talk about that.

For clergy members, the benefit of enhancing their ministries provides strong incentive to get involved with BRIDGE. Lay people are often asked to join BRIDGE by their church leadership, which is often a flattering proposal and also difficult to resist. One BRIDGE member said:

...at first I was kind of scared because I'm not a person who will speak to people up at the top of the leadership. So, the pastor I think is like the top of the church, so to me...it's like "Hi. Bye. Thank you. Say your prayers." And go. But she spoke to me, and she sought me out. And I was like, "O my goodness." And all of a sudden I said this must be a sign, something must be pushing me this way because I can't say no to a pastor...

When BRIDGE members conduct one-on-ones with potential members, it creates a relationship whereby the recruiter increases his or her credibility with the potential member. That credibility makes the recruitment message that much stronger for new recruits. When you add to the equation the esteem afforded to clergy members, it is difficult for potential members to say "no."

The Transit Riders League uses the same basic organizing approach as the other two organizations in the study by trying to attract people to the organization based on their self-interests. This is why a great deal of the organization's outreach efforts focus around recruiting people from bus stops and subway stations. However, since the Transit Riders League is a single-issue organization, the recruitment message is necessarily much narrower. One member explains how she was recruited:

...I attended the book fair for Enoch Pratt [libraries] here in Baltimore City, and the Transit Riders League had a booth there. And I was walking by, and a young lady said, 'Hi! Do you use public transportation?' And I said 'Yes!' And I happened to step over, and it happened to be...the organizer, and she started to tell me about the Transit Riders' League, what it did, what it was trying to do, how they were really soliciting members to help them get their goal completed. And she asked if I would be interested in attending a meeting.

This participant expressed an interest in learning more about transit from a systemic viewpoint. Getting more involved in transit issues is either appealing to

a potential recruit or not, providing much less flexibility for Transit Riders League recruiters.

With the exception of members who carry a long history of involvement in transit related issues, the Transit Riders League is at a disadvantage when appealing to potential members, compared to ACORN and BRIDGE, because they cannot attract people whose passion lies in different community issues; they need to find people who feel strongest about transit issues. As an average community resident, just because someone rides mass transit does not mean that trash, rats, crime, and the usual host of urban problems take a back seat to transit concerns. Therefore, the Transit Riders League's recruitment efforts end up taking on a random character when they are not targeting people with demonstrated interests in transit issues. For example, the same League member talks about how circumstantial her recruitment was:

Well it struck the right chord because it's September, it's on a Sunday, it's still hot. I had come down there on a bus that was not air-conditioned ...And then I had to walk several blocks to get to where I was going. And it's not because I did not know the area. It was because of where I had to get off the train and walking in the heat. So, when you talk to someone and they're saying, 'We want to make transit better,' you're thinking, 'O well you're going to drop me right at the door. You know, you're gonna take me door to door.' [laughs] It just seems like when you're in a certain mood and somebody pushes the right buttons, you will go for it...Hey, any other day? Maybe it wouldn't have worked. Maybe if I had gotten straight through, came down, stepped right off the bus and I was right where I wanted to be? Perhaps it would not have. But you know like with most things, you have to be in the buying mood...

In this case, the member had just had an uncomfortable transit experience, so it was fresh in her mind. In another instance, a new League member seemed to get

involved through a spur of the moment decision to attend a Transit Riders League meeting with her neighborhood association. She explains:

...they had an open house at this church on York Road. They were serving refreshments and all. They had a meeting with MTA to discuss the new bus booths they was gonna put at different routes. And they was trying to recruit new people. So I came with [the neighborhood association] and we came and we stayed and I took notes, enjoyed the food and drinks and listened, and that's how I got recruited. I filled out the application card, and I think a week later I got a thank you letter from [the organizer], thanking me for coming to the meeting and all and saying 'Welcome.' And that's how I got in.

Three of the seven Transit Riders League members were recruited without having previously expressed an interest in the political side of transit. In many ways, the Transit Riders League's task is to transform people into transit conscious consumers while they continue recruiting local transit system enthusiasts.

Differences in Recruitment Experiences Among Groups

Few patterns emerged from the data that made it seem that one demographic group was more affected by pre-recruitment experiences or recruitment methods than another group. Ethnicity played a role in the recruitment data in that all of the interviewees in the sample who talked about previous experiences in neighborhood associations were African Americans whereas all of the participants who mentioned previous experiences in transit organizations were White. This finding may be most revealing about the kinds of opportunities for involvement available to the different groups in Baltimore.

The second pattern that emerged from the data relates to identity. Six females and only one male mentioned that she or he never worries about fitting in with a new group.

This kind of social confidence on the part of the females in the sample may best be explained by the fact that females are often socialized to be more social than their male counterparts. In any case, once the participants are recruited, they absorb the organizations' frames to varying degrees. The next section of results will explore this variation.

Members' Frames and Frame Alignment

While attending their first meeting or first action, participants are keenly aware of everything happening around them, assessing whether or not this is an organization with which they might wish to continue. Participants are also beginning to absorb the organization's frames during this formative period. The study data suggests that a myriad of early experiences shape the way a participant orients himself or herself to the group. Table 7 provides a display of ACORN members' frames.

Table 7: ACORN Members' Frames

What is Issue?	ACORN
Specific Issues Cited	4
Inequality/Democracy	2
Enhancing Baltimore Communities	1
Who is to Blame?	
City Government	3
Political System	2
House "Flippers"	1
No One Entity	1
What Should Be Done?	
Fight	5
Education	1
Community Involvement	1

Among the ACORN members who participated in the study, there were a variety of interpretations about what the issue is that ACORN is fighting, what should be done about it, and who is to blame. When asked what the issue is that ACORN is fighting, four people cited specific issues like trash or predatory lending. One member conceptualized ACORN's issue as being a general approach toward enhancing Baltimore communities. Two ACORN members used language that was more akin to the

organization's description of its issues; two interviewees described the issue in terms of inequality and of having a voice in the political system. One ACORN member says:

...we were talking about how we used to clean our streets twice a week. For the past few years, they don't even clean our streets at all. And they should! We pay taxes. We need our streets cleaned at least once a week...And [ACORN members] said, 'You know, that's right, if they can do it out there in that neighborhood, why can't they do it here? We pay taxes and we're human beings. We want the same things for our neighborhoods and communities that other nice neighborhoods want.'

For two participants, ACORN's framing of issues such as trash became part of a larger framework toward community problems that incorporates a sense of injustice and inequality.

The other dominant characteristic of ACORN's issue framing is the organization's ability to mobilize people to attribute blame to one entity for any given issue. Four interviewees in this study pinpointed specific entities responsible for the issues they tackle through ACORN. Three people blamed city government, and one person blamed corrupt house "flippers" who buy homes and resell them for inflated prices. Two other participants cited the political system, in general, as the cause of community problems. And one person felt that no single entity is responsible for any of the community problems, citing the flaws of both government and of neighborhood residents.

Finally, interviewees were asked what they thought should be done about the issues that concern them. Two people mentioned less confrontational tactics than the organization espouses, such as educating people and staying involved in the community. However, five of the seven interviewees responded by saying things like "keep fighting,"

or “go after” the city. Five people framed the solutions to community problems in the same kind of direct action terminology that ACORN uses.

Participants in BRIDGE varied in the ways that they conceptualized the issues. (See Table 8.) Three interviewees chose specific issues that they felt most strongly about: crime, drugs, and housing. The other two interviewees, however, explained that the issues that they would most support would be whatever rises out of the BRIDGE issue selecting process. One participant explains, “There were three issues that after we did our one-to-one conversations that bubbled up as they say.” Another member says, “...those are the first three that we’re gonna start researching and meeting people in those areas and seeing what’s the lay of the land politically...” Both members mention the issues as part of the process rather than as issues that they feel impassioned about for some more intrinsic reason, thereby conceptualizing the issues in BRIDGE terms.

Table 8: BRIDGE Members’ Frames

What is Issue?	BRIDGE
Specific Issues Cited	3
Whatever is Selected by Process	2
Who is to Blame?	
Lack of Values	2
No One Entity	2
Landlords and Tenants	1
What Should Be Done?	
Officials’ Accountability	2
Community Involvement	2
Build Relationships to Gain Power	1

In terms of who to blame about the issue, BRIDGE participants were somewhat at a loss. The mobilization process had not yet progressed to the point of blaming anyone, so the organization had provided few messages about who would ultimately be the target

for pressuring social change. Two interviewees said that no one person or entity was to blame. Two other interviewees mentioned that they felt that a dearth of values among people was to blame for many community problems. And one participant felt that both landlords and tenants contribute to housing problems sometimes. In some respects, not knowing who is to blame fits BRIDGE's frames more than choosing a target fits the frame. In that sense, the interviewees conformed to BRIDGE's framework about community problems.

Although still a new organization, three participants talked about what should be done about the issues, indicating a belief in the BRIDGE process. Two members mentioned accountability and telling officials what the organization demands. A third member said that the organization should build relationships to gain power. The two other participants spoke less specifically about organizational processes and mentioned that staying involved would help remedy community problems and that certain policy changes might aid the housing situation. All considered, three members adopted BRIDGE frames to talk about the issues.

So, how do Transit Riders League participants conceptualize the issues? Five participants talked about the issues in the same way that the League frames the issues. Four interviewees said that they felt the issue was either transit funding or transit inefficiency, while one member talked about transit flaws as inequality. The two other responses involved Smart Growth and an ineffective bureaucracy in the MTA. Table 9 displays League members' responses to questions about how they conceptualize issues, who are to blame, and how the issues should be tackled.

Table 9: Transit Riders League Members' Frames

What is Issue?	Transit Riders League
Transit Funding/Transit Efficiency	4
Inequality	1
Smart Growth	1
MTA Bureaucracy	1
Who is to Blame?	
MTA	2
State Legislature	2
Highway Lobby	2
No One Entity	1
What Should Be Done?	
Work Closely with MTA	3
Lobby for Funding	2
Attract Money to Baltimore	1
Transit Organization Involvement	1

Whereas most interviewees felt that transit is the heart of the issue, the interviewees were less consistent about whom they think is to blame for transit inadequacies. Four people mentioned either the highway lobby or state government. However, other responses included the MTA (two interviewees), and one person felt that no one is to blame. Attributional frames are less aligned in the Transit Riders League.

Five out of seven interviewees felt that the best way to deal with transit problems is to either work closely with the MTA to help enact improvements or to lobby the state government for increased transit funding (three and two interviewees respectively.) Other responses involved attracting money back to Baltimore or simply to stay involved with transit advocacy in general. Irrespective of the organization to which a participant belongs, what other characteristics influence members' frame alignment?

Differences in Levels of Frame Alignment Among Groups

One would expect that an individual's conceptualization about the organization's issue, what to do about them, and who to blame for the problems would be more or less aligned with the organization's frames to a consistent degree. This was not the case. Only three of the nineteen interviewees spoke about the issues, what to do about them, and who is to blame in the same way as their organizations did (one ACORN member and two Transit Riders.) Almost half of the sample, seven people, framed both the issue and what should be done about it in the same way as the organization framed it.

Patterns among groups were not striking. A roughly equal number of males and females talked about what to do about the issues in the same way as their organizations. However, five females and only three males defined the issues in the same way that the organizations did or blamed the same entities as the organizations. Age seemed to play a role in influencing the interviewees' perceptions about what to do about the issues and who is to blame for the issues using similar frames to the organizations' frames; eleven of the thirteen interviewees who explained what to do about the issues in the same way as their organizations fell into the older age brackets of 46-76 years old. Six of the eight people who attributed blame to the same parties as the organization attributed blame fell in the 55-76 year old age range, suggesting that the older people in the study are more receptive to the organizations' messages than the younger people.

Other demographic characteristics of the sample revealed no patterns whatsoever. I assumed that people who were members of their organizations for a longer period would be more likely to conceptualize issues in the same way as their organizations. The

results did not support that pattern, however. I also hypothesized that participants who engaged in some leadership role with their organizations would be more likely to employ frames consistent with their organizations' frames. The results did not reveal that pattern, either. Specifically, although ten leaders versus three nonleaders framed their ideas about what should be done about the issues in the same way as their organizations, only roughly equivalent numbers of people demonstrated "aligned frames" when conceptualizing the issues and who to blame for them. The small sample size used in the study certainly hinders the possibility for conclusive patterns to emerge across demographic groups. Participants' accounts of their experiences provide the greatest boon for data. In the next stage of participation, interviewees' accounts of their first few months with their organizations reveal insight about retention patterns.

Early Orientation and Retention

Once recruited, what mechanisms assist new members in feeling like a part of the group? How do people come to think of themselves as members? What emerged from the data is: (i.) Clues about the length of orientation processes; (ii.) The ways that people believe participation has changed them, if at all; and (iii.) A set of practices that encouraged people to feel more comfortable with the group and inspire them to continue involvement.

Orientation processes are clearly different for everyone. Four of the nineteen interviewees, three Transit Riders League members and one ACORN member, however, specified that it takes more than one meeting to get a clear sense of the organization's culture. One Transit Rider describes her early involvement:

I think it was a wait and see attitude. The first meeting I told you I was impressed because the people sounded so knowledgeable, but it wasn't until, say, like, the second or third meeting that I actually got to read materials that had something on which I could form an unbiased opinion. When somebody's talking, you believe what they say because you're not hearing any rebuttal. But when you can actually see it in print and actually hear people say, 'That's not the way it went,' then all of a sudden you form different opinions. So, I think I had attended maybe two or three meetings before I would say with any degree of surety that I got a different feeling about what the group was about. Because you hear different people speak.

For this member, the process of establishing her own opinion on the information that the organization presented required hearing the perspectives of many members and taking the time to evaluate the organization's claims on her own. This process took more than one meeting. Likewise, one ACORN member went to the first meeting with

attention to ACORN's claims of organizational democracy, the part of ACORN's recruitment message that appealed most to her. She explains:

And so, I went to the first meeting. I didn't catch on—you know, you saw this one that was in charge, you saw that one that said a little bit of that, but I've come to realize that all of us have something that we can lend to the conversation. One is as important as the other. There's no one in ACORN that is more important than the other because everyone brings a little something to the table.

This member's perception that ACORN practices organizational democracy was very important to her, but could not be substantiated from just one meeting. If participants feel that their orientations into the organizations require attendance at several meetings, what happens during that time that draws people in?

Retention

Four major themes emerged from the interviews as positive indications for new members. (See Table 10 for a display of commonly cited dynamics that led new members to get more involved in their organizations.) The most common of these themes is the feeling that the organization is effective and gets results. When an organization has a large membership or receives media attention, members feel further convinced that the organization is effective. Another important landmark for new members is when they take on a leadership position. Additionally, four members talked about how participating in actions increases their commitment to the organization. Also of importance to new members is when other members acknowledge them and/or give them positive feedback. Finally, when members attend their organization's training sessions, it tends to encourage them to get more involved. The first positive experience I will discuss is the perception of effectiveness.

Table 10: Positive Experiences

	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL ^a
Effectiveness	7	3	6	16
Large membership	6	2	4	12
Media coverage	4	0	0	4
Taking On Leadership	4	3	4	11
Learning	4	2	4	10
Relationships with Members	2	4	3	9
Participating in Actions	1	3	0	4

^aSome interviewees mentioned more than one positive experience. All responses are shown here.

Effectiveness

Sixteen of the nineteen interviewees talked about the ways that key victories or the perception that the organization is effective is important to them. One of the organization members expressed fear that the organization was not going to be effective. Clearly, getting results is critical for an organization to retain members, especially new members who may fear that their time might be wasted in organizational life. All seven ACORN members who were interviewed talked about how important the organization's effectiveness is to them. One member enthuses:

And they are out everyday. I don't care what situation it is, they are out working everyday. And I feel like I'm getting more results from them than I've gotten the whole 35 years I've been in here.

For ACORN, winning the vote on Question P, a proposal to reorganize city council into more and smaller districts, represented one of their most important victories. ACORN members that were interviewed felt proud of this win and often cited it as one of the most important parts of their involvement. One member says:

[Question P] was important and it was big...It wrapped up a lot of loose ends. Instead of going through a whole lot of issues, Question P did the thing. You know, because when you got people who's supposed to be representin' you in your communities and they don't do nothin', then it's time to make a change.

Another member sees the Question P victory as an indication that more successes will follow. She says:

And ever since Question P, it's almost like our reputation is one that's regarded, whether it's good or bad, people know who ACORN is. They know, "O, here come ACORN," or "Here comes ACORN!!!" It just all depends on what side you stand.

Winning victories and being effective provides the clearest incentive to remain involved for ACORN members.

At the time of interviews with BRIDGE members, the organization was still too young to have tackled any of its three main issues. Still, the promise of being effective inspired three of the five people interviewed to talk about getting results. One member explains:

So, that first meeting really helped me to understand and to see that there was a vehicle for change. And that vehicle could very well—a group of concerned clergy and laity together could make the kind of change that could make a difference.

For another member, it was the fear that the organization would not be effective that caused her to express some reservations. When asked what activities had been her least favorite, she answered:

Actually I think it would really be looking around the room at the people we're working with and the lack of, you know, that follow through look or that look of excitement or that look of determination that 'We're gonna get this done!' ...I didn't have it either because it's still that straddling the fence kind of thing, and I don't like straddling the fence. I like to know I'm gonna do something and I'm gonna move forward on it. I'm just, I'm still at the preliminary stages where I need to see that this thing is really gonna make sense, honestly.

Despite this member's hesitation, later in the interview she explains that her feelings would change if she saw the prospect for effectiveness in the organization:

I guess it might be very impactful if I really saw over 1,000 people on that day all rallying for one thing and one place and committed and hearts bound together by true purpose of making change. That would be pretty impactful in my mind...That would be a first for me, to see churches coming together with that number and agreeing on something together to get it done. That would probably knock the ol' girl's socks off. [laughs] That'd be pretty neat.

For BRIDGE, the importance of demonstrating results is critical to retaining all the new members they've gained since their beginnings in 2002.

Six of the seven Transit Riders that were interviewed discussed the importance of organizational effectiveness in keeping them coming back to the organization. One member said:

But we did send some suggestions some time ago to MARC and they adopted, or at least said they would adopt, all of them, or nearly all of them. So that feels like, 'Okay, I can have some influence on the way things go'...if it didn't have the sense of we could accomplish something, then I wouldn't be there at all.

Another member talks about how her first impressions of the group were most heavily influenced by her perceptions of how effective they are. She said:

...my first impression is that things are getting done, and the Transit Riders League are making things happen, influencing people, and I want to be involved...I think it's real easy for a person to join an organization that's making progress, that's actually setting goals and meeting goals...I've noticed changes, too, even since I've been here. On certain buses that I ride on, the buses are cleaner, they're running more frequently. Things are happening, and a lot of it has to do with the League's direct contact with the people at MTA.

Two other Transit Riders talked about how important it was that the organization won Sunday subway service for Baltimore. New members are inspired by results and

organizational effectiveness. The importance of results was the single most common feature of social movement participants' experiences. Two organizational features signaled participants that the organization is effective: large membership and media coverage.

Importance of Large Membership

Many members spoke about how important it is to them to be part of a group with a large and robust membership. Four ACORN members, two BRIDGE members, and one Transit Rider proudly cited their group's membership sizes as being an important aspect of their participation. One ACORN member says:

When I first came to ACORN there were over 500 members on the books all over Baltimore City, on the books. There's probably somewhere close to 3,000 now. And now when you knock on somebody's door, practically anybody, somebody'll say, 'Yeah, I've heard of that group.'

One BRIDGE member talked about how a large membership is important to the organization. He said:

Well, the numbers are part of it. We talk about power as being organized people, and so the more organized people you have, the more power you have.

And one Transit Rider commented about the importance of having a large membership for the potential effectiveness of the organization. He said:

Just one person or just two people can't do it alone. But we do it with numbers. That way we can do it with strength. We can say, 'Well, we're an organization that's at least 1,200 members strong.' Politicians say that's almost 1,200 voters.

A clear part of many people's frameworks for involvement is the importance of being part of a large organization. By being a part of a large membership, their odds of

being successful at making change is greatly enhanced. In addition to a large membership, participants also mentioned media coverage.

Media Coverage

Related to the idea of needing to feel that the organization is being effective, four ACORN members also talked about how important it is to them that ACORN consistently gets media coverage. One member enthuses:

So now, the peoples is beginning to see that ACORN is really trying to do something because if we go to a site that is real dirty or vacant houses, protestin' the landlord or whatever, we don't just go ourselves. We have newsmen to come out there and report everything that we doin'. And that's how it hits the paper.

Half of the ACORN members interviewed mentioned that media coverage of organizational activities is important to them so that the ACORN name gets publicized and also so that immediate victories are more winnable. Getting results functions as a clear motivator for new members. Members also felt more invested in their organizations after taking on new roles.

Taking on Leadership

Recall that eleven of the interviewees already occupied some leadership position by the time of the study. Those eleven organization members and two members who were on the verge of taking on leadership positions commented about how becoming a leader affected their involvement with the organization. In all three organizations, being asked to perform leadership duties brought the members closer to the organization. One ACORN member was almost immediately asked to take on leadership duties, thus pulling him further into the organization from the beginning. He explains:

Interviewer: What was your next contact with ACORN after that door knock?

First organizational meeting.

Interviewer: And what did you think about that?

Um, I thought it was pretty good since I ran it. [laughs]...Basically, I was asked by [the organizer] if I would run the meeting. Basically, it was on my turf, my church, and I ran it.

Similarly, in BRIDGE, the honor of taking on leadership duties is intensified when a pastor asks a lay member to do something for the organization because of the pastor's credibility with the member. One of the BRIDGE members who was just beginning to take on leadership duties at the time of the interview talked about how flattered he felt to be asked to be a part of the evaluation part of the meeting. He says:

...I sat in on one of their evaluations and I just said, 'O my goodness. I must be a member,' 'cause everybody else was, like, gone! This is like the people evaluate how the meeting go and then they leave. But they asked me to stay. I kinda sat back in my chair. Then they asked me for my opinion and I was like, 'I feel good about this,' and whatever. But I said 'I must be a part of this.' Especially when [my pastor] has invited me to, I think, every one after that.

A Transit Riders League member also describes how being asked to take on more responsibilities for the organization actually made her feel more invested in it. She explains:

And it's always, like I said, you know, you go in, you make the phone calls to other people. You invite them to the rallies, to the outreach, or whatever the group's gonna be doing, and you say, 'O they let me do this? I've only been in here two months, three months.' They make you a part, you know?

For all three organizations, asking people to take on more responsibility and assume leadership positions encourages them to align their ideas closer to those of the

group and to feel more like a member. In addition to leadership experiences, participants also felt more like members in the organizations when they felt that they were learning from their participation.

Learning

Ten participants talked about how important it is to them that their organizational experiences provide a chance to learn new skills and knowledge. For example, one ACORN member describes how her involvement has contributed to an overarching awareness of political issues. She explains:

[I am] more willing to be aware of what's really going on throughout the community, more aware of what the political issues really are, more concerned in voting, more concerned in exercising my vote for the candidate that I feel is actually going to bring about what is important to me. Voting and all that other crap really never was a big thing for me.

For Transit Riders, group members become local experts on transit issues. One group member talks about how her perception of transit has changed:

...all I knew is you get a schedule, you stand on the corner, you wait for the bus! Now you know why the buses are late or why you think the buses are late. You kind of feel a little bit differently about things.

While members are volunteering time to their social movement organizations chiefly to get results and make a change, it is also important to many that they are personally being changed by the experience. Learning about the issues in Baltimore becomes an important aspect of many members' frameworks for participation.

Five interviewees also talked about attending training sessions. Two BRIDGE members had attended the organization's national weeklong training. Two ACORN members talked about training experiences, one locally and the other regarding a national

training session. One member of the Transit Riders League enthused about the training she had received through sessions held locally at the CPHA offices. In BRIDGE, the weeklong training functions as a deliberate effort to get people to understand the organization's philosophy about power and agitation. One BRIDGE member talks about her training experience:

I loved the weeklong [training], the power of the people there. At first I found it a bit intimidating. They really get in your face. And at first I even felt that some of them were kind of arrogant, but as the week continued and I was able to talk to them outside of the classroom as well, some of them were really warm and wonderful people...

For this member, the messages worked. When asked how her participation in BRIDGE has changed her, she talked about having her ideas about agitation and about power changed:

I feel that I'm more confident. I've been confident now for a long time. I wasn't at a young age. But moreso. I've learned that it's okay to agitate, and I'm good at it. I didn't realize I was an agitator. Now that I know it's a positive thing, I do it even more...they talk about power a lot. And that's become a very good word to me now. I used to think about people being power hungry. I used to think of it from a negative perspective. But now I embrace power. And so power is organized people, organized money.

For members who attend the weeklong training session in BRIDGE, the organization's philosophy is clearly imparted. For the interviewees in the study from ACORN and the Transit Riders' League, trainings have been reported as beneficial because the members feel fulfilled by learning new things. One Transit Rider comments:

And then when I stayed for the training thing to go talk with the senator about the transit funds and cuts and they were showing me the right way to talk to an administrator of the state--which was fun! It was fun! I said, 'Okay, I can learn something from this.'

When organizational culture is not the primary lesson of training, members learn that their involvement can yield direct benefits in terms of learning new skills. This benefit often increases members' commitment to the organization. Relationships are also important to many members.

Relationships with Other Members

Another way that organizations encourage commitment is usually not quite as calculated. Interviewees reported that they felt like they wanted to continue being a part of the organization when other members acknowledged their attendance and/or their ideas. Three Transit Riders League members and one BRIDGE member talked about how important it was to them when they first got involved that people talked to them at meetings. One Transit Riders League member recounts:

I think people always wonder that: will I fit in? And you just have to sit back and see how everything goes to see if you do. And, they accepted me. [laughs] I guess I'm in!

Interviewer: What kind of clues do you think you get to be able to figure out if you're gonna fit in or not?

When people walk up to you and say, 'I'm glad you came. That was a good suggestion you made. Keep giving us more suggestions.' Stuff like that. The feedback from various people. It's very helpful. Encouragement, you know.

When new members are greeted by name and acknowledged by other members, it pulls them further into the organization. It allows them to start considering themselves members. Members also appreciated their friendships with members. Three ACORN members, three BRIDGE members, and one Transit Rider talked about how important to

them their relationships are with other organizational members. These relationships constitute bonds that help retain social movement members. One ACORN member says:

...I've made some great friends. I have a whole bunch of surrogate mothers in ACORN. Some of the ladies, I give them a hug, and they really care. And some of them sent me a card when I got sick and stuff like that. Those individual relationships are great. That's one of the things I think is primary among my experiences with ACORN, friendships, the people I've gotten to know, the people I've gotten to like a lot.

On a more pragmatic note, one BRIDGE member commented about how helpful it is to have quality relationships with other organizational members. He said:

I guess one thing that we really didn't talk about was the camaraderie and the fellowship that has been developed with those who are struggling with the same issues, to help BRIDGE to be, and also helping their congregations to grow. And I think that has been helpful to know that you're not in this alone, that there are other people out there just like you who are struggling. But they see the need to be a part of this because this really is going to make a difference.

One Transit Rider mentioned briefly that she enjoys the camaraderie among committee members in the League. Relationships among members often help participants feel connected and invested enough to continue being a part of the movement. Participants also reported that participating in actions drew them into their organizations.

Participating in Actions

Organization members feel more invested in the organization when they take part in an action. Four people talked about actions as crucial moments in their participation.

One ACORN member talked about how his first experience with an ACORN action solidified his commitment. He explained that his neighbors and he had held a large public meeting where local politicians had agreed to attend, and none of them attended.

In response, he and his neighbors marched to a nearby major street corner and held hands, blocking the intersection. He explained how his sense of what is possible changed during the action:

And that was the first time I'd ever seen anything like that in Baltimore...So I said, 'Cool. This is cool. Maybe there is hope.' [laughs] Maybe there are people like me out there who are just—what is that line from Network? 'I'm mad as hell and I can't take it anymore!' [laughs] So, yeah! There were people like that. That's a good thing. So we gathered around, and that was a defining moment for me. That was a big defining moment for me, that not only did they do it, we kept that sucker blocked for an hour.

Ironically, the other three people who talked about the importance of actions for making participants feel more invested in the organization were from BRIDGE, the one group in the study who had not yet had any big actions at the time of interviews. Two pastors and one new member of BRIDGE talked about how the actions would be the crystallizing experiences for most BRIDGE members. One member says:

So that's when I think people get it, when you have your first big action and see what all the research, all their issue clarification, and all their relationships, all come together in that hour and a half or whatever. And change is made. And they feel so good. And that's when they get it.

Being part of a big action and experiencing the power of making change happen plays a large role in pulling in new members. Some organizations plan strategically with this in mind--others do not.

No Transit Riders League member expressed the same import about being involved in actions. This could be because the League uses compromise and consultation with the MTA as strategy more so than actions. Rather than feeling solidarity at actions, many participants feel solidarity during regular organizational business.

Differences in Orientation Processes Among Groups

No patterns emerged from the data with respect to which demographic groups experienced influential orientation processes more so than others. Although it is tempting to posit that the lack of patterns is a result of the universality of these particular findings, it is more likely a result of the small sample in the study. However, for the nineteen interviewees in the study, the next question to be answered is what kinds of experiences hamper someone's ability and/or motivation to continue getting involved in their organizations? The next section of results addresses these issues.

Hesitation, Barriers, and Drop Outs

What can account for the difficulties that organizers face when trying to keep members coming back to their organizations? This next section of results explores the host of factors that may contribute to members discontinuing their involvement in organizational life. First I analyze the kinds of hesitation that people mentioned feeling about getting more involved. Participants in the study have remained with their organizations and therefore also provide information on how hesitations are overcome. Additionally, differential recruitment and differential participation literature suggest that it is the risks undertaken by these members when they engage in confrontational tactics that might repel dissuade them from continuing with their organization. Did the members in this study feel hesitant about using confrontational tactics? I will examine those results, and I will also analyze the kinds of barriers that provide structural impediments to participation. Members' theories about the reasons that other people drop out of their organizations are also included in this section.

Hesitation

When people join any new situation, they engage in an ongoing assessment of whether or not the new situation benefits them. Members often harbor hesitation that stems from their level of confidence in themselves or in their organizations. However, roughly half of the sample, nine of the nineteen people interviewed, said that they felt no hesitation to get more involved in their organizations whatsoever. Four ACORN members, two BRIDGE members, and three Transit Riders said things like, "Absolutely

not,” and “...whatever I can do, I’m ready.” One BRIDGE member said, “I had plenty of time and just felt like that was an important thing that I could do for this congregation and certainly for the organization.”

On the other hand, three people from ACORN, three people from BRIDGE, and four people from The Transit Riders League all reported feeling some kind of hesitation to get more involved in their organization at some point in time. Table 11 details the varying sources of peoples’ hesitation.

Table 11: Sources of Hesitation to Get Further Involved

SOURCES OF HESITATION	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL ^a
None	4	2	3	9
Perception of a Lack of Time	0	2	1	3
Identifying as a Member in Workplace	2	1	0	3
Doing New Tasks	1	0	2	3
Public Speaking	1	1	0	2
Membership Seems Too Demanding	0	1	1	2
Intense Strategy Disagreements	1	0	0	1
Privacy and Security Issues	1	0	0	1
Needing Direction	0	1	0	1
Travel for a Full Week	0	1	0	1
Perception of Disorganization	0	1	0	1

^aSome interviewees mentioned more than one kind of hesitation. All responses are shown here.

Among the most common responses was the feeling among members that they have a lack of time. Two BRIDGE members and one Transit Rider, all of whom cited specific time barriers, also talked about the feeling that their personal time was generally limited and might be stretched too thin by involvement. I draw the distinction between time as a barrier and time as a source of hesitation because three interviewees spoke about a lack of time in more interpretive terms than the others. For example, one Transit Riders League member had this exchange with the interviewer:

Interviewer: Have you ever felt any kind of nervousness about getting more involved in the TRL?

Yeah. Is it gonna eat up all my time and completely take over my life?

Interviewer: How did you overcome that sense?

Who says I've overcome it?

Whereas specific structural barriers limit participants' time such as jobs and family responsibilities, for three interviewees, the mere sense that involvement could create a time crunch creates hesitation to commit further to the organization.

Another issue raised by interviewees was feeling hesitant to identify themselves as organization members in the workplace. Two ACORN members and one BRIDGE member felt that their membership was best left a mystery in the workplace. The ACORN members both described having political reasons for not mentioning ACORN to coworkers. One member said:

...sometimes they'll ask you on a job application about what is your extracurricular activities, and I won't put down ACORN. Because that's a job, and you don't mix politics—it can never help you but it can hurt you.

For the BRIDGE member, it is a reluctance to broach the topic of religion at work that fuels his misgivings.

Three interviewees also mentioned that they felt hesitant to try organizational tasks that they had never done before for fear of failing at them. One ACORN member and two Transit Riders commented to this effect. One ACORN member said:

...when I was asked to do parts that I really wasn't comfortable with [I felt hesitant.] And sometimes I got thrown into things and found that I was all right with it. I could do it. Like I didn't really think I could sign people up. I found out I could. [laughs] Still don't like doing it. But I can do it. Some things you find out you're good at but you just don't like it.

Similarly, a Transit Rider indicated that the League's letter writing campaign caused her some hesitation to press forward for fear of writing an inferior letter. She explains:

I don't know, I think it's a self-esteem type of a thing. When you write a letter to somebody, you don't want to sound stupid. [laughs] And then after a while it's like, 'O heck with it!' I'm sure they get a whole bunch of letters from a whole bunch of stupid people. What's one more? So I got over it.

In all three cases, interviewees overcame their hesitation over the risk of failing at new tasks by simply attempting to do them and learning that they could be successful.

Two members mentioned one specific new task as particularly daunting. For one ACORN member and one BRIDGE member, public speaking provided the greatest amount of hesitation to be more involved in their organizations. Both people, however, reported that the sure fire way for them to overcome their fear of public speaking was to actually do it. The ACORN member says:

But now, since I've been doing it, I feel great! It makes me feel important. It makes me feel like somebody's listening. You know, and the main thing is talking. When you start explaining things, a lot of people say, "What? O no!" You know, like some people was surprised. Well, when they do that and people look at you and they say these things, you know you're doing something for somebody. And I love it.

For this member, seeing people's positive reactions to his efforts encourages him to continue public speaking. The BRIDGE member explains that public speaking continually gets easier and easier for him:

It's terrifying. It is very terrifying at first, but once I start speaking and get the flow with it, then I'm more at ease...I get less nervous.

Practicing public speaking helps members overcome their hesitation about it.

One BRIDGE member and one Transit Rider faced hesitation with the worry that being a member in their groups would be too demanding upon their time and energies.

The Transit Rider comments:

...by I was outside looking in, it looked like ‘Gimme gimme gimme gimme.’ But basically what they’re saying is, ‘You have to want. And if you want, then you don’t mind doing.’

The Transit Rider had her perception changed about how demanding the organization is simply by hanging in there and continuing to attend meetings and talk to the organizer about what would be expected of her. For the BRIDGE member, a future organizational challenge was starting to make her feel overwhelmed. When asked if she felt nervous about getting more involved in BRIDGE, she replied:

Yeah. I think so. I may feel that way a little bit right now. Just about—and I don’t know if nervous is a good word—more so than stressed. Yeah, tense. It’s not about BRIDGE so much as it is about the challenge ahead...to make a difference, to get a great number of people out...Having the time to do all that I need to do to help make it happen...

In order to overcome her hesitation about being stretched too thin by BRIDGE, this member reports that it is a positive attitude that gets her through the challenging times.

She says:

I think one of the things that I do is know that it won’t last forever. I just gotta get through it. I just gotta do it. So self-talk, prayer, sharing it with others...And that’s my attitude in life, I guess, with things that are unpleasant or hearty or strong at the time, or uncomfortable: this too will pass...Not what goes up must come down, but I’m looking at it like it’s gotta be reciprocal; I’m not gonna stay down. I’m not gonna stay in pain. So it’s a matter of thinking.

The most commonly named sources of hesitation are the perception of a lack of time, identifying oneself as a member of the organization in a work setting, the fear of

failing at performing new organizational tasks, especially public speaking, and the feeling that membership will be too demanding.

In addition to these concerns, singular members mentioned several others. In ACORN, one member felt hesitation about the membership's often intense disagreements over strategy while another member expressed hesitation about being identified as an ACORN member in her neighborhood for fear that her privacy would be violated. In BRIDGE, one member expressed a feeling of being lost and needing direction in order to take on a new leadership role in BRIDGE. Another member felt hesitation about traveling for an entire week for the national Gamaliel training because it was uncustomary for her to travel or vacation without her husband. And finally, one BRIDGE member felt that the first meeting she attended was disorganized and unclear, forcing her to reconsider her involvement.

In terms of overcoming hesitation, responses all revolved around either persevering and doing the organizational activities that may at first seem daunting or maintaining a positive mental attitude. Table 12 displays interviewees' responses about how hesitation is overcome. One might believe that getting involved in risky activities like picketing and participating in confrontational tactics could discourage someone from getting more involved in his or her organization. Rather, the interview data revealed a different story.

Table 12: Overcoming Hesitation

METHOD FOR OVERCOMING HESITATION	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
Persevering/ Doing what causes hesitancy	2	1	3	6
Positive attitude	0	1	0	1
TOTAL	2	2	3	7

No member ever volunteered that they felt hesitant to get more involved with an organization because of its confrontational tactics. Being expected to engage in confrontation against a target did not create any reluctance for the nineteen participants interviewed. Instead, confrontation performed the opposite function of instilling feelings of excitement and purpose in participants. Furthermore, participants felt that confrontation should not be used without a valid purpose.

Confrontation

The first issue that emerged from the data is what purpose members feel is served by engaging in confrontational tactics like rallies and protests. (Table 13 displays members' ideas about using direct action tactics.) The most common comments about confrontational tactics were that they should be used as a last resort when organizations' demands will not be addressed by any other means. Four of nineteen people felt that generally these tactics are necessary as a last resort because many times other tactics do not work. One Transit Rider and three ACORN members commented to the effect that actions should be used as a last resort. One member of the Transit Riders' League commented on the group's rallies:

And I think they're saying like, 'They're not paying any attention to the letters. So we gotta do it another way.' And sometimes you have to speak a little rough for somebody to wake up.

Three ACORN members commented similarly about their experiences with ACORN tactics. One member explains:

...with ACORN, they have what you call an action where they will—a bunch of members will get together and do an action on an agency or company or something like that, where we all get together and we go in and—you really sometimes unfortunately don't get heard unless there's a large number of you saying the same thing.

Another member says:

Once we know that you're not taking us seriously, sometimes you have to go to different tactics because it's the squeaking wheel that gets the attention. And sometimes we just have to squeak.

ACORN members further elaborated that idea by explaining that actions function to bring parties to the negotiating table and are vitally important in achieving that leverage. One member explained how negotiations transpired with a delinquent mortgage company:

Initially, they blew us off. They were like, 'You're just a grassroots organization. ACORN. Who are you? Never heard of you. Where'd you come from? Be gone. Nobody will pay you any attention.' But we just kept crying, crying, crying, crying, letting people know what was happening until people started saying, 'Hey! Somebody better listen to these people cause they actually got proof and documentation of things that are really going on, things that are really happening.' And then once they realized, 'O darnit, we're really gonna get in trouble. We're really gonna have to go to court,' then, that's when they wanted to have some closed-door meetings. 'No! No! You can't talk to me now. No!'

Two ACORN members added to the idea that actions are necessary by pointing to specific results that were achieved by confrontational tactics. One member says:

...I don't mind direct action, but I like direct action with a purpose. I don't want to just go to somebody's house and make a scene in front of their door and say, 'Okay right, we did that.' It's gonna get you publicity and stuff, but then you gotta do something concrete with that. It can't be just to be doing something or to make that person's life difficult. And they seem to be able to do both. They'll get in your face, but then they'll

say, ‘Look, these are the things that we would like to get done’...And I think that’s something that they’ve been better with than a lot of these organizations just based on some of the settlements they got like Household Finance and Citigroup.

So, getting results provides the thematic undercurrent by which most organizational members, especially ACORN members, judge the purpose of direct actions. Whether members rationalize direct actions as a necessary last resort or as a mere means to an end, it is the results that members seek and that motivate them to continue engaging in confrontational tactics.

Table 13: Ideology about Confrontation

CONFRONTATION	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL ^a
Necessary to Bring People to the Table	3	0	1	4
Fun to Expose People for What They Are	3	0	0	3
Should be Lawful, Adhere to Boundaries	2	1	0	3
Achieves Specific Results	2	0	0	2
Camaraderie	1	0	0	1
Draws Attention to Organization and its Issues	0	0	1	1

^aSome interviewees mentioned more than one idea about confrontational tactics. All responses are shown here.

In addition to getting results, three ACORN members had additional ideas about the purpose of actions. They felt that being part of actions provides a satisfying feeling of retribution and that they are actually fun. For some, actions are an opportunity to confront people who have been exploiting poor people and to expose them for who they really are.

...you get the chance to shout and yell at people and just have a good time. It’s fun. Instead of them yellin’ at me, I yell at them for a change.

One member tells this story:

There was one time, very early in ACORN, we went out to this guy’s house who was a predatory lender up in Westminster...We foreclosed on his house...He was totally rattled! [laughs]...we totally rattled him because he never expected to see the people that he ripped off! He was

never confronted by that. It was such a moral thing to confront the oppressor. To confront the person who's doing the wrong to you, directly, in the flesh. And that's what actions do...And that's how come I tend to like them so much.

This member also explained that he thought participating in the actions created a sense of camaraderie among the members. Another ACORN member expressed similar views. She talked about exposing people for what they've done to Baltimore communities as the most important moments in her organizational participation. She says:

To see the expressions on these here landlords when you get 'em really cornered up, and when you go to Annapolis and corner these peoples and they don't know what you're talking about. They look at you, and some of them are sittin' there flabbergasted. They don't even know what's going on. After it's over, they'll come to you: 'I didn't know this, and I didn't know that.' 'Well honey, you better believe it! That is what's going on out here.' That's when they believe it. That's when you really see that you sittin' in an office, you don't know what's going on. There's people out here's livin' in it [that] know what's going on. So, and that's when I really get a kick out of it...Because you lied to us. You call up there and they tell you a lie. You call back in a couple of days, 'Well, I haven't got to it.' You call back in the next couple of days, 'Well I'll send you a letter.' That's what—you go down the line until it's nothing! That's the thing of it—catch 'em in a lie.

One interesting note of comparison is that whereas ACORN members mainly discussed the purpose of actions in terms of what immediate goals could be accomplished, one Transit Riders League member conceptualized the purpose of rallies in his organization very differently. He said:

...it was very interesting. And I think it helps to draw attention to our needs. If I remember right, there were one or two U.S. senators there and there were a couple of representatives and a few state level representatives and county executives [at the rally].

For this Transit Rider, confrontational tactics serve to get the organization noticed by politicians and other power brokers so that attention is given to the transit issue, generally. In contrast, ACORN members think of their confrontational tactics as a means to a direct, specific result.

In addition to articulating what people felt was the purpose of engaging in confrontational tactics, three members also detailed the ways in which they believe that actions should be lawful and should have some decorum. Two ACORN members and one BRIDGE member talked about actions in the context of setting boundaries for behavior. One ACORN member says:

...Cause like I say, we should never break the law. We should never be involved in anything violent or anything like that. Some lines you don't cross. You just don't. [ACORN has] been able to do that. But then, they've been good at getting in peoples' faces, but sticking to the issues and not making it personal, because the grievances that we have against these persons or organizations are not personal. It's based on policy and action. I think that's the most important thing cause then that gets you bagged as a radical.

The BRIDGE member who spoke about boundaries explained that he felt that actions should be kept from being too personal. Even though BRIDGE had not yet organized any confrontational actions at the time of the study, this BRIDGE member had a good sense of what he thought distinguishes BRIDGE's form of confrontation from traditional Alinsky-style tactics which tended to incorporate a level of shock and to be designed for the purposes of creating conflict. He explained:

...you will have enemies, and not in a bad sense of that, but people that you are opposed to because they're doing things that go against your self-interest and your values. And so you will confront them, but it's public. It's not warfare, but it's a very public confrontation. But then you've also got allies, of people who are working toward the same goals, at least in

that particular area, and so you want to support that and increase it. So you work on both of those things....And it's not a personal kind of thing. It's public. I don't think we'd go camp out in front of the bank president's house and shout at his family and stuff like that, cause that's not my values...

Even though the BRIDGE member defined tactics that get too personal differently from ACORN, members of both groups feel that boundaries are necessary to make the organizations' messages effective. This is the final element of members' frameworks for confrontation. Confrontational tactics may not hinder participants' involvements in their organizations, but when asked about hesitation, many interviewees mentioned aspects of their life that provide structural rather than interpretive impediments to their abilities to participate in organizational activities. These factors are discussed here as barriers.

Barriers

Barriers are distinct from hesitation because they are external conditions that hamper involvement rather than being interpretively perceived. Barriers can have serious impacts on an organization's ability to retain members. Thirteen out of nineteen people mentioned at least one barrier to organizational involvement. (Table 14 displays the six most commonly mentioned barriers to people's involvement.)

Health and disabilities rank as the most common barrier to participation. Health concerns include illness and injury. For example, one ACORN member explains:

Sometimes I drop out simply because I'm just not feeling well enough. The rally that we had on the gambling issue is one that I feel impassioned about, but I was just not physically able to do it that night. Physically unable to. That decision got made for me by God. I didn't have a choice in that matter. So, that's the way that decision got made.

Among the disabilities cited, interviewees mentioned severe asthma and wheelchair confinement. One Transit Rider describes her concerns about an upcoming rally:

...I'm praying that the temperatures are right. Because of my disability, I can only handle so much. I'm not trying to be sick. And I can't go rally and I'm sick, slumped over.

Illness and injury prevent people from getting more involved.

Table 14: Commonly Cited Barriers to Participation

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL ^a
Health and Disabilities	3	1	2	6
Work	1	2	2	5
Children and Family	1	0	3	4
Participation in Other Activities	0	2	1	3
Lack of Transportation	1	0	1	2

^aSome interviewees mentioned more than one barrier. All responses are shown here.

Five interviewees mentioned that work interferes with their participation in their organizations. Generally, people felt that work demanded time that they could otherwise devote to their organizations. One BRIDGE member commented on the weeklong trainings:

Unfortunately, they're during my working hours, and I'm not able to get out. Just like there's gonna be a weeklong training at Goucher College for something. I just wrote it down. But it's gonna come up at a time where at my job we're not allowed to take off...I really want to go, but I can't do it.

For others, responsibilities to family and especially children limit the extra time available to them for social movement activities. One Transit Riders League member says:

It's been pointed out to me a couple of times that of the very regular attenders, I am one of two who is married, and I think—that's not quite fair—maybe one of three. And I definitely feel a pull between family

responsibilities and this. It's one thing when the general meetings are once a month. Now they're three times a month because I have steering committee, general membership meeting, and my MARC committee meeting, and it's tough to juggle.

In addition to family time, some members mentioned that they are involved in other community and church activities that take up more time and sometimes conflict with the activities of their community-based social movement groups. Finally, two members mentioned that a lack of transportation often creates barriers to participation. Perhaps these barriers are part of the reasons that organizations tend to suffer such high drop out rates. Interviewees have their own theories about why other people drop out of involvement.

Drop Outs

Given some of the important aspects of organizational life that satisfies the members interviewed for this study, why do some members end up leaving these three organizations? Is it that they fail to align their personal frameworks with the organizations' frames? Is it that the number of barriers working against their participation is greater than the number of barriers that continuing members tally? No one was interviewed for this study that had dropped out of his or her organization. Therefore, no data can directly address these questions. However, the members interviewed revealed their intuitions about why some members drop out of the group.

Theories about why other members have dropped out of the three organizations tend to conform to one of three recurrent themes: a lack of self-interest to really see change, a lack of immediate results, and a lack of commitment. (See Table 15 for a breakdown of which members expressed these themes. Note that ACORN members tend

to express one theory, while BRIDGE members tend to conceptualize dropouts by using the first theory.)

Table 15: Interviewees' Theories About Why Other Members Drop Out

	ACORN	BRIDGE	TRANSIT RIDERS LEAGUE	TOTAL
No Self-Interest to See Change	0	4	2	6
No Immediate Results	3	0	1	4
Not Enough Commitment	1	0	2	3
TOTAL	4	4	5	13

Four BRIDGE members and two Transit Riders felt that people drop out of the organization when they lack the self-interest to fight for change. One BRIDGE member talked about how other congregations may not have as much commitment to change things because they lack the self-interest to do so simply because certain issues do not directly affect them. He explains:

The ones that drop out, I just don't think their commitment was as strong as it should have been. So, that's the only thing I feel about them is like, okay, they're backing away from the issues here. Maybe their commitment is just not as strong. To where I'm living in it, so my commitment is gonna be strong. Or maybe they don't deal with the same issues or problems that we have, so they just back out. But I'm committed 'cause I really want to see change. And maybe those other congregations that dropped out must not have been interested in seeing those changes.

One Transit Rider who was asked about why some members drop out of the group had a similar answer. She replied:

They're really more interested in just—They're only interested in catching a bus to reach a destination and not so much with the drivers and the drivers' attitudes and such.

A common theory about dropouts among members, especially BRIDGE members, is that those who drop out are not as affected by an issue and therefore interested in changing it.

Another common theory is that people join an organization expecting immediate results for their narrow problem(s). When the results do not surface quickly, members quit. This theory is most common among ACORN members. For example, when one member was asked why meeting attendance started to dwindle in her neighborhood, she explained:

Well, I don't know why it came to that, and then again I do know. Because people want something right now. If they don't get it, they lose confidence, so they're gone. That's the way I feel about that.

One Transit Rider offers a similar theory:

I think a lot of people leave because they come there with a complaint, not necessarily wanting to find a solution. They have a complaint and they want their complaint acted on. And when you don't come up with a way to solve their issue immediately, they become disgruntled and leave.

Many members perceive organizational dropouts as those people who came to the organization interested in how it could help them rather than how they could help the organization.

A third theory expressed by the interviewees is simply that some people lack the level of commitment necessary to stick it out in the organization. One ACORN member and two Transit Riders felt this was the reason that people drop out of their groups. The ACORN member explains:

...if you're a person that's afraid that it takes too much time or too much of a commitment than you don't have the time for it and you're not committed to it. You have to have the time for it and you have to be committed. You have to really tap into what motivates you. And maybe being of service is not what motivates you, which is why you can't be committed, and maybe which is why it's too much time, because that's not what you're about.

Two Transit Riders expressed similar hypotheses. One member even compared organizational commitment to marital commitment. She explained:

But see, the commitment has to be there to stick with it no matter what, and you have to keep looking at why you got into this situation, this arrangement in the first place. And it was because you had something in common. And that commonality is still there. It's just that other things have popped up in the meantime that want to pull you away from it. So, you have to have the commitment to stick with it regardless of where the pulls are coming from. If you're going to be on the steering committee, then be on the steering committee.

A lack of commitment is the final response given when organizational members were asked why they believe that some people drop out. This data gives us some clues about retention issues in social movement organizations.

Differences in Retention Among Groups

The most striking pattern that emerged among demographic groups with respect to retention issues is that all the females in the study mentioned at least one barrier to participation whereas only three males mentioned any barrier. This could be because women are usually the primary caregivers to their families and therefore have more demands placed upon them. Similarly, nine of the people who mentioned barriers had highest levels of education at high school or some college; three people who mentioned barriers had college or graduate degrees. If education levels can be used as an adequate measure of class, it is fair to say that working class people in the study faced more barriers to participation in social movement activity than did those participants from a higher social class.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This research sought to explore the dynamic behind new membership in community based SMOs. I was especially interested in distinguishing characteristics of the processes that lead new recruits to become full-fledged organizational members. The results indicate that there is no path to community activism that is more common or more predictable than any other after discounting pre-recruitment activities that prime people for organizational involvement. Some participants are radicalized by participation in actions. Some participants are convinced to get involved through a constellation of positive experiences with their new organizations. And organizational culture is certainly not the prime factor influencing whether or not a person becomes a member. It is, in fact, possible that many participants subconsciously choose to adapt to organizational culture when they make the initial good faith commitment to attend a meeting or activity. As the social movement literature about differential participation suggests (Barkan, Cohn, and Whitaker 1995; Passy and Giugni 2000), the same reasons that participants initially got involved tend to be the same reasons that people stay members. That is, social networks and other involvement tend to overlap to support membership.

A Culture of Success

These results suggest that the cultural level of social movements is much less important to potential members than organizational efficacy is to would-be activists. Accordingly, community-based social movement organizations, although often attracting diverse or divergent neighborhood personalities, can be most successful at attracting and

retaining membership when strategies and tactics are well planned enough to insure success. Pragmatic movement concerns like formulating issues and developing strategies should take precedence over developing organizational level messages. The most important cultural message to impart to new members is that the organization enjoys a great deal of success.

Differential Recruitment to Community-Based SMOs

Community-based SMO recruitment pitches tend to be most effective, by far, with people who already possess a framework for understanding the power of organized people. Much more of a person's willingness to join a social movement group has to do with an individual's pre-existing interpretive framework than I could have ever predicted. It is easy to forget that participants in community activism did not simply come to organizational life as completely uninitiated community residents, awaiting radicalizing experiences. The classic organizing model that emphasizes how an average community resident blossoms into an empowered activist receives little support in light of the pre-recruitment experiences that seemed to prime the interviewees for activism in this study. Although Klandermans's theory about how participating in actions radicalizes movement members (a theory supported by Rick Fantasia's research in *Cultures of Solidarity* 1988) bore true for some participants in the study, more participants were already angry, motivated, and awaiting a channel for effective action when they were recruited to their organizations. Participating in actions just helped their commitment to community activism to grow.

For community based social movement organizations, this can be good news and bad news. On the positive side, a wealth of angry and motivated residents are anxious to take action to change their communities. However, the bad news is that the number of residents in any given community who benefited from activist role models or in other ways came to believe that organized people can make a difference remains unclear. It is possible that communities are, instead, teeming with angry yet hopeless residents who have given up on any prospect for change.

If social movement activists are more often primed for organizational participation by other experiences rather than being made by the movement, then classic organizing recruitment techniques such as doorknocking seem like a potential waste of resources. Doorknocking depends on the possibility that every neighborhood contains several would-be activists waiting to hear the right pitch before they will get involved. It is more likely, however, that those community residents who want to change their neighborhoods are already involved in that effort somehow. The results suggest that there exists a selective subset of would-be activists in every neighborhood who have few outlets for their willingness to fight for their communities. The task is not to broadly canvass neighborhoods, then, but to somehow reach those people who are ready and willing to get involved and to provide them with an effective way of achieving results. Approaching people who have been involved in other organizations or who have family members that are involved in activism may be more efficient than going door to door. Although previous research supports the idea that social movement participants are generally already involved in organized activities like community associations and

churches, this research demonstrates that these kinds of previous experiences alter one's framework for getting further involved in new organizations. Organizations should capitalize on this readiness to join an organization that is effective. For those who are ready and able to join a successful organization, the choice is clear. Ability to be involved, however, is another story.

Klandermans and Oegema's differential recruitment research found support with respect to the significant number of barriers to participation that arose from the interview data. Specifically, of the neighborhood people that heard the recruitment messages, the messages then had to resonate with the recruit, the person had to be willing to participate, and the person had to be free of barriers, which in some cases can be the biggest hurdle to participation. Trying to eliminate some of those barriers for people by providing child care, transportation, or holding meetings and trainings at accessible hours might help widen the pool of potential recruits for community organizations. According to these findings, when structural barriers are eliminated, not even risks of participation factor as a deterrent for new members.

The social movement literature that addresses differential recruitment with respect to risk is not substantiated by this study. People were not hesitant to get involved in confrontational tactics for their organizations, the riskiest aspect of community organization participation. No one expressed fears about being arrested or hurt during an action. In fact, the use of confrontational tactics energized people and made them feel that they were effective, especially when the media covered their actions. Risk does not weigh as a factor affecting recruitment according to this study. Instead, members weigh

risk against the potential for their organizations to achieve their goals, which again bolsters the sense that efficacy is of primary importance in retaining members.

Primacy of Getting Results

Once recruited, it was interesting to note that results were the paramount aspect of involvement for people. Class may be one explanation for this result. As most community organizing participants are from low-income urban neighborhoods, these findings substantiate previous work like Politics and the Class Divide (Croteau 1995) which suggests that low-income people generally have more direct goals for organizational involvement than people from higher economic classes (and are thus more suspect of middle-class social movements) because low-income people do not tend to have the luxuries of time and money to indulge in extra activities that are not effective. From this sample, it was mostly low-income people who talked about barriers to participation, not those people with graduate degrees and college degrees. These findings also support Cable's study about cultural class differences among nuclear disarmament groups wherein low-income people got involved in nuclear disarmament because it was happening in their backyard, not because of idealism; similarly, most of the participants in this study spoke about getting involved because the issues affected them directly in their neighborhoods.

Implications for Frame Alignment

The theory that frame alignment processes function as important cognitive stepping stones from nonparticipation to social movement organization commitment lacks support from these findings. All three organizations' members, despite vast

differences in organizational culture, size, goals, and membership, spoke consistently about how important it is to them to be effective in their organizations. Aspects of organizational culture barely register among members' concerns.

The importance that members place on being effective in their organizations, above other concerns, suggests a few key possibilities for social movement literature. The first possibility is that social movement theory that focuses narrowly on cultural features of organizational life fails to reflect reality. The emphasis of these findings suggest that the resource mobilization perspective contributes much more solidly to the study of movement phenomena than new social movement analysis can contribute. Stated simply, people with immediate goals join social movement organizations with the belief that their goals can be fulfilled through collective action. When evaluating a new organization, a member's primary concern is whether or not the organization will be effective enough to ensure that his or her goals are fulfilled. Beyond that, practical concerns like strategies and tactics provide the avenue for efficacy, and members remain in groups that employ effective ones. Members are even willing to take on risk by being confrontational if it means that they will achieve results. Frame alignment processes are not consciously recognized if they are transpiring at all.

The second possibility is that the resource mobilization perspective on social movements and the new social movement perspective are both too compartmentalized to allow research that unearths the complex interrelations between a social movement organization and its members. Must social movement resources be devoid of cultural frames? And conversely, must cultural messages transmitted between organizations and

their members be devoid of purely pragmatic features? This study's findings suggest that the most significant aspect of a community-based social movement organization's culture for potential members is how effectively the organization can mobilize resources (like other members and effective strategies) to resolve community problems. The intrinsic reward of involvement is being successful. The greatest motivation to continue being a member is achieving more goals. If social movement literature emphasizes the perspective of the participants more often, resource mobilization and cultural framing will be treated as inseparable aspects of the same phenomena rather than as separate and often competing processes.

Finally, the importance of cultural framing to potential members may lie in a directly inverse relationship to the immediacy of the issues a potential member seeks to change. In community-based social movement organizations, members seek to change conditions that surround them in their neighborhoods on a daily basis. The issues are inescapable. In contrast, many social movement organizations which pull members based upon their ideals toward environmental preservation, human rights, or religious freedom, for example, rely more heavily on cultural framing because the group's goals are less immediate. This relationship could explain why efforts to get members of community based SMOs involved in broader and less immediate political movements have been largely unsuccessful (Alger and Mendlovitz 1984). The fact that many members of community-based SMOs are low-income people without extra resources to expend on fighting for less immediate goals may contribute to the import of immediacy as well, as discussed earlier.

Frame alignment theory may also suffer from the fallacy that frame alignment processes are separate from commitment and recruitment. The relationships between a member's initial recruitment to the organization, commitment, and frame alignment became confounded in this study's data. No clear order for these events or causality emerged. In result, the theoretical power of frame alignment did not find empirical support. The processes underlying recruitment, commitment, and frame alignment interacted more like a web than like a consistent model.

Early Orientation Processes: Intricate Webs

Once recruited, the results show that a myriad of positive experiences increase commitment to the organization and therefore increase retention. In fact, commitment and frame alignment processes prove difficult to separate from one another. Only three participants in the study framed the issues and what should be done about the issues and who is to blame for the issues in the same way as the organizations framed them. This made it difficult to extricate patterns among participants whose frames were aligned versus nonaligned. And this inconsistency seems to substantiate to an even greater degree the possibility that cultural congruence between primary and secondary frames is not even close to being as important to people as getting results.

It is possible that positive experiences and the general passing of time may compound to increase one's commitment. In that sense, the prescription for organizations would be to get people into the organization and immediately sweep them into leadership activity so that they become so invested in the organization that it would be a shame to give up the investment of time and energy by dropping out. Frame

alignment would proceed as a function of increased commitment. Further research may be able to elaborate the relationships between commitment and frame alignment processes. This study did not provide data that could sort out distinct and definitive frame alignment processes. Instead, interviewees revealed early orientation and retention processes to be a confounded interlacing of commitment and serendipity. The one guiding principle for all the organizational members in the study is that the best motivation to become involved and remain involved in a community-based SMO is the very real prospect of making change.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Guide for Community Organization Participants

I'm interested in the process of how you got involved in _____(X organization.)

- 1. STORY OF GETTING INVOLVED**
(Most important moments? Turning points?)
 - First hear about organization?
 - First contact?
 - First impressions? (hesitation?)
- 2. What is issue? How did organization talk about it? Different? Same from you?**
- 3. Why is this an issue? Who responsible? How did organization talk about who is responsible?**
- 4. Why bother doing something about it?**
- 5. What activities liked/disliked?**
 - Why?
 - Actions?
- 6. Ever feel nervous?**
- 7. Worry about fitting in?**
- 8. When/where start mentioning that you're a member?**
- 9. Friends/Family say anything about involvement?**
- 10. Feel like you've changed at all?**
- 11. What has kept you coming back?**
- 12. Why some people don't stay?**
- 13. What parts of your experience with this organization that is important to you...?**
- 14. Anyone seem to have different experiences? Why?**

Appendix C

Interview Summary Form

Interview # _____

Contact Date: _____

Today's Date: _____

1. What were the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?

2. Summarize the information collected on each of the target issues.

- 3.a. What problems, if any, were there with the interview and questions?
b. What should be changed for the next interview?

4. Where should most energy be focused for next interview, and what kinds of information should be sought? What kinds of new questions should be asked?

5. Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important in this contact? General impressions?

Appendix D

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Getting Involved in Community Organizations

VCU IRB PROTOCOL NUMBER:

PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR: Dr. David Croteau

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Sarah K. Diehl

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask the Student Interviewer to explain any words or information that you do not clearly understand. You may take home an unsigned copy of this consent form to think about or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this research study is to better understand how and why people become involved in community organizations.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY:

Community organizations depend upon volunteers for their success. This study seeks to better understand how and why some people become involved with such organizations and what is needed to retain their involvement.

Approximately 20 people will participate in this study. These persons have been identified because they either are or were involved in community organization(s) in Baltimore.

PROCEDURES

If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form after you have had all your questions answered.

Your participation in this research study will consist of one recorded interview session lasting approximately two hours and one brief follow-up phone call to discuss preliminary findings.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The researcher foresees no special risks or discomfort associated with this study.

BENEFITS

You will not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. The information from this research study may help future community organizing efforts.

COSTS

There are no costs associated with this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If you choose to participate in this study, your name will remain confidential. The only people who will have access to your name will be the primary researcher and the student researcher. Your name will not appear in any papers, reports, or articles that may result from this research.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to verbally give consent to allow the interview to be recorded. At the beginning of the interview, the Student Investigator will read a number onto the recording. The recording will later be transcribed into a word processing file. Upon completion of the transcription, the recording will be destroyed.

ALTERNATIVE

This is not a treatment study. Your alternative is not to participate.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide to not participate in this study. If you do participate you may freely withdraw from the study at any time. You may also choose not to answer particular questions during the interview.

QUESTIONS

In the future, you may have questions about your study participation. If you have any questions, contact:

Dr. David Croteau
Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology
PO Box 842040
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, VA 23284
(804) 828-6464

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Office for Research Subjects Protection
Virginia Commonwealth University
1101 E. Marshall St., Room 1-023
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, VA 23298
(804) 828-0868

Do not sign this consent form unless you have had a chance to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers to all of your questions.

CONSENT

I have been provided with an opportunity to read this consent form carefully. All of the questions that I wish to raise concerning this study have been answered.

By signing this consent form I have not waived any of the legal rights or benefits, to which I otherwise would be entitled. My signature indicates that I freely consent to participate in this research study.

Subject Name, printed

Subject Signature

Date

Signature of Student Investigator Who
Conducted Informed Consent Discussion

Date

Principal Investigator Signature

Date

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