Environmental NGOs: Intermediating Between the State and Social Movement Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Taking part in much broader environmental and climate movements, the environmental nongovernmental organizations (ENGOs) considered in this study exist in relative proximity to one another as they navigate a field of institutionalized politics in Washington DC. Given their relative proximity, I highlight how these ENGOs are, at the same time, situated differently within the societal distribution of power. ENGOs’ distinct positions are determined by their objective situation within the broader distribution of social, cultural, and economic capital, as well as their exposure to the political analyses that exist in other, oppressed or dominating, social realms. They are considered intermediating forms as they navigate the influences of dominant elites and marginalized communities, integrating and institutionalizing political frameworks and discourses from both realms. In order to avoid unwanted influences of dominant power players, ENGOs adopt practices of reflexivity to maintain organizational autonomy, while simultaneously benefiting from the needed legitimacy with the dominant white society, provided by access to “statist capital” (Bourdieu 1992:114). Their positions are framed in terms of a Left-Right political spectrum that emerges in staff members’ interviews, as they navigate interdependent ENGO coalitions and perceive different levels of compromise with elites on the Right, and organizational autonomy on the Left.
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INTRODUCTION

Background

Shannon Gross sits across the table from me in a small conference room as we begin our interview at the headquarters of CommunityEarth, a small environmental organization in Northwest Washington DC, about two miles away from the US capitol. She is in her mid-twenties and has been working with CommunityEarth for a little over half a year, having come to the organization after leaving her job at a “Big Green.” She tells me about her frustration during the three years she spent at the organization writing 500-page proposals to “save tigers in Russia.” To Shannon, the work felt irrelevant when what she really cared about was fracking, the Chesapeake Bay, and her parents’ water supply in Upstate New York. When she noticed a job opening, Shannon decided to return to CommunityEarth where she had interned as an undergraduate student. Now instead of saving tigers, Shannon is part of the CommunityEarth energy team working on environmental issues surrounding oil and gas extraction. She tells me she is excited to be part of a small organization and to take up a full-time, paid job as an “activist” doing the organizing work she previously had to do in her spare time.

Throughout the interview Shannon is insistent on her view of CommunityEarth as set apart from a lot of other environmental groups in DC. “There are a lot of groups,” she tells me, “I hate to hate on people and name names… but there are certain national organizations that are very national policy, federal-driven. And they're also very donor-driven so they tend to take more of a conservative or narrow approach. We tend to be a little bit more on the fringe… a little bit more grassroots. I don't want to say radical activists because we're not crazy, but we tend to be a little bit more willing to kind of challenge the system and we're definitely not afraid to call

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1 See p. 11
out specific actors whereas I think some of the bigger national groups are a lot more conservative in that way. It's much more important to us that what we're doing is whatever our local contacts want to see.”

This snapshot of the way in which Shannon distinguishes between types of organizations in the world of DC environmentalism and climate work is representative of many of the recurring themes cropping up throughout my research process for this study. Here Shannon relays a number of characteristics representative of big national environmental groups. These groups are “national-policy” and “federal-driven,” “donor-driven,” and take a “conservative” approach. In contrast, CommunityEarth is small, grassroots, and unafraid to “call out specific actors.” Shannon’s interview was one of the twenty-two interviews I conducted with a wide variety of environmental groups in the summer of 2016, many of which are based in Washington DC. To provide context for my original interest in researching environmental organizations, I will begin by recounting a talk I attended in the spring of 2016 at a gathering called Cove Point Spring Break which first drew my attention to the factions of the US environment movement.

Cove Point Spring Break was a gathering of environmental activists, grassroots organizers, and college students in Cove Point, Maryland. The gathering centered around the organizing against Dominion Virginia Power’s proposed liquid natural gas export terminal at Cove Point, Maryland as well as other related projects throughout the Eastern United States linked together by the route of the Dominion pipeline. We Are Cove Point, SEED: Stopping Extraction and Exports Destruction, and the Backbone Campaign organized the gathering. These groups invited a range of speakers to give talks and run workshops on social justice issues related to environmental organizing and other, more strategy-focused topics on nonviolent direct action. Throughout my
time at the gathering, my attention consistently returned to the tensions between networks of grassroots environmental organizing and what many attendees referred to as “mainstream environmentalism.” Through multiple conversations with community organizers, I learned about the frustrations of the people in these roles in working to collaborate with bigger environmental organizations which had consistently prevented them from doing the type of organizing work in which they were most invested. One talk at the gathering, led by Fred Tutman, the Patuxent Riverkeeper, helped to explain this tension, and was titled “Why Mainstream Movements Ignore Environmental Justice, or How Color-blind Movements Reinforce Racism.”

In his talk Fred discussed his personal experience as a black man in his work as a Riverkeeper that shaped his perceptions of how issues of race and class unfold in environmental organizing. Fred spoke of the importance of seeing racism as a societal project and moving away from “colorblind” position-taking, which fails to recognize the institutionalization of racism within a historically white, Euro-centric mainstream environmental movement. When working through large organizations dominated by historically privileged groups of white people and engaging with political institutions inherently built on racism, there is a foreseeable propensity for modes of thinking and decisions to take on the preexisting institutionalization of structures around race. Fred sees these environmental organizations as affinity groups of a particular (white) demographic, that people of color do not tend to see as a productive space for organizing or even collaboration. He therefore argues for a historically-contextualized perspective of the structures around race in government and social institutions as necessary in order to build a more inclusive movement working for the interests of minority and frontline communities.

Over his time working as the Patuxent Riverkeeper, Fred has come to believe in grassroots organizing as having the most transformative effect on dominant social structures and
as the best way of working for the interests of marginalized communities. Fred makes the distinction between grassroots movements as driven by dissent and having potential for true social change, and mainstream environmentalism as driven by funding. Fred believes that organizations receiving big money from corporate foundations cannot get at the root of issues of environmental justice because these organizations’ actions are too heavily influenced by the corporate interests that supply the funding. The funding is channeled to organizations taking a “cleaning up” approach with strings attached that prevent fundamental work that truly addresses sources of injustice. Organizations instead work within lines designated for them by a dominant capitalist economy and white supremacy.

Fred made the decision to focus his work on issues of environmental justice and marginalized populations. He sees true grassroots organizing as serving as a facilitator for a community. Mainstream movements have difficulty with this type of organizing because truly listening to a community often demands a complete shift of tactics and often goals as well. Populations from disenfranchised demographics will often bring entirely new issues to the table, and focusing on social justice has been seen by environmental groups as detracting from their prioritized, strictly “environmental” issues. Fred spoke of his greatest successes in bringing people together to work on issues of environmental justice as coming about through a common connection based on a shared sense of place and the transmission of human compassion through personal narratives.

My time at Cove Point raised a lot of questions for me about the interconnections between grassroots environmentalism and more formal environmental organizations, or “mainstream environmentalism.” I wanted to understand why these grassroots community organizers saw local work as the best approach to overcoming the root causes of environmental
problems. To me, direct action tactics and organizing within local communities to delay the construction of a fracking well or pipeline initially seemed rather ineffective. Working through formal, professionalized institutions to sway the workings of government seemed like a more comprehensive, and influential course. Refusing money from foundations also confused me as I saw money as a necessary resource for obtaining power and could not understand why grassroots movements could not simply accept the money and carry on doing the same work with greater financial capacity. Furthermore, a number of attendees at the gathering were members and organizers with Greenpeace, which I understood to be a large, highly institutionalized, formal group. Given the insistence of community organizers that collaboration with big environmental groups detracts from their emphasis on social justice and community participation, what had brought them and Greenpeace organizers into a shared space of learning and networking? These were some of the questions on my mind as I began to think about my thesis and started drafting interview questions for my field work.

Overview of the Study

This study seeks to explain the mechanisms giving shape to a “political style spectrum” across different environmental organizations operating within the context of US society and politics, especially within the realm of Washington DC, through an analysis of twenty-two qualitative interviews. Central to the theoretical discussion are the contributions of Pierre Bourdieu, social movement theorists, and anthropological and sociological perspectives on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the context of the neoliberal milieu. Commonly referred to as non-profits in the US context, I will use the term NGO throughout the study to provide a more general categorization referring to state-sanctioned organizations in both the national and international context. The political style spectrum highlights the varying levels of proximity to
the US state and more autonomous spaces of collective consciousness raising and social movements among different NGOs. Organizations on the Right end of the spectrum are relatively proximate to the state. They are generally identified with being larger in size, focused on federal-level policy, dependent on large foundations, more likely to partner with the private sector, and less likely to engage in “on-the-ground” organizing work. Staff members primarily perceive them as more willing to collaborate and compromise on policy with state and corporate entities. On the Left end of the spectrum, organizations play an intermediary role between the formal structures of the state and more autonomous spaces of social movements emerging around issues of environmental, climate, economic, and racial justice. These organizations demonstrate practices of organizational autonomy and are less willing to partner with the private sector or to compromise on policy. They are further characterized with smallness in size, engagement in organizing work, and more reflexive analyses (recognition) of their positionality in the societal distribution of power.

The study is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. In Chapter One, I provide the theoretical groundwork of the study, drawing largely on the work of Pierre Bourdieu in addition to other theoretical work on social movements and power, to depict the role of environmental organizations as intermediating forms between, and having varying levels of alignment with, the state and more autonomous spaces of collective consciousness formation. Anthropological and sociological concerns of NGOs as privatized social service providers shaped by a neoliberal state apparatus and as diffusers of collective dissent are also considered.

Chapter Two draws largely on interview transcripts to set the scene of the networks, coalitions, and partnerships within which staff members’ organizations operate. The NGOs are considered in relative proximity to one another as they navigate the realm of elite,
institutionalized politics in Washington DC, while often connected to much broader, multifaceted environmental and climate movements. Despite their relative proximity to one another, in this chapter I begin to highlight how these NGOs are in fact situated differently within the societal distribution of power. A qualitative description of NGOs’ coalitional interdependency introduces the foundational framework of the Left-Right political spectrum along which NGOs situate themselves in relation to one another as they seek to hold influence from their different types of legitimacy, or what Bourdieu refers to as “species of capital,” with grassroots partnerships or with the state. NGOs with large amounts of dominant capital with the state, such as EDF, partner with more “grassroots,” “community-led” organizations like CommunityEarth that hold local legitimacy through their “well-connected” field staff. NGOs with grassroots legitimacy and access to “indigenous resources” in the form of local organizations, partner with “Big Greens” for their technical know-how, financial stability, and dominant cultural legitimacy. In these coalitions of behind-the-scenes partnerships and mutual influence, NGO staff members perceive a political spectrum primarily in terms of NGOs’ willingness to compromise and ingratiate themselves with political elites, corporations, and foundations.

Chapters Three and Four concern the different mechanisms by which NGOs are pulled towards opposing ends of the political spectrum. NGOs’ differential positions are determined by their objective positions within the broader distribution of capital (in the Bourdieusian sense), as well as their exposure to the political analyses that exist in other, oppressed or dominating, social realms. Autonomy from the state is considered in terms of “reflexivity” apparent in organizational discourse. Reflexivity entails a recognition of one’s social position within a
broader distribution of power; reflexive practices allow agents to step outside of their own socially-informed norms and recognize that they are not universally shared.

Chapter Three discusses the characteristics of Left-of-center organizations, arguing that the interests and perspectives of marginalized populations can be understood to shape the operations, discourse, and tactics of some formal, professionalized organizations. Listening and working at the grassroots level can alter organizational practices and cultivate indigenous resources in the form of social ties and networks. Removed from the realm of institutionalized politics and elite interests, social positions of oppression offer spaces of potential for the collective imagination of a counter social order and the creation of counter-hegemonic discourses. The integration of more radical, intersectional frameworks into the institutional structures of NGOs is addressed in consideration of three models of organizing. These models – constituency-led organizing, national organizing, and deep organizing – suggest different levels of capacity to break away from a homologous reflection of the status quo. Most NGOs can be understood adopting the integrative, middle approach of “deep organizing” that recognizes the importance for local autonomy and indigenous capacity building, but that still operates largely under the professionally-driven analyses originating in the field of institutionalized politics.

Chapter Four considers NGOs’ subordinate position in relation with the state, corporations, and foundations. NGOs in closer proximity to these entities are considered Centrist and Right-of-Center groups. Dominant positions of elites produce a discourse of neutrality, pragmatism, and corporate benevolence that conveniently ignores questions of power, and reconstitutes societal structures of domination that work in the interests of elites. In this sense, NGOs’ partnerships with charitable foundations and corporations is understood as steering them towards the realm of the state. Foundation mandates direct NGOs towards short-term, achievable
agendas while corporate partnerships steer them away from political considerations of power and towards technical fixes and regulation through the private sector. In order to avoid unwanted influences of dominant power players, NGOs adopt practices of reflexivity to maintain organizational autonomy while simultaneously benefiting from the needed legitimacy of the dominant white society provided by access to dominant statist capital. Organizational autonomy indicates separation from the dominant political field and is perceived through staff members’ recognition of their subordinate position and a desire to avoid problematic influences of foundations and corporations.

The reader should note that the data collected for this study presents an understanding of political organizing and frontline community groups solely from the perspectives of NGO staff members who occupy a sociocultural dominant position in this relationship. This is not to undervalue the importance of perspectives from the other end of this relationship, but rather is due to the limitations of this study. I argue that environmental NGOs are intermediating forms within the social power structure which can be observed in NGO staff members’ positionality and perspectives alone, but there is certainly also much to be gained from further research incorporating the views of NGOs’ non-elite partners.

Methods
I chose to interview staff members at environmental NGOs for my field work. My original research question centered on what seemed to me to be disconnect between a lack of critique of the impact of large-scale agribusiness on climate change within the climate movement, in contrast with the explicit condemnation of the fossil fuel industry. For this reason, a number of the organizations or staff members in this study were selected because of their work on climate issues and large-scale monoculture and meat production. This focus however shifted as my
attention was brought to different patterns in the data I collected. I chose to use qualitative, in-person interviews as my primary research method because of my limited knowledge of the world of environmental NGOs. This approach was also informed largely by my familiarity with ethnographic research methodology. The methodological approach left space for elaboration during interviewees and inductively developing a rich qualitative understanding that could not be accomplished through a survey. And this is in actuality what unfolded. As my field research progressed, I began to pick up on new patterns in the data and shifted my interview questions to focus on these trends.

These trends included important differences in staff members’ perceptions of extra-organizational partnerships with other NGOs, charitable foundations, corporations, membership bases, and frontline communities. The initial interviews included questions I developed around my original research question on monoculture and meat production. The original questions concerned the overall goals and objectives of staff members’ organizations, the organizations’ relation to their “big picture” understanding of environmental and climate issues, important distinctions or points of tension among organizations operating within shared coalitions or networks, and impressions of foundations’ priorities and how foundations influence the work of NGOs. Over the course of ten weeks, I expanded the interview questions to collect data on noticeable trends concerning private-sector partnerships, organizational structures, membership engagement and “on-the-ground” organizing work. As I gained experience with interviewing and knowledge of my topic, the interviews tended to become longer. The average interview lasted around fifty minutes.

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2 For a sample of interview questions, see appendix, p. 119.
I learned about the organizations where I conducted my interviews through online searches for prominent environmental groups in Washington DC, and used their websites to learn about their different levels of collaboration through close partnerships, coalitions, and looser networks. While at first I found it difficult to understand the overlapping networks and how groups saw themselves fitting into a broader environmental and climate movement, as time went on it became easier to understand where different groups fell in relation to each other within these networks. A number of organizations in Washington DC, including US Climate Action Network, Climate Protection Network, and Eco Organizing Group have as their mission the coordination of different groups to build issue-based coalitions. Informants from these groups helped map out the organizational terrain in their interviews from their positions in overarching, umbrella organizations. I conducted the recruitment process through emails and phone calls, providing interviewees with limited information about the study.

I explained that the study was about the organizational structures and agenda setting of environmental NGOs, with the goal of understanding their modes of identifying and approaching environmental issues. I explained that I sought to understand how organizations shape their campaigns around specific issues, and how relationships with other NGOs and the broader environmental/climate movement, private sector partnerships, and funding sources influenced agenda setting. At the beginning of interviews I went over the points laid out in an informed consent form. I told all staff members their names and organizations would be kept anonymous in the final report but I later gave staff members the option of disclosing the information to provide added depth to the study. Four of the staff members I interviewed gave me permission

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3 For recruitment email, see appendix, p. 118.
4 For Informed Consent Form, see appendix, p. 120.
5 For an invitation to disclose information, see appendix, p. 121.
to use their organization’s name in the writing of my thesis and a few staff members gave
permission for me to use their personal names as well. The rest of staff members wished for their
names and organizations to remain anonymous. I have assigned these organizations and staff
members pseudonyms, and I discuss their organizations in general terms to protect their
anonymity.

The data on which this study is based consists of twenty-two interviews at twenty-one
different NGOs (I was able to interview two staff members at one group) collected over the
course of ten weeks in the summer of 2016. The NGOs consisted of six international groups,
including two research institutes; seven national groups, including one overarching network
group that coordinates efforts on climate change (USCAN); two regional groups, one focused
explicitly on climate change and the other on local environmental issues; and two foundations,
one regional and one national. I audio recorded and transcribed verbatim every interview in order
to analyze them. Not every interview is referenced in this study, and some interview transcripts
are used more heavily than others depending on their relevance to the discussion. I see this
narrowing and selectivity as part of a research process in which every interview played a role
even if it does not appear in the final study presented here. Fifteen of the twenty-two interviews
are referenced at least once.

Upon a preliminary analysis of the data collected, I was able to narrow my research
question and analysis to focus on patterns of a “political style spectrum.” I developed coding
categories using Atlas.ti for each interview while simultaneously carrying out secondary
research. In this way, my theoretical and secondary sources and the development of codes were
mutually informative. Towards the beginning of this process, a consistent trend among staff
members’ discussions of NGO partnerships was their connection with a “political spectrum” (the
focus of Chapter Two). The political spectrum highlighted variations in NGOs’ tendencies to take “hardline” political stances, in contrast trying to shift federal policy through more compromising, “insider” techniques such as lobbying and mobilization at the national level. During the academic year starting in the fall of 2016, I centered my primary data analysis and secondary material research on identifying the mechanisms that incline certain NGOs to take inflexible political stances or else more compromising approaches.

A Note on Positionality

Based on my outwardly identifiable characteristics, the world of professional environmental work was easy to enter. I am a white, female-identifying student at an elite college. I am an American-born citizen, and I consider my background as a mix of middle and upper class influences. I attended a well-resourced private Quaker boarding school for my childhood and teenage years (boarding for my junior and senior years of high school) on financial aid, and both of my parents hold bachelor’s degrees, although from more vocationally-oriented, and less prestigious institutions than mine. I was accepted into Swarthmore College’s class of 2017 and chose to pursue a major in Sociology and Anthropology during the second half of my sophomore year.

Throughout the process of field research, my background provided me with a certain amount of legitimacy perceptible through my interactions with staff members. The recognition of Swarthmore’s name among interviewees was mixed, but still important in some cases, as a number of interviewees commented on the high-standing academic reputation of Swarthmore. More generally, however, my white skin, and educated, middle class persona helped me to not
stand out in comparison to the staff members I interviewed, all of whom held at the least a bachelor’s degree and all of whom appeared white.

At the same time, my young age (twenty-one at the time) and outward discomfort in professional settings worked against my aura of legitimacy. I felt nervous and uncertain of my own research, especially when interviewing at NGOs with a corporate feel, or when meeting with highly experienced and educated professionals. In general, I perceive myself as outwardly presenting a certain though not overbearing level of discomfort and nervousness in the presence of professional adults. At points during interviews, my outward confusion at the use of professional jargon left me at a loss for how to steer the interview and resulted in awkward moments of silence from which I would then have to recover. On a number of occasions, interviewees expressed confusion as to what I was trying to “get out of” the research project, and I had difficulty explaining the immersive approach of qualitative research. For the most part, staff members were generous with their time and seemed comfortable and willing to disclose information. However, two interviewees working for Big Greens and one interviewee at a development group were outwardly hesitant to reveal information that would portray their organization in a negative light. At a different Big Green, a staff member had to limit our time to thirty minutes because of his busy schedule, which resulted in a very rushed interview.

I am a young person in a world facing increasing inequality and the impending crises of global climate change. My Swarthmore experience has centered around trying to understand my positionality and role coming from a background of white privilege in the fight for a sustainable and just future through collective liberation from capitalist exploitation and social oppression. I wanted my thesis to be a part of that journey of self-discovery, and I feel it is important to note that this felt like an unavoidable, overarching interrogation throughout the research process. I
also entered the research process with a certain level of skepticism of NGOs and top-down organizational structures informed by two anthropology seminars, Development and its Discontents, and Anthropology of Capitalism. Aihwa Ong’s *Neoliberalism as Exception*, discussed in Chapter One, was particularly informative.
CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXTUALIZING NGOs, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND THE STATE

In *This Changes Everything*, Naomi Klein lays out a trend of environmentalism moving away from efforts of mass-based movements engaged with the broader public, and towards the work of professional scientists, lawyers, lobbyists, and economists, by and large engaged with the legal structures of the state. With the advent of the Reagan administration in the 1980s and the rise of free market ideology, the environmental movement’s conventional approach of pushing for environmental regulation through banning or severely limiting polluting activity radically changed. Instead of risking their ties with political and corporate power, organizations began to lay out new approaches to reach their aims by ingratiating themselves with big polluters and corporate representation in political lobbies and the federal government (Klein 2014:203).

Environmental agendas towards insider approaches of compromise and away from the difficult task of demanding that politicians regulate companies to incorporate the costs of environmental and climate externalities into their business plans.

Klein provides the salient example of the failure to pass the Waxman-Markey climate legislation in 2009 to demonstrate the depth of the partnership between big environmental groups and large corporate polluters. Klein argues that in 2007 the political climate made the passing of climate legislation by Congress highly likely. In this same year, Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a huge multimillion dollar environmental NGO, brought together a number of “Big Green” environmental groups and large corporate players to form the US Climate Action Partnership (USCAP). USCAP included companies such as General Electric, Dow Chemical, Alcoa, ConocoPhillips, BP Shell, Duke Energy, and DuPont that were concerned with the possibility of the Obama administration using the EPA to put a strict limit on carbon emissions (Klein 227). These companies came together with some of the “Big Greens,” including The
Nature Conservancy, The National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the World Resources Institute (WRI), and what was at the time called the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. Together they worked to compromise on climate legislation and find middle ground on the priorities of the business and environmental communities.

Far from having the power to significantly curb emissions, however, the USCAP compromise would have permitted 90 percent of total emissions from energy utilities to continue with no cost to corporations, and Waxman-Markey, the primary draft of legislation that came out of the partnership, would have actually banned the EPA from regulating carbon from coal plants and other major polluters (Klein 227). To top off the feeble strategy of compromise, rather than supporting the legislation they had helped to draft, the corporations in USCAP suddenly began attacking the legislation in 2009 as the rise of the Tea Party made the chance of Congress passing climate legislation a non-concern for corporations. Instead of endorsing the legislation, they focused their efforts on framing it as dangerous to the economy and employment.

This example of insider environmentalism illustrates the influences of corporate interests in politics on environmental NGOs and raises fundamental questions about relationships of power and influence between a the state and other actors, notably corporations and nongovernmental organizations. In this chapter, I will engage anthropological and sociological insights on NGOs and reform-oriented social change organizations. Considerations of such organizations as tools of a capitalist state for the privatization of social services and diffusion of collective dissent will be put in conversation with social movement theory. This will build an inclusive framework that recognizes spaces of mutual influence between environmental NGOs and social movements, as formal NGOs act as resource providers for grassroots organizing efforts, intermediating between
these efforts and the state’s dominant structures and ideologies. This framework will integrate ideas of social movement autonomy and critiques of depoliticized, state-proximate NGOs that will inform an understanding of NGOs’ differential positioning along a political spectrum described more fully in the following chapter.

NGOs: Tools of the Capitalist US State

In following two sections, I will provide an overview of existing literature that contributes to an understanding of the interconnectedness of the dominant realm of the state and NGOs. “NGO” is an ambiguous term applied to a wide variety of institutions with highly differentiated levels of state, societal, and corporate influence. As Fisher (1997) explains, the literature on NGOs contributes to the obfuscation of the term’s designation, through broad generalizations, and the particular politics and ideologies of the analysts concerned with NGOs. I use the term NGO because of its connotation with NGOs as a part of a depoliticizing, neoliberal state apparatus discussed in the following section. I will specify the organizations considered in this study with the term “environmental NGO” (ENGO) to differentiate them from the social service provider role NGOs are frequently connected with. A Bourdieusian framework of ENGOs will also be considered. Put in dialogue, neoliberal and Bourdieusian angles of engagement will build a theoretical framework for understanding the implications of “state proximate” ENGOs.

NGOs and the Neoliberal State Apparatus

Literature connecting NGOs with neoliberalism is commonly concerned with NGOs as social service providers. ENGOs are not focused on social services in the same sense, as they more commonly focus on corporate and state regulation and enforcement, and, as discussed in Chapter Three, political organizing. However, considerations of ENGOs’ implication in state
retrenchment and depoliticization of structural inequities provides important context for this study. Anthropological and sociological research engages with questions of state power and NGOs in terms of neoliberal policies and ideology at both the macro and micro level. The analytical lens at the macro level primarily explores patterns of macroeconomic policy of states and international governing bodies. James Ferguson (2010) explains that neoliberal macroeconomic policies share a doctrine of the minimization of government and valorization of private enterprise. Scholarship often deems these policies “free-market fetishism” in their push for welfare state retrenchment, privatization of social services, as well as tariff elimination and currency deregulation, notably through the structural adjustment programs spearheaded in the 1980s. Under neoliberalism, the state deploys market-based techniques of private enterprise by subcontracting out to private service providers, thereby integrating the realm of the market into core structures of the state (Ferguson 2010). David Harvey considers these patterns a class project carried out internationally by capitalist elites to enrich the holders of capital, leading to increasing inequality and the loss of social safety nets for the working class and poor (Ferguson 2010).

If one considers neoliberalism as various forms of macroeconomic policies, the rise of NGOs can be seen as an outcome of the minimization of social welfare spending and market regulation. NGOs step in as privatized, “efficient” social service providers in place of the welfare state, cushioning social costs of cuts in state spending. Among these understandings is sociologist Geoffrey Wood’s (1997) discussion of the “franchise state” (the state franchising its responsibility to NGOs), arguing that restricting the role of the state and its control over resources is a necessary precursor for the proliferation of free markets and for NGOs and other private organizations to gain power in society. In a structural sense, NGOs are forms of
privatization and decentralization of the state at a macro level that take its place as social service providers (Ganti 2014). They come to represent necessary alternatives to the problematic and unpreventable over-bureaucratization of the state, rather than an outcome of its insufficiencies (Fisher 1997).

At a micro level, neoliberalism is commonly understood in relationship with a Foucauldian understanding of, and individualizing subjectification by, the rationality of the capitalist state in the creation of neoliberal subjects. NGOs can be understood as articulating neoliberal ideologies under the realm of the state, creating neoliberal subjectivities. In this regard, neoliberalism is less about macroeconomic policies and patterns of economic doctrine, but rather the specific mechanisms of the state in creating subjects marked by values of individualism, entrepreneurialism, and self-improvement for contribution to a capitalist, free market society. In this way, “the ‘responsibilized’ citizen comes to operate as a miniature firm, responding to incentives, rationally assessing risks, and prudently choosing from different courses of action” (Ferguson 2010).

Instrumental in the anthropological concern with neoliberal subject-making is Foucault’s theory of governmentality and understanding of power. Foucault (1982) defines power as actions by individuals or groups working to modify the actions of others. “Governmentality” or “to govern” is “to structure the possible field of action of others” (Foucault 1982:790). Rather than conceiving of the state as a totality that ignores the individual natures of human beings, he posits the state as a complex series of interlocking forms that pattern actions to control and make predictable the behavior of individuals in a society. (Foucault 1982:786).

In a Foucauldian sense, neoliberalism can be understood as a more recent development in the history of technologies of governmentality and subject-making, one concerned with market
knowledge and profitability, and NGOs can be seen as one of many forms of state control in a neoliberal society in their propagation of neoliberal technologies (Ong 2006:13). Aihwa Ong (2006) describes the tendency of neoliberalism to degrade traditional rights of citizenship as tied to the sovereign, geographically-bounded nation-state, and to weaken the social contract between the state and its polity. Citizenship and rights are instead linked to notions of individual value in contribution to a capitalist economy. Meanwhile, the role of the state increasingly becomes the protection of capitalist interests, providing opportunities for the privatization of public services, access to the free market, and rights to private property. As certain populations are marginalized by their inability to participate equally in the market, and rights and privileges tied to sovereign nations are degraded, new institutions, such as NGOs, emerge to address issues of health and human rights. Mediating between cultural and political economies, NGOs try to appeal to local cultural values as well as neoliberal ideologies of the state (Ong 2006).

Through this mediation, NGOs depoliticize issues by making appeals to basic ethical values of survival and “bodily integrity” and participation in neoliberal society, putting forth “technical solutions,” such as job training and welfare services to depoliticized issues (Fisher 1997). In the world of environmental organizations, this tendency can be recognized in an emphasis on sources of renewable energy, energy efficiency, and corporate initiatives as a primary strategy for achieving climate change mitigation, downplaying the distribution of power that structures oppression and environmental injustice (Baer 2011). By avoiding the framing of issues in terms of civic engagement, and equal rights to citizenship, racial, class, or gender equity, NGOs obscure technologies of neoliberal control and steer clear of discussions of systemic oppression underlying environmental degradation (Ong 2006). In a Foucauldian sense, NGOs can be seen as just one piece of an expansive network of systems of social control.
implicated with the state in its creation of neoliberal subjectivities, propagating neoliberal rationality in their ideologies, policies, and organizational structures.

**Bourdiesuan Conception of NGOs and the State**

The work of Pierre Bourdieu can serve as an additional framework for conceptualizing the interconnectedness of the state and “nongovernmental” institutions through his theories of habitus and field. Bourdieu (1992) describes a field as a network of objective, historical relations between positions that are determined by the distribution of various species of capital (or power) throughout the field. These species of capital can be social, cultural, economic (monetary), or symbolic, and hold differing amounts of legitimacy and therefore power depending on their place within the field; in some fields, certain types of cultural capital hold more weight and legitimacy than in others. Human agents or “players” within a field acquire particular dispositions, abilities, and bodily practices, shaped through their lived experience within that field. Bourdieu calls this make-up of individuals their “habitus,” of which he says individuals are by and large unaware because it is part of their seemingly natural, lived experience of the everyday.

The conditions of preexisting fields are perpetuated through the habitus of human agents as they internalize the mannerisms and worldviews of the various fields they come into and then act accordingly to reconstitute those fields’ structures. Habitus “explains that the agent does what she or he “has to do” without posing it explicitly as a goal, below the level of calculation and even consciousness, beneath discourse and representation” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:128). Social reality, therefore exists twice, “in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Bourdieu describes fields as “overlapping” and “semi-autonomous” because the flow of agents and capital between fields introduces and
legitimizes new species of capital within them, blurring their boundaries and altering their structures.

Bourdieu’s discussion of the perpetuation and expansion of state power can be considered through the concept of “homologies” in the field. Capital, reconstituted by habitus in the field, can become concentrated and lead to a rise in the interweaving configurations and consolidation of fields. Particular types of capital hold increasing influence over others and can be centralized within the state, forming a “statist” or “meta” capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant 114). Homologies are the patterns or positions between fields that resemble each other despite their unique characteristics determined by the field of their occurrence; they are “a resemblance within a difference” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:106). They occur between different fields in reference to the overarching power structure of a dominating statist capital.

The concept of homologies may be understood through a comparison between an academic in the field of philosophy and a lobbyist in the field of environmental NGOs. These two agents may hold the same reservations with regard to the state because of their subordinate positions to it and the risk of delegitimizing their own positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:105). Bourdieu considers this pattern of subordination in relation to the same dominant field of statist capital a homology. Homologies legitimize the dominating type of capital by operating within its terms and respecting its authority. Bourdieu argues that the existence of homologies means that the differentiation between “private” and “state” organizations is often deceiving because organizations are often trying to leverage power within the same field and commonly conform to the same structures (1992:113). Bourdieu’s theory of the field can be used to conceive of NGOs as reinforcing statist capital. In order to command influence, NGOs (contending on the same “statist” field as, and in relationship with, the state) attempt to leverage
power through preexisting power structures that are determined by statist capital. By organizing more and more through the direction of professional lawyers, lobbyists, and economists, and under the financial backing of corporate foundations in order to leverage the power of the state, environmental NGOs partake in the dominant statist capital of legal and monetary forms, acting as important parts of the state’s structure.

**Autonomous NGOs, Social Movement Theory, and the State**

The above considerations of NGOs are largely concerned with their intertwining with structures of neoliberalism and state power. They are particularly concerned with NGOs’ increasingly large role in global governance and as social service providers in recent history. While these perspectives are informative in considering the intertwining of state structures, ENGOs, and the depoliticizing roles they play, many of the organizations considered in this study also share clear ties to questions of social movement theory because of their “on the ground” organizing and political mobilization work, serving as resource providers in their partnerships with “grassroots” community organizations, topics explored in-depth in Chapter Three. It is therefore instructive to also consider ENGOs within a broader range of social movement actors, as these groups come together and are influenced by organizations occupying different positionalities in an environmental movement and in relation to the state. While literature on NGOs is usually distinct from social movement theory, I will consider ENGOs as part of a broader environmental movement and draw on social movement theory to do so.

**Tying Together NGOs and Social Movement Theory**

Literature concerning NGOs and social movement theory are differentiated in several respects. Literature on NGOs is commonly concerned with their institutionalization, hierarchical and
formal structures, and stability. Rootes (2004) considers environmental work in all industrialized countries as highly institutionalized, considering organizations’ size, income, professionalization, formality, and degree of interaction with the state. Eyerman and Jamison (1991) question the categorization of ENGOs’ work as being situated within a “movement” because of their highly institutionalized structures and the competition and lack of collective identity among groups.

Along these lines, sociologist Doug McAdam (2010) questions the categorization of reform organizations working within formal political processes as part of social movements. He asserts their “broad links to the centers of decision-making power and their heavy, if not exclusive, reliance on institutionalized change strategies mark them as different phenomena” from social movements (2010:25). Their insider status distinguishes them from groups excluded from formal political processes that use noninstitutionalized tactics intended to disrupt the normal functioning of society to gain political leverage (McAdam 2010). McAdam sees reform-oriented organizations as serving to strengthen the status quo by confining change efforts to institutionalized channels and diffusing discontent with the assurance that “something is being done” (McAdam 2010:25). In his essay, “the political logic of the non-profit industrial complex,” Dylan Rodriguez (2007) views the proliferation of nonprofit organizations as a means of deradicalizing the counter-hegemonic movements of the Left and turning them into “nonantagonistic social service and reformist initiatives” that fail to challenge fundamental structures of domination (26). These initiatives are in closer proximity to the state through its determination of their structures and a dependence on philanthropic, corporate capital.

In comparison with NGOs’ association with reinforcing the status quo, social movement organizations (SMOs) seek to change it (Kriesberg 1997). According to Kriesberg (1997) SMOs can be understood as a subset of NGOs working through a political analysis aiming to
fundamentally restructure society (Kriesberg 1997). Kriesberg defines SMOs as groups “working to change some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society” (1997:12). SMOs more commonly use unconventional tactics of protest and direct action, in addition to conventional tactics within the formal political system, more commonly associated with NGOs’ institutionalized structures. SMOs are points of organizational stability in broader social movements, generally understood as fragmentary and disjointed, and characterized by a continual shifting and reframing of goals and beliefs as nonprofessional participants work collectively to shape the movement (Jasper 1997). They are understood to stem from organization around unfulfilled needs of a segment of the population raising up a collective objection to political practices or cultural norms.

Following Kriesberg’s explanation of SMOs and their closer association with nonprofessional disjointed movements, the formalized organizations considered in this study do not fall into this category. All but three of the staff members I interviewed work for national or international nonprofits operating under the federally recognized 501(c)(3) tax-deductible model. According to the IRS, 501(c)(3) nonprofits are “religious, charitable, scientific, or educational” organizations, with tax-exempt spending. They can receive tax deductible contributions from funders but cannot engage in political campaigns and can only spend limited amounts (around 10 to 20 percent) of the organization’s resources on lobbying. Of the three remaining groups, two were foundations⁶, and one had a 501(c)(4) branch in addition to a 501(c)(3) branch, to allow for unlimited levels of spending on lobbying and direct participation in political campaigns, but barring the benefit of tax-deductible contributions.

⁶ Foundations are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.
Despite the differentiation of social movement theory and literature concerning NGOs, considering ENGOs as an interconnected part of an environmental movement is useful in understanding the political alignment of environmental organizations, as these groups frequently partner with, initiate, or serve as an institutionalized voice or resource provider to social movements (Fisher 1997). I consider formalized “Left-of-Center” ENGOs as intermediating forms between the state and its institutionalized structures and ideologies, and frontline communities, whose interests and worldviews frequently lie more outside the dominant structures and ideologies of the state. ENGOs exhibit varying levels of proximity to these two realms. Other more “Centrist” ENGOs on the Right end of the political spectrum are considered operating by and large within the homologous structures of the state. The meshing of frontline community organizing and formalized Left-of-center organizations is an intermediating process of collective action, wherein movement ideologies, strategies, and organizational structures are brought into ENGOs’ institutionalized structures. An appreciation of collective action among ENGOs themselves can be recognized in the way groups value collaboration despite intragroup competition, forming “issue-based” coalitions within network structures that are able to accommodate their diverging ideologies and political stances. Through this process, groups occupying different spaces along the political spectrum can come to integrate the goals, understandings, and tactics of divergent ENGOs and organizing efforts.

Analysis of ENGOs within the influence of social movements helps to understand why there is a spectrum of alignment and struggle with state and corporate interests within the environmental movement’s ENGO partners. I draw on social movement theory in an inclusive framework that includes ENGOs in the web of coalitions and networks that make up a noninstitutionalized, broader environmental movement. This framework conceptualizes formal
and informal organizations as part of an inclusive network of collective action and shared identity, recognizing that institutionalization does not necessarily entail a complete loss of shared identity within the movement at large (Rootes 2004). By partnering with nonprofessional, participatory grassroots groups and local communities, ENGOs are exposed to work focused on empowerment and democratic organizing within marginalized populations. An inclusive framework also gives recognition to the centrality of the nonprofit model and its “oversubscription” in the current political milieu that blurs the line distinguishing autonomous movements and state-proximate nonprofits and NGOs generally (Tang 2007:223).

**Social Movements and the Need for Autonomy**

This section will discuss common conceptions of New Social Movements (NSMs), and explain sociologist Rhys Williams’ discussion of cultural environments and organizational fields within which social movements form. Williams’ discussion of dominant cultural codes will focus on the necessity of social movements’ autonomy from the state’s confining, hegemonic structures and ideologies. Coy and Hedeen (2005) emphasize autonomy because of its conduciveness to “spaces where critiques of status quo norms and policies may be nourished and articulated free from the conceptual constraints and boundaries of established thinking and existing policies.” Autonomy enables the articulation of the grievances, demands, and collective identity formation within challenging movements, and is signaled within movements through organizational structures, discourses, and the affirmation of identities that challenge the homologous status quo.

“New Social Movement” literature utilizes identity formation and identity politics as a central lens of analysis. Analysts of NSMs observe a shift away from class-based mobilization around issues of material distribution seeking to challenge the state’s protection of dominant class interests. Instead, movements seek to challenge the dominant culture and work towards
increased political representation by targeting the dominant society in addition to the state
(Woolford and Ratner 2003). Scholarship on NSMs describes a shift towards movement building
around individual identities (race, gender, sexuality, and religion), environmental issues, as well
as peace and opposition to war, instead of focusing explicitly on class (Eidlin 2014).

The formation and maintenance of alternative identities is thus a central lens of analysis
in NSM scholarship. Identity formation or “identity politics” counters patterns of social
domination and the unequal distribution of resources across different social groups, developing
around historical patterns of minority groups organizing to gain political and social recognition.
Analysts recognize that although citizenship is supposedly based in universality of equal rights,
the reality is that the universal citizen is of a particular type, in the US namely the white,
European, propertied male. Holston and Appadurai (1996) explain this in terms of the difference
between formal and substantive citizenship. While many groups may have formal citizenship in
the nation-state, unequal cultural and material resources prevent many people from participating
in and benefiting from the state’s institutions. Because of their differences, particular groups
have been denied equal status and opportunity.

The central argument of identity politics is that only recognition of these groups’
existence and differential treatment will counter their historic exclusion. Citizenship becomes
about recognizing the needs of different groups, rather than insistence of equal treatment across
all groups of people (Holston and Appadurai 1994). The environmental justice movement thus
points to structures of racism, in addition to economic marginalization and exploitation, as the
cause of inequitable patterns of toxins, environmental degradation, and its impact on health.
Environmental justice movements work for the empowerment of local communities, striving to
increase representation of communities facing injustices by reshaping dominant social norms as
well as recognition by the state (Rootes 2004). While the environmental justice framework is not central to the work of many of the ENGOs considered in this study, it is the central framework of many of their grassroots, frontline partnerships, and thus important context for understanding their interactions.

Rhys Williams’ (2004) discussion of “cultural environments” in shaping social movements is useful in understanding the application of Bourdieu’s statist capital in the formation of social movements within the institutional contours of the state and dominant social codes. Like Bourdieu’s conception of the field, Williams’s explanation of cultural environments focuses on their objective and structuring functions. Williams defines cultural environments as “sites” produced by “the interactions among social and cultural contexts… in which meanings are ambiguous, definitions of the situation contested, and cultural challenge is possible” (Williams 2004:100).

The cultural environment is structured by the “cultural field” and the “institutional context” of formal organizations that channel the development of movements within their structures. Cultural environments both limit and enable the possibilities for building power within social movements. They are limiting because of their structural determination of legitimacy, or what Bourdieu would call the objective structure of the distribution of species of capital. However, cultural environments also serve as “repertoires” that agents in social movements can use in innovative ways to build power and legitimacy for groups in society. The idea of a “cultural repertoire” seeks to highlight the limits and enabling aspects of a cultural environment.
Williams explains the structural existence of cultural environments, and the repertoires they make available to challenging movements in terms of “boundedness” and “resonance.” Boundedness limits the repertoire of cultural elements available to actors in a movement when making their claims because the elements must be both intelligible and hold moral or ideational legitimacy for people outside of the movement (Williams 2004). Williams understands reform groups as those that work well within the dominant societal norms of intelligibility and legitimacy. Radical groups push the boundaries of social norms and require more “elaborated” explanations and codes in order to make their case and appeal to the broader population (Williams 2004). McAdam sees the latter (radical) groups as threatening the established system of elite power as a whole, while the former only threaten the interests of a few elite groups (2010). The cultural repertoire is further shaped by the “resonance” of frames that social movements create through their elaborated explanations. Within the bounds of legitimacy and intelligibility, certain frames will resonate differently across various audiences, depending on the life experiences, worldviews, and beliefs they hold (Williams 2004).

In making appeals, movements must work within the cultural environment to gain recognition and achieve benefits for movement members. The adjustment of appeals within a movement to fit the boundedness and resonance of the cultural environment is a reflection of different groups’ positions within the social hierarchy, as oppressed or subordinate subculture groups work to accommodate perceptions and ideologies of the broader public that may not fit with their own views. The use of resonant, legitimate, and intelligible cultural codes (or what Bourdieu would call dominant forms of capital) can help movements gain acceptance within the broader public.
The challenge for a movement, then, lies in finding a balance between selection of dominant cultural codes to represent the movement’s legitimacy, and elaboration of less legitimate or illegitimate codes to challenge the widely accepted structures of dominant state and cultural power. This balance is important because, while appealing to the broader society can be an effective tool for leveraging power within marginalized populations, it can also steer the group away from the concerns and commitments that brought it together in the first place thereby damaging its autonomy. As Nancy Bell (1999) explains, structures of power in society are commonly reinforced through arguments of “rationality” or “efficiency,” created in the dominating group’s effort to maintain control; Bourdieu (1994) observes this in terms of dominant political discourses of the neutralization and negation of social struggle.

The use of legitimate codes can fall within arguments of rationality and efficiency, serving to reinforce dominant ideologies and structures of power, such as the neoliberal doctrine of the free market and privatization (Williams 2004). The creation of “frames” in movements is held to be an essential tool and resource for marginalized groups. Piven and Cloward (1979) write that it is the tool of “people whose only possible recourse in struggle is to defy the beliefs and rituals laid down by their rulers” (2). Frames that resonate strongly within society, such as appeals to morality and religion in the Civil Rights movement, may be used by challenging groups to gain influence in seemingly illogical, unconnected fields (from religion), without reinforcing the dominant structures of society (Williams 2004). The elaboration of nondominant cultural codes enables movements to maintain a certain level of autonomy from the state that is important for the development and maintenance of a counter-hegemonic identity.
Conclusion

This chapter has laid out theoretical groundwork for contextualizing ENGOs within existing literature on neoliberalism, Bourdieu’s conception of habitus and field, and social movement theory. These three angles of theoretical grounding provide a framework for analyzing ENGOs as existing within intermediating spaces where they come into closer proximity with the state or else more autonomous social movements. Considerations of ENGOs operating as a piece of a neoliberal state apparatus indicate their participation in macroeconomic policies of privatization, and their depoliticizing role in the creation of Foucauldian neoliberal subjectivities and obscuration of oppression. This theoretical angle indicates ENGOs’ implication within dominant state structures. A Bourdieusian analysis of habitus and field similarly sheds light on the reinforcement of the status quo through the reliance on dominant statist capital indicated by operation within formal political channels and reliance on corporate money and dominant class professionals. Finally, social movement theory contributes to an understanding of formalized ENGOs’ navigation of grassroots organizing efforts, as they partner with frontline communities and local, nonprofessional organizations that often use frameworks of environmental justice. While the organizations in this study should not be considered SMOs, grassroots partnerships can be considered as extraorganizational influences through exposure to the political frames, indigenous resources, and alternative species of capital of marginalized populations.
CHAPTER TWO:  
ENGOs AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

This chapter will provide an qualitative description to set the scene of the networks, coalitions, and partnerships within which the staff members’ organizations operate. The field of environmental organizing, in which these ENGOs are incorporated to a greater or lesser extent, maintains a significant level of shared identity and autonomy of structure from the state. This shared identity exists across organizational boundaries, and to a certain degree is able to override conflicting tactics, worldviews, and the fragmenting effects of sustaining single organizations that lead to intragroup competition for funding and membership. Groups strive for flexible networks that can sustain collaborative efforts and provide access to the different types of legitimacy coalesced in different ENGOs. These types of legitimacy can be considered in terms of Bourdieu’s species of capital that coalesce in semi-autonomous fields (more or less) intertwined with those of the state. More centrist organizations can be seen as leveraging power through the dominant statist capital of money and professionalism, while “hardline” or “left-of-center” organizations work to develop indigenous and alternative species of power through identity formation, collective action, and less conventional tactics of protest and direct action. Staff members’ perceptions of different organizations’ positionality within the environmental movement will be framed in terms of the political spectrum in which their coalition work evolves. This perception of different political alignments and ties to the state emerges in coalitional work in which ENGOs recognize the various competencies and styles of different organizations, and strive for flexible networks and coalitions.
I begin this chapter with a qualitative depiction of the environmental NGOs I interviewed existing within (albeit with varying proximity to) the broader environmental movement, and the common theme of perspectives of a "political style spectrum" that characterizes the coalitional work of these organizations. These coalitions are "issue-based," allowing for collaborative efforts among organizations that come together around specific issues despite their ideological and tactical differences. In these networks, organizations recognize the influence of pooling their varying species of power. An organization that demonstrates well the diversity of these networks is US Climate Action Network (USCAN), an affiliate network of the international Climate Action Network (CAN). CAN is a network of over 850 NGOs in more than 90 countries working to promote action to mitigate climate change through government policy, and private sector and individual initiatives. I met with Mick Power at USCAN who at the time was working as a membership and campaign coordinator for the network. Mick no longer works for USCAN and his perspective does not necessarily reflect the views or position of USCAN. He provided an overview of the diversity within the network and some of the challenges of his work coordinating across the immense differences in organizational and ideological perspectives. I will quote Mick at length here as his description provides an insightful portrait of the power dynamics and complications at stake when bringing together USCAN’s membership, that totals over 160 organizations. When I asked about differences in theories of change across the USCAN coordinates, Mick offered this explanation:

People have not just different theories of change, but different understandings of the world and power, and different levels of comfort with using the word power. In our membership we have 160 plus organizations, some of whom are academic organizations, like research groups, and then we have like 350.org and we have the NAACP. There are some folks who really believe that the way we are going to win on climate change is to have all of the best research and really understand the problem extremely well and communicate it very clearly to a majority of the
American public or really communicate clearly to political decision makers and that is the way to change their mind and change what happens. And there are others who think that the power behind this system of climate destruction lies with the fossil fuel industry and the politicians who they own and that the only way we are ever going to create change is to smash that system [through] direct action or huge civil disobedience or directly targeting companies… Those people have radically different understandings of the world, they have radically different vocabularies, they typically come from very different backgrounds, they wear different clothes. It's hard to even be in a room together let alone agree on a common strategy. So one thing we've tried really hard to do is get comfortable with the idea that we are different and we are never going to agree on everything, actively explore that tension and just have that conversation rather than be awkward about it and pretend that it isn't there, just have the conversation publicly together about how we disagree because then we can start a conversation about how do we work separately but together, like how are we doing different stuff but not [undermining] one another. So is it possible that the people who really want to work with the gas industry to help them get more efficient and less polluting, is it possible that although their understanding of the world is totally different [than] the people who want to ban all gas and stop fracking, is it possible that could be like a good cop bad cop kind of thing? Or do they have hate each other forever? And what are the principles of working together and what are the kind of relational foundations that might facilitate that kind of working separately together?

In this excerpt, Mick envisions the inclusivity of diverse positions and perspectives within a complex and disjointed network, laying out two fundamentally different theories of change. The first is working through the formal political system with decision makers and corporate leaders seen as the holders of power, or what Mick describes as “the view of the world that change happens by passing government policy.” Falling within this view is Mick’s reference to the example of the Waxman-Markey climate legislation, where people had a theory of power of “gaining access” and “really [focusing] on Congress people.” The second approach can be understood as working from outside the confines of the state, with the understanding that the vested interests of the fossil fuel companies and other industries are such that any change has to come from a buildup of pressure from the outside. Mick elaborates on this separate approach later in the interview when he says that the underlining power dynamics are totally tilted in favor of the fossil fuel companies. He explains, “when somebody else has that much power you don't
try to negotiate with them, you try to build up your power and then negotiate with them” recognizing that formal “access [to the state] is not influence.”

In a Bourdieusian sense, the first approach can be understood as working within the confines of the dominant statist capital of professionals, taking an insider approach to leveraging power over the state. The second can be understood as coalescing alternative forms of capital through grassroots organizing, often within nondominant populations of society. Mick recognizes the different habitus of groups coming from this second approach to organizing (they “have radically different understandings of the world,” “radically different vocabularies,” and “they wear different clothes”) and later ties this style to groups that are historically organized around matters of economic and racial justice and based in low-income community networks.7

Despite these fundamentally different approaches, USCAN’s mission is to figure out ways for these vastly divergent groups “to work better together” which makes them “a unique organization within the movement” in terms of the extent to which they are able to develop, let alone push their own agenda. Mick explains that one of the factors that drew him to the organization was his boss’s conviction that, in order for the movement to win, they needed to be putting “people and equity a lot more front and center and [having] a lot more focus on building power from the ground up.” At the same time, USCAN is working to figure out to what extent it will push its own convictions, for fear of reducing the openness of the network towards more dominant power players and the inclination of these members to participate. Mick says that, in the past few months, there has been a debate within USCAN as to what extent the organization should be “advocating for human-centered climate focus” and putting the folks in the

7 See chapter 3, p. 61
membership “who have an equity, justice, human-centered approach front and center,” providing
them with “opportunities to really be a part of the network.”

The task for USCAN is juggling the line between keeping the openness of a network
approach and gaining the legitimacy of more mainstream organizations (leveraging the power of
the state through dominant statist capital), and sticking to the strategies and morals of a human-
centered approach to justice and equity. Mick ties the latter to USCAN’s ability to prioritize
frontline communities in redistributing its pooled resources. He also references ensuring
representation of people from frontline communities and the environmental justice movement in
USCAN decision-making bodies or representative teams at conferences, instead of just having
“speakers who are scientists who talk about science, or speakers who are middle-class white
dudes talking about policy stuff.”

In this way, USCAN uses the coalition structure to facilitate participation in national and
international politics among community-based organizations that may otherwise lack legitimized
channels through which to get involved. USCAN acts as an umbrella organization, concentrating
the financial and technical resources of the Big Greens and then “channeling technical, political,
and tactical information to organizations otherwise lacking such information” (McCarthy
1997:250). At the same time, leanings towards the maintenance of an open network perspective
of USCAN comes forward clearly when I ask Mick his opinion on ENGO-private sector
partnerships. Mick’s “personal view” is that partnerships with fossil fuel corporations or
polluting industries cannot be useful, and any other private-sector partnership should be “an
alliance of convenience,” rather than a deep partnership. But he says that USCAN has “members
who believe the whole range of things and it’s not our place to have views as an organization.” It
is in this sense that USCAN acts an intermediating form between the institutionalized structures
of the state, integrating movement agendas and analyses into its formal, legitimized network backed by Big Greens and corporate foundations.

Within the wide discrepancy of worldviews and “habitus” apparent within USCAN, all the organizations that form the basis of this study can be placed to a high degree in the “insider approach,” or what Mick would call “the view of the world that change happens by passing government policy.” The ENGOs at which I conducted my interviews are highly professionalized, hiring policy analysts, professional lobbyists, lawyers, and scientists, working to leverage the power of the state through “statist capital,” that is, species of capital widely held by the dominant culture as legitimate and that enforce the structures of the semi-autonomous fields making up the US state. In terms of Williams’ analysis, these groups are “reform groups,” working well within the dominant societal norms of intelligibility and legitimacy. For McAdam, the propensity of these groups to stay within the “proper channels” of institutionalized politics affords dominant social groups “the means to monitor and control any substantive threat to their interests,” and allows them to do so without having to resort to delegitimizing, costlier means of social control such as violence (2010:26). Even Shannon, who considers CommunityEarth as more hardline and “grassroots” than the Big Greens, maintains that it is still a “reform organization” because “a very hardline approach… is not a realistic strategy.”

The degree to which reformist ENGOs partner with grassroots, community-based organizations and adhere with social movement strategies for change, however, varies. Organizations with local contacts and a focus on political mobilization can be understood as intermediating forms between movement-based agendas, and institutions of the state. Within the smaller, professionalized sub-portion of the environmental and climate movements, variation in the extent to which organizations play this “grassroots” role can be recognized in ENGOs’
discourse on topics of mobilization, local community partnerships, and social change. It can be seen emerging in staff members’ perceptions regarding coalition work, in which organizations occupying different positionalities in relation to the state work in collaboration to leverage the collectivity of their differential species of power. They do this through a “division of labor” and the flexibility of “issue-based coalitions” discussed in the following two sections. The differentiations organizations make emerge through discussions of differential power and resources and are framed in terms of a political spectrum, with regard to each other’s political stances as “hardline” organizations, or organizations working through an ingratiating “political lens.”

**Networks Across Strategy and Tactics: Don’t “Reinvent the Wheel”**

“I thought we would be better off doing very good technical and analytical and legal work and then finding existing groups, [taking] advantage of the fact that they had members and a local base, and then we would supply some of the legal and technical firepower to make them stronger, make us both stronger.” – Eric Schaefer, Environmental Integrity Project

The description of USCAN provides an extreme example of the flexibility and representation of diverse worldviews within a single network, but less extreme patterns of this flexibility can also be seen in ENGO staff members’ discussions of coalition work with other ENGOs. Despite diverging ideologies and intragroup competition for funding and membership support, every ENGO interviewee emphasized the need for coalitions across organizations, and many spoke about a division of labor recognizing the strong suits of different organizations. As a staff member working for one of the Big Greens put it, “a lot of it is about the relationship with the other groups and knowing like I'm not going to screw you over you're not going to screw me over… We may or may not be competing for the same funding, but this is the work we’ve agreed to do, coalition work in alignment.” This network mentality and structure makes space for
ideological division and intragroup influence, and is characterized by overlapping memberships, shared resources and knowledge, and the flow of employees and activists between organizations. Even though ENGO staff members consistently reference the tensions that arise in coalition work, there is a prominent recognition for the need for informal coalitions and “loose networks” that enable ENGOs to stay informed on each other’s ongoing work, refrain from undermining one another, and collaborate when possible. This pattern lends support to Rootes’ recognition of the relative flexibility of the movement milieu, in contrast with the formalized ideological divisions between organizations within the formal political sphere (2004).

The maintenance of a coalition mindset among ENGOs can be seen rooted in a recognition among staff of the power of other groups’ various species of capital and the different kinds of legitimacy they bring to the table. ENGOs’ practice a division of labor in which organizations recognize the various strengths of coalition and primary partners within a broader environmental movement. As one informant explained, “I can’t really think of any examples in which [our organization] is out there alone, and I think that’s true for a lot of environmental NGOs in the US. Everybody is recognizing that there is value added from each other’s organizations and resource-sharing.” In this collaborative work there emerges a pattern of interdependence and resource sharing between well-resourced, professionalized ENGOs, and ENGOs with local connections to community organizations and an ability to mobilize constituencies. The latter organizations hold ties to what McAdam terms “indigenous infrastructures,” which provide pre-established organizations with members, leaders, communication networks, and “solidary incentives,” through which to mobilize and expand movements (2010:47). It is within these coalitions of differential access to resources that perceptions of organizations’ relative proximity to the state emerges.
One example of the collaboration across different types of legitimacy becomes apparent in Eric Schaeffer’s explanation of his vision of the Environmental Integrity Project (EIP) at its conception in 2002. Eric Schaeffer is the director of EIP, an environmental litigation nonprofit or “public interest group” that works to hold the EPA accountable by filing lawsuits for failure to act, and as a public defender in cases of environmental injustices. Eric quit his job at the EPA at the advent of the Bush administration when the enforcement program was “getting squeezed” and the agency was required to drop ongoing cases under the Clean Air Act against refineries and power plants and prevented from pursuing new ones. Eric explains the original model of EIP as fitting into a preexisting environmental community in Washington DC and beyond. He explains his understanding that his organization could partner with membership-based groups like the Sierra Club: “I thought we would be better off doing very good technical and analytical and legal work and then finding existing groups, [taking] advantage of the fact that they had members and a local base, and then we would supply some of the legal and technical firepower to make them stronger, make us both stronger.”

Eric’s approach of combining forces between EIP’s analytical and legal work, and other groups’ memberships and local connections, often unfolds between ENGOs whose work is more “technical” and professional, and those with more on-the-ground connections. For example, Stewart at the Clean Earth Initiative (CEI) talks about not wanting to “reinvent the wheel” of membership organizations. CEI specializes in research and advocacy work around toxins, agricultural subsidies, public lands, and corporate accountability. I met with CEI’s Director of
Agricultural Policy, Stewart Klein, who focuses on food and farm policy, and works as a lobbyist, meeting regularly with members of Congress. Stewart noted that CEI is not an “expert in knocking door-to-door to [get] people to donate or become educated about an issue.” Stewart sees this as the “strength of people like Environment America, PIRG, or Sierra Club,” but CEI “will partner with those groups on certain issues.”

Likewise, Shannon Gross at CommunityEarth talks about a methane campaign that CommunityEarth is involved with in collaboration with a number of “huge organizations,” including EDF. Shannon says that these big national groups do not frequently work at the local level. As Robert Frazier, an interviewee working for a local environmental network in DC put it, “some of the national groups like NRDC, they’re just not wired to do grassroots [work]. [National groups] have lawyers and technical experts that have helped us with some of our efforts to clean up the rivers. But they do not have the capacity to do grassroots [organizing].” Robert describes the “complexity” for environmental groups of going into low income communities to do advocacy work when there is not sufficient funding for these types of initiatives:

I mean I live in Columbia Heights and for me to go into Ward Eight and try to promote my ideals, I might as well be as from California. So you have to develop a certain amount of sensitivity before you do community outreach, and if you’re not doing it all the time then it’s really hard to do the right way all the time and so it often comes back to capacity.

Situated firmly in the realm of institutionalized politics, Big Greens do not hold the required legitimacy to work at grassroots levels. Lucas who works as the National Organizing Director at the Sustainability In Action notes, “NRDC, EDF, Earthjustice, for everything they bring to the table, they’re not really organizing operations.”

For this reason, Big Greens look to groups like CommunityEarth for its local connections and strength in this area, seeing “the value after working with CommunityEarth of having
contacts at the local level.” In the case of the methane campaign, instead of going out and doing it themselves, EDF “[recognizes] that [CommunityEarth is] kind of the best suited to do that and is already doing it” and therefore chooses to funnel the work and resources to CommunityEarth. Shannon feels that as a smaller organization with limited financial resources and technical capacity, CommunityEarth benefits from the partnership as well. While Shannon believes that EDF recognizes the CommunityEarth’s strengths, she also recognizes a power dynamic between the groups noting that CommunityEarth is “kind of forced to act like a bigger guy when we’re hanging out with the big dogs,” and doubts that CommunityEarth will influence EDF’s operations. She comments, “I don't think we're going to change the way they work, but I think that they at least recognize it with us because they’re funding that work.” A staff member working at a local environmental network in DC also commented on the benefits of having “the stability of a large organization” to provide funds for coordinating local-level environmental initiatives.

Perhaps the best example of collaboration between Big Greens and organizations with local contacts is the Interfaith Environmental Action (IEA), a faith-based environmental organization. Susan Brown, the manager of IEA, explained at length the various strengths of the Big Greens in comparison to faith-based organizations like IEA. Susan speaks from her experience of working across faith-based and secular organizing under the coordination of USCAN. Susan explains that “the environmental community has its base, it has its strength, it has money, it has organized power,” but they rely on the faith-based community’s ability to do local organizing. As Susan explains, religious organizations have “stable structures with this sort of built-in grassroots local-national structure to it.” The environmental community wants groups like IEA because “they want that kind of constituent engagement.” At the same time, IEA wants
them because they “can’t possibly lobby or research enough to really follow the issues, so we work together.”

“Issue-Based” Coalitions, and the “Political Style Spectrum”

“We don’t have that problem because we tend to be harsher and we tend to be seen as like more out there which is liberating in a way. We don’t worry about offending people. So there’s a style spectrum you know like how aggressive, how critical of the status quo you are.” – Hannah Rosenberg, Environmental Policy Initiatives

Because of the recognition of the influence gained through coalition work across organizations, ENGOs work to maintain the flexibility required for cross-ideological collaboration through “issue-based” coalitions or “behind the scenes” work. In the work of supporting this flexibility, perceptions of divergences in political stances emerge consistently in informants’ common observations of a “political style spectrum.” This spectrum provides one way of analyzing an ENGO’s proximity to the state or, on the other hand, more autonomous social movement spaces.

The example of the Clean Earth Initiative (CEI) provides an insightful look into the coalitional flexibility and tensions between organizations, and the spectrum of political stances that characterize different organizations. Stewart discussed CEI’s coalition work with other ENGOs, differentiating between “public-facing” and “behind-the-scenes” work that enables these partnerships:

There are plenty of groups we will never work with publicly, that we are in coalitions with… So just because you don't put your names on the same document doesn't mean you can't be friendly or that I can't talk to them about stuff. There is the public-facing work that you do, and then the kind of behind-the-scenes work. Sometimes the letters that are sent up to Capitol Hill on an issue might have 20 groups on them, but in reality there were 40 groups that were talking about strategies for working on that issue together but for various reasons couldn't sign a letter.

Stewart explains that CEI will partner with other organizations within limited “buckets of issues,” depending on the public stances taken by the other groups. At CommunityEarth,
Shannon shares this perspective of hesitance in taking public stances, commenting that sometimes even when “everybody's on the same page you don't want to put your name next to somebody because you guys disagree on something unrelated.” Stewart connects CEI’s ability to engage in “public-facing” coalition work with the challenge of “just politics.” He explains that CEI recognizes the “politics involved” in a way that is often “missed” by other groups:

We see almost all of our work through the lens of politics that is often missed by a lot of groups who maybe take positions or put out public statements that are counterproductive... So if you have a group that has put out a public statement about something that bashes a member of Congress on something, it makes it difficult to partner with them because we can't be associated with someone who is bashing this member of Congress because of a position they took, because we might know the reason why that person took that position and while we might not support it, we understand that there's always politics involved with all of these things. Some of the environmental nonprofits that are not based in Washington DC don't necessarily see their role as helping to shape legislation and more see the role as just kind of throwing bombs, trying to defeat things or trying to cause havoc.

While Stewart recognizes that CEI does not want to (at least publicly) engage with “smaller nonprofits that take very hardline leftist views on issues,” he places CEI somewhere in the middle of two extremes of its coalitional work saying that there are also “big nonprofits that don't take positions on anything because they don't want to tarnish their reputation among members of Congress.”

This perception of the “Big Greens” is mirrored by Hannah Rosenberg who works for Environmental Policy Initiatives (EPI), generally perceived as a Left-of-Center organization. Hannah comments that the large, national environmental groups like NRDC and EDF “tend to not be as harsh” and are hesitant “about offending people.” Hannah grounds this observation in the example of a fight around a GMO labeling bill that was going on the week I met with her. As Hannah explained it, in response to a Vermont law requiring GMO labeling, the food industry was pressuring Congress to pass a bill to “wipe out the ability” of states to require labeling. When the bill was “shut down,” the industry began to compromise with Democratic legislatures,
resulting a reformed law that was “full of loopholes.” From Hannah’s perspective, the compromise was enough to start to peel off some of the [environmental] groups who were tired of this fight, who don't want to be mean to the Democrats who negotiated that compromise because they’re kind of historically more attached to the Democrats. So now we have this problem where there's a bunch of us who are like it’s still unacceptable we're going to throw down, we're going bezerk, and a bunch of the groups are like oh that's going to be embarrassment that you're going to throw down. Could you stop, could you be nicer, could we just like suck it up and say this is something, this is progress? There's probably going to be some public airing of this this week because it's a big deal, and this happens when you pass bills. It is not pretty and somebody's always ready to settle before everybody else is ready to settle and when that gets public it's a shame. But we really don't want this bill to pass so it’s probably going to be a public fight in the next couple of days and there will be some tension over that.

Hannah generalizes this story of political compromise and ingratiating as what “happens when you pass bills.” Hannah later notes a “style spectrum of how aggressive, how critical of the status quo you are” and that “groups that stay in DC for longer tend to mellow out a little bit” because they are “a little closer to the politicians.”

Lucas Gagnon at Sustainability In Action lays out the spectrum in terms of “Left,” “Right,” and “Center,” which he explains has to do with “the ideological views of the various organizations.” Lucas considers Sustainability In Action a “Left-of-center organization” because of its work of bringing social justice, economic justice, and racial justice perspectives into their analysis. Lucas notes that “Earthjustice probably is [Left-of-center too]” and that “on the Right end of the environmental groups would be EDF and then everybody else falls out in between somewhere.” For example, NRDC is “a centrist kind of organization.”

From Stewart’s perspective, the challenge for CEI within this spectrum becomes falling somewhere in the middle, not becoming associated too strongly with either side. CEI wants to steer clear of allowing their political stances to be entirely shaped in an effort of maintaining a favorable reputation with members of Congress, while at the same time recognizing that
“hardline leftist views” can be “counterproductive” and don’t play a role in “helping to shape legislation.” CEI works to maintain their own stance through collaborating within select “buckets of issues” and maintaining “behind the scenes” networks of communication.

Lindsey O’Brien who works for Climate Protection Network (CPN) observes the political spectrum in terms of “people’s level of optimism.” Lindsey came to work for CPN after participating in a program called Green Corps, a branch of the Public Interest Network, that trains recent college graduates in environmental organizing. Lindsey chose to work for CPN because of its prioritizing of grassroots organizing and her perspective that “grassroots organizing is at the core” of “all the major victories, [the] big sea changes in our society that are geared toward social justice.” CPN works in Maryland and other nearby states within a broad network of formal environmental organizations and informal grassroots community groups, social justice organizations, faith-based organizations, and public health and clean energy groups. While Lindsey says that the environmental community is CPN’s “most natural ally,” CPN does not identify strictly as an environmental organization because they “think of the climate as not just an environmental issue, but a social justice issue.” Because their work “tends to be broadly focused on the various groups that are impacted by climate change,” CPN is “working to expand the base of who considers themselves a climate activist.”

In contrast with Stewart, Lindsey situates CPN on the side of wanting “to push harder and take stronger stances” in coalitions. She explains that “CPN tends to be a group that wants to… call politicians out for doing the wrong thing. On the other side you’ve got people who want to show what politicians are doing right and present this really positive outlook.” In this sense, Lindsey comments on CPN making the choice to publicize the legislative choices of politicians to show how decision-makers are controlled by the vested interests of the fracking industry.
While CPN tends to take stronger stances, Lindsey says that “working in a coalition automatically assumes that you’re willing to compromise” and requires constant negotiation:

[In coalitions] you’re kind of always negotiating those strategies of are we giving people good guy opportunities... or are we showing that they’re bad guys. So people’s level of optimism varies in any coalition and so [we’re] constantly trying to figure out do we meet in the middle and work together, or do we approach separate strategies so we’re kind of covering all of our bases.

In this way, the coalitions that CPN participates in are able to make space for a spectrum of stances and approaches and come together to set priorities and “then work with [their] varying strengths.”

**Conclusion**

The examples above reveal a political spectrum existing across the formal structures of environmental NGOs and can be used to analyze ENGOs’ proximity to the state or else a broader, more autonomous, “grassroots” environmental movement spaces. This perception emerges through the interdependence between ENGOs with “on the ground” connections and access to indigenous resources, and groups with greater technical and monetary resources. These groups rely on each other for the political leverage of their different types of capital: gaining legitimacy by speaking the language of the dominant culture through large endowments and professional, well-connected staff, or else through political mobilization and in some cases elaborated cultural codes of marginalized populations.

While all the ENGOs considered in this study can be understood as reform organizations, those toward the left of the political spectrum intermediate between more autonomous, grassroots organizing work and the institutionalized political structures of the state. As groups work to maintain flexible networks and coalitions for open communication and shared resources, the ideological tensions between them become perceptible through staff members’ observations.
Consistent in these observations is the tendency for groups to take either hardline or more compromising approaches to working in the formal political system, and a recognition that the Big Greens do not have the organizing capacity of smaller, intermediary ENGOs. The following two chapters will explore the mechanisms and ideologies of the state and social movements that may pull ENGOs to the Left or Right ends of the spectrum.
CHAPTER THREE
AUTONOMY IN INTERMEDIATING ENGOs ON THE LEFT: INCORPORATING A DISCOURSE AND ANALYSIS OF GRASSROOTS STRUGGLE

The previous chapter explored staff members’ analyses of a political spectrum across formal ENGOs. This spectrum highlights their differences, notwithstanding their similarly situated positions of cultural dominance within broader networks inclusive of frontline communities, such as the one illuminated in Mick’s description of USCAN. In describing their coalition efforts to pool their varying types of capital, staff members’ observations of the political spectrum provide a starting point from which to analyze their organizations’ relative autonomy or proximity in relation to the hegemonic ideologies and power of the state. This chapter will address the ways in which even professionalized, reformist ENGOs can be seen existing in spaces of varying levels of autonomy, through their differential proximity to objective societal positions and incorporation of the practice of Bourdieu’s “reflexivity” in their organizational agendas and structures.

The chapter will elaborate the political spectrum, exploring how organizational discourses differ in the extent to which they reflect societal struggle and power distribution. These discourses will be analyzed in terms of three different levels of organizing in varying proximities to the state and more autonomous, grassroots movements. The three levels include: 1) deep, constituency-led organizing, characteristic of marginalized, grassroots community groups; 2) national organizing, characteristic of the Big Greens operating primarily within the terms of the formal political field and dominant statist capital; and finally, 3) deep organizing (not constituency-led), an integrative form of the previous two levels which is the predominant form among the organizations concerned in this study.
ENGOs’ analyses of oppression reveal the extent to which they are incorporated within or influenced by counter-hegemonic efforts to reveal social struggle between exploitative and dominated positions. Non-neutral discourses within ENGOs can be understood as the result of extra-organizational forces helping to shift ENGOs towards a hardline stance on the “Left,” or else an exercise of reflexive agency in the maintenance of organizational autonomy. Maintaining autonomy from the state gives ENGOs the ability to construct their own political frameworks and goals, independent of those deemed reasonable and legitimate by the state and its vested interests. In Chapter Four, patterns of reflexivity will be contrasted with mechanisms of societal reproduction pulling ENGOs towards the “Right” end of the spectrum, and rooted in a conviction of the necessity of dominant species of capital in order to access and influence the formal political system.

As described in Chapter One, Bourdieu understands the reconstitution of the social order as resulting from the overwhelming statistical probability that individuals will continually encounter the same social conditions that determined their habitus, that is, the internalization of agents’ perceptions of the objective positions between fields. The homology between the habitus and the objective position of the dominated “render the bases of inequality literally invisible” to those entrapped in its structures (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 24). Through a sense of naturalness of the given social order within the habitus, social orders of domination and subordination are preserved within the interests of elites. Challenging and restructuring the social order requires a radical break from the invisibility of its structures of domination through collective struggle among dominated social groups to redefine the social order and its systems of classification hitherto imposed on them by the dominant class. Bourdieu writes,

Dominated individuals make common cause with discourse and consciousness, indeed with science, since they cannot constitute themselves as a separate group, mobilize themselves or
mobilize their potential power unless they question the categories of perception of the social order which, being the product of that order, inclined them to recognize that order and thus submit to it. (Bourdieu 1994:131)

For Bourdieu, the most fundamental change required for a radical reorganization of the social world is the practice of “reflexivity” for a rethinking and re-representation of the systems of classification imposed by elites within the professionalized political field. This type of reflexive collective consciousness raising is difficult, however, given the vastly divergent habituses that make up the masses of society and the political field. Because of the professionalized discourse that shapes and regulates institutionalized politics, agents outside that region of the political field are deterred from involvement and not stimulated to participate in it. Furthermore, collective challenges from the dominated classes are met with resistance from those who benefit from the status quo and who, as professionals, hold disproportionate sway in molding the representation of society within the political realm:

Having an interest in leaving things as they are, [dominant individuals] attempt to undermine politics in a depoliticized political discourse, produced through a process of neutralization or, even better, negation, which seeks to restore the doxa to its original state of innocence... This politically unmarked political language is characterized by a rhetoric of impartiality... and sustained by an ethos of propriety and decency, exemplified by the avoidance of the most violent and polemical forms, by discretion, an avowed respect for adversaries, in short, everything which expresses the negation of political struggle as struggle. This strategy of (ethical) neutrality is naturally accomplished in the rhetoric of scientificity. (Bourdieu 1994:131-132)

Employed by different organizations in greater or lesser proximity with the state, staff members’ use of discourse and analyses to explain environmental issues shows different tendencies towards the framing of political struggle, or else a depoliticized, neutral discourse of technical fixes and constituency engagement.

Partnerships between ENGOs and other groups or people situated within positions structured by the differential distribution of capital across fields can help to reveal a particular ENGO’s contestation with the state and the dominant white culture. Bourdieu explains the
strategies adopted by different agents, as they struggle to maintain or restructure systems of domination, are dependent on their position within the field. That is, on “the distribution of the specific capital, and on the perception that they have of the field depending on the point of view they take on the field as a view taken from a point in the field” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:101). With this understanding, the political spectrum across the ENGOs can be understood as rooted in their different positions within a broad field of power determined by both the views they are exposed to as well as the species of capital accessible to them.

This chapter will focus on ENGO relationships with their memberships and frontline community groups, in which staff members’ discussions of these partnerships provide insight into their organizations’ differential positioning in relation to broader structures of the state and dominated segments of society. ENGO Membership and frontline community partners are better understood as two separate, though at times blurred, categories. Membership is more commonly understood as the dues-paying, middle class base of an ENGO that is more “values-based” than “interests-based.” Frontline community partnerships can be understood as comparatively informal, interests-based organizations that are often seen as beneficiaries by ENGOs in their provision of technical, legal, and financial resources, but are also understood as providing ENGOs with important constituency-based legitimacy and access to indigenous resources conducive of political mobilization.

Organizing and Agency: ENGO Views on Membership, Grassroots Partnerships, and Political Efficacy

Understood as intermediating forms, ENGOs can be seen in conversation with both dominant cultural and statist capital, as well as with alternative forms of capital and counter-hegemonic analyses that can be collectively realized and built up in marginalized communities. Informants’
discussions of partnerships between professional, largely white middle-class ENGOs within the formal political realm on the one hand, and communities marginalized by broader systems of racism and capitalist exploitation on the other, reveal key distinctions in organizations’ theories of change. Within the professionalized sub-portion of the broader environmental and climate movements, variation in the extent to which organizations play a “grassroots” role can be recognized in ENGOs’ discourse on topics of mobilization, local community partnerships, and social change.

Discourses of power and struggle within more antagonistic ENGOs can be understood as coming from reflexive analyses of agency and empowerment in grassroots political movements that lead to counter-hegemonic goals and strategies. ENGO familiarity with political analyses tied to the objective position of frontline partners provides heightened potential for inter-organizational reflexivity and autonomy; it is an encounter with different social conditions that call into question elite staff members’ internalization of their dominant objective positions within the field. Centrist organizations, meanwhile, demonstrate greater neutrality in their language and tend to operate largely within the realms of the formal structures of the state for dominant species of power. This section will discuss important differences in the ways staff members and their organizations’ approach political organizing and its ties to theories of change. The categorizations to follow should not be considered absolute or demonstrative of organizations in their entirety. Rather, they can be thought of as patterns suggestive of an organization’s broader analysis of social change and objective position within societal power structures.

Deep Constituency-led Organizing

“So I think who’s involved is different, but also the way they approach it is different in my view because just the fact that there are so many different problems for them makes them a little more reflexively intersectional perhaps.” – Mick Power, USCAN
Because of Mick Power’s perspective within an umbrella organization of different approaches to organizing, his comments will provide a useful framework for understanding the meaning of membership and leveraging political influence for different ENGOs throughout this section.

Mick emphasizes that even though the term “organizing” is widely popular across national, regional and local-level groups, it holds fundamentally different meanings. From his own experience working as an organizer, Mick is able to loosely categorize different groups’ approaches to organizing. The first level Mick identifies is “deep constituency-led organizing” which means “you start with a group of people and say what problem are they facing and how can I [as an organizer] build their capacity to realize their own power to solve this problem themselves.” Robert Frazier who works for Eco Organizing Group (EOG), a network of local environmental advocacy groups, similarly explains an organizer as “someone who can work specifically on the interests of that specific geographical area… to empower those areas more by helping them organize around what their common interests [are].” Mick explains that this type of approach is most common within frontline, grassroots efforts because of the disproportionate significance that climate change will hold in these areas. Mick explains,

If you’re in this climate fight because you care about a particular group of people who you know will be screwed, it might have very big implications for what kind of leadership you take from that group, how much you listen to that group, the extent to which you involve that group of people in defining and solving their own problems.

Mick says that the involvement of people on the frontlines leads to an “interest-based” approach that is “more inclined to make it about lived experience and stories and emotions.” Mick asserts that analyses and approaches in these groups tend to be “reflexively intersectional.” He characterizes these groups as:

low income people, not middle class, often really struggling economically who have so many problems in their lives. Like they can barely pay the bills and they're black so they're afraid of
getting killed by police for no reason at any moment, or they're undocumented so their position in this country is so tenuous, and then on top of that they live in New Jersey and their whole community just got destroyed by Sandy and nobody's rebuilding it for them. Or like they're in Colorado and now somebody wants to fucking frack in their community and so they're like ‘I guess we have to be in this climate fight,’ but like it's one of many problems. So I think who's involved is different, but also the way they approach it is different in my view because just the fact that there are so many different problems for them makes them a little more reflexively intersectional perhaps.

Here, Mick’s conceptualization of “reflexive intersectionality” in marginalized communities can be understood in terms of Bourdieu’s assertion as to the determining ability of objective positions within the field of power in shaping the strategies of agents in restructuring that field. Because of their objective positions at the intersections of multiple forms of oppression, reflexive analyses from these positions have the potential to form a more intersectional understanding of an issue like climate change or environmental justice. Recall Mick’s explanation in the previous chapter that frontline organizations “have radically different understandings of the world” and are more inclined to talk about power in politics and the money of the fossil fuel corporations, understanding change as the ability to “smash that system [through] direct action or huge civil disobedience or directly targeting companies.” The discourses and analyses rooted in the communities to which Mick is referencing are perceived by the dominant culture as much more radical than the technical and seemingly value-neutral fixes often focused on in the culturally legitimized language of mainstream environmental organizations, whose agendas are largely determined by the white middle and upper classes.

Two other staff members working for the Rural Climate Network (RCN) and EIP, express similar practices or beliefs in alignment with what Mick terms “deep constituency-led organizing.” RCN is an international NGO that is based in farming communities throughout the world. In the US, RCN is based in the Midwest but also has an office in Washington DC where they work in collaboration with several of the Big Greens and other ENGOs working on issues of
rural development and farm policy at the national level. I interviewed two staff members at RCN, Kim Stevenson, the Director of Trade and Global Governance, and Ted Franzen, who Kim suggested I interview by phone to learn more about RCN’s Community Climate Discussions program. Ted works as RCN’s Director of Corporate Strategies and Climate Change and describes the Community Climate Discussions as an effort to create a strong network of relationships across rural farming communities in the Midwest to help them engage in political processes.

The connection between Mick’s understanding of deep constituency-led organizing and the work that RCN is engaged in with farmers in the Midwest is that both depict organizing work as starting from the perspectives and interests of communities and emphasizing a buildup of social networks that create space for political engagement. Ben explains “developing a functioning network is something you have to invest time and money into, you have to be able to get people to meet together in person, you can do a lot of things electronically but you really need to build trust and build relationships and create a space that is value added for everyone.” Ted believes in the indispensability of engaging with and respecting the autonomy of communities directly impacted by climate change and other environmental issues.

Ted explains that because RCN is not a membership organization in which “people are sort of voting for certain policies or setting approaches for the organization,” RCN has to “hold itself accountable” to rural communities to identify “priorities from a rural perspective” in a space where people have largely been left out of the discussion and where there are political obstacles to talking about climate change. Ted explains that RCN’s partnership with farmers and the Community Climate Discussions are crucial for creating informed policy that will work for the communities it will affect the most. Ted compares RCN’s approach with organizations that
work solely within the beltway which he sees as unable to advocate for informed policy as a result:

I think it's very hard for us to advocate at the national level if we don't understand what's happening at the local level. There are a lot of groups in Washington DC and if we wanted to just work at the national level we would just be in DC, but we are not there on purpose. We're not based there because we don't want what's happening in DC to dictate everything that we do. There's this sort of inside the beltway politics. We want to know what's really happening and we want to be pushing for policy solutions that are real and that are going to have a real impact and that are not just totally driven by some political calculus.

Through the Dialogues and basing themselves in rural farming communities, RCN gathers different perspectives than those driven by beltway politics and seen through a “political lens.” Kim points out that this approach prioritizes local communities’ autonomy and voice in a way that shifts the priorities of RCN:

[The discussions are] not just to convince rural people that they should get on our side, it's to listen and to see how those things play out because of course, even if [RCN staff] based in Minnesota were to come in and say you must do this, people would ignore them. So it's this listening process and so it's meant some shifts in our priorities as well. So in the climate work, some of our focus now is on clean power plants and issues of rural energy which would not normally be our starting point but that is what we are hearing from these people. I think on the climate work it's been a lot of listening and the staff who are leading this come from farming communities themselves, so again it's not somebody from the city who doesn't understand the dynamics going in.

As a result of their chosen starting point in policy work, RCN will approach the promotion of farm policy differently than other Big Greens. Kim references a report released by Friends of the Earth (FOE) and how it framed the necessity of shifting farm subsidies towards more sustainable farming and away from corn and soybeans. Kim sees the report as “superficial” in its lack of recognition of the harmful implications it would pose for farming communities locked in the current system of large-scale monoculture incentive programs. She explains that rural farming communities’ perception of the EPA’s response to climate change is often one of resentment because of the feeling of being put at fault and having environmental regulations imposed on
them. Because of RCN’s relationships with farmers, Kim sees other environmental NGOs looking to them for direction in navigating the “resistance among rural communities” which “they don’t quite know how to cope with.”

A final organization that demonstrates a correspondence with Mick’s explanation of “deep constituency-led organizing” is Eric Schaeffer’s explanation of how EIP navigates partnerships with organized groups in local communities. Although EIP does not do capacity-building and leadership development itself in these communities, Eric recognizes the importance of capacity and autonomy in communities confronting environmental issues as the result of sociopolitical marginalization. Eric explains EIP’s position on how to partner with community groups through the example of inhibiting the construction of a local source of pollution, such as an incinerator:

> Basically say these are your rights, here’s what we know about impact, it’s your decision. Come in, let them know what their rights are. Don’t come in and preach and tell them this is what you must and mustn’t do. Don’t do that. It’s much more effective, and it doesn’t always work, but if people can come to the issue on their own and start to get a sense of the power that they actually have if they can find a way to exercise it with our help.

Eric sees self-driven organizing in communities, “writing letters and the phone calls, and coming to meetings,” as “critical.” He talks about a specific case in which EIP helped to prevent the construction of an incinerator in a Baltimore neighborhood in partnership with a teenager who grew up in the neighborhood and attended school less than a mile away from the proposed location of the incinerator. Reflecting on the student receiving a national prize for environmental activism Eric commented, “and to me that’s exactly how it should work. She got the prize, not us even though [one of our staff] here spent five years of her life, the idea is no, this is home grown. You want the activist cause we need them. And it’s great. It’s like a really good outcome.”
This first level of “deep constituency-led organizing” is theoretically important because of the implications it holds for how different ENGOs are situating themselves in relation to broader structures of power and oppression. Bourdieu maintains that the prerequisite for any restructuring of the distribution of power and patterns of domination in a society is a (re)formation of the representation of the divisions in a society. Groups must challenge the neutralized and legitimized discourse of the upper echelons of society in order to portray its structures as unjust and illegitimate. For Bourdieu, “it is in the struggles which shape the history of the social world that the categories of perception of the social world, and the groups produced according to these categories, are simultaneously constructed” (1994:134).

In addition to Bourdieu’s insight on the importance of consciousness of oppression in communities, discussions of power and collective consciousness can also shed light on the importance of Mick’s notion of “deep constituency-led organizing” for social change. In *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley*, John Gaventa develops a model for “understanding the generation of quiescence, as well as the process by which challenge may emerge” that builds on Steven Lukes’ “three dimensions of power.” In brief, Lukes’ (1974) understanding of the three dimensions of power rests on the recognition that power that is easily recognized in the formal political realm as the determination of one’s will over another’s is only the first dimension of power and does not come close to encapsulating the full implications of power dynamics at play in a society. Lukes thus explains the second face of power in which conflict is pushed out to avoid its entrance into the formal political realm or policy-making process. The final and third face of power is the most difficult to prove
empirically because it understands a hegemonic form of domination as being able to change the
conscious interests of a group, through the ideological dissemination of information and creation
of norms, to be against their own, “real” interests.

The second and third faces of power are important for considering the different
conceptions of political organizing work apparent in staff members’ interviews. Gaventa (1980)
understands power in a strictly distributive or relational sense: the power of a dominant group
(“A”) over a dominated group (“B”). In order for a shift in the power structure to occur, group B
must overcome the inhibiting effects of the second and third dimensions of power before the
conflict can exist on competitive ground with group A and reflect B’s genuine participation in
the first dimension of power (Gaventa 1980). For B, this process has to involve the collective
formulation of issues and action, mobilization, and the buildup of resources, “both real and
symbolic,” to wage the conflict (Gaventa 1980:24). Other theorists, namely Foucault and James
C. Scott, challenge Lukes’ third face of power, seeing all forms of oppression as always met by
some form of resistance. Scott asserts, “if the elite-dominated public transcript tends to naturalize
domination, it would seem that some countervailing influence manages often to denaturalize
domination” (1990:79). Collective resistance, however, remains an achievement brought about
through the cultivation of alternative species of capital within indigenous network structures.

Nancy Bell’s discussion of community empowerment and Iveson and Fincher’s
discussion of identity politics and social movement spaces further build on ideas of collective
resistance. Bell differentiates between “power over” and “power to” which emphasizes
understanding power as a two-way relationship with agency on both ends (Bell 1999:100). Like
Bourdieu and Gaventa, Bell sees shifts in power rooted in a challenge to normative legitimacy
and consent:
If those who exercise power over others have the power to define, they must face the possibility that the definitions of the power relationship that they create may be disbelieved and rejected by the supposedly powerless people whose reality they attempt to shape. This is the ultimate expression of the denial of legitimacy that is required for power over to be effective. (Bell 1999:102).

Bell discusses community empowerment as fundamental for this type of collective refutation of accepted norms, viewing power as “ability, capacity, and energy.” She understands the potential of dominated groups to overcome their position through a collective formation of capital – or “species of power” – in the form of indigenous resources: strong networks, institutions, and shared morals.

Iveson and Fincher (2011) expand on the importance of autonomous movement spaces in their discussion of identity politics and spaces of encounter that allow for new understandings and articulations of how society is structured in the advantage of particular social groups. Similarly, for Woolford and Ratner they “are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent or circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (2003:89). Iveson and Fincher express concern with “essentialist identity politics,” which imposes limits on individual identity and group interests. Despite its important achievements for gender, racial, sexual-orientation and religious equality, Iveson and Fincher see identity politics as limiting because people do not ascribe solely to one category. For example, women with different religious or cultural practices or class standing may be entirely excluded from any benefits created around maternity leave because those benefits were created with a universalizing understanding of white, middle class women in mind. As groups organize around identity and gain recognition, this identity can become “essentialized” in normative understandings of group
needs within social institutions, and pose serious disadvantages for individuals that fall between the gaps or intersections of recognized categories.

Social movements can be understood as semi-autonomous spaces, heightening the possibility of encounter across social boundaries and enabling individuals to interact and explore “those aspects of themselves and their relationships with others which are not fully contained within any one identity category” (Iveson and Fincher 2011:412). People are able to recognize and organize around unrecognized (or unessentialized) commonalities and raise new political concerns for inclusion and justice. New political coalitions are created that bring state recognition and address concerns hidden within the shadows of essentialist identity politics. By working directly in communities marginalized by the political process, Mick, Kim, Ted, and Eric all recognize the importance of local autonomy in determining the involvement and course of action of the community organizers and professionals they partner with.

The recognition of deep engagement within marginalized communities as the starting point for true social change is recognized in discussions of grassroots or bottom-up organizing, situating certain organizations as intermediators between movement autonomy and institutionalized political channels. These partnerships have the propensity to inform more “radical” political agendas that problematize and challenge, to a greater degree, the fundamental power structure. It is noteworthy that five different organizations explicitly tie funding restrictions to a lack of capacity to engage in serious organizing work, suggesting movement deradicalization through foundation mandates (a topic considered in Chapter Four).

**National Organizing: Plugging People into the Political Process**

“I think our grassroots activism and our grassroots work is far more at the national level. Not to say that we don’t engage our members and people through our social channels you know on state
issues but we take a much more national approach, the national-focused issues. Our [grassroots activism] is housed basically in our DC office.” – Stewart Klein, Clean Earth Initiative

Before turning to the most common organizing approach recognizable in the organizations included in this study, I will briefly discuss an organizing approach that originates largely in the political field of professionals and is fundamentally different from constituency-led organizing. I call this approach “national organizing” and it might be considered “totally driven by some political calculus,” in the words of Ted Franzen at RCN. The discourse of national organizing can be recognized as largely unconcerned with the concepts of power or empowerment presented in the previous section and the section to follow. It falls in line with what Mick called “mobilizing.”

Then there are groups who do mobilizing, so they're like making lots of calls, sending lots of emails, turn out turn out turn out, but like there's no serious investment in developing leaders. It's like a staff organizer calling 50 people and 10 of them will come to this hearing, as opposed to a staff organizer working with 3 people in a neighborhood who they talk to every week and who they've trained with and campaigned with, and their only job as an organizer is to work with these three people so that they can do all of the turnout work which is a big difference. I think that's the difference between organizing and mobilizing, both are important but many climate groups do mobilizing and just call it organizing and that's fine, but like it's what it is.

Important in this excerpt is Mick’s notion that mobilization is not concerned with “developing leaders,” but is nevertheless conflated with organizing by national environmental groups. This conflicts with the ideas embedded in constituency-led organizing, which recognizes true social change as having to come from bottom-up formulations of collective consciousness and community power. This section will look at two approaches to national organizing: one that operates solely in the field of DC politics, and one that is still engaged in interpersonal community relationships. The former organizations engage non-staff members only through online media campaigns. Stewart at CEI depicts this level of engagement quite well:

You know, I think as opposed to some environmental nonprofits and environmental groups that have boots-on-the-ground, CEI does not have state chapters, we don't knock on doors, we are not
embedded in local environmental issues. I think our grassroots activism and our grassroots work is far more at the national level. Not to say that we don't engage our members and people through our social channels you know on state issues but we take a much more national approach, the national-focused issues. Our [grassroots activism] is housed basically in our DC office.

In both cases – of engagement in communities or solely through online media – a clear difference can be recognized in their disconnect with USCAN’s, EIP’s, and RCN’s ideas of engaging with the grassroots.

The Environmental Protection Project (EPP), a nationally-focused ENGO, is removed from the potential for outside-the-beltway influences because they are not engaging in “organizing” work outside of their online media campaigns. This distance is reflected in John Packert’s thinking about the targeted strategy for which online structural capacity allows:

We do a lot of grassroots organizing work and we have a really great online campaigns coordinator... [Our coordinator] does targeted action alerts if things are particularly affecting somebody in a particular state she sends it just to the members in that state... We do more national engagement in this office. We work so much on federal policy and that sort of thing and federal agency rules like FDA, USDA, and EPA so that's where we engage our nationwide membership in and activism. In terms of our legal actions around “ag gag” laws we kind of rally our state-based membership because those are state-specific... we do state-based organizing to stop those laws which has been really successful.

John implies here that EPP engages people through its nationwide, online membership because its focus is on federal administrative bodies. Its engagement of members is based on the strategic knowledge of the organization pertaining to what engagement will influence particular levels of government.

The example of People’s Planet Partnership (PPP) provides an interesting addition to the discussion of national organizing because of the organization’s involvement in frontline communities, while still using mobilization as a response to the professionally-conceptualized analysis. For example, Pauline describes her frustration with the lack of organizing capacity in a particular campaign to pass legislation:
We go to the hill and we're trying to get members of Congress to co-sponsor a bill or sign a letter and they're not hearing anything from their constituents about it so what do they care? Sure we can talk intellectually about it but they need to hear from people whose views are relevant to the issue, and that has been a hindrance on campaigns.

Pauline’s concerns signify PPP’s predetermined understanding of the bill that should be sponsored. It should be noted that Pauline is a Director of Federal Policy for PPP and would therefore seem more likely to take this federal-focused perspective than someone more directly involved in organizing work, but her comments still illustrate a divergent understanding from constituency-led organizing. She continues later, explaining that “the success of the campaign is due to those folks on the ground working with local people getting them to speak up, bringing them to Washington to tell policymakers how drilling would destroy their livelihoods.” She later comments that in this campaign the organizers “have built public opposition,” and then reroutes saying “helped build public opposition” to offshore drilling. Here it is the organizer’s role to “get” the local people, to “bring” them to Washington DC, and build the opposition. This is a very different understanding from staff members who recognize organizing as at least being about empowerment and local autonomy, if not also for its ability to shift organizational analyses away from a focus on Congress and the censoring effects of the political field. Pauline’s understanding of membership and organizing is further demonstrated in her discussion of the shortcomings of PPP’s email list:

Our technical ability to plug those people into the political process isn't that good right now and that hopefully will be improved with new software that we're getting. But if [someone] is trying to get a Republican to co-sponsor the seafood fraud bill we can't readily pull down a list and contact [the right members]. We do do action alerts by email, they tend to be national or statewide... If we want to do more targeted organizing around particular lawmakers, we don't have a lot of structural capability to do that.

This comment can be seen paralleling Stewart’s concern with strategy above; Pauline’s understanding of organizing and membership has entirely to do with PPP’s desired influence on
particular lawmakers. The discussion here has tried to show a fundamentally different approach to organizing than the approach highlighted in the previous section. In Bourdieu’s terms, this approach can be understood in consideration of these organizations’ similar position within the field of power in which they are cut off from both alternative species of capital that exist outside the political field, as well as from the collective formulations of struggle within dominated groups that are articulated in fields more removed from the state. Because of centrist ENGOs’ proximity to the state, they are deprived of the potential to maintain, let alone create a counter-hegemonic discourse. In the following section I will discuss the intermeshing of professionally developed, inside-the-beltway strategies for national organizing and constituency-led organizing, as an integrative approach. This is the predominant approach recognized in the interviews on which this study is built.

Deep Organizing: At a Crossroads of Movement Autonomy and National Organizing

“Our job as organizers is to show those people in power that it is more beneficial to them to do the right thing than the wrong thing. And you can do that by getting people to make direct contact with those power players and to me that’s what grassroots organizing is all about.”

Lindsey O’Brien, CPN

Situated in the professional, white middle-class political field in Washington DC, most organizations in this study are several steps removed from the ideas of autonomy and empowerment of deep, constituency-led organizing, incorporating greater weight on notions of policy analysis and strategy discussed in relation to EPP and PPP in the previous section. In this section, I will analyze the comments of staff members from six different organizations illustrating what these steps of removal look like in inter-organizational analyses and discourse. Within the world of highly professionalized, national ENGOs, these organizations are commonly considered “Left-of-Center” organizations. They are significantly enmeshed in both the formal
political realm as well as within various realms of organizing work that are more removed from beltway politics; their approach can be understood as integrating the organizing approaches of the previous two sections.

This approach is well summed up in one informant’s comment that he doesn’t see his national organization’s involvement with the frontlines as “shifting our view because we already have that view,” in stark contrast with his assertion that organizing is “a long-term thing of building power for the people that are most affected by the issues of the current system.” If building power in marginalized communities is to be understood as dependent on their objective position of domination within broader structures of power and realized in collective consciousness raising and defiance of professional political neutrality, its inability to shift the views of a national organization suggests a degree of separation from the fundamental ideas of constituency-led organizing within that organization.

ENGOs’ departures from notions of constituency-led organizing can be tied to their objective positions within the field of power, as well as to their capacity for reflexivity on societal structures of domination. I understand the former as dealing largely with ENGOs’ access to resources and technical capacities required for participation within the political field. The latter is associated with the positions of the partners and members with whom formal ENGOs organize (white middle class memberships as opposed to marginalized frontline communities). Greater levels of technical capacity and professionalism and white middle class memberships contribute to heightened tendencies to build analyses within the political realm and then work to “plug” people into a predetermined agenda, as discussed by Pauline Smith. Working in communities marginalized by race or class has the potential to influence tendencies towards reflexivity within middle class ENGOs; the ideals of constituency-led organizing can still be
seen existing within professional staff members’ discourses of empowerment and the importance of local autonomy.

Mick offers an explanation which helps to think about this style of organizing which he calls “deep organizing” – as distinct from deep *constituency-led* organizing. Mick explains,

> There's like a second level which is still deep organizing, still doing lots of one on ones, still building teams, still seriously investing in developing grassroots leadership, but it's not constituency-led, it's not about something that I'm directly experiencing, it's about something I care about, or we as a big national group care about. So like probably the Sierra Club is in that boat. They do excellent organizing but it's not constituency-led, and I think they know that, well you should ask them. Greenpeace is a similar thing.

Mick’s emphasis here is on the demographics of the populations the organizations are working with in developing leadership, and this is what he ties to whether or not the work is constituency-led. Ife Kilimanjaro who works with the Climate Justice Alliance, a “collaborative of over 40 community-based groups, alliances and movement support organizations in Indigenous, African American, Latin@, Asian Pacific Islander and working class white communities” makes a similar observation of the differential organizing tendencies of environmental justice groups and the Big Greens (Kilimanjaro 2015).

In a reflection piece after participating in collaboration among Big Greens and environmental justice groups to organize the People’s Climate March in 2015, Kilimanjaro differentiates between the “transactional” work of ENGOs, and “transformational” work in environmental justice groups. A transactional approach comes from an organizational culture of acting “with quickness, agility, and at a significant scale” (Kilimanjaro 2015:11). A transformational approach focuses “on a deeper level of relationship-building that leads to longer term change” and is “more deliberate in building a base and relationships in the community based on core organizing principles (Kilimanjaro 2015:19). Kilimanjaro explains the orientation
to either transactional or transformational work as “rooted in different constituencies and definitions of membership” and as leading to differences in organizing strategies. The national environmental organizations tend to have members that are mostly middle class, white and/or affluent, whereas CJA members and the communities in which they organize are poor and working class Indigenous, people of color and white communities. (Kilimanjaro 19)

In this section, I will continue to illustrate the importance in the socioeconomic backgrounds of membership bases in shaping the trajectory of organizations, but I will also incorporate the interconnected issue of organizations’ capacity in resources – cultural, social, and economic – to engage in the formal political field as a further determining factor in ENGOs different engagements with organizing work. I will consider the comments of interviews in five different organizations8 – Climate Protection Network (CPN), CommunityEarth, Environmental Policy Initiatives (EPI), the Sustainability In Action, and Interfaith Environmental Action (IEA) – that can be seen straddling the line between notions of empowering, constituency-led organizing, and the “transactional,” professionally-devised engagement with frontline communities and membership in national organizing.

While Lindsey’s description of CPN’s understanding and approach to organizing suggests many of the ideas of constituency-led organizing, the overall approach can be understood as occupying an integrative position in relationship with tendencies of both national and constituency-led organizing. On the constituency-led end, Lindsey explains that CPN’s work starts with a focus “on the various groups that are impacted by climate change.” They do this both by “starting from scratch” within communities where there is not an ongoing organized struggle, as well as within communities where preexisting, organized struggles exist:

8 One of which will remain unidentified due to the informant’s wish to remain anonymous
Sometimes we go places where there’s no kind of current organized base and from there we’re kind of starting from scratch. We’ll knock on doors or we’ll do kind of public events where we’ll bring people together through like a film screening. Something that we know would get like-minded people in one space and try to be efficient about our time there. So that’s one way of doing it is just go out, meet people face to face, follow up with them, give them volunteer activities to do, kind of build them up as community leaders. Another way that we do it, especially when there is a battle that’s already being fought, we’ll go work with the community groups that are fighting that battle and help to kind of, like in the pipelines case a lot of what we do is try to help people come together cause there’s so many small groups happening all over the state that we’ll help to kind of be the convener and try to give it a bigger, kind of state-wide focus and strategy and you know that way we can amass our power a lot more efficiently. So we play that role a lot too.

Here we see Lindsey emphasizing the importance of community leaders and amassing power among frontline communities. Lindsey sees ePN’s understanding of organizing as “not just an email list” as something that sets them apart from other groups. At the same time, ePN can be considered embodying a “transactional” approach in Lindsey’s emphasis on “efficiency,” further illustrated in her explanation of organizing. To Lindsey, “at the core of it,” organizing means:

getting people to engage with the power centers that be. So in our case it’s often big corporations who have outsized sway over our politicians and it’s the politicians that are listening to them, or just denying the science of climate, generally speaking, and that our job as organizers is to show those people in power that it is more beneficial to them to do the right thing than the wrong thing. And you can do that by getting people to make direct contact with those power players and to me that’s what grassroots organizing is all about.

ePN’s striving to “think of the climate as not just an environmental issue but a social justice issue” that needs to involve impacted communities leads them to incorporate an analysis of power and struggle in society. But this analysis does not emphasize ideas of transformation and collective consciousness raising, an approach ultimately concerned with the third dimension of power, fundamental to constituency-led practices. Lindsey sees organizing work more in the terms of the second dimension of power, that is pushing articulated conflict back into the official channels of the political system by “getting people to make direct contact with power players.”

CPN’s transactional approach of efficiency in getting agents to engage with the formal political
system shines through amidst differing nonprofessional grassroots notions of leadership development, and beginning with marginalized voices to amass power.

Shannon’s perception of CommunityEarth’s organizing work further highlights the sometimes incompatible influences founded in the intermeshed influences of Beltway politics and frontline communities. CommunityEarth differs from CPN, however, in its more national focus and its engagement of “regular people” as opposed to “activists” or preexisting community organizations. Recall Shannon’s description of CommunityEarth’s work with EDF in Chapter Two, highlighting its “grassroots” role in the partnership. In comparison with EDF and other national groups, CommunityEarth is “community-driven” in their accountability to what their “local contacts want to see” them do, and much more willing to “challenge the system.”

Shannon’s comments parallel Eric’s views on respecting local communities’ autonomy:

It’s much more important to us that what we’re doing is you know whatever our local contacts want to see. So if they want us to be poking the bear rabble-rousing we’re going to do that, but if they want us to be more behind the scenes about it maybe work through the local lawmaker channel rather than putting a big “they suck” on our Facebook, if they want to be a little bit more behind the scenes about it then usually we take the lead from our field organizers or the communities we’re working with.

In this sense, CommunityEarth is attuned to the agency of communities in directing CommunityEarth’s tactics in different situations. On the other hand, Shannon’s statement suggests underlying conflicts rooted in the differing approaches and ideals influencing her organization as they “work to bridge the gap between what’s going on at the local level and what’s going on in DC at the White House.” At the same time as Shannon engages with ideas of constituency-led organizing, CommunityEarth’s approach includes an orientation towards a professionally-driven agenda:

We want to start with doing a lot more with building capacity at the local level. Like for example a lot of times we’ll come in, we’ll film some really nasty pollution, we’ll feel like this is grounds for a complaint: you should report a violation to the operator or whatever. And a lot of times the
kind of follow-up and all of that policy work will fall on us and we don't always have the staff or
the time to like deal with it. So it would be really great for us if we could show people how to do
it themselves and you know kind of build up that kind of grassroots capacity. Like I don't want to
say that we don't build capacity but that's not our mission. And we're kind of developing some
tools and some guidance guideline and things like that. This map and the website has a lot of this
kind of guidance stuff and we are really trying to kind of start pushing some of that responsibility
back on people and having them kind of own the process a little more because you know they are
the local experts, like we think we know, but they are really the ones who are in it. A lot of these
people you know are brilliant and organized and really engaged but then they just don't think that
they can do it cause it's like we are the professionals.

Here there is an important back-and-forth between agency in who is taking initiative. Shannon is
talking about capacity-building and recognizes communities as the “local experts,” the ones who
are really “in it”; she sees “building up networks, more kind of organizing people in their
communities get more engaged” as essential, and thinks CommunityEarth needs to focus more
on capacity building. She suggests their work is “deep” in the sense that they are “working with
regular people first,” who “have been the most impacted,” not just “other organizations.”

Shannon’s insistence that CommunityEarth is a community-driven organization and her focus on
the “qualitative” aspects of storytelling in the program she directs, suggest alignment with
constituency-led organizing and the development of indigenous resources and collective
consciousness.

At the same time, Shannon restrains CommunityEarth’s agenda to its own organizational
boundaries, rather than focusing on a broader vision of extra-organizational mobilization and
initiative. She speaks of “pushing” the CommunityEarth directive back on communities to follow
through on what they “should” be doing and says this “would be great” for CommunityEarth.

Shannon’s equating “building local capacity” with the merely contractual orientation of “former
affected communities contracting for CommunityEarth” further reveals the centrality of
CommunityEarth in its community partnerships. The focus becomes boosting CommunityEarth’s
own network of local contacts rather than building capacity through self-determination. McAdam
refers to this orientation as oligarchization: the valuing of the “maintenance of [an] organization over the realization of movement goals” (2010:55). Furthermore, CommunityEarth’s staff are perceived as “the professionals,” creating a dependence on experts. Coy and Hedeen see this professionalizing tendency as creating “the perception among individuals and communities that they are incapable of addressing their own needs” (425). This departure from the first level of organizing, however, is countered by Shannon’s emphasis on being community-driven and of “immediate benefit to the community;” CommunityEarth encompasses aspects of organizing driven from both ends of the political spectrum.

Environmental Policy Initiatives also straddles the line between national and constituency-led organizing, and follows many of the same patterns discussed in regard to CommunityEarth, with the exception of their tendency to partner primarily with preexisting organizations. Hannah presents a concise analysis of EPI’s dedication of resources to organizing work, relating it to an analysis of power in the political space, and contrasting it with many other organizations that consider having an email list as the equivalent of “organizing the public”:

You know I'm proud of the policy work we do. We have a very good ability to analyze a problem and go look for data and show what's wrong and suggest different policy, or whatever it is. But we don't fool ourselves that that alone is going to make the change we want and we're very very clear that there's a political power situation and that's why we have the mess that we have. It’s that there's disproportionate power in who's making our laws and enforcing them and all of that... So we do all that policy work, but as much of that or more, we balance out with that. We think we have to build political power to make elected officials change. And that sounds really logical but it's actually not always happening in the same places. Some folks just do policy or some people just do organizing and we think we have to do both. So that is kind of our philosophy, kind of in our DNA from the beginning.

Hannah has a clear analysis centered on power, setting EPI outside the realm of political neutrality and negation of struggle. EPI sees the efforts of its organizing department in raising a political consciousness and getting people involved politically as a response to this analysis:
You have to raise people's consciousness that that's a political problem, like there were rules that weren't followed, or the rules were wrong, or there was something broke down in our public policy system, that there's a place for public policy to fix problems and prevent problems. A lot of people think the market's going to fix it. So 1) it's explaining that these are political problems, and then 2) it's really motivating people to then act in a political way right. This is a problem that we have to solve in the political space. And then we have people whose job title is just 'Organizer' and they're out there just trying to build up a pool of people who think that way and are ready to do stuff.

Hannah's focus is tied largely to the starting point of EPI's "policy work," and to a degree limited within the organizational boundaries of EPI. She described the job of an organizer being to "[get] people in our orbit to stay" and "keep them for the long haul." Hannah does not put forth an analysis of empowerment through the buildup of indigenous resources such as long-term leadership and network development - what Mick would consider the first level of organizing - but instead talks about "constantly smacking people in the face with an opportunity to do something" of EPI's initiative. Her discussion of this more top-down approach is suggestive of "transactional" as opposed to Mick's "deep" relationships:

The broader the base of people that are working on something, that are asking for the same thing, the better off you're going to be. Depending on who you are targeting if it's like a city council or Congress, or if you have different neighborhoods or different states or whatever it is, than it's more elected officials you're touching because they represent you. So you can do it with geography, you can do it with different constituencies, you know, well I represent labor, well I represent this church, well I represent this environmental group. Each of them might have access to different decision makers so there's a lot of reasons to do that kind of work together. The fastest way to do that is to find existing groups, not to build your own.

While this approach comes across as transactional, Hannah is sure to differentiate it from other national organizations. Her emphasis of EPI's caution to always establish good, communicative relationships with existing groups, and not just "swoop in and stay for a little while, maybe do some fundraising and then go," suggests a proximity to the constituency-led level of organizing and an understanding of the importance of local autonomy.
A staff member at one of the Big Greens shared the same concern when talking about not “wanting to suck all of the air out of the room” in their partnerships with local community members. She explains that through conversations with community groups, she has heard about their efforts and organizations being “burned” by national environmental organizations, a pattern that builds up a reputation or “personality” for national groups that “affect all [of their] interactions.” She says that these types of relationships have to be transparent “taking some responsibility, as often the group with more resources, to make sure that there's clear communication and that you're asking the question, ‘is what I'm doing fitting into your organizing strategy.’”

Kilimanjaro similarly notes the historic distrust many grassroots groups have with national environmental organizations, specifically the experience of being “tokenized” by the Big Greens whose values they often see in opposition with the values of grassroots environmentalism — “self-determination, democratic process, and solidarity” (2015:9). At Sustainability In Action, Lucas Gagnon talks about the adoption of the Jemez Principles which he describes as “guidelines for how groups like Sustainability In Action should interact” in their “local partnership work.” Like Hannah and Lindsey, Lucas ties Sustainability In Action’s coalition work to building power, specifically in opposition to the political influences of the fossil fuel industry:

Well our macro theory of change as an organization is that there are two sources of power in the political process there’s people and there is money and that organized people can beat organized money. If you look at who our opponents are on most environmental issues it is the fossil fuel industry most of the time and as I think you are probably aware they have massive amounts of financial resources, so we have to offset that. Even though Sustainability In Action is a pretty well funded organization we need to offset that with bringing people into the political process to try and move our agenda forward.
Lucas bases his understanding of organizing on this “macro theory of change,” explaining it as “people coming together around common values and common goals to come together and exercise their collective power to move that through some kind of political process at the state, local, or national level.” Like the examples above, the cases here show how Big Greens are influenced to bring power into their analysis, but a type of power best understood in Lukes’ first or second dimensions, rather than a clear analysis of overcoming power in the third dimension through “deep” relationships and “self-determinism.”

A final organization illustrative of this middle approach to organizing is the Interfaith Environmental Action (IEA). Judging by Susan’s discussion, IEA does not fully embrace Mick’s first level of organizing because of their separation from interests-based organizing with frontline communities. Susan explains IEA’s organizing in terms of allyship with marginalized communities on issues of injustice rather than interests-based mobilization. Susan implies an understanding of organizing in a transactional sense of base-building and numbers, calling it a “grasstops” approach. When I ask whether she sees differences in the goals behind different organizations’ approaches to organizing she responds,

I think the goal is the same right? You get constituents involved, you build your base that like gives you people to show up and to call their Congress people and to become leaders in their own communities on the issue, like you mobilize and build. I think that that’s the same.

Susan emphasizes the purpose of organizing as building a base to engage with the formal political system. In addition to IEA’s “progressive outreach” within the Jewish community on issues of social justice, they also have a “conservative outreach” which follows the logic that “if you care about Israel then you have to care about international security, and therefore you have to care about climate change.” In this sense, IEA decides to pick and choose a political framework based on their audience, with their chief concern being strength in numbers.
At the same time, in the above passage we also see Susan’s concern with people “becoming leaders in their own communities.” Susan’s discussion of IEA’s lack of financial resources and technical capacity in comparison to the Big Greens illustrates IEA’s dependency on alternative species of capital rooted in indigenous structures of religious institutions. Recall the discussion of IEA from the previous chapter in which Susan explains the importance of IEA and faith-based organizations more generally for Big Greens in providing access to mobilizing structures. Susan links the structure, networks, and rhetoric of the Jewish community to power (that Big Greens lack), comparing Jewish clergy to highly trained community organizers. She also emphasizes the importance of leadership development and engagement:

I think that there's a lot of really cool leadership development that we could be doing, not to talk in stereotypes but to talk and statistics but Jews are doctors and Jews are lawyers and they are doctors and lawyers who come from these faith-based, values-based approaches. Like Jews are lawyers in part because we learn how to do close reading from the age of like three basically and Jews are doctors in part because we have this sort of value system that has to do with healing and protecting the sick that is also like engrained for a lot of us. And I think that then those people go off into the world and into their professional lives and don't necessarily have the capacity to tie that back into social justice issues and into their community and I think that we have that capacity to help them bring that back in, you know climate change is a health issue, climate change is a rights issue, so that is some of my thinking in terms of leadership development.

Because of Susan’s extensive experience with the greater power of mobilization in comparison to the technical and financial capacities of Big Greens, she ultimately concludes that IEA’s organizing work seems more important than any headway they may make through lobbying. But this is not without noting the seduction of lobbying work from her positionality as a middle class professional in the field of middle class, professional politics and dominant statist capital:

I think that probably national lobbying is less important than membership engagement but it’s hard, it's so seductive, it's hard not to get sucked in to. Everyone loves doing the lobby and work and I think it's probably not the most important part of this work in the end because I think it will get done for you at a certain point by your constituents.
In her comment, Susan reveals what Bourdieu describes as “the unconscious fit between [her] habitus and the field [she] operates in” (Bourdieu 1992:24).

**Conclusion**

In summary, this chapter has worked to show the importance of discourse concerning political organizing in situating an ENGO’s position within a point on the political spectrum discussed in Chapter Two. The three different “levels” of organizing illustrated in this chapter help to describe the political spectrum in terms of an ENGO’s relationship with nonprofessional members of the organization and its community partners. This analysis is based primarily on Bourdieu’s conception of society consisting of semi-autonomous fields, doubly structured by habitus and the objective distribution of capital among fields. As agents struggle within the field to restructure relations of domination and subordination, they adopt strategies based on the species of power available to them, and their view of the field rooted in their objective position within it.

Communities marginalized at the intersections of race and class bear fundamentally different habituses than the dominant white class, and contain the possibility for a revolutionary collective consciousness conceptualizing oppressive structures and the need for a radical redistribution of species of power. Constituency-led organizing, illustrated in discussions of staff members at USCAN, EIP and RCN, is the most encouraging of this possibility of collective consciousness – incorporating alternative species of capital and counter-hegemonic analyses of struggle – and indicates ENGOs’ heightened affinity with the Left of the political spectrum. National organizing can, in turn, be associated with the Right end of the political spectrum of ENGOs, stemming largely from the professional political field and discourses of formality, compromise, and political neutrality. The most common approach to organizing – “deep
organizing” – apparent among the organizations in this study, incorporates aspects of both national and constituency-led approaches. Partnerships with frontline community groups can be considered an extra-organizational force with the potential to shift organizations towards the Left of the political spectrum. In the next chapter, two forces – charitable foundations and corporate partnerships – will be considered that can have an opposing effect shifting ENGOs towards the Right.
CHAPTER FOUR
STATE-PROXIMATE ENGOs: SHIFTING TOWARDS THE RIGHT

As I argue in Chapter Two, while all of the organizations interviewed for this study can be understood as coming from the fields and habitus structuring the dominant society and the state, there is variation in the extent to which ENGOs take more or less compromising approaches in their political and legislative dealings with the state. In the previous chapter, uncompromising, Left-of-center approaches were tied to the incorporation of collective analyses of frontline communities rooted in their struggles with dominant, oppressive structures. These analyses could be seen prompting ENGOs to break out of a homologous manifestation of the status quo, situating their discourse on the Left of the political spectrum. In contrast, this chapter will be an exploration of some of the structural and ideological mechanisms of the dominant white society and the state, that shift ENGOs away from integrating the perspectives of the progressive Left environmental and climate justice movements, and towards centrist strategies of compromise. It will consider the interconnected influences of corporate foundations’ and ENGO-corporate partnerships.

To frame this analysis, I turn once more to Bourdieu’s theory of the state and statist capital. Bourdieu sees society as the interlocking of semi-autonomous fields and their different species of power which coalesce in structuring state. In contrast to common understandings of the state as “a well-defined, clearly bounded and unitary reality which stands in relation of externality with outside forces that are themselves clearly identified and defined,” (Bourdieu 1992:111) Bourdieu sees the state as

an ensemble of administrative or bureaucratic fields (they often take the empirical form of commissions, bureaus, and boards) within which agents and categories of agents, governmental and nongovernmental, struggle over [a] peculiar form of authority consisting of the power to rule via legislation, regulations, [and] administrative measures (1992:111)
Bourdieu calls this form of authority “statist capital,” which acts as an encompassing influence in shaping homologous struggles for leveraging power over the structures of the state. Semi-autonomous fields contest one another for power over statist capital, and those that rise to the top in this struggle come to constitute a concentration of fields that make up the state. Bourdieu summarizes,

The construction of the state goes hand in hand with the constitution of the field of power understood as the space of play in which holders of various forms of capital struggle in particular for power over the state, that is, over the statist capital that grants power over the different species of capital and over their reproduction. (1992:114)

Bourdieu sees the forms of statist capital concentrated in the fields comprising the state as “economic (thanks to taxation), military, cultural, juridical, and, more generally, symbolic” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992:114).

The forms of statist capital discussed in this chapter can be understood as pulling ENGOs towards tactics and analyses rooted in a conviction of the necessity to acquire dominant species of capital in order to access and influence the formal political system. Bourdieu recognizes that this struggle is key to reconstituting societal patterns of domination and subordination, and thus not capable of transforming oppressive structures of society. As explained in Chapter One, Bourdieu understands the social world to be, by and large, a continual reconstitution of a social order through the “double and obscure relation between habitus and fields,” that is people’s perception and thus embodiment of objective positions between fields (1992:127). People perceive the structure of society as natural rather than as “the historically contingent fallouts of a given balance of power between classes, “ethnic” groups, or genders,” thereby conserving the social order and the interests of those who dominate it (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 14). Thus, people occupying positions within the dominant fields of the state embody and reconstitute its structures through their habitus.
By working to leverage the power of the state through dominant species of capital, ENGOs inherently play a role in the reconstitution of the power structures of society. This is not to say that ENGOs holding dominant species of power cannot play a role in institutionalizing analyses of struggle and pushing forward economic, racial, and climate justice initiatives. As recognized by Williams in his discussion of the cultural environments structuring social movements, demonstrating a certain level of dominant legitimacy (recognized in statist forms of cultural, economic, social, and symbolic capital) is necessary in restructuring status quo politics and culture. This legitimacy, however, can be a balance of appeals to dominant cultural codes on the one hand, and “elaborated” explanations of non-dominant political analyses of injustice and uneven distributions of power necessary for transforming the representation of the social world on the other.

The interwoven mechanisms of financial and cultural legitimacy discussed in this chapter will point to the ways ENGOs move away from elaborated cultural appeals, building their legitimacy instead on the dominant forms of capital that restructure societal oppression. In social movement theory, the processes and dominating structures that lead to this trend are often referred to as “co-optation,” defined by Coy and Hedeen as “the influential role of powerful exogenous institutions and resource providers, particularly the state, in fostering or imposing the reproduction of organizational patterns and values that reinforce the status quo.” This chapter will concern entities that pull ENGOs towards the Right end of the political spectrum through their provisions of legitimized dominant capital. These partnerships have a tendency to serve the purpose of maintaining the status quo and the interests of the dominating white class.
Corporate Foundations and Funding

"A big challenge for this movement unlike other social movements like the union movement for example is that we are not financially self-sustaining... So we are all beholden to foundation funding which is a problem because foundation funding tends to come from people who have a particular view of the world that they want to fund." –Mick Power

This section will discuss the influences of foundation funding on the organizational structures and tactics of ENGOs. I will consider the tendency towards hierarchization and centralization in organizational structures, as well as towards short-term “achievable” and measureable campaign outcomes under the influence of foundations. Several contributors to The Revolution Will Not Be Funded provide historical accounts of the rise of corporate foundations in the US and their ties with progressive social movements. An overview of these accounts and contributions from social movement theory will be instructive in understanding the problematic influences of foundations (governed primarily by extremely wealthy, white men) on progressive political organizing.

Foundations were created for the first time in the early 1900s by multimillionaires including John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, and Russell Sage, ostensibly for charity work and the amelioration of social issues (Smith 2007). From the beginning, critics raised concerns about foundations’ ability to funnel money to support the interests of their corporate backers. For example, in 1916 the US Commission on Industrial Relations (also known as the Walsh Commission) filed a report with Congress expressing concern that foundations were a “grave menace” that concentrated wealth for the propagation of capitalist interests. Union leader Samuel Gompers testified in the report that “In the effort to undertake to be an all-pervading machinery for the molding of the minds of people… in the constant industrial struggle for human
betterment... [foundations] should be prohibited from exercising their functions, either by law or regulation” (Smith 2007:5).

After World War II and economic resurgence from the Great Depression, foundations rose in prominence, gaining criticism from both the Left and Right: on the Left for steering the Civil Rights and other progressive movements in more conservative directions, and on the Right for subsidizing left-wing causes. Beginning in 1962, Texas Congressman Wright Patman carried out a study of foundations he saw as propping up liberal causes. Patman’s report was delivered to Congress, contending that the IRS did not adequately monitor the financials of foundations; that foundations were putting small businesses at a disadvantage; and that they were being used to consolidate economic power, escape estate taxes, and compensate relatives (Smith 2007). The report prompted the Tax Reform Act of 1969 which led to heightened regulation through a four percent excise tax on foundations’ net investment income, restrictions on engagement in business dealings, and a requirement on foundations to spend at least 6 percent of annual net investment income on charitable causes (Smith 2007).

Stricter regulation of foundations after 1969 was accompanied by a rise of nonprofit organizations which require approval by federal law under 501(c)(3) status in order to be eligible for foundation funding. According to the IRS, these organizations are “religious, charitable, scientific, or educational” and are prohibited from direct involvement in political campaigns (Smith 2007:6). The late 1900s saw an exceptionally large increase in foundation wealth, growing by over 400 percent between 1981 and 1996 (Ridriguez 2007). Tang (2007) similarly notes that between 1975 and 1988, philanthropic foundations grew from a total of 21,887 to 30,388 and that by 2000, that number had risen to 56,582.
Tang situates the rise of the nonprofit at the beginning of the Reagan era in the early to mid-1980s, as service providers scrambled to meet the needs of their communities under the cutbacks to the War on Poverty programs designed under the Kennedy-Johnson “Great Society.” Similarly, Gilmore (2007) explains the rise of the nonprofit as a “resolution” between “the unprecedented expansion of government agencies and services (1933-1973), followed by an equally wide-scale attempt to undo many of those programs at all levels—federal, state, county, and local” under the neoliberal agenda of the 1980s (45). In this sense, Gilmore understands the rise of nonprofits as a tool of transition to enable the retrenchment of the welfare state without a complete removal of social services that could instigate mass insurrection.

Sociologist Doug McAdam similarly relates elite benefactors of social change efforts with diffusion of discontent within challenging movements. McAdam describes elite-movement partnerships as trade-offs “between benefits obtained and costs incurred” (2010:27). The idea of “benefits” originates with recognition in social movement “resource mobilization theory” that social movements require stable organizations and a steady input of resources to endure over time. Elites are willing to support such efforts because their intervention comes with “costs” to social movements, costs that “ultimately to strengthen, rather than challenge, the status quo” (McAdam 2010:27). This is because support from benefactors comes with mandates that shift tactics towards institutional political processes in which terms are set by the dominant white class. Foundations provide a state-legitimized mechanism to coopt progressive or redistributive social change efforts.

Foundations transfer public money to undemocratic, unrepresentative governing bodies. Foundation giving is an alternative to paying high income and estate taxes (which are over 50 percent on large estates), that further concentrates wealth in the hands of a few and, some of
which (if it were not for the tax incentives around charitable giving) would have been allocated to social spending through political systems with higher accountability. Foundations are governed almost entirely by the dominant white class. According to the Council on Foundations, in 2000, 90 percent of foundation board members were white, and 66 percent were men. Only 1.7 percent of charitable foundation giving is reserved for funding civil rights and social action causes. The majority of foundation grants go to universities, hospitals, research and the arts (Ahn 2007). The qualitative descriptions in the following sections will help to portray the influences of foundations on ENGO agendas and the ways in which the agendas of wealthy elites pull ENGOs towards the right of the political spectrum, reconstituting oppressive structures of society.

The Shaping of (short) terms: Achievable Agendas

“The type of funding that foundations want are projects that are generally sort of positive and can show a clear result within one year... some measurable outcome. So they really push you towards thinking short term rather than long-term, the ability to produce some kind of outcome quickly rather than taking the time which it takes to really make change.” – Ted Franzen, Rural Climate Network

Staff members’ perceptions of the foundation influences emerge most clearly in the interviews through their reflections on the necessary “short-term” focus and requirements of foundations. This focus can be seen in the requirements of foundations for ENGOs to strategize around producing specific, measureable outcomes in the form of key performance indicators, or “deliverables.” I will begin by exploring the patterns of this dynamic in staff members’ observations, and then turn to a discussion of some of the implications of the rightward influences foundations hold over organizations’ place on the political spectrum, as well as the influence they hold over the direction of a broader environmental movement. Interviews with five different organizations help to illuminate a link between funding from foundations and an emphasis on short-term work with clear end goals. Staff members’ observations at other ENGOs
provide evidence that helps to form a broader look at the influences on organizational and movement structures including intragroup competition, fractured – rather than cohesive and long-term – planning, a shift towards professionalization and away from efforts at mass-based organizing, and deradicalized tactics and discourse. The next section, “Negotiation with Foundations,” will contrast these tendencies towards centrism, with the ways in which ENGO staff members demonstrate reflective agency in avoiding some of the problematic influences of donors.

As a first example of the foundation-incentivized trajectory towards a short-term campaign approach, Lindsey O’Brien at Climate Protection Network feels that the mandates of the foundations CPN works with are problematic with regard to the limits they put on how CPN is able to allocate money. Lindsey says that while CPN is able to “sell” foundations on their campaigns, they are unable to obtain funding for improving internal capacity and communication systems because donations towards these areas won’t “produce a specific campaign result.” Lindsey explains, “I think technologically speaking we’re a bit behind the curb and it’s more of a funding issue than anything, to find people to fund some brand new technology that isn’t going to produce a specific campaign result has been a challenge.” She says it is difficult “getting a funder to see that this is a long-term investment,” and that while CPN will not “be able to say [they’ll] win this campaign because of it,” it will make them a more effective organization. Lindsey sees this type of organizational capacity as important for CPN’s work organizing in low-income communities because people in these areas “almost always have a cell phone but don’t necessarily have a laptop in their house.” Funding for CPN’s internal capacity to communicate effectively is something Lindsey sees as necessary to “engage in that arena” – that is, low-income communities.
Shannon Gross also comments on the short-term directive of foundations, but rather than focusing on Earthwork’s internal capacity, she contrasts it with the long-term nature of the organization’s policy goals. Shannon explains that with policy work, “there’s a lot going on behind the scenes that takes years and years of lobbying efforts that you’re never going to see” which is problematic when foundations want to see outcomes in the form of “things that you could actually like produce and package and deliver.” Shannon connects CommunityEarth’s board and funding base with the business world, significantly “financial planners and analysts who used to work for oil and gas.” She explains that a lot of people who were in that world see the negligence and corruption and come over “to the other side fighting it,” with the added impetus of the dawning realization that extraction no longer makes “economic sense” with such limited deposits and cheaper renewable energy production. Shannon says that CommunityEarth’s board is unique in that it has totally bought into their strategies and objectives, whereas other organizations are much more “donor-driven.”

In the donor-driven world, she refers specifically to her old job which was “the kind of place” that had “huge foundations” where staff members had to spend a lot of their time “convincing these well-endowed organizations or individuals what they should spend their money on. Kind of like selling ideas to them.” Although Shannon says she does not think CommunityEarth’s board of directors has any people from the gas and oil industry, she makes clear observations of the interconnectedness of big money from the corporations, foundations, and the directive role of the people in these circles who she describes as “high-level folks in the movement.” Shannon concludes, “I like working for a group like CommunityEarth because we are on the Left side of things and so our donors tend to be a lot more conscientious and aware than a lot of [other] donors.” Eric Schaeffer at EIP provides an even clearer link between the
short-term strategizing of foundations and their elite governing bodies, noting that “the foundations are established by very wealthy people who are kind of used to being able to make decisions, maybe in the business world, and then execute.” Eric expresses frustration with this trend considering that EIP “has to be in it for the long haul” because the issues they work on “are political and difficult,” and they “take years to move forward.”

Lucas Gagnon at Sustainability In Action, and Ted Franzen, who works for the Rural Climate Network (RCN), contextualize this short-term trajectory as part of a historical shift in the work of their own organizations. Ted’s comments complement Lindsey, Shannon, and Eric’s observations, describing the projects that foundations tend to want to fund as generally being “sort of positive and [able to] show a clear result within one year, you know some kind of measurable outcome.” Ted says foundations “really push you towards thinking short term rather than long-term, [towards] the ability to produce some kind of outcome quickly rather than sometimes taking the time to really make change” that is “substantial.” Ted situates this pattern as part of a historical shift in the way foundations operate:

In the past foundations used to give a lot more general operating support – we like this organization we're going to trust this organization, we trust you guys to decide what to do, what's best, what's the most important – and that has kind of disappeared. So they are [now] more project-oriented, and they're way more kind of setting their own priorities and expect groups to sort of execute their priorities.

Lucas Gagnon who has been working at Sustainability In Action for 22 years similarly observes a shift away from the “unrestricted” funding that used to be the typical approach of foundations:

When I first came, the organizing department was funded with about 85 percent unrestricted money, meaning money that people would just give us money because they [thought] Sustainability In Action is doing good work and they would say spend it the way you think [you] should. Whereas it’s flipped in the last 22 years. Now 90 percent of the organizing department funds are from restricted money.
Lucas says the restriction of funds has made Sustainability In Action’s work “much tighter” because “funders are much more focused on specific deliverables and key performance indicators, and the outcomes you're going to deliver.” Within the organizing department, Lucas now has to be much more concerned with being able to “quantify organizing work” much more so than when he first started his work 20 years ago. He explains what this quantification looks like for Sustainability In Action:

In the case of the [one particular campaign], [foundations] want to know how many tons of carbon we are taking out of the atmosphere, they want to know how many coal plants we’re shutting down, they want to know how much clean energy is being brought online. So those are the kind of policy outcomes they're looking at. They're also interested in knowing what is our contribution for turning people out for EPA hearings, so how many people have actually engaged in this work. So it's a combination of both kind of organizing metrics and policy outcome metrics.

While I will not go into an analysis of this shift, I make note of it here because of the support it lends to more general observable trend of ENGOs feeling restricted in their work by foundation mandates. Staff members working at CommunityEarth, CPN, EIP, RCN, and the Sustainability In Action depict a generalizable picture through their observations of the power dynamic existing between foundations and ENGO grantees in how governing bodies of foundations mold ENGO tactics into producing measureable deliverables that can often conflict with longer-term visions.

The effect of this dynamic on the organizational structure of one particular ENGO is laid out clearly in Pauline Smith’s observations in her work as the Senior Director of Federal Policy at PPP. In her account, PPP’s funding base can be seen holding clear influence over the campaign-oriented agenda and hierarchical structure of the organization. Pauline describes PPP as having a particularly close relationship with its funders because many of its largest donors helped to found the organization and are on its board of directors. Because of PPP’s comparatively close proximity with its largest donors, its funding base holds disproportionate sway over its operations. Pauline says the board reviews and has to approve all of PPP’s
campaigns. She describes the relationship between the organization and its board as “a two-way street because they’re more likely to keep funding PPP because they’re involved so closely in what PPP is doing and in approving what PPP is doing. So it’s much more a part of the financial well-being of the organization than some boards are.” When I asked Pauline about the ways in which funding influences the work of the organization, she immediately linked the funding to the way in which PPP is structured around campaigns with clear, winnable outcomes. Pauline explains,

Funding does influence what we can do certainly. Typically the way PPP works is on a campaign model, not political campaigns, but issue campaigns, developing campaigns that run for three to five years, with milestones along the way, with the idea of achieving the overall goal in [that time] and having that goal being something that will make real change...

Pauline sees this model as unique to PPP and entailing a much more “rigorous” process than other organizations she has worked for previously:

The biggest distinction about PPP is it really is campaign-focused in that it’s a very rigorous approach to developing the campaigns. Really spelling out very clear goals, really holding the organization to achieving those goals. Progress toward those goals is reported to our board at every board meeting. I’ve never worked for an organization that does that in such a rigorous way as PPP does… It’s much more, very focused.

Pauline later sums up the key tenets of the campaign model as having “to be something with a clear endpoint, with a clear measurement of success... and it has to be achievable in a certain amount of time, and the board has to approve it.” Pauline’s observations display a strong connection between the proximity of funders to the governance of PPP, and the PPP’s campaign-oriented approach. While PPP’s board is able to secure sound allocations of funding for the organization, they also limit its perceived realm of possibility and the meaning of “practicality” and what is “too big an ask” or “overreach” on policy demands.

As referenced above, McAdam problematizes elite-backing in terms of “costs” to challenging movements’ organizational structures, wherein “centralized discussion and decision-
making bodies are created where those vested in the status quo can concentrate their persuasion efforts to effectively neutralize key aspects of the challenge” (2010:416). McAdam understands this neutralization to mean the moderation of goals and shifting tactics towards institutionalized political channels but it can also be understood in terms of movement fractionalization. PPP’s proximity with its board members steers it towards short-term campaigns that require “deliverables” to legitimize their work in the eyes of foundations. Pauline discusses the pressures of competing for funding among different ENGOs explaining,

I mean all organizations need recognition for what they’re doing in order to continue to raise money so there’s always a little bit of jockeying for position in terms of making sure that your organization gets the credit or at least grabs a share of the credit or gets all the credit... So those tensions are constant in absolutely everything that we do in collaboration with other organizations.

For this reason Pauline believes it was important in one of PPP’s campaigns to maintain a leading position when “groups that had not been involved jumped on the bandwagon,” to make sure PPP got “credit for leading the band.” For Smith, this type of competition requires “niche marketing,” preventing activists from collaborative dialogue about failures in addition to successes, and getting them stuck “in having to repeat the same strategies because [they] insisted to funders they were successful, even if they were not” (2007:11).

Fractionalization can also be recognized in what Coy and Hedeen refer to as a distraction of long-range planning through “the need to satisfy multiple masters with diverse interests” (2005:420). At EPI, Hannah notes that “the biggest stressor is sustaining yourself in a rational way where you're not just chasing funding and doing weird stuff that's disjointed year-to-year or disjointed from your other programs.” Likewise, Susan at IEA complains about the restrictions on her organization due to the low levels of funding they receive from the Big Greens resulting in her having to do “all this random shit.” Foundation-influenced competition and fractured
agendas can be understood as consequences of groups’ dependency on elite sponsorship. The observations above illustrate a shifting of organizations to work under the model of short-term campaigns with obtainable outcomes under the requirements of foundations and large donors.

**Negotiation with Foundations and Fitting Agendas Within Foundation Mandates**

“*I think what we try to do is really try to set our own priorities about what we think is important, try to make the case to funders, try to fit our priorities within [their] parameters and limitations.*” – Ted Franzen, RCN

ENGO staff members are often aware of the restrictive demands foundations place on their strategies and goals and are thereby able to practice a certain level of reflexive agency in order to protect their own analyses, tactics, and agendas. This practice is recognizable through the way in which ENGOs mold their long-term strategies into the confines of foundation-required deliverables, and the way in which they engage foundations in negotiation to convince them of their own original analyses. This section will discuss the foundation-related observations of staff members at five different ENGOs that have been introduced previously. Interview excerpts from Environmental Integrity Project, CommunityEarth, and the Rural Climate Network will be discussed in relation to staff members’ perceptions of working within the mandates of the federal-driven analyses of foundations, while reflections from staff members at the Sustainability In Action, CPN, and EPI will add depth to the reflections on negotiation with foundations raised in the first four interviews.

The most explicit demonstration of awareness of working to avoid foundation-driven agendas can be seen in Ted Franzen’s discussion of the Community Climate Discussions as a way of “packaging” RCN’s larger goals for foundations in such a way that they will receive financial support. Ted describes the strategy thus: “I think what we try to do is really try to set our own priorities about what we think is important, try to make the case to funders, try to fit our
priorities within [their] parameters and limitations.” RCN sees the Community Climate Discussions as a “step on the road towards where [RCN] wants to go,” which is building a much broader “rural climate network.” RCN envisions this network as being able to engage rural communities in local, state, and national level policy decisions and building new markets for farmers who want to target local markets. RCN understands this work is an extensive process of building cohesion and dialogue among rural communities through a long, concerted effort of creating continuous opportunities for “face-to-face” interaction. Ted discusses the role of the Community Climate Discussions in obtaining funding:

We were able to break out the dialogue part of [building a rural network] and I think in our fundraising we didn't even talk much about the network but we said we're going into these communities that haven't talked about climate, that rural communities don't talk about climate, and we're going to go hold these three dialogues in this period of time and we will have this outcome which will be these actions statements that will come out of each one. And that is something that funders are able to grasp and support, they're more receptive to that kind of thing.

Here Ted demonstrates RCN’s efforts at breaking down a longer term strategy with a qualitative emphasis on the importance of face-to-face interactions in building trusting relationships into “steps” that can be “packaged” for foundations. RCN does not even attempt to explain their long-term visions to foundations but rather tries to break out various aspects of their work into steps with clear deliverables that “funders would see and would fund.”

Shannon also highlights CommunityEarth’s emphasis on pushing for concrete regulation in local communities, and not letting foundations’ orientation towards international and federal-level policy steer the direction of their work. She discusses CommunityEarth’s strategizing in their Community Partners Project in which CommunityEarth works with communities to create infrared videos of pollution from fracking, and testimonial videos of the kinds of health impacts people have seen locally. The project focuses on linking federal-level policy that tends to be the priority of the foundations with which they partner, with work that CommunityEarth sees as
having more tangible outcomes for people in local contexts such as influencing regulation “at the source” and raising awareness in communities:

Funders and donors are also really keen to see big impacts, so they want to see that the local work we're doing is influencing federal policy. One of the ways that we actually have started doing that is through storytelling and getting infrared footage of actual oil and gas air pollution and combining the two to create a really nice visual image of what's going on in these areas. And those stories and infrared videos have proven really powerful in kind of changing the hearts and minds of lawmakers or at least raising awareness in places where people didn't know it was an issue... [This program] is something that donors see as being very tangible in terms of producing outcomes and it's great when you have something visual that you can share with people and put on a website and make it public... Maybe we're not showing donors like new laws, but we're showing them these tools that we’re creating and these visuals that are pushing people. We can show them smaller isolated incidences where maybe a school board didn't sign a lease for a new well on their school property, or maybe [a] city is reconsidering their power plan.

Shannon sees the Community Partners Project as a way of fitting the community-level work that CommunityEarth wants to be doing into a broader, national-level context that is often the focus of CommunityEarth’s benefactors. She sees it as creating an “immediate package” that can be used to influence decision-makers at the state and city level, while also helping to further the “national conversation” and regulation around the impacts of fracking. In addition to scientific evidence, the Community Partners Project offers more qualitative, “localized” case material for making an argument at the federal level.

Eric Schaeffer’s discussion of working within the confines of foundation mandates to engage with the “local level” work EIP wants to focus on highlights negotiation as a strategy to avoid unwanted foundations influences. Eric describes the nonprofit-foundation relationship as one of marketing issues and “persuasion,” with the constant, looming question for ENGOs being “how are we going to pay for it?” Situated in this relationship, Eric feels frustrated with the emphasis on climate change because “it can’t all be about Paris and you know big international agreements that you can’t enforce here.” He sees environmental work under the influence of foundations as distorting attention away from issues at the local level. Eric explains that “in this
political climate, you’re not going to move climate legislation, there’s not going to be a carbon law or a cap and trade bill, you know not right now. So you need to work with the tools you have. And that means making the fossil fuel industry clean up their act.”

For this reason, EIP focuses on showing foundations the connection between climate change and other forms of pollution that can be regulated through existing regulation under the EPA. Eric gives the example of the work EIP has done around the coal industry which he says has survived due to “all the rules that are supposed to be attached to coal-fired power plants [being] delayed, deferred, pushed off.” EIP sued the EPA for failing to adequately monitor the most toxic pollutants of coal industry. As a result of the lawsuit filed by EIP, the EPA began requiring the installation of wastewater treatment in coal plants, heightening costs for the industry and making renewable energy more appealing.

EIP tries to negotiate with and convince foundations of their own analyses of the best approach to environmental litigation work, getting funders to “loosen up their grants [to] squeeze in” the work EIP wants to do. One of the ways they do this is through “information work,” writing reports that get media attention and shift perspectives among donors. Eric specifically raises the issue of fertilizer chemical plants that have been being built up and expanded due to the availability of cheap oil and gas through fracking. These plants are supposed to be regulated under a law limiting new or expanded sources of carbon emissions from industry. EIP developed a report documenting the allocation of new permits that were not enforcing limits on carbon at the permit level (Schaeffer 2016). Eric explains that EIP’s information work is meant to shift the analyses of their donors: “We haven’t taken the next step because the funders are focused on coal and to some extent on methane, but not on the issues that we flag. But you know part of what we
do with those reports is we create a profile so it changes the way funders think and we can start turning around and start enforcing permit requirements on carbon, that industry.”

Staff members at CPN, the Sustainability In Action, and EPI do not speak in the same way about fitting their own analyses and work within the confines of foundation mandates, but they do highlight their organizations’ autonomy in the relationship through efforts at negotiation. Lindsey explains that CPN approaches a funding relationship as “Here’s what we’re doing. Fund it,” staying “very clear CPN works on these things and would love to have your support.” CPN is also trying to work with funders to get financial support for a development position within the organization with a focus on building a base of independent, grassroots funding that would allow CPN to improve their internal capacity as discussed in the previous chapter.

At Sustainability In Action, Lucas speaks of his frustration with the lack of funding available for focusing on “organizing capacity” and “building in Sustainability In Action’s diversity, equity, and inclusion work.” Lucas highlights his organization’s relationship with a sponsor as one way they try to navigate this obstacle:

[This one sponsor] is super concerned about coal and the health impacts on communities so he’s giving us a multi-million dollar multi-year grant. We have shared with him our theory of change and how important we believe it is to have people of color and communities speaking for themselves, sort of consistent with the Jemez Principles as part of the way that we think we’re going to win. So they agree with our analysis and allow us to use some of the money to do some of the work. So even though it’s not free-standing DEI money, what we try to do is build that into all of our campaign proposals and plans that we take to foundations and get it kind of funded through the backdoor.

Lucas recognizes his more socially-oriented analysis of environmental concerns is one not shared by foundation elites. He therefore works build an elaborated “theory of change” that creates room for constituency-led organizing and tries to sell it to foundations.

Hannah Rosenberg provides another example of negotiation and EPI’s effort to preserve their independence in relationships with foundations. Hannah adamantly believes in strong
governmental policy as the only realistic means to improving the food system. She says that many of the foundations with which EPI has tried to partner have tended to want to focus on more simple, positive initiatives of “building alternatives” within the food system “without dealing with the broken system” first. As a result, EPI has needed to approach the situation through years of conversation and explanation:

We had to do a lot of explaining to be like [alternative systems will not] grow until we bust up the structural problems in this system... But that's not what people wanted to hear, they wanted to hear if we paid for this project for three or four years and got this incubator food system up and running and then it would be on its own two feet. And I'm telling them a harder slog about farm bills and policy work or whatever. It took a very long time before people were kind of willing to see maybe there's some potential in this policy work.

Hannah recognizes that her analysis of “excessive corporate control” is not shared by foundations. Hannah’s vantage point from her objective position in the field of environmental justice work is one that exposes her to the struggles of local communities and exploitative corporate entities. It becomes her job to persuade foundations that the exploitation of natural resources in a capitalist economy requires a counterbalance in the form of strong government regulation and that EPI has the know-how and capacity to push for this regulation, but only with their financial support.

The different approaches ENGOs take in navigating relationships with foundations is telling of their position within the broader societal distribution of power and along the political spectrum. As ENGOs struggle to maintain organizational autonomy within these relationships through negotiation and strategic communication, they reveal their subordinate position to capitalist elites. Staff members discussions’ of the “short-term,” deliverable-oriented agendas of foundations suggests a propensity to be steered in the direction of transactional dealings with grassroots partners and away from constituency-led organizing. Only Pauline offers no critique of these tendencies, instead attributing it to PPP’s “more rigorous” and focused approach than
other organizations. Pauline’s optimistic comments suggest a loss of reflexive tendencies within a hierarchical ENGO in closer proximity to the dominant class occupying a critical position on their board of directors.

Private Sector Partnerships: The State and Vested Interests

“When somebody else has that much power you don’t try to negotiate with them, you try to build up your power and then negotiate with them.” – Mick Power, USCAN

This section will compare differences in position-taking regarding partnerships with corporations. For some informants, these discussions are linked directly with concerns of power and struggle, while other staff members tend towards an elaboration of collaborative processes and mutual benefits. As Robert Frazier at EOG puts it, there is a spectrum “within the environmental community” to the extent to which different groups “go along with the corporations.” Discourse of power and struggle can be understood as a practice of reflexive agency, maintaining some level of organizational autonomy. Again, Mick’s comments provide a useful starting point, as he immediately ties the topic of private-sector partnerships, especially with large polluting industries, to the problem of a differential power distribution in society:

For an organization that makes money, like their core business is destroying the climate and it's a choice for them between succeeding as a company or destroying the planet or people's lives, they might be nice people and they might be willing to have a reasonable conversation with you but the power dynamic underlining that is totally tilted in their favor and like David didn't go to Goliath and ask him nicely to put his swords down, you know what I mean? When somebody else has that much power you don't try to negotiate with them, you try to build up your power and then negotiate with them.

Mick recognizes the distorting tendencies of corporate partnerships but he does not rule them out entirely. As explained in Chapter Two, USCAN struggles to find a balance between drawing in dominant capital, and keeping “an equity, justice human-centered approach front and center” that “builds power from the ground up.” Mick explains the concept of a “short-term ally” as an
approach to lessening the contradiction between having polluting corporations as partners, while also recognizing inherent power differentials and the possibility of cooptation. The short-term ally approach concedes that the backing of dominant power and cultural legitimacy can be advantageous for the climate movement – “it’s good to have Fortune 500 companies backing the CPP” – and that with many industries threatened by climate change, “immediate short-term interests intersect.” Ultimately, however, it has to be an “alliance of convenience,” in which distance preserves the nondominant partner’s objectives. Through a recognition of power differentials, Mick’s conception of the “short-term ally” leaves an awareness for the need of organizational autonomy.

For a number of ENGOs on the Left end of the spectrum, this maintenance of autonomy can be recognized in continuation with Mick’s political framework of corporate power. Recall Lucas Gagnon’s “macro theory of change” that organized people can beat organized money. This assertion as well as other staff members’ framings and stigmatization of polluting industries at CPN, CommunityEarth, and EPI can be recognized in stark contrast with their more Centrist, ENGO partners’ discussions of collaboration and mutual benefits. At CPN, Lindsey sees “corporate greed” at the heart of environmental issues:

Our system is set up to incentivize people to make money no matter what and so you have utilities like Dominion Power, or Exxon who are these huge utilities and their main goal is to make money for their shareholders and everything else is kind of a either an intended or unintended consequence. And I think that system is just inherently flawed. And then you look at the money that they spend lobbying politicians and that further corrupts the system. Though I think the US has a pretty robust democracy, the places that it breaks down are the places that end up causing a lot of environmental impact. People and their health are kind of seen as a price of doing business and if I were to boil down to the one core problem it would be that.

Recall Lindsey’s explanation in Chapter Three that the power of organizing is a method to counter the “outsized sway” of corporations within our political system. Through political engagement, CPN works to turn these huge utilities into “toxic entities that politicians don’t want
to stand next to.” At CommunityEarth, Shannon similarly explains that at the core of all environmental problems

is an issue of corporations [having] been allowed to operate pretty much unchecked for a very long time, and not just unchecked, but like policies have been created that actually support their profit-making and hurt us and for a long time, and I think they still do, politicians thought that that was the way that way you spur [economic] growth.

While Lindsey does not link this analysis directly with CommunityEarth’s grassroots engagement, her discussion of building capacity at the community level suggests this approach is meant to counter corporate political influence.

Finally, Hannah Rosenberg articulates EPI’s framework of engagement in everything they do as always coming back to “excessive corporate power.” This “worldview” is applied organization-wide – in EPI’s organizing department, membership engagement, and policy work. Hannah says that EPI chooses to prioritize certain issues based on whether they will continue the education “that these are policy problems and these are problems of control and power.” EPI does not see the “science argument” as sufficient to get Congress “to wake up and do their job.” Instead they are always trying to paint a picture “that there's a role for regulation, that there's a role for government, and we need to reduce the amount of control big corporations have over our water, our food, our environment.”

On the opposing, Right end of the spectrum, several other staff members share a discourse of neutrality and pragmatism on the topic of corporate partnerships, that contrasts with the power-concerned orientation above. One staff member working for a Big Green explained partnerships as a process of finding what “can be done behind the scenes that is mutually agreeable, that can see the outcomes that we both want to see, while business is still profitable.” The most extreme example is Environmental Defense Fund which relies heavily on this type of approach. Anthony Black a senior scientist at EDF, describes the organization’s “technical
strength” in partnering with large industry, calling a “profit motive” the “pragmatic approach” to making progress on environmental issues. Anthony explains that EDF opened an office in Benville, Arkansas to be next to the headquarters of Walmart. According to Anthony, the philosophy of EDF comes down to: “If you don’t have industry working with you, it’s going to be very difficult to make changes.”

At CEI, Stewart takes a comparably neutral position on corporate partnerships, although he differentiates CEI from other Big Greens that allow corporate partnerships to modify their political stances. Stewart’s comment suggests an obscuration of power differentials between grassroots engagement, and coalition building in the dominant realms of society:

We have a network of over two million members and people we reach through our social channels. So there are folks that sign up for our emails and our list that we reach out to about new issues, we reach out to about our groundbreaking reports or ask them to get involved on a piece of legislation. And then we also certainly have a very active grassroots network through social media. And so I think it’s tapping that element of the grassroots, and then working with other organizations, working with food companies, working with cosmetic companies, working with members of Congress and state legislatures, to really build coalitions to expand the grassroots impact of our work is I think another thing that CEI is quite successful at, building this not only echo chamber, but building a big grass roots of folks who are willing to take action on things.

Stewart speaks of membership engagement, “working with companies,” and “working with members of Congress,” as all mutually encompassed, expanding CEI’s “grassroots impact,” without recognition of the fundamentally different distribution of power and access across these realms. Unlike Anthony, however, Stewart does give recognition to the problematic power differentials of ENGO-corporate partnerships (excepting his own organization):

There are other organizations who I will not mention that are far more willing to partner with big companies. Anytime you partner with someone, that has the ability to impact your own decision-making and your ability to take stances [publicly]. I can't think of a time that a CEI has partnered with someone where our own political speech has been compromised... There are certainly Big Green groups that partner with big chemical companies or other companies where that level of partnership limits their ability to say things or moderates their positions on issues. We certainly are aware of that and there a lot of companies that would never partner with us because of the stances we take.
Stewart explains that CEI’s “political tack” gives them an easier time partnering with companies that are not willing to work with “radical lefty” groups. Compare this with Shannon’s general assertion that CommunityEarth gets “shut down at the gate” by corporations because corporations are “lazy and greedy and they don't like working with reformists because they think we're the devil.” She continues, “Even if [we’re] trying to do things that would actually help their business [CommunityEarth gets] shut down at the gate.” CommunityEarth’s hardline stances puts them at odds with the interests of corporations, making it difficult to build collaborative private-sector partnerships.

The “Consumer Campaign”

Another interesting topic addressed by several interviewees when asked about private sector partnerships is what they refer to as “market,” “consumer” or “corporate” campaigns. This approach is not a partnership in the same collaborative sense considered above, but involves using consumer voices to pressure corporations to change harmful practices. A comparison between EPI’s stance and those of Centrist can be considered in continuation with ENGOs’ portrayal of power in society. At CEI, Stewart goes as far as to equate regulation by industry with regulation by the federal government in his discussion of consumer campaigns:

Companies, because they are economic generators, are perceived to be different than nonprofits and advocacy organizations. [But] they just bring their own political ammunition on a policy fight, and in many cases because of the dysfunction here in Washington DC, we have a lot of de facto regulation that comes through the marketplace, so when Walmart tells its food companies or it’s cosmetic companies we’re not going to sell your product if you have X, Y, and Z in it, or we're not going to sell your product until you do X, Y, or Z, that regulation by retailer has just as much weight as regulation by the federal government, and in many cases that can happen a lot quicker than what the federal government can do because they have to go through rulemaking, get public comments, Congress can always muck it up with appropriations riders, whereas if Walmart says.. or Whole Foods has said by 2018 we are not going to sell any food that is GMO. And so that's valuable.
Here we see Stewart’s propensity to think of corporations (at the instigation of ENGOs) as playing a regulatory role, standing in for the government in the space of a deregulated market. To Stewart, there is no difference between consumers pressuring polluters to regulate themselves, and pressuring the government to protect the wellbeing of the body-politic as a rights-bearing citizen. Another staff member at one of the Big Greens also discusses the potential regulatory role of corporations, similarly displaying approval, or at least neutrality on this approach:

I think that [exerting public pressure] is a strategy that is becoming more common in the environmental movement. I think that in this country corporations are gaining power and influence and one of the ways traditionally that the public interest pushed back was through government and regulation. I don't know if it's that we've come so far on that avenue that there's not as much low or medium hanging fruit, or if it's that the apparatus of government regulation is not as nimble or likely to step in as it used to be, it could be either of those, but I think this corporate campaign and public pressure avenue is very much something that a lot of environmental groups are engaged in now.

Here this staff member recognizes what she perceives as an increasing trend among ENGOs in targeting corporations as regulators, instead of the government.

Hannah Rosenberg, frames this increasing trend in terms of the meaning of citizenship, agency, and power in society, in contrast to the discourse, seemingly unconcerned with the location of power, considered above. Hannah speaks of not wanting to “abandon the concept of government” which can be understood in terms of EPI’s worldview of “excessive corporate control”:

We want the actors who are making change to be somehow governmental, not just companies. And there’s a lot of environmental groups who do this, and it's a choice we don't make. I don't want the actor making the decision that I am urging to act, as a member of the public, as a citizen, I want that body or person to be part of the government at some level, somehow accountable to the people, not just saying hey Tyson could you be nicer to your chickens. Because it makes me berserk to give all of that power to Tyson. Cause they’re not elected, I can’t vote them out, I can only vote for them with my dollars maybe as a shareholder but not really. It makes us crazy that they have all of the agency, cause they are the ones making all the decisions... a lot of people have kind of given up on the government, it's too hard it takes too long, so we should just get these corporate players to be more responsible. And that worries us deeply because it gives them an enormous amount of decision-making power.

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Hannah says in the consumer campaign approach “it's like our only agency is as consumers and we want people to feel like we have some agency as citizens,” even if that means a more difficult, drawn-out fight. She qualifies voluntary or consumer-instigated change as “greenwashing,” an attempt of businesses to improve their image by “going green,” while making no significant change. In contrast, at EPP John considers Subway’s new policy on the use of antibiotics in its supply chain as “very weak” but still “something... a movement forward.”

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of ENGO partnerships with foundations and corporations, to be contrasted with the previous chapter’s consideration of grassroots partnerships. In this chapter, ENGOs navigate a position of subordination to the state and the vested interests of capitalist elites, as opposed to the dominant position they hold in relation to the grassroots partnerships considered in Chapter Three. ENGOs engage at varying levels of proximity with the state as they work to draw financial and political resources from dominant social fields to provide stability and legitimacy to their organizations. Variation in proximity to the state is recognized in the related discrepancies of reflexive practices and autonomy emerging in spaces of negotiation. Under the mandates of foundations, staff members demonstrate organizational autonomy through negotiation and “packaging” their initiatives in a way that will correspond with foundations’ mandates of short-term deliverables while still trying to stick to their commitments. In consideration of corporate partnerships, ENGOs vary to the degree they recognize the ability of corporate interests to shape their agendas. ENGOs on the Left of the spectrum maintain autonomy through short-term allyship and political frameworks and tactics of
stigmatization. Failure to maintain autonomy steers ENGOs further towards the Right end of the political spectrum as they increasingly work to reinforce institutionalized political channels of engagement and seemingly neutral, “pragmatic” discourses of corporate benevolence.
CONCLUSION

In this study I have tried to highlight qualitative inferences based on interviews with ENGO staff members operating largely in the formal realm of institutionalized politics in Washington DC and often focused primarily on national-level policy issues. My main argument has been that the discussions of staff members reveal ENGOs’ inter and intra-organizational negotiations across differential spaces of power. I considered this negotiation through their relationships with frontline populations, and dominant political and capitalist elites. Staff members perceive different approaches of negotiation in terms of a “political style spectrum,” indicating their different levels of incorporation within the dominant norms and capital of the state, or else more autonomous organizing efforts. This understanding complicates sociological and anthropological literature on NGOs and what McAdam deems “elite-generated reform efforts,” in their presentation of reform organizations as equally implicated in enforcing the status quo. In actuality, ENGO staff members highlight a significant amount of tension between groups, illustrated by their common observation of a political spectrum, and grounded in their organizations’ willingness or resistance to ingratiate themselves with elites.

For Bourdieu, these differences stem from the objective positions of organizations in the field of power, as well as the propensity of certain groups to break out of the homologous status quo through reflexive practices. Bourdieu recognizes moments of crisis, in which people are thrown out of their normative everyday experience and forced to reconcile with it as particular and exclusive, as conducive to reflexivity. Spaces that bring agents, coming from fundamentally different lived experiences, together, such as USCAN, illustrate this potential. I return here to one of Mick’s observations:
There is a debate going on as to what extent, like should we be advocating for a human-centered climate focus, or should we be like allowing [Big Greens] into the space as well as other people. And so I think in the last few months in particular we have been trying really to advocate to put those folks in our membership who have like an equity, justice, human-centered approach front and center to give them lots of opportunities to really be a part of the network... As to how we can do that longer-term and outside the confines of a conference we are totally still figuring it out. Like we have a small funding pool that we have in the last 12 months, we re-grant 200,000 dollars each year, in twenty thousand chunks, so last year we decided this is going to be frontline community funding, so this is going to people who are hit first and worst by climate change which was a new thing for us.

Mick’s organizing work with USCAN puts him in a middle position where he can better understand the worldviews and tactics of people coming from fundamentally different lived experiences. With the sole mission of “figuring out ways for those groups to work better together,” Mick’s organization is trying to create a space where resources can be pooled, and in the case above, redistributed. This requires USCAN to take a mediating, compromising stance that limits the extent to which they can take sides without shutting out their ability to procure the resources and legitimacy of the Big Greens. In his work, Mick occupies a space of reconciliation of different experiences and habitus. With this approach, it becomes possible to redistribute resources to the organizations that Mick sees as taking a more “appealing,” “human-centered approach” grounded in “values like equality, values like radical progress,” giving them greater financial capacity to carry out their work, but at the cost of USCAN being able to push its own political frames and “advocate” in the way staff members may want to.

Network building in a group like USCAN illustrates an extreme example of coalition work across organizations occupying different positions in the social hierarchy. However, coalition building among ENGOs that are more proximate to each in terms of their dealings with the state and access to dominant statist capital, also demonstrates the struggle groups encounter in navigating the extent to which they should work to appeal to foundations and political elites by moderating their position. It is a struggle that represents relationships of power in non-binary
terms of oppressor and oppressed; ENGOs are torn in the directions of both incorporation of
dominant forms of capital and organizational autonomy in alliance with grassroots organizing
efforts outside the pragmatism of the dominant society and the state. In terms of Bourdieu, this
navigation can be understood as the homologous pull of an overarching statist capital that
defines, in a given historical moment, what is socially legitimate. Agents are able to break out of
this pull when they begin to recognize history as the antagonism between dominating and
subordinate positions in defining what is legitimate.

Bourdieu, however, is not looking at this struggle from an organizational standpoint.
Questions of the role of organizations in collective consciousness formation, political
mobilization, and collective resistance do not drive his work. For this reason, social movement
theory is instructive understanding the aspects of political mobilization and consciousness
formation in which that ENGOs are engaged. McAdam, for example, highlights the importance
of “indigenous resource networks,” illuminating the appeal of contacts with local legitimacy for
ENGOs. For McAdam, these networks form the bedrocks of movements:

The established organizations of the aggrieved population also constitute a communication
network or infrastructure, the strength and breadth of which largely determine the pattern, speed,
and extent of movement expansion. Both the failure of a new movement to take hold and the
rapid spread of insurgent action have been credited to the presence of absence of such an
infrastructure. (2010: 46)

In order to implement programs or organize communities, organizations rely on contacts with
local legitimacy that provide access to preexisting social networks. IEA and CPN’s connections
with faith-based organizations illustrate this reliance within ENGOs lacking strong connection
with local institutions structuring people’s everyday experience. Other social movement
theorists, like Coy and Hedeen, describe the dominant forces that pull organizing groups away
from the creation or maintenance of autonomous social movement spaces such as foundation
funding and professionalization. Key here are the ways in which institutions, such as ENGOs, implicated with the dominant structures of society intervene and intermesh with grassroots organizing efforts. This intermeshing puts ENGOs in tension with each other’s political stances in the formal political realm.

An important limitation of this study is its ahistorical content. All the data was gathered in a ten week period and included very limited information about the organizations’ history and changing trajectory through time. The breadth of the intra-organizational perspectives allowed for a field analysis of these organizations’ different positionings within a broader structure of power, but the depth does not allow for an understanding of how these positionings came about. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine the extent to which organizations choose to take Left-of-center, more “grassroots” approaches because it is “in their DNA” as explained by Hannah, or because their exposure to organizing efforts over time encouraged reflexivity within organizations, and pushed a grassroots approach more towards the center of their work.

Another limitation is that the data does not include perspectives from ENGOs’ grassroots partners that could give insight into whether these partnerships can provide grassroots initiatives with valuable financial resources and sociocultural legitimacy, while avoiding tokenization, cooption, and burn out. Perspectives from deep, constituency-led organizing efforts in the environmental justice movement could also help to understand whether environmental justice principles of self-determination and democratic processes can be institutionalized into ENGO structures, as suggested by Lucas Gagnon’s discussion of the incorporation of the Jemez Principles at Sustainability In Action. The data presented here should be recognized as a stepping stone in understanding the organizational dynamics of power and neutrality, as middle class
professionals and elites take part in a movement that requires a radical dismantling of what is currently deemed pragmatic in mitigating climate change.
APENDIX

1) Recruitment Email:

Dear (specified organization or individual),

My name is Natalie McLaughlin and I am an undergraduate student at Swarthmore College majoring in sociology and anthropology. This summer I am conducting interviews with representatives of environmental organizations with offices in Washington D.C. as part of my senior thesis. I am interested in organizations like yours, how you set agendas, maintain a funding stream and the health of the organization, and think about what’s best for the planet, especially around issues of climate change. Because your organization has been so important in raising public awareness around this and other serious issues, I would be grateful to interview you. I know that your time is valuable and so I’ve insured that the interview will only take about thirty minutes. I will be in Washington DC until August 6. Please let me know of your availability and thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Natalie McLaughlin
2) Sample of Interview Questions:

How did you first come to work for _____? What about the organization’s approaches to addressing environmental and climate issues appealed to you?

How would you describe the overall goals and objectives of _____ and the top issues it chooses to prioritize? How would you describe its fundamental methods of change?

Can you describe the overall structure of _____ as a national organization? How does the national leadership relate to the agenda and priorities of the organization?

How does _____ collaborate with other national environmental groups? Can you speak about some of the groups your organization works with and what that process is like? What do you see as the role of your organization in these partnerships? (ask for specific examples)

What do you see as distinguishing _____ from other environmental/climate groups? (Differences in how it is run, how it approaches issues, why it prioritizes particular issues, what it chooses to focus on).

What are some of the challenges of working in coalition? Are there groups that are easier or harder to work with? What makes it difficult for certain groups to collaborate?

What do you see as some of the most divisive issues or strategies between groups? Where do theories of change differ?

How do you see _____ promoting particular methods of change or particular framings of issues in these partnerships? How have other groups influenced _____ or how does _____ influence other groups?

Does _____ partner or work with industry? What is the place of industry in tackling climate change?

What do you see as various perspectives on partnering with industry?

Does _____ work with groups focusing on food/agriculture issues? What important perspectives do these groups bring to _____’s work in mitigating climate change?

How would you describe grassroots organizing and its role within _____?

How do you rally people around a particular issue? How do you get people involved? What work or campaigns are members most interested in supporting? Why do you think this is the case? Are there issues that are more difficult to get people involved with?

What are various understandings or approaches to grassroots organizing among environmental/climate groups? How do understandings or approaches differ?

How does _____ approach imbalances of power, access, or influence between groups?

Are there challenges in working at both the local and national/regional level? How does your organization balance its resources between the two? What is your organization’s approach to linking local, national, and international efforts? What are the challenges in this?

What are different priorities among funders, what are they interested in, what do they want to fund?

Do you see sources and distribution of funding influencing _____’s agenda or priorities?

Are there any particular issues that you think should be prioritized more in fighting climate change?
3) **Informed Consent Form:**

You are invited to participate in a research study about the organizational structures and agenda setting within environmental NGOs. The goal of this research is to understand modes of identifying and addressing various environmental issues within NGOs through in-depth, qualitative interviews with staff members. It seeks to explore the ways in which environmental organizations build strategies and make decisions, paying attention to how organizations have shaped their campaigns around specific issues to look for influences on agenda setting and to characterize their relations within the broader environmental movement, various sectors of society, the private sector, and funding sources. The classifications and language used by staff members in describing their organizations will help me to build a framework for understanding influences on agenda setting in environmentalism and climate change work more broadly.

The nature of the research and interview questions is ethnographic and descriptive. The questions I ask are fairly open-ended and are intended to help me see the perspectives of interviewees with the goal of understanding their job in the way that they see and experience it. The questions vary depending on how relevant they are to the work of the person with whom I am meeting. Because qualitative interviews do not have the set structure of a survey, when I hear something that may relate to my broader research questions or insights from previous interviews, I may also ask for further explanation, an example, or for it to be put within a specific context.

This study is being conducted by an undergraduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Swarthmore College in the United States. It will be the core of my senior thesis, which is a requirement for my major. There are two qualifications to participate in this study: You must be at least 18 years old and you must be working for an organization that focuses its work on the environment in some way. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** If you agree to participate in this study, you would be letting the researcher use the information provided to write her senior thesis. You may choose not to answer any questions, and you may discontinue participation at any time. The interview should take 30 to 45 minutes.

I do not anticipate any risks or benefits as a result of this study, but it is an opportunity for me gain experience with field work and primary source data collection and analysis. It will also help me to complete my graduation requirements.

The information you will share with me if you participate in this study will be kept confidential. No one will be able to see your interview or my observations of it. In the final written thesis, interviewees and organizations will be given pseudonyms to protect anonymity. If you have any questions about this study, please contact me at nmclaugl1@swarthmore.edu or the Chair of my department Professor Willie-LeBreton, Sociology and Anthropology, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore PA, USA; 610-690-2044 <swillie1@swarthmore.edu>.

By signing below, you certify that you are at least 18 years old and agree to be interviewed.

**Signature** ___________________________ **Date** ________________

**Agreement to be Audio-Recorded:**

I would like to record this interview. I will store the recording in a password-protected file on my computer (or phone) and will destroy the file when my research is complete. A recording will allow me to create transcriptions and categorize the interviews in relation to the topics explored. I am able to use new insights to guide later interviews. As I gather more transcriptions, I will begin to compare these categorizations and look for larger trends in responses. If you do not agree to be recorded, I will simply write notes. You may stop the interview at any point or simply not answer questions that you would rather not. By signing below, you agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

**Signature** ___________________________ **Date** ________________
4) Invitation to Disclose Identifying Information:

Dear [Name],

My name is Natalie McLaughlin and I am a senior studying Sociology and Anthropology at Swarthmore College. I met with you over the summer for an interview about [Reason] as part of the research for my senior thesis. At the time we met, I explained that your name and the name of your organization would be kept anonymous in my thesis. I am still committed to anonymity should you prefer that. However, I would like to ask whether you would consider giving permission for me to use the name of your organization in the writing of my thesis. This will allow me to provide the reader with more in-depth, contextual information about the location, work, and networks with which your organization is involved. This information will strengthen and enrich my discussion of the corporate, governmental, and constituency influences on the organizations I visited. I will still keep your personal name anonymous unless you would prefer me to use it. Please let me know whether you approve of me using the name of your organization and if you would like me to use your personal name in my thesis. If you do not feel comfortable disclosing this information to anyone who may read my final paper, I understand and I will continue to ensure that any identifying information is left out. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you require any additional information and thank you for your time and continued support.

Sincerely,
Natalie McLaughlin
Sources Cited


Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. “In the Shadow of the Shadow State.” In The Revolution Will Not be


Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. 2015.


Other Informing Sources


GRAIN. The Great Climate Robbery: How the Food System Drives Climate Change and What We Can Do About It. Edited by Henk Hobbelink. New Internationalist, 2016.

