

**Intersections of Environmental and Reproductive Justice: Examining Social Movement
Efforts to Protect Vulnerable Communities from Toxic Exposures Harmful to
Reproductive Health**

by

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Dedication

For my parents, Robin and Mark Mandell

and

For my husband, Asaf Peres

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List of Abbreviations

ACAT	Alaska Community Action on Toxics
ACOG	American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
ALEC	American Legislative Exchange Council
APHA	American Public Health Association
ASRM	American Society for Reproductive Medicine
BPA	Bisphenol A
BWW	Black Women for Wellness
CAFs	Collective action frames
CEH	Center for Environmental Health
COLOR	Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights
CBPR	Community-based participatory research
DIEBO	Detroit Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes
EJ	Environmental justice
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FIFRA	Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act
IRB	Institutional Review Board
FIGO	International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer
MOU	Memorandum of understanding
NAPAWF	National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
NLIRH	National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
PCACS	People Concerned About Chemical Safety
PCBs	Polychlorinated biphenyls
P&G	Proctor and Gamble

RJ	Reproductive justice
SMO	Social movement organization
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
TSCA	Toxic Substances Control Act
WE ACT	WE ACT for Environmental Justice
WV FREE	West Virginia Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality
WVE	Women's Voices for the Earth

Abstract

Cross-movement collaboration is emerging amongst advocates at the intersection of environmental justice (EJ) and reproductive justice (RJ) to protect communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health. Little research exists on this intersection, and on cross-movement collaborations in general. This study examined the collective action frames (CAFs) of advocates at the EJ/RJ intersection. CAFs highlight how advocates identify problems and solutions, and motivate people to take action. Study objectives were to: 1) identify CAFs of advocates working to protect vulnerable communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health; 2) identify tensions and synergies associated with these frames, and how diverging and converging frames impact cross-movement collaboration; and 3) identify social, political, and economic contextual factors that shape frameworks for action, and consider their implications for tensions and synergies across movements.

Semi-structured interviews with 36 advocates and 4 funders across the United States were conducted and over 65 organizational documents were reviewed, resulting in the identification of two main CAFs. The first is the use of intersectionality as a core analytic and organizing principle focused on holistic conceptualizations of individuals, communities, problems, and solutions, and the need for cross-movement collaboration. The second is the use of reproductive

health messaging to encourage policy and behavior change. This frame was perceived as highly resonant due to the relatability of reproductive health concerns.

Analyses suggest that advocates see substantial value in cross-movement collaboration, including expanded bases of support; new perspectives; shared resources, information, and expertise; and the potential to disrupt social, political, and economic power imbalances that shape environmental reproductive health inequities, as well as other health and social inequities. However, the joining of numerous movements can create interpersonal complexity and competing priorities that influence the strength of alliances, message framing, agendas, and ultimately, the ability to reach shared goals. Investments in inter-group processes that address these tensions may provide opportunities to strengthen cross-movement collaborations. Understanding the CAFs that guide movement efforts can inform this process, as well as more broadly inform advocacy approaches to promote health and health equity, particularly those focused on policies and structural drivers of health.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Overview

Background and significance

Exposure to environmental toxicants present in air, water, land and consumer products can impact many aspects of reproductive health, including fetal and infant development, fertility and puberty (Wigle et al., 2008). Communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities often have both higher exposure to these toxicants, and greater susceptibility to them as a result of social and place-based stressors (e.g., racial discrimination, poverty) that may potentiate their effects (Clougherty & Kubzansky, 2009; Hoover et al., 2012; Morello-Frosch, Zuk, Jerrett, Shamasunder, & Kyle, 2011). This “double jeopardy” can result in population-based, reproductive health inequities (Morello-Frosch & Shenassa, 2006).

There is increasing interest among activists in creating collaborative approaches between the environmental justice (EJ) and reproductive justice (RJ) movements in order to address issues of mutual concern, including the higher burden of toxic exposures and associated reproductive health outcomes in vulnerable communities (Khan, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). The EJ movement mobilizes efforts to address the disproportionate burden of environmental harm in many communities of color, Indigenous communities, and communities of low socioeconomic status (Mohai, Pellow, & Roberts, 2009). The RJ movement expands the dialogue about reproductive health and rights beyond a singular focus on abortion to consider the myriad structural influences, such as neighborhood conditions, that shape the reproductive lives

of women of color, Indigenous women and women of low socioeconomic status (Price, 2010; Ross, 2006).

Advocates leading these efforts to improve environmental reproductive health assert that women's reproductive health cannot be separated from the health and environment of the communities in which they live (Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). Indigenous women's health activist Katsi Cook describes a woman's body as "the first environment," inseparable from the external environment (Silliman, Fried, Ross, & Gutierrez, 2004). Scientific evidence consistent with this framework continues to build, establishing the pathways through which maternal exposure to toxicants can pass into a developing fetus or nursing infant (Nickerson, 2006; Perera et al., 2003), with significant health implications across the lifespan. These include increased risk of infant mortality, developmental delays and asthma during childhood, and heart disease, diabetes and cancer during adulthood (Behrman & Butler, 2007; Bove, Miranda, Campoy, Uauy, & Napol, 2012; Dalziel, Parag, Rodgers, & Harding, 2007; Stillerman, Mattison, Giudice, & Woodruff, 2008; Wang, Ding, Ryan, & Xu, 1997).

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), and the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO) have called for improved policies to reduce toxic exposures, particularly in vulnerable communities that come into contact with disproportionately high levels of toxicants (ACOG et al., 2013b; Di Renzo et al., 2015). Additionally, policies that address structural determinants of health, such as social, economic, political and environmental factors that contribute to higher levels of susceptibility to the effects of toxic exposures, as well as policies to address the cumulative impacts (or the "combined risks") of multiple exposures and susceptibilities, stand to benefit the health of residents of communities that experience multiple

risks (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Morello-Frosch et al., 2011; Ponce, Hoggatt, Wilhelm, & Ritz, 2005; Environmental Protection Agency, 2003). Yet, policymakers typically do not address structural factors that shape toxic exposure levels, poor health, and inequitable living conditions, nor do most policies adequately address the cumulative impact of multiple environmental stressors and susceptibilities (Alves, Tilghman, Rosenbaum, & Payne-sturges, 2012; Hofrichter, 2000; Linder & Sexton, 2011).

Social movements can play a valuable role in advocating for policies (Schulz & Mullings, 2006), thus helping to translate research into policy—a much noted gap in public health (Brownson, Royer, Ewing, & McBride, 2006; Davis, Peterson, Bandiera, Carter-Pokras, & Brownson, 2012; Green, Ottoson, García, & Hiatt, 2009). The EJ and RJ movements are particularly well-poised to push for policies that address the cumulative impact of multiple exposures and vulnerabilities on reproductive health in the environmental policy arena. Their holistic frameworks, which consider structural influences on health, are compatible with existing and emerging public health paradigms that link population-based inequities with the contextual conditions (e.g., neighborhood stressors, racism, poverty) that shape people’s exposures and vulnerabilities (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Morello-Frosch et al., 2011; Morrison, 2010; Phelan, Link, & Tehranifar, 2010; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). These holistic frameworks also consider positive contextual conditions, such as community resources, that can buffer against harm (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Khan, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009).

Theoretical framework and research objectives

While EJ and RJ advocates have voiced interest in joint advocacy, advocates and foundations supporting their efforts have identified a need for an improved understanding of

each movement's frames in order to engage in more effective collaboration (Khan, 2009; Ross, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). This study addresses this literature gap by examining the collective action frames (CAFs) of advocates who work at the intersection of EJ and RJ. Scholars of social movement theory study CAFs in order to understand how social actors identify a problem and frame potential solutions, and how they motivate people to take collective action (Snow & Benford, 1988). Using this theoretical lens, I ask the overall question: how are advocates framing intersectional EJ/RJ efforts and what are the implications of these frames for cross-movement collaboration? Specific objectives are to:

- 1) identify CAFs of advocates working to protect vulnerable communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health;
- 2) identify tensions and synergies associated with these frames, and how diverging and converging frames impact cross-movement collaboration; and
- 3) identify social, political and economic contextual factors that shape frameworks for action, and consider their implications for the tensions and synergies across movements identified above.

Methods

This study uses a constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes discovering key concepts throughout the research process rather than relying upon concepts identified a priori (Charmaz, 2006; Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2002; Lewis, 1996). The study has a qualitative, exploratory methodology, as little research currently exists on social movement efforts at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice. Specifically, it employs a grounded theory approach, hallmarks of which are to develop theory from data and to engage in an iterative process of

simultaneous data collection and analysis that are mutually informative (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

I conducted semi-structured interviews with a racially and ethnically diverse sample of thirty-six advocates across the United States who are leading efforts to combine EJ and RJ work, as well as with four professionals working in philanthropy who have supported work at the EJ/RJ intersection. Given this national scope, in order to improve study feasibility, interviews were primarily conducted via phone and video chat, with a limited number of face-to-face interviews. I also analyzed documents that reflected messaging by participating organizations on EJ/RJ issues. Use of member checking, which entailed bringing back a summary of my interpretation of emerging themes to participants, provided an opportunity for validation or further discussion of findings before finalizing the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a product of the research process, participants will also receive a synopsis of findings and lessons learned via a written report, as well as verbally via a conference call or webinar. The presentation will include an opportunity for participants to share their thoughts and feedback.

Dissertation format

The write-up that follows consists of six chapters. Chapter 2, *Literature Review*, reviews the literature on environmental exposures and reproductive health; disproportionate toxic exposures and adverse outcomes in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities; the role that social movements can play in advancing agendas focused on improved health; the emergence of cross-movement collaboration at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice; and previously identified benefits and challenges of cross-movement collaboration. The chapter closes with a discussion of the literature gap that

this study addresses; the application of frame theory to the investigation of social movement efforts at the intersection of EJ and RJ; a statement of the research objectives; and a description of the unique contribution of this study to scholarship and praxis.

Chapter 3, *Research Methods*, reviews the methodological orientation and the research methods used in data collection and analysis. Information on the development of the interview guide, data collection protocol, sampling, recruitment and participation, description of the study sample, analysis and interpretation, strengths, limitations, and efforts to ensure quality are provided.

The next three chapters present research findings and analyses to address the core research questions described above. Chapter 4, *Breaking Free From Siloes: Benefits of Working Across Identities, Issues, and Movements*, examines the use of intersectionality as a collective action frame. It explores the ways in which advocates, particularly those who identify strongly as reproductive justice advocates, are approaching the link between toxics and reproductive health by using intersectionality as a core analytic and organizing principle that leads them to work across identities, issues, and social movements. The chapter focuses on the benefits that they perceive may be derived from this intersectional approach. The perceived benefits of working across identities include creating social movement spaces that are welcoming of individuals with intersecting identities; highlighting the unique vulnerabilities of women with regard to toxics (which many participants felt was important due to women's roles in the biological and cultural continuity of communities); and maintaining a strong spiritual core that can keep advocates centered as they do their work. The perceived benefits of working across issues include more effectively addressing the holistic nature of people's lives, and creating environmental conditions that contribute to genuine reproductive choice. The perceived benefits of working across

movements include expanding bases of support; bringing new perspectives into advocacy work; sharing resources, information and expertise; and working towards progressive change that extends beyond toxics to other health and social inequities.

Chapter 5, *Tensions and Challenges in Movement Building Around Toxics and Reproductive Health*, explores challenges associated with working across movements, and with engaging in cross-issue work. Challenges that can arise between movements include tensions that can arise when advocates and organizations with differing degrees of privilege (namely White privilege) collaborate with each other; disputes between advocates regarding how to frame policy solutions, and disputes regarding how to frame messaging so that it will resonate most with potential supporters; ways in which the continuing controversy around reproductive rights (i.e., abortion, contraception) can complicate alliance-building between reproductive groups and environmental groups around toxics; and the challenge of messaging around toxics when these messages may conflict or *seem* to conflict with other issues that potential allies care about. Lastly, a challenge that arises from engaging in cross-issue EJ/RJ work is that it can be difficult to secure funding from a philanthropic world that is not structured, for the most part, to fund intersections.

Chapter 6, *Use of Reproductive Health Messaging as a Strategy for Changing Policies and Practices*, presents reproductive health messaging as a collective action frame. The chapter documents three strategies that advocates are using to mobilize against toxic exposures in the U.S.: 1) advocate for governmental policy reforms; 2) advocate for corporate policy reforms; and 3) encourage individual behavior changes that can reduce exposure to toxic chemicals. These advocacy strategies bring attention to the ways in which advocates are using reproductive health messaging as one means of gaining support. This includes highlighting the ways in which

advocates are messaging around reproductive health and toxic exposures in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities along four dimensions of vulnerability: 1) place-based exposures; 2) occupational exposures; 3) lack of access to safe products; and 4) cultural norms that influence exposures. Lastly, this chapter considers the ways in which advocates, on the whole, perceive reproductive health messaging as effective with certain audiences because they think that many people can relate to and care about reproductive health concerns.

Chapter 7, *Conclusion*, integrates the findings across chapters. It contains a deeper and more multifaceted understanding of intersectional frameworks, including the challenges as well as benefits of applying such frameworks in social change work. The chapter reviews the primary collective action frames identified in this research; provides an overview of study findings; discusses the task of reality construction in advancing social movement agendas; describes potential directions for future research; and presents implications of study findings for cross-movement dynamics, policies that promote health and health equity, and funding.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter first details the scientific link between toxic exposures and reproductive health, and the disproportionate impact of these exposures and associated outcomes on communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. It then discusses the importance of policies in reducing health inequities and the key role that advocates in the EJ and RJ movements can play in shaping environmental reproductive health policy. Next, it talks about a recent emerging interest in EJ/RJ cross-issue and cross-movement work in order to protect vulnerable communities, and associated benefits and challenges of this approach that have been documented thus far. It then describes the gap in the literature that this study aims to address, the applicability of framing theory to the subject at hand, the research objectives, and potential contributions of this research to advocacy efforts on the ground.

Toxic exposures and reproductive health

There is a growing body of evidence that toxicants adversely impact reproductive health (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women et al, 2013a; American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women et al., 2013b; Wigle et al., 2007, 2008;

Wong & Cheng, 2011). Chemicals can enter the body through breathing, eating, drinking, skin penetration, and can cross the placenta in pregnant women to affect the fetus (Di Renzo et al., 2015). Toxic exposures have been associated with a host of adverse reproductive health outcomes. For example, air pollution exposure among pregnant women has been associated with low birth weight and preterm birth (Ritz & Wilhelm, 2008), and air pollution exposure among infants has been associated with postneonatal respiratory death (Šrám, Binková, Dejmek, & Bobak, 2005). Maternal consumption of fish from water contaminated by methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) can result in neurologic problems in the fetus (Dovydaitis, 2008). Endocrine disrupting chemicals, commonly found in products such as plastic bottles, metal food cans, detergents, flame retardants, food, toys, cosmetics and pesticides, have been linked with infertility, endometriosis, compromised prenatal and postnatal development, early puberty onset in girls, and delayed puberty in boys (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, 2014; Roy, Chakraborty, & Chakraborty, 2009). Toxic exposures in the industrial food system, including pesticides, chemical fertilizers, hormones and antibiotics, have been associated with reproductive health problems in workers and consumers, including sterility in males, miscarriages, diminished fetal growth and survival, birth defects, and breast and testicular cancers (Sutton, Wallinga, Perron, Gottlieb, & Sayre, 2011). The examples listed here represent but a subset of reproductive health issues that are associated with environmental toxicants. More comprehensive reviews of the scientific literature on these associations are available from Wigle and colleagues (2007 and 2008), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists Committee on Health Care for Underserved Women et al (2013a), and Chalupka & Chalupka (2010).

Pregnancy and early life development: windows of vulnerability, with implications across the life course

Toxic exposures are particularly harmful *in utero* and during childhood, which are vulnerable periods during human development. Fetuses, infants and children are more susceptible than adults to the negative effects of toxicants due to physiological and behavioral characteristics (Grandjean et al., 2008; Moya, Bearer, & Etzel, 2004; Perera et al., 2002; Woodruff, Carlson, Schwartz, & Giudice, 2008). For example, children breathe, drink, and eat more relative to their body weight than adults, and young children have hand-to-mouth behaviors whereby they can orally introduce toxic substances into their bodies (Moya et al., 2004).

A sizeable body of research on humans and animal models suggests that exposures *in utero* and early life can impact health across the life course (Woodruff et al., 2008). For example, toxic environmental exposures during early life development have been associated with lower IQ (Perera et al., 2009), behavioral problems (Perera et al., 2011), diabetes, cancer, and adverse impacts on sexual maturation and reproductive capacities (Grandjean et al., 2008). Researchers have implicated epigenetic pathways in some of these processes. Epigenetics highlights the critical interaction between the environment and genetics in determining health outcomes, whereby the environment can change gene expression without changing the DNA itself. Researchers have demonstrated associations between epigenetic modifications due to air pollution exposure *in utero* and adverse birth outcomes, and with the development of chronic disease later in life (Rozek, Dolinoy, Sartor, & Omenn, 2014). The many associations mentioned here point toward the need to ensure a healthy environment early on in order to improve long-term physical and mental health.

Disproportionate impact by race, ethnicity and income

Communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities in the United States are often particularly vulnerable to harmful environmental exposures. First, these communities have historically had a greater burden of exposure to environmental toxicants (Brulle & Pellow, 2006; Bullard, Mohai, Saha, & Wright, 2007; Gurr, 2011; Hoover et al., 2012; Huang & London, 2012). Racism and the unequal distribution of material resources can ultimately lead to unequal burdens of physical, chemical and biological exposures within and across social and geographic communities (Schulz & Northridge, 2004). Second, social and place-based stressors (such as racial discrimination, poverty, crime and poor food access) may result in chronic wear and tear on the body's stress-response system that may both impede its ability to withstand the effects of toxicants, and increase absorption of them through greater respiration and perspiration (Clougherty & Kubzansky, 2009; Morello-Frosch et al., 2011). Third, certain chronic diseases (e.g., asthma, obesity and diabetes) and health behaviors (e.g., smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise) can enhance susceptibility to toxicants (Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). Given that structural inequities can socially pattern the prevalence of these diseases (McCartney, Collins, & Mackenzie, 2013; Phelan, Link, & Tehranifar, 2010) and health-related behaviors associated with these diseases (Dai, 2010; Diez Roux et al., 2007; Zenk et al., 2005), this represents yet another way in which vulnerable communities are uniquely susceptible to morbidity and mortality that may result from environmental toxicants. The multiplicity of risk factors described here can result in cumulative risk, defined as "the combined risks from aggregate exposures to multiple agents or stressors" (Environmental Protection Agency, 2003). The presence of cumulative risks may enhance vulnerability, with environmental pollutants

exacting harm at relatively lower doses, thus contributing to reproductive health inequities (Morello-Frosch & Shenassa, 2006).

The need for better policies

Policy change is effective because it can have an impact at the population level by changing physical and sociopolitical environments (Dodson et al., 2013). Developing strong support for policies that protect the public from environmental exposures that impact reproductive health, particularly in vulnerable communities where this harm may be most acutely felt, is important because individuals are limited in their ability to avoid exposure to environmental contaminants (American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists et al., 2013b). Due to the ubiquity of toxicants, even policies that create small improvements in reducing exposures can result in significant public health benefits due to the magnitude of the populations affected. For example, following passage of the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1970 that created stricter air quality standards for industrial polluters in nonattainment areas, a 1% reduction in total suspended particulates was estimated to result in a 0.5% drop in infant mortality (or approximately 1,300 fewer infant deaths) at the county level during the first year that the Act was implemented (Chay & Greenstone, 2003). Local policies can have an impact as well. For example, installation of E-ZPass, which reduces traffic congestion and vehicle emissions near toll plazas, has been found to significantly decrease preterm birth and low birth weight among children born to mothers residing nearby (Currie & Walker, 2009).

Additionally, some researchers and environmental health advocates have suggested that policymakers ought to address social and place-based stressors in vulnerable communities that can contribute to cumulative risk (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Morello-Frosch et al., 2011;

Ponce et al., 2005). Developing policies that address structural determinants of health, such as social and place-based stressors, is critical in order to reduce health inequities (McCartney et al., 2013). Yet, policymakers addressing environmental health typically do not address the need for structural transformation of the economic and social conditions (e.g., poverty and racism) that shape levels of exposure to toxicants, poor health, and inequitable living conditions (Hofrichter, 2000). For example, there is still a need for policies to reduce race-based residential segregation, which has been linked with both higher levels of exposure to air pollution (Lopez, 2002) and greater risk of adverse birth outcomes among African Americans (Kramer & Hogue, 2009; Osypuk & Acevedo-Garcia, 2008).

Moreover, there is a significant gap between research and the translation of scientific studies into public policy (Brownson et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2012; Green et al., 2009). For example, the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), which was created in 1976 so that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) could protect the public and the environment from commercial chemicals, has yet to be updated despite a literature that increasingly documents the harmful effects of certain chemicals on human health (Liebler, 2014; Vogel & Roberts, 2011). As a result of legal and procedural weaknesses in TSCA, the EPA has only been able to require that approximately 200 of the over 84,000 chemicals on the TSCA inventory list undergo testing for safety (Owens, 2010).

Calls to action

In consideration of the mounting evidence linking toxic exposures to poor reproductive health, there have been numerous calls for action to improve policies. For example, researchers have called for further studies to inform environmental policies aimed at improving health in

early life (O'Neill et al., 2013). Investigators have also encouraged public health practitioners to advocate for better policies that can reduce *in utero* exposures and associated health problems across the life course (Stillerman et al., 2008). The sizeable body of evidence linking chemicals and reproductive health, as well as the rise in incidence of adverse reproductive health outcomes in recent decades, has led professional societies to issue formal statements advocating for better policies. For example, the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) have all called for strengthened policies to better protect the public from chemicals deleterious to reproductive health, with a special emphasis on protecting vulnerable and underserved populations (ACOG et al., 2013b; Di Renzo et al., 2015).

The role of social movements in translating science into policy

This section discusses the valuable role that the EJ and RJ movements can play in the policy process. This information provides context for the decision to focus on the EJ and RJ movements in this dissertation. This section also discusses recent EJ/RJ cross-movement efforts, and associated benefits and challenges of these efforts documented thus far, in order to orient the reader to the kind of progress that has already taken place in this area. This information helps to lay the foundation for the following section, which focuses on the specific literature gaps that this study aims to address, the approach used to address those questions (i.e. framing theory), and how this research might contribute to scholarship and praxis.

The environmental justice and reproductive justice movements and health policy

Social movements can play an important role in influencing health policy (Schulz & Mullings, 2006). The environmental justice and reproductive justice movements are well-poised to address the gap between research and policy by helping to translate the latest scientific evidence on environmental reproductive health into policy. These movements can also influence the body of scientific evidence itself by shaping the research questions that are asked. Communities mobilizing against environmental burdens have at times been the first to identify potential associations between environmental hazards in their communities and elevated disease rates, and have partnered with researchers through community-based participatory research (CBPR) partnerships to better establish evidence for these linkages (Brown, 2007).

The environmental justice movement

Linking environmentalism, racism and injustice (Taylor, 2000), the environmental justice movement seeks to achieve “the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (Environmental Protection Agency, 2014, p. 2). The EJ movement brings attention to and seeks to address the disproportionate burden of harmful environmental exposures placed upon many communities of color, Indigenous communities, and communities of low socioeconomic status (Agyeman, 2005; Mohai et al., 2009).

According to Cole and Foster (2001), the EJ movement coalesced over time as a result of many local environmental battles and events, such as a seminal battle in Warren County, North Carolina in 1982, and was influenced by a number of social movements, including the civil

rights movement, the anti-toxics movement, Native American struggles, the labor movement, and the environmental movement (Agyeman, 2005). At the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991, the movement codified its *Principles of Environmental Justice*, which lay out criteria for developing and evaluating policies for environmental and social justice (Agyeman, 2005). The movement has representation at the federal level through the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council, and has legal standing through the 1994 Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, which directs federal agencies to better protect minority and low-income populations from adverse human health or environmental effects (Environmental Protection Agency, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c).

The reproductive justice movement

The reproductive justice movement advocates for “the complete physical, mental, spiritual, political, social and economic well-being of women and girls, based on the full achievement and protection of women’s human rights” (Ross, 2006). According to Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice (2005), which is an organization that is now called Forward Together, the term ‘reproductive justice,’ which combines ‘reproductive rights’ and ‘social justice’ into one term, was coined in 1994 by a Black women’s caucus at the Illinois Pro-Choice Alliance conference.

The RJ movement advocates for the right to have children or not, and for those who have children, to parent them in safe and healthy environments (SisterSong, 2016). RJ expands the dialogue around reproductive health and rights beyond a singular focus on abortion to consider

the myriad structural influences that shape the reproductive lives of women of color, Indigenous women and women of low socioeconomic status (Price, 2010; Ross, 2006). It positions a woman's control over her reproductive life as inextricably linked to the conditions in her community, including the environment, economic justice, immigrant rights, disability rights, racism, discrimination based on sexual orientation, educational opportunities and housing quality (Di Chiro, 2008; Ross, 2006). In defining rights as 'human rights' rather than civil rights or political rights, which are dominant frames in U.S.-based social movements, RJ is incorporating principles and language from international human rights discourse in order to advance women's sexual and reproductive rights in the U.S. (Luna, 2009).

RJ draws upon intersectional theory (Crenshaw, 1995; Ross, 2007), which highlights the dynamic relationship between racial, socioeconomic and gender inequalities, and the way in which these categories vary as a function of each other (Schulz & Mullings, 2006). As applied to RJ, intersectional theory underscores the assertion that reproductive oppression results from the intersection of multiple oppressions (Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, 2005), including, for example, intersections between race and gender.

Why the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements are well-poised to advocate for policies around toxics and reproductive health

Social actors in the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements can serve as important catalysts for change in the environmental policy arena. The holistic nature of the EJ and RJ frameworks, which take into account structural influences on health and well-being (e.g., racism, poverty) (Morrison, 2010; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009), are compatible with fundamental cause theory (Link & Phelan, 1995; Phelan et al., 2010)—a widely used theory in public health.

This theory suggests that it is necessary to address social inequities that place individuals “at risk of risks” in order to reduce population-based health inequities. Policies can help societies and communities to “push up” against the fundamental causes of disease and simultaneously impact more proximate causes of disease (e.g., environmental toxicants) (Schulz & Northridge, 2004). EJ and RJ frameworks are also compatible with the aforementioned emerging scientific paradigms that account for ways in which stressors (e.g., neighborhood stressors) might exacerbate the effects of toxicants on marginalized communities (Clougherty & Kubzansky, 2009; Morello-Frosch & Shenassa, 2006). Their holistic frameworks are also in alignment with research stressing the importance of positive contextual conditions, such as community resources, that can buffer against harm (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Khan, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009).

Emergence of EJ/RJ cross-movement collaboration

While the EJ and RJ movements have typically been viewed as distinct, there has been increasing interest in creating alliances between them, as well as in intersectional frameworks that embody the lenses of both movements (Di Chiro, 2008; McCarthy, 2013; Ross, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). An interest in collaboration around EJ/RJ work is not only limited to advocates who self-identify with the EJ and RJ movements, but can also extend to advocates in other environmental and reproductive movements who work on EJ and RJ issues. For example, Richardson (2006) argued in a policy brief for the Guttmacher Institute that “by working more closely, environmental justice and reproductive rights advocates will be more effective in reaching common reproductive justice goals.”

Cross-movement collaboration and cross-fertilization of thinking could potentially strengthen policy advocacy efforts to protect vulnerable communities from harmful environmental exposures that can adversely impact reproductive health (Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, 2005; Khan, 2009; Ross, 2009; Urban Institute, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). These calls to action, which have been spearheaded by women's organizing and Indigenous movements, assert that women's reproductive health cannot be separated from the health and environment of the communities in which they live (Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). As Indigenous women's health activist Katsi Cook has noted, a woman's body is "the first environment" and is inseparable from the external environment (Silliman et al., 2004). As demonstrated earlier by numerous research studies, scientific evidence consistent with this framework continues to build, establishing the pathways through which maternal exposure to toxicants can pass into a developing fetus or nursing infant (Nickerson, 2006; Perera et al., 2003), with significant health implications across the lifespan (Behrman & Butler, 2007; Bove et al., 2012; Dalziel et al., 2007; Stillerman et al., 2008; Wang et al., 1997). Studies also demonstrate how stressful life conditions that affect the mother can adversely impact the fetal environment (Miranda, Maxson, & Edwards, 2009; Morello-Frosch & Shenassa, 2006).

Organizations that have engaged thus far in efforts that intersect with both EJ and RJ have focused on issues such as preventing the military and industry from further contaminating Native American lands (Daniel, Herzing, & Lerza, 2012; Gurr, 2011); reducing occupational exposure to chemicals among Asian nail salon workers (Daniel et al., 2012; Willman, 2012); preventing agricultural chemicals from seeping into the drinking water of Latino farm worker communities (Daniel et al., 2012); advocating for stronger regulations for personal care products marketed to Black women (WE ACT for Environmental Justice, 2014); and raising awareness

regarding the link between air pollution and poor birth outcomes (The Bronx Health Link, 2010). This sampling of issues, which by no means represents all pertinent issues, demonstrates the wide variability in environmental reproductive health issues that lie at the intersection of EJ and RJ, as well as the variability in demographic characteristics of the communities that are at the focal point of efforts to take action. These advocacy efforts have focused on changing policies and also on increasing awareness regarding health effects of toxicants. Both are important in order to galvanize momentum for policy change (Freudenberg, 2005; Themba & Minkler, 2003).

Benefits and challenges of EJ/RJ collaboration

Advocates who link diverse ideas and movements to derive mutual benefit are proving to be influential actors in progressive, coalition politics (Di Chiro, 2008). Cross-issue and cross-movement alliances can be more effective than single-issue and within-movement efforts in accomplishing policy reforms, systems change (Daniel et al., 2012), and social change (Roberts & Jesudason, 2013). Zimmerman and Miao (2009) argue that the convergence of EJ and RJ frameworks marks a transition away from single-issue advocacy towards multi-issue, transformative change. This change considers the complexity of structural factors that impact the life experiences of families and communities, and the inefficacy of issue silos and single-issue politics in adequately addressing these realities. This intersectional analysis, which goes beyond considering distinct EJ and RJ perspectives on an issue to considering the interaction of combined perspectives, allows social actors to “circumvent the limitations of more mainstream approaches and make surprising, non-traditional connections” (Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). Cross-movement collaborations are able to build a broader base of support and cultivate stronger leadership (Khan, 2009). They also allow policymakers to address intertwined community

concerns on a larger scale and, in the face of insufficient funding (Khan, 2009), may help organizations to maximize their resources.

While there are significant potential benefits to cross-movement collaboration, there are also numerous challenges to fostering this collaboration. Both the EJ and RJ movements want to protect fetal health, though EJ advocates have not been embattled in debates over the “personhood” of a fetus in the same way that RJ advocates have been (Khan, 2009). Among RJ advocates, this may create reluctance to discuss the health of the fetus (Arons, 2006; Kissling, 2005). This controversy could potentially also be of concern to EJ advocates who may not want to get drawn into right-to-life discussions. Population control is another potential trigger point. Some environmentalists have argued that impoverished women of color in the U.S. and women in the Global South ought to curb their reproduction in order to reduce their ecological footprint – a perspective that many argue shifts the blame for environmental degradation and depletion from those of higher socioeconomic status who over-consume to women of lower socioeconomic status with high fertility rates (Di Chiro, 2008). While one might speculate that EJ advocates are not likely to make such arguments, RJ advocates might associate environmental concerns with this issue, thus making them reluctant to engage in issues that lie at the intersection of environmental and reproductive health. Another potential point of contention is the precautionary principle, which maintains that “when an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause-and-effect relationships are not fully established scientifically” (Ashford et al., 1998). While this is a central tenet in EJ work, anti-abortion advocates could use similar logic to argue, for example, that health care providers must not perform abortions until it is proven that they are not deleterious to women’s mental health (Khan, 2009). Some RJ advocates may therefore be reluctant to adopt the

precautionary principle in order to maintain consistencies in their platform. As movement activists pursue opportunities to join together in support of common objectives, it is important to identify and address these and other tensions (e.g., misunderstandings that one movement has about the other or differences in language) that may arise at the intersection of the EJ and RJ movements. It may also be interesting to juxtapose perspectives that give rise to tensions against alternative, consonant perspectives that contribute to synergies. For example, some RJ advocates might argue in support of the precautionary principle in order to avoid the potential for reproductive effects that may arise from environmental exposures. This study identifies such points of tension and also aims to illuminate common ground. Additionally, there may be perspectives that emerge within or between movements that are not polarized into either/or dichotomies, but rather, are multifaceted in nature. An understanding of positions that may fall along a continuum of ideas might help to create future advocacy platforms that are more inclusive of multiple perspectives and might therefore garner broader support.

Literature gap

Environmental justice and reproductive justice advocates, as well as some foundations, have expressed an interest in fostering cross-movement EJ/RJ collaboration, yet much remains to be understood about how advocates in these movements can most effectively dialogue and work together (Khan, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). Research is needed to explore how these movements frame their work, and how knowledge of these frames can contribute to science and understanding regarding potential EJ/RJ dialogue and cross-movement collaboration. Loretta Ross, formerly with SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective, a reproductive justice organization, noted:

Despite the many sites of overlap and common ground, for the EJ and RJ movements to come together to address environmental and reproductive injustices, we also recognize that the two movements do not necessarily share a common understanding of language and that many assumptions about framing and language exist that need to be teased out and explored in order for the groups to successfully partner and blend with one another. There remains a fair amount of work to be done to first achieve greater clarity about each movement's terminology, language, triggers, sensitivities, and framing, and from there, to find places of intersection and the possibilities for collaboration (Ross, 2009, p.11).

The above quote points toward the need to compare and contrast the understandings and assumptions that are characteristic of each movement—characteristics that inform the ways in which they go about organizing, advocating and mobilizing their advocacy efforts. For example, it may be useful to gain a better understanding of advocates' use of terminology, rhetoric, issues of sensitivity, which populations are of main concern to them (e.g., specific racial and ethnic groups, women, infants, children), and the concepts that are integral to how they approach and portray their work.

Two reports have been particularly influential in informing my work. The Movement Strategy Center released *Fertile Ground: Women Organizing at the Intersection of Environmental Justice and Reproductive Justice* (Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). This report showcases the work of organizations working at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice, argues that an intersectional approach to organizing and movement building is particularly impactful, and aims to bring about both more collaboration between EJ/RJ groups and more foundation support for this kind of work. The Women's Foundation of California released a companion report to the Movement Strategy Center report, entitled *Climate of Opportunity: Gender and Movement Building at the Intersection of Reproductive Justice and Environmental Justice* (Khan, 2009). This report identifies opportunities and obstacles to cross-movement collaboration between environmental justice and reproductive justice advocates in California. It documents the formation of an EJ/RJ Collaborative that sought to provide more support for broad-based, multi-

issue movement building work on environmental reproductive health issues, and also to increase the number of organizations in California that engage in this type of work. This study builds upon both of these reports in two key ways. First, all of the organizations detailed in the Women's Foundation of California report are in California, and over half of the groups in the Movement Strategy Center report are in California. This study captures more points of view from elsewhere in the U.S., and thus may round out the perspective on these social movement efforts. Second, this study can help to expand upon some of their findings. For example, both reports discuss how issues are framed, challenges in movement building at this intersection, and how to strengthen this work going forward. The analysis presented here can potentially add to these findings, such as to confirm them, add further detail, or provide a different point of view.

Framing theory as a tool of analysis

This study seeks to address the above gap in the literature by studying the collective action frames (CAFs) of advocates that are engaged in EJ/RJ intersectional work. Framing theory is used in the social sciences, including the study of public policy (Triandafyllidou & Fotiou, 1998), to explore the ways in which people conceive of an issue. It was originally developed by Erving Goffman to examine an individual's organization of experience, which indicates how a person interprets the world (Goffman, 1974). This concept has since been expanded by social movement scholars to analyze the organization of experience by a collective body of individuals (Benford & Snow, 2000; Croteau & Hicks, 2003).

As social movement advocates develop CAFs, they engage in three core framing tasks: identifying a problem (i.e., diagnostic framing), conceptualizing potential solutions (i.e., prognostic framing), and motivating people to take collective action (i.e., motivational framing)

(Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988). Diagnostic framing includes the attribution of blame or causality; prognostic framing includes identifying strategies, tactics and targets; and motivational framing focuses upon identifying rationales for action (Snow & Benford, 1988). CAFs serve to highlight the injustice associated with a social condition, or to redefine as unjust something that was previously deemed tolerable (Snow & Benford, 1992). Through these processes, advocates can construct frames that offer new ways of viewing social problems, and that open possibilities for social change. CAFs can be studied by assessing how people struggle, against whom they struggle, over which issues they struggle (Tarrow, 1992), how groups define themselves in relation to an injustice, and on what grounds (e.g., moral case, humanitarian/human rights, constitutional, cultural) an argument is forged (Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008; Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Esacove, 2004; Saguy & Riley, 2005).

Research objectives

This study has two broad aims. The first aim is to understand the collective action frames of advocates working at the intersection of EJ and RJ. The second aim is to examine tensions and synergies between these frames, and their implications for cross-collaboration. For each aim, a goal is to understand how these perspectives and efforts are shaped by the social, political, and economic contexts from which they emerge. The short-term goal of these aims is to develop a theory that contributes to science and understanding about the nature of this intersectional phenomenon, such as how frames impact the work of advocates and their collaborations. The long-term goal of these aims is to potentially help improve environmental reproductive health in vulnerable communities by providing advocates with research that might inform intersectional

frames and cross-movement partnerships, including implications for cross-movement dynamics, policy change, and health promotion and health equity.

Specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) identify CAFs of advocates working to protect vulnerable communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health;
- 2) identify tensions and synergies associated with these frames, and how diverging and converging frames impact cross-movement collaboration; and
- 3) identify social, political and economic contextual factors that shape frameworks for action, and consider their implications for the tensions and synergies across movements identified above.

Potential contributions to scholarship and praxis

This research aims to contribute to social theory regarding this particular intersectional phenomenon, and can potentially inform future research in public health and other disciplines that examine intersectional movements. More specifically, this study might contribute to the research literature in several ways. First, there is limited research on the intersection between EJ and RJ with regard to toxic exposures. Second, while researchers have separately examined CAFs of the EJ and RJ movements (Luna, 2010; Taylor, 2000), to my knowledge this is the first academic study to analyze the CAFs of social actors engaged at the intersection of EJ and RJ. Third, while there is a large body of research on collaborations within movements, there is limited scholarship on cross-movement collaborations (Beamish and Luebbbers, 2009). Fourth, while many studies by bench scientists, epidemiologists and biostatisticians examine associations between environmental factors and reproductive health, few studies examine this intersection

from the standpoint of social theory and qualitative inquiry, nor do they ask how social movement actors seek to move forward social change that attempts to act on this scientific evidence. Brulle and Pellow (2006) write: “It is important to build more significant links between research on environmental justice and the theoretical and empirical sociological literatures on social movements and environmental sociology to advance our understanding of the origins of and responses to environmental inequality (p.117).” This study can help to bridge this gap.

This research meets a need directly identified by grassroots advocates engaged in EJ/RJ intersectional work (Ross, 2009). Social actors can potentially use study findings to strengthen advocacy efforts, such as those described above, that seek to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with environmental reproductive health inequities in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. In an effort to translate research into practice, I will disseminate a written summary of findings to participants; present them via a conference call or webinar and invite participant discussion; and disseminate a resource list of participating organizations who have consented to sharing their contact information in order to facilitate networking amongst advocates. Disseminating findings to those who participated in the research process can inform action (Israel, Schulz, Parker, & Becker, 1998).

Chapter 3

Research Methods

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodological orientation of this study and the specific research methods used to carry out the research. It includes information on the development of the interview guide, data collection protocol, sampling, recruitment and participation, description of the study sample, analysis and interpretation, strengths, limitations, and efforts to ensure quality.

Methodological orientation

This research is oriented within a constructivist paradigm, which sees reality as socially created and the researcher as subjective (Charmaz, 2006). This paradigm also seeks to contextualize the phenomenon under investigation and emphasizes the process of discovering key concepts throughout the research process rather than relying upon concepts identified a priori (Charmaz, 2006; Glanz, Rimer, & Lewis, 2002; Lewis, 1996). A constructivist paradigm can be particularly useful for the investigation of community-based advocacy activities because it emphasizes concepts such as community empowerment, community building, community partnerships, and community participation (Lewis, 1996). Both researcher and community members are seen to hold expertise that can improve population health, and a process of deep

engagement and dialogue between them is encouraged in order to develop knowledge that can inform action (Lewis, 1996).

Methodology

There is little existing research on the collective action frames used by advocates working at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice, making an exploratory approach ideal for this study. The analysis presented here engages qualitative research, which is particularly useful for exploratory inquiry (Creswell, Klassen, Clark, & Smith, 2011).

Specifically, the research uses a grounded theory approach, hallmarks of which are to develop theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) and to engage in an iterative process in which data collection and analysis take place concurrently so as to inform each other (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). These strategies have been designed to facilitate the development of new, contextualized theories about the phenomenon under investigation, rather than relying upon analytical constructs, categories or variables from pre-existing theories (Willig, 2013).

A grounded theory approach is well suited to studying the collective action frames of advocates working at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice for several reasons. First, grounded theory is particularly useful for examining social processes (Coffman & Ray, 2001), thus allowing for meaningful inquiry into the “process” of creating CAFs, which involves competition over ideas and meanings (Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008; Kwan, 2009). Second, grounded theory’s inductive approach was developed to create data that is more likely to represent a “reality” from the perspective of participants (or multiple “realities” constructed by various actors) and to identify leverage points for action (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is therefore well suited to analyzing CAFs, which tell us how social actors “organize

experience and guide action” (Benford & Snow, 2000). Third, grounded theory can help us to understand people’s perceptions of their life experiences and their meaning making (Marcellus, 2005). Thus, it can help us to understand social movement activities, such as people’s advocacy experiences and their perceptions of problems, solutions, and viable strategies to create change. Fourth, grounded theory is informed by symbolic interactionism, which posits that society, reality and self are constructed through an interaction that is “inherently dynamic and interpretive and addresses how people create, enact, and change meanings and actions” (Charmaz, 2006). It can therefore help to explore the dynamic interplay between social actors as they engage in dialogue regarding the framing of ideas and solutions. Lastly, grounded theory is ideal because it offers a systematic, analytical approach that considers broad societal contextual factors that can help researchers to better understand how social justice issues impact people’s lives (Charmaz, 2005; Marcellus, 2005). It is therefore suitable for investigating environmental reproductive health work in vulnerable communities, which is deeply linked with social justice issues that are shaped, in part, by contextual factors, such as social, political and economic conditions.

Methods overview

This study contains two data collection methods. The first was semi-structured interviews, which allow for a balance of structure and flexibility across interviews, whereby gaps in the data can be addressed in the course of subsequent interviews (Patton, 1990). In total, I conducted 40 interviews between December 10, 2014 and June 10, 2015 (a six month period). Of these, 36 were with advocates from 31 different organizations or coalitions. Four interviews were with individuals working in the funding world who have supported philanthropic efforts at the

intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice. Three of these individuals were from foundations and one was a consultant to philanthropy. I did not initially plan to interview professionals from the foundation world, but a number of advocates encouraged me to speak with them in order to hear funder perspectives on why, according to advocates, the EJ/RJ intersection does not receive sufficient funding. I therefore added this component to the study in order to see if funder perspectives were consistent with advocate perspectives regarding a shortage of funding in this area and if so, why this might be the case. In addition, I added some other components to these interviews, beyond what participants suggested, such as what might be some facilitating factors to funding this work, and how funding work at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice might compare to funding environmental reproductive health work that is not focused on justice issues.

The second data collection method was analysis of organizational documents. Analysis of extant texts can supplement interview data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Using document analysis enhanced the feasibility of the research design because documents are easily accessible and inexpensive to collect, and examining them is unobtrusive. These texts were primarily used to learn more about projects that participants mentioned in interviews, and also about their organizational messaging. I collected 67 documents in total for 35 of the 36 advocates. The number of documents per participant ranged from 1-6 documents, though the vast majority (30 advocates) had 1-2 documents and a small number (5 advocates) had 3-6 documents. These were both documents that participants gave me and relevant documents that I found online. In order to avoid counting the same document twice, if two or more people were from the same organization, I counted that document in affiliation with one person even though it was relevant to both. I do not have documents for one participant because we spent our interview time

speaking about her long-term involvement with EJ/RJ cross-movement efforts rather than her current organizational role. However, I collected documents from other participants who worked for the same organization. Documents included organizational reports, website content, brochures, flyers, journal publications, organizational newsletters, articles in the media, occupational safety materials for workers, presentations, a consensus statement, organizational principles, policy briefs, a legislative bill, a letter to a legislator, conference materials, and an educational calendar. I did not collect documents from funders because my main interest was in learning information that was not available in documents.

Interview guide

I used a semi-structured interview guide, which outlines topics in advance, but also allows the researcher to determine the sequence and wording of questions within the context of each interview (Patton, 1990). This approach made data collection systematic, but also enabled participants to share and offer information about topics that I may not have anticipated. In developing the guide, I drew upon excerpts from a coding matrix that was developed by Kwan (2009) and expanded upon by Jenkin, Signal and Thomson (2011) for studies on framing. While they used the matrix to assist with systematic identification and recording of key features of their data, I used it identify topics to include in the interview guide and did not use it for coding. (See Appendix A for the framing matrix.) During the process of developing the interview guide, I reached out to Kristen Zimmerman, Senior Fellow at The Movement Strategy Center. She and her colleague, Vera Miao, authored the report, *Fertile Ground: Women Organizing at the Intersection of Environmental Justice and Reproductive Justice* (2009), for the Movement Strategy Center. Her organization interviewed representatives from 24 organizations regarding

their work at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice. In reviewing their interview guide, I used a few of the themes from their questions to inform my own guide and reworded them. For example, they asked what was unique or special about work at the EJ/RJ intersection and I crafted a similar question. I also contacted Surina Khan, currently CEO at The Women's Foundation of California, who authored *Climate of Opportunity: Gender and Movement Building at the Intersection of Reproductive Justice and Environmental Justice* (2009) during her previous role there as Vice President of Programs. The report highlighted the value of intersectional work, and detailed themes, recommendations and lessons learned from organizations conducting work at the EJ/RJ intersection. The Women's Foundation of California convened three roundtable discussions with leaders and activists working at the intersection of environmental health and justice and reproductive health and justice to explore the possibility of collaboration at this intersection. They subsequently formed an Environmental Justice/Reproductive Justice Collaborative to bring 12 environmental justice and reproductive justice groups together in partnership. I spoke with Ms. Khan via phone and she verbally shared with me the overall framework that they used to facilitate discussions between environmental justice and reproductive justice advocates. This helped me to think about general themes that I might want to touch upon.

Prior to implementation, I piloted the interview guide with three individuals who were currently or previously involved with organizational work at the intersection of EJ and RJ. Participants gave me verbal feedback and suggestions about the guide at the end of our interviews. After each pilot, I improved the guide for the subsequent pilot interview. Once official data collection began, I also revised and fine-tuned the interview guide during the period of conducting the initial interviews. For example, in the pilot, the interview began by asking

participants how they defined environmental justice and reproductive justice. However, I began to feel that I was imposing my own frame upon them by starting the interview in this way (since they may not even use that terminology to describe their work). I therefore embedded that question later in the interview, and ultimately dropped the question altogether after several interviews because it was not resulting in very useful data. Given the limited interview time, I thought that time could be better spent on other questions.

The interview guide included the following topics: a description of the work advocates are doing to protect communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities from environmental toxicants that can harm reproductive health, including proposed solutions, strategies, allies and opponents; perceived underlying causes of issues; what participants see as unique about advocacy work that combines both environmental health and reproductive health; their social movement affiliations; questions about terminology and use of language to frame issues; experiences with any cross-movement collaborations they may have had on environmental reproductive health issues, including unique contributions of different social movements to these efforts; perceived benefits and challenges of cross-movement work; and overall trends in social movement activities at the EJ/RJ intersection. (See Appendix B for the complete list of questions in the interview guide for advocates.) A few participants requested to see the interview questions in advance. They were sent a truncated version that excluded prompts and some questions about language because sharing that information in advance could have influenced their answers. They were told that some questions had been excluded and why.

For the funder interview guide, questions were developed based upon emerging themes in the data. The guide included questions about what their foundation currently or previously funded at the EJ/RJ intersection; barriers and facilitating factors to funding this intersection;

whether or not they agreed with advocates' perceptions that it is hard to get funding at this intersection; and changes in funding over time. (Please see Appendix C for the complete list of questions in the interview guide for funders.)

Data collection protocol

Prior to each interview, I increased my familiarity with the participant's organization by reviewing her or his organizational website, including the organization's mission, projects, and publications. At times, these sources informed interview questions, such as by prompting me to ask for more information about something mentioned there. I also used these sources to help me contextualize study findings.

For participants who worked near my home locations of Ann Arbor, Michigan and New York City, I offered the option of conducting face-to-face interviews. For those interviews, we met at their place of work. All other participants were offered the option of conducting the interview via phone or video chat. These media provide a viable alternative to face-to-face interviews that reduces travel, thereby increasing feasibility and decreasing a study's ecological footprint (Hanna, 2012). This approach was consistent with the study's focus on protecting the environment, allowed for greater flexibility in scheduling times to conduct interviews, and a greater national reach in recruitment and participation. For the phone conversations, I initially called people through my computer using Skype, and ultimately switched exclusively to Blue Jeans conferencing because the audio was of superior quality. Blue Jeans is a conferencing system whereby both parties must call into a conference number. I called in through my computer, and participants could call in via their computer or phone. For video chats, I used Skype and Google Hangouts on my computer. While Blue Jeans has a video conferencing

option, it requires that participants download a plug-in and some participants had organizational policies that prevented them from doing so.

The breakdown of how interviews were conducted with both advocates and funders is as follows:

Table 3.1. Interview Medium

Medium	Participants
In person	6
In person at first, and continued via video chat	1
Phone	25
Video chat	7
Video chat at first, and continued via phone	1
Total	40

While the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board (IRB) designated this study as exempt from IRB oversight, I still used consent forms in order to protect participants. Participants were emailed the consent form in writeable pdf form prior to the interview. In most cases, they emailed back the signed consent form prior to the interview with an electronic or scanned signature. In a few cases, I received and recorded verbal consent at the time of the interview. The consent form included descriptions of the following: the study purpose; what would be requested of participants (e.g., interviews, provision of documents); types of questions that would be asked during the interview; study incentives; protocols to protect each participant's identity and data; and the right of participants to stop the study at any time or refuse to answer interview questions. Responses were anonymous so as to reduce risk of identification (Morse, 1998), unless participants signed an optional confidentiality waiver to allow attribution of participant quotes and ideas. Twenty-six of the forty participants signed the confidentiality waiver. (Please see Appendix D for the consent forms for advocates and funders.)

Before each interview began, I reviewed study details with the participant and asked if she or he had any questions. Participants were then asked for consent to make an audio recording of the interview, to which they all agreed. Face-to-face conversations were recorded with a digital recorder, and a back-up recording was made on my computer using QuickTime Player. Skype and Google Hangouts video chats were recorded via Audio Hijack Pro. Blue Jeans phone conferencing was directly recorded via the Blue Jeans interface. For Skype, Google Hangouts and Blue Jeans conversations, I placed a digital recorder next to my computer and made a back-up recording. Recordings were stored on my computer, which is password-protected, and also on online password-protected back-up locations. The recording time of interviews with advocates lasted from 28 minutes to 2 hours, with an average interview time of 1 hour, 6 minutes. Interviews with funders were shorter, lasting from 32 minutes to 58 minutes, with an average interview time of 40 minutes. However, interviews lasted longer than the numbers reflected here because I did not track the time spent with participants prior to pressing the record button, during which time I was reviewing interview details and asking if there were any questions. Also, for face-to-face interviews, I stopped the recorder prior to giving participants the demographic questionnaire and the consent form for the organizational resource list (described below).

At the end of each interview, participants were asked to provide at least one document that their organization had used to advocate around EJ/RJ issues that would help to show how they frame messaging to stakeholders, such as reports, brochures, press releases, position statements, and organizational website content (Kwan, 2009). It could be from any year. Participants were asked to identify a document after the interview was complete, as opposed to prior to the interviews, in order to increase their understanding of what kind of document would be most useful. Prior to each interview, I also conducted an Internet search to identify if an

organization had published an organizational report or other type of outreach document on EJ/RJ. I looked for explicit use of EJ/RJ language (e.g., “environmental justice” or “reproductive justice”), or else language that indicated that the organization was engaging in environmental reproductive health work with an EJ or RJ focus. For example, I looked for words such as “inequities,” “disparities,” “injustice,” “communities of color,” “Indigenous/Native American,” or “low-income” to demonstrate that they were focusing at least part of their work on vulnerable populations, and not solely on the population at large. If the participant did not explicitly mention a document that I had found prior to our interview, I asked if it would be useful to include it in the analysis. There were also several documents that I found and included after the interviews were over.

At the end of each interview, a brief demographic questionnaire was verbally administered to phone and video chat participants. For in-person participants, they were handed the survey to fill out on their own. Participants were also asked if they wanted to include their organizational contact information on a resource list that would identify organizations that participated in the study. The purpose of this document is to facilitate networking amongst advocates after the study is over, for those who wish to do so. Contact information was only included on the list if all participants from the same organization agreed to include this information. For those who were interested, I followed up via email with a separate brief consent form to sign electronically. (Please see Appendix E for the email consent for the organizational resource list and Appendix F for the resource list.)

After interviews were over, I wrote a memo for the majority of interviews with my impressions of what we discussed (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Writing memos can facilitate analysis by helping to identify relationships between concepts (Strauss & Corbin,

1998). Transcription was outsourced to a transcriber with whom I had worked previously. She and her colleague transcribed all interviews. Both signed confidentiality agreements to keep the data confidential. I listened to the audio from the interviews to double-check the accuracy of the transcripts and made corrections, as needed. Participant names and affiliations were not included on the transcripts, unless they had signed the confidentiality waiver. Like the interview recordings, transcripts were also stored on a password-protected computer, and on online password-protected back-up locations.

Sampling

Organizational sampling frame

The sampling frame consisted of organizations and coalitions across the United States that work on environmental reproductive health issues situated at the nexus of EJ and RJ. The sample was national in scope because the federal government plays a central role in determining environmental regulations that could protect vulnerable populations. By studying organizations nationwide, the intention was to be able to generate knowledge that could potentially inform national collaborations that might influence federal policy, in addition to state and local policy. The study focused on groups that already engage at the intersection of EJ/RJ for several reasons. First, they are able to speak to cross-movement EJ/RJ collaboration based upon past or current experience rather than conjecture. Second, the results of the study may be more relevant to their work and of greater interest to them. These justifications are particularly relevant where RJ organizations are concerned, as RJ is a broad term that encompasses a wide array of issues – many of which are highly divergent from EJ work. Honing in on RJ groups already focusing on EJ issues helped to ensure that organizations had a knowledge base that would better allow them

to contribute to research about EJ/RJ intersectional work, and that they were interested in combining environmental and reproductive health work.

Sampling strategies: purposeful, criterion-based sampling, categorical sampling and snowball sampling

Purposeful, criterion-based sampling

I initially used purposeful, criterion-based sampling. To be eligible to participate, participants had to work for organizations that focus on communities of color, Indigenous or low-income communities to some extent, though they could work on behalf of other populations as well. Organizations were identified for inclusion if they had put out information (e.g., reports) about combining EJ and RJ, or if a key informant had verbally informed me that they were conducting substantive work at the intersection of EJ and RJ. In order to identify organizations, I used professional contacts, including contacts from the *Reach the Decision Makers* training fellowship program run by the University of California, San Francisco's Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment, contacts from the University of Michigan, and organizations identified via Internet search.

Categorical sampling

Categorical sampling was used to identify a sample with diverse social movement affiliations (e.g., EJ, RJ, EJ/RJ). Depending upon the organizational orientation, I anticipated that they might bring different points of view to their work that would make study data richer. I identified organizations that appeared to primarily affiliate with the environmental justice movement, primarily with the reproductive justice movement, or that seemed to be equally affiliated with both. Ultimately, however, my main interest was in understanding how the

advocates identified themselves. That is, someone could work for an environmental justice organization and identify as a reproductive justice advocate. During the interviews, I asked advocates about their primary social movement affiliations so as to be able to appropriately categorize them. The goal was to recruit roughly an equal number of EJ and RJ participants, and any number of EJ/RJ participants.

In order to ensure that the sample was representative of multiple racial and ethnic groups and multiple points of view, categorical sampling was also used to recruit a diverse sample. I chose to concentrate on recruiting African American, Latino, Asian and Indigenous populations because there was already a base of literature focusing on the unique histories of oppression that have shaped environmental reproductive health in these communities. For example, for African American women, reproductive health and rights have been shaped by circumstances of slavery, racism and poverty (Silliman et al., 2004), and environmental health has been impacted by high levels of segregation (Williams & Collins, 2001) and associated environmental exposures (Lopez, 2002). Among Latinas and Asian Americans, reproductive health and rights have often been linked with immigration restrictions (Silliman et al., 2004) and environmental health has been significantly impacted by working conditions among immigrants (Khan, 2009). Among Indigenous populations, reproductive rights and environmental health are integral to struggles over land and sovereignty (Hoover et al., 2012; Silliman et al., 2004), as well as cultural and biological genocide. I also sought representation from White participants, as many White individuals are part of the EJ and RJ movements, and many historically predominantly White organizations are adopting EJ/RJ frameworks. I thought that their perspectives could provide points of comparison. There were no specific parameters regarding the minimum number of people to recruit from each racial/ethnic category.

Snowball sampling

A snowball sampling technique was used in which the initial point of contact in an organization recommended other potential participants from either that organization or another organization. Interview participants can be a good referral source for other potential participants with relevant expertise (Creswell, 2007). A snowball sampling technique was particularly apropos for this study, as it can result in social knowledge that is “emergent, political and interactional” (Noy, 2008, p.327), which are qualities that are characteristic of social movement activities.

Organizational inclusion/exclusion criteria

Initial eligibility criteria required that organizations currently conduct advocacy work in the United States on issues at the nexus of environmental health and reproductive health, with special attention paid to vulnerable populations. This attention to vulnerable populations is what qualified their work as “justice” work rather than mainstream environmental or reproductive rights work. Vulnerable populations were initially defined as communities of color or low-income communities. However, it became clear in the course of the research that many Indigenous groups did not self-identify as “communities of color,” but rather as “Indigenous” communities (or alternatively, as American Indian, Native American or as a specific tribe). I have since adopted this language.

Additionally, as the research progressed, there were two organizations that had previously conducted significant work at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice, but no longer worked in this area. I thought that these organizations had valuable contributions to make in helping me to understand barriers to continuing to do work at

the EJ/RJ intersection. I therefore modified the eligibility criteria so that organizations could either be currently working to address the impact of toxicants on reproductive health in vulnerable communities, or have done significant work in the past. Only one of these organizations ended up participating so that in the end, all participating organizations currently worked in EJ/RJ, except for one.

Organizations could engage at any level of government—local, state, and/or federal. Organizations were not excluded based upon geographic location so long as they were located within the United States. While there are significant toxic exposures impacting reproductive health outside of the U.S., this study had a domestic focus in order to both limit its scope and make it more feasible.

In keeping with past work on this subject, organizations did not need to self-identify their organization as an EJ or RJ group (Zimmerman & Miao, 2009) or even use EJ or RJ terminology when speaking of their work. This type of sampling was justified because people do not need to overtly identify with a movement or even be familiar with its concepts in order for a movement's frame to resonate with them (Alkona, Cortezb, & Szec, 2013). Such frames can be characterized as “submerged frames” (Taylor, 2000). (Note that, in keeping with this point, while I use the terms “environmental justice” and “reproductive justice” throughout my dissertation, groups may not have used this same terminology.)

Organizations had to have one or more staff that oversee(s) operations in order to be eligible. In order for coalitions to be eligible, they had to be a formal coalition with one or more staff that oversee(s) operations. My rationale for these last two criteria was that I was looking for formalized groups that had likely produced documentation that I could analyze regarding their messaging to stakeholders.

Individual inclusion/exclusion criteria

To be eligible, participants had to currently engage in EJ/RJ intersectional work or to have conducted significant work in this area in the past. In order to capture a variety of perspectives, they could have been involved with EJ/RJ for any length of time, ranging from recent involvement to having significant experience engaging in this work. I aimed to recruit no more than three people from the same organization so as to have a wider representation of different organizations in the study. Interviewees could be paid or unpaid (i.e., volunteer). Lastly, participants had to be conversant in English. While there are individuals organizing at the intersection of EJ and RJ who are not fluent in English, the wide variety of languages that social actors speak would have required funds exceeding the study’s budget in order to hire research staff fluent in these languages to assist with interviews, transcription, and translation.

Table 3.2. Summary of Sampling and Eligibility Criteria

Sampling frame
1. Organizations and coalitions that currently work on environmental reproductive health issues at the nexus of EJ and RJ across the U.S. or conducted significant work in this area in the past
Sampling strategies
1. Use of purposeful, criterion-based sampling to identify organizations that put out information about combining EJ and RJ
2. As data collection proceeded, use of categorical sampling to create a balance of organizations according to EJ, RJ and EJ/RJ social movement affiliation
3. As data collection proceeded, use of categorical sampling to select individuals to create diversity according to racial/ethnic group
4. As data collection proceeded, use of snowball sampling to identify new participants
Organizational inclusion/exclusion criteria
1. Currently conducts advocacy work that addresses the impact of environmental exposures on reproductive health or conducted significant work in this area in the past
2. A portion or all of this work focuses on communities of color, Indigenous and/or low-income populations
3. A portion or all of this work focuses on issues within the United States
4. Has one or more staff that oversees operations

5. Located anywhere in the United States
Individual inclusion/exclusion criteria
1. Currently engages in EJ/RJ intersectional work or conducted significant work in this area in the past
2. No more than three people from the same organization
3. Conversant in English

Theoretical saturation

Interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. Theoretical saturation refers to the point when the researcher is not discovering new information during the coding process, and collecting more data no longer appears to be productive (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Estimates vary as to when theoretical saturation might occur in a study employing grounded theory. For example, Creswell (2007) suggests 20-30 participants. Guest (2006) recommends approximately 35 participants, and notes that the degree of homogeneity in a sample can impact the number of participants needed until theoretical saturation is reached. Saturation is generally reached with 6-12 participants for homogeneous groups, and may require more participants for less homogeneous groups. I anticipated a fair amount of heterogeneity amongst study participants, given the disparate locations, the wide range of issues that were eligible for inclusion, the diversity in kinds of groups (EJ, RJ and EJ/RJ), and the diversity in racial/ethnic groups. I originally estimated the need to interview approximately 30-40 participants total. As noted previously, I ultimately ended up interviewing 36 advocates. I felt that I had reached theoretical saturation with advocates at 31 interviews, but continued with several more interviews because I had already reached out to those people to participate. I interviewed 4 funders. I did not aim to reach theoretical saturation when speaking with funders. The goal of those interviews was to supplement information that advocates had provided.

Recruitment and participation

I reached out to 56 advocates to request their participation. Of these, 7 were ineligible. Of the remaining 49 advocates, the breakdown of recruitment outcomes is below. As noted, the response rate among advocates was over 73%.

Table 3.3. Recruitment Outcomes Amongst Advocates

Recruitment outcomes	Advocates
Participated	36 (73.47%)
No response	7 (14.29%)
Declined because too busy	2 (4.08%)
Said yes and no response to follow-up	3 (6.12%)
Did not show up for call	1 (2.04%)
Total	49

I reached out to 8 funders to request participation. Of these, 1 was ineligible. Of the remaining 7 funders, the breakdown of recruitment outcomes is below. As noted, the response rate among funders was over 57%.

Table 3.4. Recruitment Outcomes Amongst Funders

Recruitment outcomes	Funders
Participated	4 (57.14%)
No response	3 (42.86%)
Total	7

I recruited participants through professional contacts, including contacts within the University of Michigan, key informants engaged in EJ, RJ or EJ/RJ work, personal contacts from former professional positions, organizations identified via Internet search, and study participants. Key informants themselves were eligible for inclusion in the study. Once identified, I first reached out to participants via an email (which included a study overview and eligibility criteria) and planned to follow up via phone. However, in many cases, there was no need for a phone call

because we arranged the interview via email. (See Appendix G for the introductory email and Appendix H for the phone call recruitment guide and screening questionnaire.) During recruitment, participants were told that they would receive a synopsis of the study findings, which might be useful to their organizational work, and that they would be invited to participate in a conference call or webinar at the close of the study in order to hear the findings verbally and have an opportunity to share their thoughts and feedback. Additionally, they were told that they could choose to consent to include their organizational contact information on a list of organizations that participated in the study in order to facilitate networking, if desired. With regard to incentives, advocates were offered \$25 in appreciation for their time. The Human Subject Incentives Program office at the University of Michigan mailed each participant a check after the interview was complete, except for six participants who did not wish to be compensated. Funders were not offered payment incentives.

Before the study began, one key informant warned that it might be challenging to recruit people into the study because grassroots organizations tend to be strapped for resources, and thus would have little time for interviews. In many cases, I had to reach out more than once to request an interview and in a few cases, waited several months until the person had time for the interview itself. Given that the research focused on a very specific study population, it was worthwhile to wait for these interviews. Ultimately, most people were receptive to and interested in speaking, even if it took a while to connect. This may have been due in large part to the snowball sampling because participants referred me to colleagues with whom they had close working relationships. It may have also been due in part to the relevance of the interview topic to their work, and the commitment to sharing findings with participants.

Description of the study sample

Social movement affiliations

Participants were asked about their social movement affiliations during the interviews. While the initial plan was to categorize people according to EJ and RJ affiliation, there were other types of environmental and reproductive affiliations as well. There were 16 advocates who identified most strongly with an environmental movement (e.g., environmental justice, environmental health or mainstream environmentalism), 10 advocates who identified most strongly with a reproductive movement (e.g., reproductive justice, health or rights), and 10 advocates who equally identified with environmental and reproductive movements. The breakdown according to environmental and reproductive social movement affiliation is as follows:

Table 3.5. Social Movements Affiliations

Environmental and reproductive social movement affiliations	Advocates
Environmental justice	12
Environmental health	3
Environmental movement	1
Total identifying most strongly with an environmental movement	16 (44%)
Reproductive justice	8
Reproductive health	1
Reproductive health, rights and justice	1
Total identifying most strongly with a reproductive movement	10 (28%)
Environmental justice and reproductive justice	7
Environmental health and justice, and reproductive health and justice	1
Environmental health and justice, and reproductive justice	1
Environmental justice and reproductive justice, but she does not use these labels	1
Total identifying equally with environmental and reproductive movements	10 (28%)
Total	36

Note: I did not ask funders about their social movement affiliation, and hence they are not represented in this table.

Race/ethnicity

All of the racial/ethnic groups (i.e., African American, Latino, Asian, Indigenous, White) that this study sought to recruit were represented. The question of race/ethnicity was phrased in an open-ended way (*How do you define your race or ethnicity?*) rather than by asking participants to choose predefined responses in order to be sensitive to the variety of ways in which people define their identities. However, responses are collapsed into the categories below because two of the participants described a very specific racial/ethnic group and listing their original responses could potentially breach confidentiality (given that many of the advocates in this study know each other). For example, specific Indigenous tribes are not listed, even though participants provided this information in some instances. Additionally, advocate and funder data are combined below in order to protect confidentiality of funders since there are only four funders. The sampling and recruitment process resulted in a fairly diverse sample. There was only one group, Indigenous, which required further recruitment because there was initially only one person in that category and I wanted to increase representation.

Table 3.6. Racial/Ethnic Breakdown

Racial/ethnic group	Advocates and funders
Asian/South Asian	3 (7.5%)
Black	10 (25%)
Indigenous	4 (10%)
Latino/a	10 (25%)
White	11 (27.5%)
Other	2 (5%)
Total	40

Gender

There was no attempt to have any specific type of representation according to gender. Among all of the interviewees together, 36 (90%) were female, 3 (7.5%) were male and 1 (2.5%)

person declined to answer. The sample includes more women, by far. This appears to be indicative of who is conducting work at the EJ/RJ intersection.

Political orientation

Participants were asked with which political party they affiliated, if any. Among advocates, 22 (61%) were Democrats, 2 (5.6%) were with the Green Party, 2 (5.6%) were with the Working Party, and 10 (27.8%) either had no affiliation or chose not to answer the question. Among the funders, 4 (75%) were Democrats and 1 (25%) was not affiliated with a party.

Time at organization and in EJ, RJ, and EJ/RJ work

Participants were asked how long they had worked at their current organization, how long they had been involved in EJ work (without the RJ component), how long they had been involved in RJ work (without the EJ component), and how long they had been involved in EJ/RJ intersectional work. The responses are in Table 3.7 below. These numbers are approximate, as some participants could not say exactly how long they worked in these capacities. The averages indicate that participants, on the whole, had significant longevity at their organizations, and significant experience in EJ, RJ and EJ/RJ work. At the same time, there was a wide spectrum of answers, such as some who had worked for a year or less in a certain capacity as opposed to others who had decades of experience.

Table 3.7. Time at Organization and in EJ, RJ, and EJ/RJ Work

	Time at current organization	Time in EJ work	Time in RJ work	Time in EJ/RJ work
Advocates	1-29 years (8.7 years on average)	1-47 years (16 years on average)	0-35 years (11.4 years on average)	3 months – 35 years (8.5 years on average)
Funders	3.5-19 years (9 years on average)	6-50 years (20.25 years on average)	12-41 years (22 years on average)	4-19 years (9.6 years on average)

Location

Advocates and funders worked for organizations located in 23 different cities across the U.S. In some cases, the participant lived in a different city than the organization that she or he represented. Included below is information on the location of participating organizations, rather than the location of the participant. These locations are pooled into general regions. Specific cities are only mentioned if either the participant signed the confidentiality waiver (waiving individual confidentiality) or all participants from that organization signed the consent to be on the organizational resource list (waiving organizational confidentiality). A large portion of participants were located in New York City or California.

Table 3.8. Locations of Organizations

United States Region	Advocates and funders
Northeast, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York City, New York • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania • Washington, DC 	15 (37.5%)
Southeast, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Atlanta, Georgia • Apopka, Florida • Charleston, West Virginia • Greensboro, North Carolina 	6 (15%)
Midwest, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ann Arbor, Michigan • Detroit, Michigan 	4 (10%)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lake Andes, South Dakota 	
Southwest, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston, Texas • Santa Cruz, New Mexico 	2 (5%)
West, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchorage, Alaska • Denver, Colorado • Los Angeles, California • Missoula, Montana • National City, California • Oakland, California • San Diego, California • San Francisco, California 	13 (32.5%)
Total	40

Participating organizations

Included below is a list of many of the organizations that participated in the study. An organization is only included if the participant signed the optional confidentiality waiver and/or all participants from that organization signed the consent to be on the resource list. Please note that while most of the organizations are listed, this is an incomplete list since not all participants signed a confidentiality waiver or resource list consent. The list is as follows:

- Adhikaar
- Alaska Community Action on Toxics
- Black Women for Wellness
- Bronx Health Link
- California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
- Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
- Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy (CHANGE)
- Center for Environmental Health (New York City office)
- Ecology Center (Ann Arbor and Detroit offices)
- Environmental Health Coalition
- Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform
- Farmworker Association of Florida
- Green Door Initiative
- Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation (funder)
- Just Transition Alliance
- National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
Native American Community Board/Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center
New Voices Pittsburgh
People Concerned About Chemical Safety
Reproductive Health Technologies Project
Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families
Sierra Club (Washington, DC office and Greensboro, North Carolina branch)
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective
Tewa Women United
Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (t.e.j.a.s)
WE ACT for Environmental Justice
West Virginia Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality (WV FREE)
Women, Environment, Health and Justice Consulting (philanthropy consultant)
Women's Voices for the Earth

Analysis and interpretation

Both the interviews and documents were analyzed with a grounded theory approach, with an initial inductive open coding process to identify concepts, followed by a focused coding process in which the most significant or frequent codes were kept and used to categorize the data (Charmaz, 2006). During the coding process, the constant comparative method was used, the goal of which is to refine, connect, and integrate categories in a way that thoroughly captures the variation and complexity in the data (Willig, 2013). This process entailed comparing data with data, data with codes, and codes with codes in order to identify similarities and differences (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). Line-by-line coding was used earlier in the process. However, I found that when I looked back at the data that corresponded to the codes created, this high level of granularity made it difficult to capture the broader sentiment being expressed. I therefore began to code the data in larger chunks in order to keep the overarching thoughts intact. The same piece of data was often coded to multiple codes because the content was relevant to more than one emerging theme. The following is an example of the coding process in an interview

with Cristina Aguilar, the Executive Director of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR). When reviewing COLOR’s website prior to the interview, I took note of definitions that they provided of reproductive justice, economic justice and other terms that they use in their work. I brought this website content up earlier in the interview, and Cristina refers to it in the excerpt below as she responds to the following question: “What has worked particularly well when you collaborate across movements between RJ and EJ?”

Table 3.9. Coding Example

Coding	Interview response
Articulating connections and intersections	I think it's being able to articulate the connections and the intersection points. And one thing that we're doing now is—it speaks to what you were observing on our website—is
Developing policy materials that define intersections	we're writing some policy papers on the intersections, on all of
Many issues areas intersect with RJ	these different issue areas; so economic justice, environmental justice, LGBTQ liberation, disability rights, et cetera. We're
Articulating intersections for partners	writing policy papers so that we can actually articulate what those intersections are, and have them to provide to partners
Looking to strengthen and form cross-movement collaborations	when we're looking to form new collaborations or as we're strengthening old ones. Because I think it can get—I think it's
Terminology as a barrier between cross-movement work	really easy to kind of get lost in the jargon of our respective
Understanding and addressing language barriers	movements. And I get that and I think our team really gets that
Belief in importance of cross-sector, intersectional work	and yet we also know how critical this kind of cross-sector intersectional approach is and that for those of us who are
Belief that RJ movements have a lot to contribute to cross-movement work	reproductive justice organizations, I think that we have a lot to offer our different movements. And it really feels like we're
Increasing use of race/class/gender frame	moving more and more to this race/class/gender analysis that
RJ uses race/class/gender frame	reproductive justice really incorporates and so we're taking that
Proactively preparing for cross-movement	very seriously and trying to ensure that we're ready, you know,

partnerships	
Want to improve quality of collaborations with multiple movement partners	a little bit more proactively to engage in more meaningful ways with all of our various movement partners.

Memos were used throughout the process. This initially included in-process, analytic memos to identify and explore theoretical possibilities emerging from the analysis. In-process memos are intended to help generate insights and leads early in the data collection process that can help to inform the direction of subsequent fieldwork (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Integrative memos were later included to refine, connect and elaborate on analytic themes and categories (Emerson et al., 2011).

In vivo codes were used to determine categories (Willig, 2013), as well as relevant constructs from the existing literature. *NVivo* analytic software was used to manage the data. After determining the main themes, relevant quotes were organized into a code book. Below is an excerpt from the code book from one analytic chapter. All of the quotes to the right have to do with the assertion that one benefit of cross-movement collaboration is that it allows social actors to expand their base of support. The main code, “benefits of cross-movement work” had many sub-codes within it, and “expanding our base” was one of these. When writing up the analysis, I chose one or more quotes to represent similar sentiments expressed by other participants.

Table 3.10. Code Book Example

Code	Sub-code	Quotes
Benefits of cross-movement work	“Expanding our base”	Pat (pseudonym): “I mean I think the biggest contribution that both groups bring to the table is that <u>it’s really about global issue building and expanding our base and network of support for our issues.</u> So I think it’s beneficial for environmental groups to have reproductive health groups part of our work because then that’s <u>another constituency that we can say supports our work.</u> So if we are talking with, say, a legislator—a legislator who is
Refers to benefits that can result from	Refers to the idea that when advocates collaborate across movements, they can expand their base by bringing the support of their respective	

<p>collaborating across social movements</p>	<p>constituencies</p>	<p>really passionate about say women’s reproductive health issues and women’s reproductive health rights, I think <u>that’s a powerful constituency or spokesperson that we can bring in</u> to say lobby or an important talking point that we can raise with an elected official. <u>And I think that is also valuable for reproductive health groups as well to expand their base and network.</u>”</p> <p>Maya Nye, People Concerned About Chemical Safety: “...what was successful in this collaboration was making the direct connection between environmental justice issues and reproductive justice issues and really helping to expand the conversation around toxic exposure, I suppose, or chemical exposure. To expand the conversation and to build power. <u>Expanding the conversation equates building power because you're engaging a whole new base of people and getting them to think about your issue to whereas before it might have been more monolithically focused.</u>”</p> <p>Nicole (pseudonym): “[Collaborating means we are] <u>able to reach those women which we wouldn’t have been able to do</u> without these collaborations.”</p> <p>“Nourbese Flint, Black Women for Wellness: I think the uniqueness of the intersection is that <u>it brings, I think, a wider group of folks together</u> that work on issues that impact all of our communities, right. [break] I think that the EJ face has a long history of, like, from <u>incredible movement and base-building work that, you know, we can fall back on.</u>”</p> <p>Miriam Yeung, National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum: “There is something about creating that link and greater linkages to worker’s rights that <u>I think is promising as an organizing strategy for the base potential and linking it to immigrant rights—that is potentially good for the base.</u> I think our social justice movements generally are too siloed.”</p> <p>Daniela (pseudonym), funder: “That’s not just</p>
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		<p>national groups kind of parachuting into a state, but really having permanent infrastructure in the states that's youth-led, that's women of color-led, that's very local, and that, yes, has a broad agenda but that this is very inclusive of that agenda but <u>needs to be broad so that they can make alliances with racial justice and other movements.</u></p> <p>[break]</p> <p>I think the whole, for example, the whole nail salon thing, reporting that happened in New York City, is an opportunity because it really merges the worker rights, the reproductive justice, and the environmental toxins piece and so <u>it presents an opportunity for a broader coalition.</u>”</p>
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After coding all of the data into themes, I went back and looked again at the research questions, first sorting themes according to which research questions they addressed. I then regrouped the themes into three overarching categories, which became the subject of the three analytic chapters. Please note that in writing up the quotes and the accompanying analyses, I chose to present interview quotes in the past tense, and to write analytic points in the present tense. Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2011) note that “this contention portrays the incident recounted in the excerpt as temporal and historical, whereas it presents the analytic commentary as ahistorical and generalizable (p.216).”

A member checking process, in which advocates received an email with a summary of the preliminary overall analysis and interpretation of the data, provided them with an opportunity to validate or further discuss initial findings before the analysis was finalized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). They were given a month to respond with any comments in whatever way was most convenient for them, whether that be email, phone or video chat. (Please see Appendix I for the member checking email and summary.) The plan was to revise findings based upon feedback in cases where my interpretation differed from the participant, or else to keep my interpretation and

make note of these differences. Four participants emailed to say that they would look at the preliminary findings, but ultimately no participants sent feedback.

In three cases, participants were sent the interview transcript, in addition to the member checking summary. In two cases this was because the participants were interested in seeing it. In the third case it was because I told the participant at the time of the interview that I would send it so that she could make sure that the anonymous sections of the transcript had been appropriately flagged.

Strengths

There are several strengths to the methods above. A grounded theory approach allowed for explorations of new leads in the data, such as the suggestion to interview funders. I could explore new leads by adding questions to the interview guide as the study progressed. In developing the interview guide, I was able to connect with two people in the foundation world who had conducted previous work in this area, and thus could build upon their efforts. Also, using two different data collection methods gave a more robust view of organizational work.

Saturation was reached in the study sample of 36 advocates. A diverse sample was recruited according to social movement affiliations (e.g., EJ, RJ and EJ/RJ), and according to racial/ethnic categories. Snowball sampling allowed me to interview people who I may not have had access to otherwise. During snowball sampling, many of the same names began to come up over and over again, giving me confidence that I had already reached out to and spoken with many key leaders doing EJ/RJ intersectional work. According to multiple participants, the EJ/RJ intersectional field is a relatively small one. Therefore, reaching many key leaders also gave me confidence that I had explored this phenomenon in depth.

Interviewing participants via phone and video chat made it easier to schedule (and sometimes reschedule) interviews with people who were very busy. I felt that I was able to establish a good rapport with participants via both video chat and phone. The use of member checking gave participants the opportunity to give feedback on the analysis, and plans to disseminate results may help to translate findings from research into practice.

Limitations

There are several limitations to the above methods. Important topics can be inadvertently excluded in semi-structured interviews, and the flexibility of this approach can reduce comparability of responses (Patton, 1990). Using phone and video chat for interviews may have been less personable than face-to-face interviews. Also, it was not possible to assess non-verbal cues at all during phone interviews, and it may have been more difficult to assess non-verbal cues during video chats than it would have been in person. Moreover, it was not possible to observe features of participants' local environments that could have potentially provided context for the interviews. Additionally, there were four interviews in which it was difficult to hear the participants due to a bad phone or Internet connection. In these few cases, interviewing remotely compromised the quality of communication.

While no one requested to conduct interviews in any language other than English, lack of recruitment in languages other than English could have resulted in selection bias, as the views of English speakers may have been different than the views of non-English speakers. Text analysis was limited to documents that were available, thus potentially also creating a selection bias. Additionally, the views in documents may not have been representative of the views of everyone in an organization. Both analysis of semi-structured interviews and texts was time-consuming.

However, the use of grounded theory may have helped to compensate for this by helping to more expeditiously hone in on key themes.

Another limitation is that no one provided feedback during the member checking process. It is not possible to know if participants opened the document and chose not to give feedback, or if they never read the preliminary findings at all. Based upon interactions with people in arranging a time to speak, many people seemed to be very busy with competing work priorities. Given their busy schedules and other commitments, perhaps this step in the process was not seen as a priority for spending their limited time.

Efforts to ensure quality

An audit trail was created to document decisions, outcomes and evaluations regarding data collection, sampling, analysis, and dissemination of results. This trail can serve to demonstrate that interpretations were consistent with the data (Hall & Stevens, 1991), and can allow others to follow the audit trail in order to examine potential alternative interpretations. In an effort to account for any biases that I may have brought to the collection or coding of data, I engaged in a reflexive process to assess assumptions, biases, or reactions that could have influenced data collection and interpretation (Hall & Stevens, 1991). Additionally, dissertation committee members reviewed the analytic interpretations and raised questions that helped to probe my assumptions or biases. This reflexive process is consistent with grounded theory's constructivist approach, as it recognizes the researcher's subjectivity (Charmaz, 2006). To promote trust between myself and participants, I was transparent regarding the study's goals (Hall & Stevens, 1991). Additionally, as mentioned previously, a member checking process gave

participants a chance to comment on the analysis and interpretation before it was finalized
(Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Chapter 4

Breaking Free From Siloes: Benefits of Working Across Identities, Issues, and Movements

“I believe that there's strength in us working together and in honoring and participating in each others' existence and supporting each other and in doing cross-movement work and cross-issue work because we don't live single-issue lives so we need to do multi-issue work.”

-Nia Martin-Robinson, Eastern Region Organizing Manager, Sierra Club, North Carolina chapter

Introduction: Applying intersectionality to movement building around toxics

Though legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw is credited with coining the term intersectionality (Bowleg, 2012), intersectionality theory was collectively developed by Black feminist scholars to understand the ways in which race, class and gender intersect to shape the lives of Black women (Bowleg, 2012; Mullings, 1997). Bowleg (2012) defines intersectionality as follows:

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that posits that multiple social categories (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status) intersect at the micro level of individual experience to reflect multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the macro, social-structural level (e.g., racism, sexism, heterosexism). (p.1267)

While emerging from Black feminist scholarship to examine the intersections of race, class and gender, an intersectional framework is applicable to other groups, and can provide a foundation for theory, education, and activism (Gaard, 2011). Intersectionality theory is central to the mission and organizing activities of the reproductive justice movement (Price, 2011). The

movement's founders, who were women of color, intentionally created a framework connecting reproductive rights with social justice in an intersectional way (Ross, 2006).

One of the goals of this study was to understand the collective action frames of advocates who are working to protect vulnerable populations from toxicants harmful to reproductive health. A prominent collective action frame that emerged through the interviews and document analysis conducted for this study was the use of intersectionality to understand and address toxic exposures that are harmful to reproductive health in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. This theme emerged most strongly among those who self-identified as reproductive justice advocates. For example, Kimberly Inez McGuire, a reproductive justice advocate and movement leader at the intersection of reproductive justice and environmental justice who was Director of Public Affairs at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health (NLIRH) in Washington, DC at the time of our interview, said, "I would say I am first and foremost a reproductive justice advocate and one of the core tenets of reproductive justice as an ideology is an intersectional analysis of the ways in which communities are affected by different forms of reproductive oppression. That's really at the core of how I approach any social movement or advocacy question."

This chapter explores what it means to approach the connection between toxics and reproductive health using intersectionality as a core analytic and organizing principle that shapes social movement ideas and actions. Given the importance of intersectionality to the reproductive justice movement, the voices of self-identified reproductive justice advocates come through most prominently in this chapter. These advocates not only work in organizations that define themselves as reproductive justice organizations, but also in other kinds of organizations focused on reproductive and environmental issues. In many cases, advocates had dual movement

identities, often with one having primacy over the other, such as being an environmental justice advocate who approaches work through a reproductive justice lens. When relevant, this chapter also incorporates the voices of advocates who did not self-identify as reproductive justice advocates but whose work engages key aspects of intersectionality (such as cross-movement collaboration). Their work, at times, provides ideas that may be useful to advocates who explicitly use intersectionality in their work (such as analyses of gender that can then be used to inform intersectional analyses of race *and* gender). Since the construction of collective action frames is a dynamic and evolving process (Benford & Snow, 2000), the interplay of ideas between reproductive justice advocates who consciously use intersectionality and advocates who do not can inform the continued development of this frame.

In exploring the use of intersectionality, this chapter focuses on the theme of breaking free from siloes. Both the Khan (2009) and Zimmerman and Miao (2009) reports mentioned previously reference the concept of breaking free from issue-based silos. This theme came up many times in the interviews—not only with regard to issues, but also identities and movements. Participants spoke about breaking free from siloes in the different ways presented below.

- 1) *Working across identities*: Advocates are working to address intersecting social characteristics that structure risk, and to create social movement spaces that are welcoming of individuals with multiple, intersecting marginalized identities. Rather than conceptualizing people's identities (and their life experiences) as the sum of their parts, a non-siloed approach to identity construction posits that people's identities can only be understood as a composite. One advocate also noted the need to weave her spiritual identity into her work, which allows her and others in her organization to remain centered and empowered.

- 2) *Working across issues*: Advocates are working to develop multi-issue agendas that contextualize risk within social, economic and political factors that intersect to shape vulnerability, and to address these issues jointly. A non-siloed approach to issues posits that issues are interlocking, cannot be disentangled from each other, and thus must be addressed together in order to achieve meaningful change.
- 3) *Working across movements*: Many advocates perceive that it is necessary to move away from siloed social movement efforts and instead collaborate across movements in order to be more effective in their work. Advocates are engaging in cross-movement collaboration in order to gain a broad base of support for systemic changes that would not only reduce toxic exposures harmful to reproductive health, but that would also promote progressive social change across a host of issues affecting vulnerable communities.

Working across identities

I think that the use of intersectionality as a conceptual framework can generate more meaningful analyses of the life experiences of individuals who face an elevated risk of toxic exposures due to the intersection of two or more marginalized identities. The first part of this section focuses upon two outcomes that, based upon my assessment of participant perspectives, appear to result from this more comprehensive and nuanced perspective on people's lives: 1) the creation of more welcoming spaces for advocates who face intersecting sources of oppression; and 2) recognition of the unique vulnerabilities and roles of women in the physical and social reproduction of communities. I think that both have important implications for strengthening

advocacy efforts and improving population health. The second part of this section focuses on how one advocate focuses on including her spiritual identity in her work, and how this strategy helps her and others in her organization to remain centered as they engage in long-term advocacy efforts. She uses a metaphor, braiding, to describe the way in which they weave spirituality into an intersectional agenda.

Creating welcoming spaces for advocates who face intersecting sources of oppression

Critical to intersectionality is the analytical point of view that assessments of race that do not take into account gender, and assessments of gender that do not take into account race are inadequate in explaining the life experiences of Black women (Mullings, 2006). Nourbese Flint, Program Manager at Black Women for Wellness in Los Angeles, California, explained how a reproductive justice framework allows her to address all aspects of her identity:

[With] the civil rights movement, women—particularly Black women—were having to put their race in front of their gender so issues around sexual violence, gender discrimination, things like that were, like, oh we'll get to those after we figure out this whole race thing. But in the feminist movement, Black women and women of color were supposed to put their gender in front of their race... so it was like, well, we'll get to that race thing or we'll get to that economic thing after you know, we do this or we secure abortion rights or things like that. And so RJ is really that kind of spot in between where people—women, can be both women and whatever other identity they bring to that. So women of color or Black women and they don't have to put one in front of the other first. You don't have to choose.

Both race and gender are central aspects of Nourbese's identity and the reproductive justice movement provides the space for her to equally address the challenges she faces by being both Black *and* a woman. The name Black Women for Wellness suggests that identity is important to her organization's work. Nourbese's ability to fully engage her own identity can, in turn, allow her to bring issues to the forefront that may impact other Black women who may face similar issues. In the context of environmental reproductive health, understanding intersections

of identity has helped advocates to bring a host of issues to the forefront, and to both educate and activate others in order to address them. For example, advocates with whom I spoke are raising awareness regarding adverse reproductive health outcomes associated with toxic hair relaxers used by many Black women under pressure to conform to European beauty standards (intersections of race and gender); the toxic effects of douches used disproportionately by Black and Latina women due to both cultural norms and corporate campaigns that target them for advertising (intersections of race and gender); and occupational exposures among nail salon workers exposed to toxic beauty products, as well as farmworkers exposed to pesticides (intersections of race, gender, socioeconomic status and immigrant status).

Nia Martin-Robinson, Eastern Region Organizing Manager for the Sierra Club's North Carolina chapter, also commented on the way in which an intersectional frame frees her from the burden of having to artificially compartmentalize different aspects of her identity in her advocacy work, and strengthens her as an advocate in the process. Nia described herself as an environmental justice activist who does her work from a reproductive justice frame. She commented on not only the inclusivity of the reproductive justice movement, but other recently birthed movements as well, such as Black Lives Matter (which advocates against violence towards Black people) and Fight for \$15 (which organizes fast food workers to advocate for \$15/hour wages and the right to unionize):

As we're opening up our spaces and we're broadening the kinds of conversations that we have, we're broadening our language, we're stepping away from conversations that only include men and women and a gender binary. We're creating the kinds of comprehensive and holistic space that people can bring their whole selves to. And so I can show up to a Fight for \$15 rally and say, "I am a Black queer woman living in the South," and understand that all of those things and all of those identities impact me and my ability to participate in this work in a certain way.

The term “space” comes up twice in the quote above: “we're opening up our spaces” and are creating a “holistic space that people can bring their whole selves to.” The word “space” came up many other times in the course of this interview (and in other interviews as well). For example, elsewhere in our interview, Nia talked about “space for a deeper understanding,” “space to do some deeper exploration, “space to have a conversation,” “space and opportunity to continue to work together,” and “space and some language to be able to incorporate the issues of women and queer folks into the conversation around environmental justice.” Rather than place, space here refers to the “broadening” of conversations and language, and to interactions between people. The term conjures up the opposite sentiment as confinement, such as confinement to a narrow range of ‘legitimate’ identities or to a narrow set of issues. Both Nourbese’s and Nia’s reflections are consistent with scholarship that highlights an important connection between collective identity and participation in social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000; Gamson, 1992b). As Gamson (1992b) said, “Participation in social movements frequently involves enlargement of personal identity for participation and offers fulfillment and realization of the self (p.56).” An intersectional lens allows both Nourbese and Nia to show up to and to shape social movement efforts as their authentic selves and therefore, to participate more fully. This includes the ability to highlight their race, gender and sexual orientation as critical aspects of their identities. By calling attention to these characteristics, social movement activists are better able to advocate for their complete health and well-being.

Highlighting the unique vulnerabilities and roles of women, with implications for the physical and social reproduction of communities

Calls for a gender frame that focuses upon women

Advocates are using an intersectional framework to draw attention to the negative impacts of toxic exposures on women in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. As Cecil Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice in New York City, said: “I think the unique perspective of RJ groups is that they bring that reproductive health lens. They bring it, however, in a way that uplifts the voices of women of color, in particular. I would say young women and girls of color. And that, I think, is unique in most of these spaces.”

Nia discussed how a gender lens was lacking in her environmental circles, and how this changed for her when she attended a meeting convened by SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective. There, a representative from Women’s Voices for the Earth (WVE), an organization that amplifies the voices of women around toxics issues, presented a gender frame. Nia described this experience:

I was coming [to the conversation] as an environmental justice advocate who felt like when we had conversations in EJ about vulnerable populations, we never really talked about women as a vulnerable population, and that felt like a really important thing to me.... When we talk about low-income people, are we talking about the fact that women make up huge majorities of the poor, not just in this country, but around the world? How are we breaking down these groups? How are we taking a look at people of color, Indigenous people, low-income people, and thinking one step further to say who are the groups inside of here who are being disproportionately impacted? There were times when I tried to bring this up thinking, how do we talk about women’s issues here? And I’ve been told at times that I’m being petty or divisive, like there was no need to take it that much further, as long as we were looking at this race frame it was not necessarily needed to talk about gender also. And even though the people who were coming from [Women’s Voices for the Earth], I don’t believe that the representative was a person of color, it still made sense and was very applicable in my opinion to the work that we had been talking about with low-income communities and people of color.

Nia's comments place the vulnerability of women within an intersectional analysis, highlighting that women are disproportionately impacted by negative environmental effects due to their economic marginalization, and that it is important to ask who are the most vulnerable within vulnerable populations. Her comments also speak to her perception of encountering resistance within the environmental justice community, where she feels that others view the "race frame" as sufficient and that it is unnecessary to explicitly address the needs of women. While Taylor (2000) noted that environmental justice is "the first paradigm to link environment and race, class, gender, and social justice concerns in an explicit framework" (p. 542), Nia's experience is consistent with analyses that suggest that the gender component of environmental justice has been significantly overshadowed by analyses of race and class (Buckingham & Kulcur, 2009). When gender is not incorporated into justice issues, the identities of women of color are artificially fractured into discrete identity characteristics. This siloed approach to identity construction marginalizes the concerns of women of color who face unique risks with regard to toxicity and reproductive health, and makes it more challenging for social movements to come up with agendas that fully meet their needs.

Nia noted that the representative from Women's Voices for the Earth (which both addresses toxic chemicals among women at large and also in vulnerable populations), was not a person of color, but that her ideas were relevant to vulnerable communities. Therefore, when advocates from different movements interact with each other, they may find pieces of other social movement frames, such as the gender analysis, that can be incorporated into their own frame to make it stronger. It also suggests that in some advocacy circles, a gender frame can be a catalyst for bringing together women in different social locations and different movements around toxics reform. However, in other circles, introducing a gender frame might be divisive if

people feel that they must focus on one particular identity characteristic (e.g., race) and that it is either unnecessary to incorporate other identities or that incorporating them could diminish the importance of their primary concern.

Focusing on women due to their unique biology and physical role in reproduction

Repeatedly advocates told me that it is important to focus upon women because, in their view, they are disproportionately affected by toxic chemicals. Nicole (pseudonym), whose organization focuses on women, explained what she means by a disproportionate impact:

We have a focus on women because women are disproportionately impacted by chemical exposure. One is because of our biological makeup; women tend to have more fat than men and so toxins can bio-accumulate or build up in our fat. Also women can pass exposure on to the developing fetus or infants or a child through breastfeeding. And there just hasn't been as much research done on the impact of chemicals on women as there have been on men, especially men in industrial settings, so we felt like there was a real need.

No doubt, men are also impacted by toxic chemicals and this concern surfaced in some of the interviews as well. For example, Nicole referenced the risk that men face in industrial settings. Some advocates work to raise awareness about male reproductive health problems, such as increases in abnormal testicular and penis growth, reduced sperm count, decreases in testosterone levels, and a higher incidence of testicular cancer. However, despite these problems in men, advocates with whom I spoke were, on the whole, far more focused on women. For those whose thinking was influenced by a reproductive justice frame, this is consistent with previous assertions about perspectives on gender within the reproductive justice movement. In summarizing some of the relevant literature on this subject, Gurr (2011) maintains that “Reproductive Justice activists and scholars specifically locate the bodies of women as one lynchpin between environmental pollution and community wellness, arguing that the impacts of pollution on women’s bodies differs in important ways from the impacts on men’s bodies, and

further that the impacts of pollution on women's bodies has particular consequences for the community at large (p.724).”

Nicole and many participants focus on women because of their biological makeup and role in pregnancy and breastfeeding. They have also recognized a gap in the scientific literature that marginalizes women's bodies. As Jose Bravo, Executive Director of the Just Transition Alliance in San Diego, California, said: “We still haven't changed the fact that the system, the way to measure toxicity in a person is still from the point of view of 150-pound White man.” By highlighting this gap, advocates are countering the invisibility of women that takes place in spite of their important role in reproduction. Nicole's comments are not intersectional, per se, because they are not focused upon dimensions of vulnerability beyond gender. However, they provide an important building block for constructing intersectional arguments regarding the unique vulnerabilities of women in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities.

Lianne (pseudonym) also commented upon the important biological role that women play in pregnancy, and consequently, the need to protect women in order to protect new life. Her frame is that woman is the “first environment,” a term coined by Indigenous midwife, Katsi Cook, because the first environment that a fetus comes into contact with is a woman's body (Silliman et al., 2004). Lianne explained:

You ask your old ladies and they will tell you, a pregnant woman should be kept happy ... because everything the mother feels, the baby feels. Everything the mother sees, the baby sees. Everything the mother hears, the baby hears. And so what began was anchored in community-based understandings of women's bodies because women's bodies are a major piece of what constructs a society, and of course of the dominant genome in terms of the mitochondrial DNA. And in fact our lineage follows three families, three clans: Wolf, Turtle, and Bear... this idea of the wild and the wilderness, that's somebody else's idea, that we accept that human beings have to be in relationship to all of this around us because without all of the other life, we are not able to live according to the way we are instructed in our longhouses. We want to keep that way for our children, our grandchildren... my framework is first environment, woman is the first environment.

Here, the environment and reproduction are so tightly linked that the body itself is equated with the environment. The boundary between mother and child is so permeable that the child “feels,” “sees,” and “hears” everything that the mother does. By depicting such tight linkages between mother and child, this frame highlights the need for a toxic-free maternal environment to support fetal and infant development. Implicit here is the idea that everything toxic that the mother absorbs, the baby absorbs. Moreover, Lianne specifically stated that “woman” is the environment. In this way, she is not limiting the fetal environment to the womb. This type of framing is harmonious with assertions by reproductive rights, justice and health advocates with whom I spoke that representations of pregnant women should focus on the whole woman, and should not be limited to her belly. They do not construct the value of a woman solely around the value of the fetus, but at the same time, they highlight her role in sustaining the life of the fetus.

Lianne noted that “this idea of the wild and the wilderness, that’s somebody else’s idea,” pointing toward the notion that the environment is not ‘out there.’ The environment is ‘in here.’ Environmental justice pushed back against mainstream conceptions of environmentalism by saying that our environments are not ‘over there’ in nature; our neighborhoods and workplaces where we live out our daily lives are our environments (Di Chiro, 2008). The woman is the first environment frame brings the environment one step closer by bringing it into the bodies of women, and therefore identifies women's bodies as ‘places’ that must be kept toxic-free in order to protect new life.

Focusing on women because of their role in cultural reproduction

Lianne also linked the continuation of societies to the bodies of women: “women’s bodies are part of what creates society.” They are therefore the connection between past and

future, the physical point from which new life emerges in order to allow for the continuation of communities, not only genetically (“in terms of the mitochondrial DNA”), but also culturally (“to live according to the way we are instructed in our longhouses”).

The theme of protecting women’s reproductive health in order to protect culture in Indigenous populations was also referenced in *Indigenous Women and Environmental Violence: A Rights-based Approach Addressing Impacts of Environmental Contamination on Indigenous Women, Girls and Future Generations* (2012) by Andrea Carmen from the International Indian Treaty Council and Indigenous Women’s Environmental and Reproductive Health Initiative, and by Viola Waghiyi from the Native Village of Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island, Alaska and Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT). This document was submitted to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Expert Group Meeting in New York, NY. It develops the emerging concept of “gender-based environmental violence,” which refers to the disproportionate impacts of toxic chemicals on Indigenous women as a result of the “conscious and deliberate” production, marketing, export and release of harmful chemicals by countries and corporations. In the document, the authors reference a quote from *The Declaration for Health, Life and Defense of Our Land, Rights and Future Generations* (2010)¹, as follows:

“Indigenous women are life givers, life sustainers and culture holders. Our bodies are sacred places that must be protected, honored and kept free of harmful contaminants in order for the new generations of our Nations to be born strong and healthy.”

The authors explain that they view women as “culture holders” because they maintain important cultural traditions, such as farming, food gathering and preparation. These activities, which place them into direct contact with the natural environment, make them vulnerable to

¹ This declaration was delivered at the International Indigenous Women’s Environmental and Reproductive Health Symposium in Alamo, CA.

absorbing toxicants that show up in their breast milk, placental cord blood, blood serum and body fat. As the authors note, these exposures have, in turn, been associated with adverse reproductive health outcomes, including sterility, reproductive system cancers, decreased lactation and the inability to produce healthy children. They also note that chemical exposures can adversely impact intellectual and neurological development in children, compromising “their ability to retain and pass on culture, ceremonies, stories, language, songs -- a primary concern of Indigenous women.” Hence, cultural continuity is both in jeopardy when communities burdened by toxicants experience higher rates of infertility or adverse birth outcomes, and also when they have children who are not developmentally able to absorb and pass along their heritage. Additionally, were women to stop engaging in long-held traditions that place them into intimate contact with the natural environment, this would also jeopardize cultural continuity. This situation highlights the critical role of the environment in cultural traditions, and that when the environment becomes contaminated, the practices that transmit culture can be interrupted. Therefore, when advocates draw attention to the flow of toxic chemicals into women's bodies, they are also calling attention to the massive disruption that chemicals can cause in the flow of culture (which can contribute to cultural genocide that extends far beyond reproductive health), and the threat that this poses to one of the central roles of women in these communities.

Gender as a key pillar in intersectional notions of risk with regard to toxic exposures

In this section, I have discussed ways in which advocates are highlighting the unique vulnerabilities of women, as well as the ways in which these vulnerabilities can impact their roles in both the biological and cultural reproduction of communities. These gendered analyses provide a key pillar in intersectional analyses of toxic risks faced by women in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. For example, the women described above by

Carmen and Waghiyi face one set of risks because they are embedded in Indigenous communities in the Arctic where their vulnerable social and geographic location results in disproportionately high levels of chemical exposures. These women then face another set of risks because they are *women* in these communities. As such, they may engage in gendered activities (e.g., food gathering and preparation) that differentially expose them to certain chemicals, as compared to their male counterparts (though men may potentially engage in other types of activities that elevate their risk in a different way). Women also process toxicants differently than men due to their distribution of body fat. Moreover, their role in bearing and breastfeeding children can result in cross-generational impacts that may also be different from the ways in which male reproductive health impacts successive generations. By drawing out the ways in which gender shapes risk, advocates are able to shape a more nuanced and complete picture of the challenges faced by vulnerable communities.

Moreover, by framing their work in this way, they may be able to engender increased support. Frames that focus upon the vulnerability of women may tap into existing widespread values and beliefs that women need more protection than men (Carpenter, 2005). This tactic may be categorized as frame amplification, which is a type of frame alignment process. Frame alignment refers to a strategic effort by social movement organizations (SMOs) to frame their issue in a way that draws support from potential constituents (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, & Benford, 1986). Benford and Snow (2000) define frame amplification as the “idealization, embellishment, clarification, or invigoration of existing values or beliefs (p.624).” By focusing on the unique vulnerabilities of women, advocates may be able to mobilize constituencies that hold beliefs regarding the need to protect them more.

Additionally, frame amplification is a particularly favorable strategy to use when seeking the support of constituents who are different from those who would benefit from change (Paulsen & Glumm, 1995). Thus, among advocates who are trying to gain broad-based support for the protection of women in vulnerable communities, focusing on intersections between gender and race could potentially result in more support from people who themselves are not part of these racial/ethnic communities, but who can relate to their cause better because either they themselves are women and/or because they have gendered ideas about the need to protect women. For example, I referenced above a document that Carmen and Waghiyi submitted to the United Nations. By focusing on risk as it relates to both gender and race/ethnicity, as opposed to focusing on risk due to race/ethnicity only, they might be able to better persuade this diverse, international audience to invest in protecting Indigenous communities in the Arctic.

Braiding: A metaphor for maintaining one's spiritual identity

Thus far, this discussion has focused upon intersecting social characteristics that impact identity. However, there was one advocate, Jeanette (pseudonym), who brought attention to her spiritual core. I highlight her framework because it represents a unique way of approaching intersectional work and adds diversity to the perspectives presented in this chapter. This frame may also be seen as linked to ideas expressed earlier by Nourbese and Nia with regard to bringing their authentic selves into their work. Instead of social characteristics, however, authenticity here relates to spiritual dimensions of the self.

Jeanette views the spiritual aspect of her identity as critical to engaging fully in her advocacy work. She described what her organization calls “spirit-rooted activism,” a form of activism derived from an Indigenous framework. She uses a braiding metaphor to describe how

she and others weave spirituality into their organizational agenda. She explained: “Our concept is a weaving together of all different issues that impact the health and well-being of our women and our children and our families and our communities.” She continued by saying that you must do “the deep work of knowing who you are and what is your purpose in life and then you can braid in the EJ and RJ work, or all the different avenues.” In her analogy, one braid represents environmental justice groups, one braid represents reproductive justice groups and the other braid is her core self. Each braid is itself made up of many strands that represent different elements or components of work. She described braiding as bringing all of these components together: “When they touch, there’s that intersectionality there, that moment when they’re braided, but then they continue and they flow; they don’t just intersect, cross, and go their separate ways.” This represents a non-siloed approach in which there is continuous and mutually informative engagement between the self, work, and other groups.

Jeanette said that this approach allows advocates in her organization to stay centered and grounded, reinforcing who they are and why they are doing their work “so that we don’t lose ourselves in the work.” In this way, this framework allows them to retain their authentic selves. This framework positions the self as an important pillar of influence in advocacy work. Jeanette’s community has faced significant toxic exposures for decades and working to protect themselves has been a long-term struggle. In Jeanette’s point of view, spirit-rooted activism can help to give her and others the strength and composure they need to continue their efforts. It also helps them to avoid becoming consumed by negative energy, or as Jeanette refers to it, getting “caught up in that righteous anger.”

The need to focus on keeping their spiritual selves intact can be understood in the context of the significant historical trauma that her community has experienced. She described the sources of oppression they have faced:

We're told when the colonizers came that we're no good, we need to be eliminated, we don't know, et cetera, and so that shaming, that guilting, that taking away our belief in ourselves is still constant today. It never stopped. And so how to maintain that sanity in both and still be loving, caring, sharing—to bring wellness to everybody on all sides, all angles, all cultures, all places.

Spirit-rooted activism appears to be an approach through which Jeanette and others with whom she works can help to ensure that their belief in themselves is not taken away. In this way, it can be seen as a strategy to keep internalized racism, which Jones (2000) defines as accepting racist messages about one's abilities and intrinsic worth, from taking root. For Jeanette and her colleagues, maintaining their spiritual cores is a form of resistance to oppression, and this form of resistance helps them to buttress other forms of resistance, such as organizing efforts to further environmental and reproductive justice.

Working across issues

Another key component of an intersectional approach to toxics and reproductive health is the development of a multi-issue agenda. The Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights in Denver, Colorado defines intersectional work as follows on their website: “When we talk about doing intersectional work, we are talking about looking at not just reproduction, but also at other movements, issues and constituencies including LGBT, racial justice, economic justice, disability and other areas where people may be marginalized or may experience discrimination or barriers to their rights and liberties.” Therefore, incorporating multiple issues into their agenda, in addition to reaching across movements and bridging

constituencies, is key to putting an intersectional approach into practice. In this section I discuss: 1) how toxics and reproductive health are conducive to a multi-issue agenda; and 2) the benefits of multi-issue frames perceived by interview participants.

Toxics and reproductive health as conducive to a multi-issue agenda

The issue of toxics and reproductive health is, in and of itself, a multi-issue problem. It unites concerns over environmental health with concerns over reproductive health. Jennifer Canvasser, Environmental Health Advisor for the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, said: “In my eyes, I couldn’t even imagine doing [environmental health and reproductive health] separately because they are so intertwined and interwoven that they go hand in hand. If you want to have a healthy reproductive system and healthy individuals, you have to have a healthy environment.” Many of the advocates with whom I spoke work to bring awareness to the intersections between environmental and reproductive health because, as Adjoa Tetteh, a National Volunteer Committee Member who works with the Sierra Club’s Washington, DC office, noted, “unfortunately there’s a lot of times that we don’t see the intersections between a lot of issues.”

When advocates discuss the intersection between environmental and reproductive health as it relates to vulnerable communities, in particular, it becomes further embedded in a multi-issue agenda. This agenda moves beyond environmental and reproductive issues to include an array of other issues, such as racism, classism, workers’ rights, immigrant rights, economic justice, and other social justice issues. Through this broader contextualization that considers social determinants of health, toxics is framed as a node in a web of intersecting oppressions, and hence becomes an essential part of an intersectional, multi-issue analysis. Miriam Yeung,

Executive Director of National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) in New York City, detailed her organization's work with regard to nail salon efforts, making clear why the issue of toxicants and reproductive health fits nicely into an intersectional agenda:

I think we have always thought that our nail salon advocacy work was really close to the heart of our mission and close to the way we do our work, which is intersectional and multi-issue, right, because it's such a rich topic that allows us to talk about environmental justice and economic justice and immigrant rights, and immigrant access and reproductive health, rights and justice, and workers' rights.

By identifying the many issues that impact risk of exposure to toxic chemicals among nail salon workers, she is grounding her comments in an intersectional analysis that examines the ways in which multiple dimensions of inequality operate together to structure risk. In addition, Miriam makes clear that talking about toxics is useful because it "allows" her organization to talk about other issues central to her organization's agenda. Therefore, in addition to being an important issue in and of itself, it can be a valuable issue to organizations that have intersectional agendas because it provides the impetus for discussing a host of social issues that relate to toxics and are important in their own right.

For other participants in this study, their toxics work intersects with and "allows" them to talk about a different set of issues. For example, Jeannie Economos, Pesticide Safety and Environmental Health Project Coordinator for the Farmworker Association of Florida in Apopka, Florida, who works to prevent pesticide exposure among farmworkers, noted that her organization's work to address pesticides includes a discussion of housing conditions, pay conditions and problems with the whole agricultural system. In addition, their agenda includes other social issues, such as immigrants' rights, housing conditions, and sexual harassment of women. Given the expansive frames around toxics that incorporate multiple core issues areas, advocates who engage in multi-issue frames around toxics and have other core issues in common

may find that these multiple overlapping areas provide another reason, beyond toxics, as to why collaboration may be beneficial. For example, in this case, workers' rights and immigrant rights are issues of mutual concern between NAPAWF and the Farmworker Association of Florida. Having more than one mutual interest may make it more likely that advocates will come together behind a shared agenda.

Organizations do not always start out with an interest in toxics and then move from that point of entry to identify the many social problems that structure risk of exposure. They may end up including toxics in a multi-issue agenda after arriving at the issue from a different point of entry. For example, Bekezela Mguni, Director of Programs and Strategic Partnerships for New Voices Pittsburgh, noted that her organization's "entrée into the environmental justice movement... didn't start out because we were looking at the terrible air quality of Pittsburgh, for example, and it didn't start out because we were looking at fracking, but we have moved from looking at beauty standards and our pursuit of how that impacts our health." Her organization, which uses a reproductive justice framework to organize Black women and has focused heavily on the risks that they face when using chemical hair and skin products in response to racist beauty norms, has since added toxics as a core issue to their multi-issue agenda. Therefore, one benefit of the inherent linkage of toxics with so many social issues is that an interest in other social issues could draw an organization into toxics work. The converse can also be true – that, for example, an interest in toxics may result in the addition of other issues (e.g., immigrant rights, worker's rights) to an organization's core agenda.

For those participants who are interested first and foremost in toxics, they might have an intersectional, multi-issue frame that has toxics at its center. For other advocates, toxics may be a peripheral issue on their agenda. Again, due to the fact that toxics is inherently linked with so

many issues, either approach can further progress around toxics reform. Luna Ranjit, Executive Director of Adhikaar in New York City, spoke about the diverse array of organizations, such as legal groups and workers' rights groups, that advocate around nail salon work. "I think people are coming at it from different perspectives. Not everyone is coming to nail salon work championing for reproductive justice. But I think overall, it ends up having a positive impact on reproductive health as well." Cecil called this phenomenon "co-benefits," the idea that working to eradicate toxic chemicals can bring about positive changes in reproductive justice, even when reproductive justice is not the main focus. He noted: "An analogy would be that rising tides lift all boats and so the sense is that here the EJ work represents the tide that, in its efforts of advancing policy change where people and impacted communities are engaged in that process, the outcomes of that... in some ways can also have benefits to the RJ." This phenomenon could potentially help organizations to make themselves more attractive to potential supporters, as they can state many benefits to their work. It could also potentially help to encourage formalized alliances between organizations, as they can continue to channel their resources into causes closest to their mission while simultaneously stating commitments to other causes.

Benefits of multi-issue frames

More holistic solutions

Adjoa noted that frames combining environmental health and reproductive health are more "holistic" and therefore "more effective" because you are "thinking about people and their whole lives and not just sectioning off one part of it." The implication here is that lives are not simply the sum of their parts, but rather, are comprised of a constellation of factors that interact with one another synergistically and must be addressed jointly. Victoria (pseudonym)

commented on the benefit of a holistic frame that combines environmental health and reproductive health:

It's addressing life the way that we live life, which is nuanced and complicated and not in a single issue track.... The issues that you face in your day to day intersect with one another and so by addressing multiple issues that affect communities at one time as opposed to forcing people to choose to center their advocacy around one thing is more responsive to the way that we view the world and the way that we experience the world around us.

Her comments shed light on how people experience the world, how people view the world, and how people ought to address the issues facing communities. Issues “intersect with one another” and thus cannot be teased apart. It is therefore important to simultaneously address them. During our conversation, she subsequently expanded upon the “nuanced” and “complicated” nature of life, noting that numerous factors influence health (e.g., stress, chemical exposure, pregnancy) and that individuals cannot know which factor is the cause of feeling ill. Additionally, she stated that people do not neatly categorize macro-level causes of disease into discrete categories, such as an economic problem or an environmental problem. The need to address issues simultaneously means that advocates must find the common denominator between issues and address them. This is consistent with the idea of addressing the fundamental causes of disease, first proposed by Link and Phelan (1995), in order to reduce health inequities. Fundamental causes refer to social conditions, such as racism and classism, that place individuals “at risk of risks” for morbidity and mortality by shaping the extent to which they can access resources that would allow them to avoid these risks. These causes result in multiple disease outcomes through multiple mechanisms (Link & Phelan, 1995; Phelan et al., 2010). Referring back to Victoria’s comments, racism and classism can shape risk of chemical exposure and stress. Thus, identifying these common denominators between issues can lead to efforts that do not simply address chemical exposure and stress as discrete entities, but drive one level deeper in

the hierarchy of risk factors and address the social determinants that influence them. This represents a more comprehensive long-term strategy for improving reproductive health.

Better policies to address the complexities of people's daily lives

Policies can help societies and communities to “push up” against the fundamental causes of disease (Schulz & Northridge, 2004). Miriam Yeung asserted that intersectional analyses that incorporate multiple issues can lead to better policies:

Looking at intersections is always going to deepen people's analysis. I think it gets at better policy analysis and also better policies written so there aren't unintended consequences. We see this all the time when we are talking about low-income and people of color communities. None of the issues that we face in our daily lives are simple because they all intersect and yet our policies are written as if it's easy to neatly cordon off this piece or the other. So it's always our way of working and our view of the world that intersectional analysis is going to get us better outcomes in the end and better meet the needs of the communities that we represent and we serve.

As she went on to describe, non-siloed policymaking would necessitate that government agencies align their standards with each other. Another participant, Donele Wilkins, CEO of Green Door Initiative in Detroit, Michigan, also commented on the need for more integrated approaches across government agencies. In referring to initiatives to reduce adverse birth outcomes in Detroit, Donele noted that “there has not been enough cross-sectional interdisciplinary conversations” and that convening a diverse set of key stakeholders is critical to better policymaking.

More genuine reproductive choice

Frameworks that encompass multiple issues can also lay the foundation for more genuine reproductive justice. Kimberly stressed this idea in relation to toxic-free environments, describing the need to look beyond traditional reproductive rights issues (e.g., abortion, contraception) to other issues that impact a woman's reproductive life:

Reproductive justice advocates have always said, we need to be as concerned with the right to become a parent, the right to have children if you so choose, and to parent those children as we are with the right to end or prevent the pregnancy. And so to me, working to eradicate toxic chemicals that unquestionably threaten that fertility and, therefore, the right to parent of those communities most affected, who we know are, again, people of color, low-income people, doing that work demonstrates commitment to the full spectrum of reproductive choices that a person might make.

Kimberly identified a toxic-free environment as critical to laying the foundation for meaningful reproductive choice. This is because the decision about whether or not to have a child is a moot point if people cannot have any children in the first place. Her framework stands in contrast to a narrow focus on the right to end or prevent pregnancy. She instead referenced the “full spectrum of reproductive choices that a person might make.” In keeping with an intersectional analysis, she not only stressed the need to look at a broad array of issues that impact choice, but also highlighted the particular constraints on meaningful reproductive choice in vulnerable communities, in particular.

Strengthening an organization’s credibility

An additional benefit of expanding an organizational framework to support genuine reproductive choice is that this can help to strengthen an organization’s credibility. As Amy Weintraub, Health Policy Associate at West Virginia Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality (WV FREE) in Charleston, West Virginia, a reproductive health, rights and justice organization, said about advocacy work that combines environmental health and reproductive health:

[It] has the potential to add to our credibility—that we are not just a one-issue kind of operation, that we don’t only think about or care about abortion protections. We also are interested in the whole woman and we are interested in all the ways her environment can affect her quality of life and her quality of health. So I think it has the potential to make us a stronger, more broad-based organization. It has the potential to help us expand, not only in our mission but also in our funding sources and in the type of staff that we have.

By broadening their agenda to include the “whole woman” and “all” of the ways her environment can impact her well-being, her organization perceives that it is able to increase its credibility with potential supporters, tap into more diverse sources of funding, and diversify its staff. By contrast, being a “one-issue” organization that only cares about abortion is painted in a less favorable light. Given that WV FREE straddles multiple worlds—not only reproductive justice, but also reproductive health and rights—this comment might imply that an intersectional, multi-issue frame is gaining traction among those invested in reproductive rights issues. There is evidence to support this idea, as even mainstream reproductive rights organizations such as Planned Parenthood are starting to shy away from pro-choice language that revolves around dichotomous choices around abortion, and to instead consider the multitude of factors that able or disenable a woman’s reproductive autonomy (Figuroa, 2014). Perhaps these groups see ideological merits of this framework and/or view it as instrumental to building a broader base of support.

Working across movements

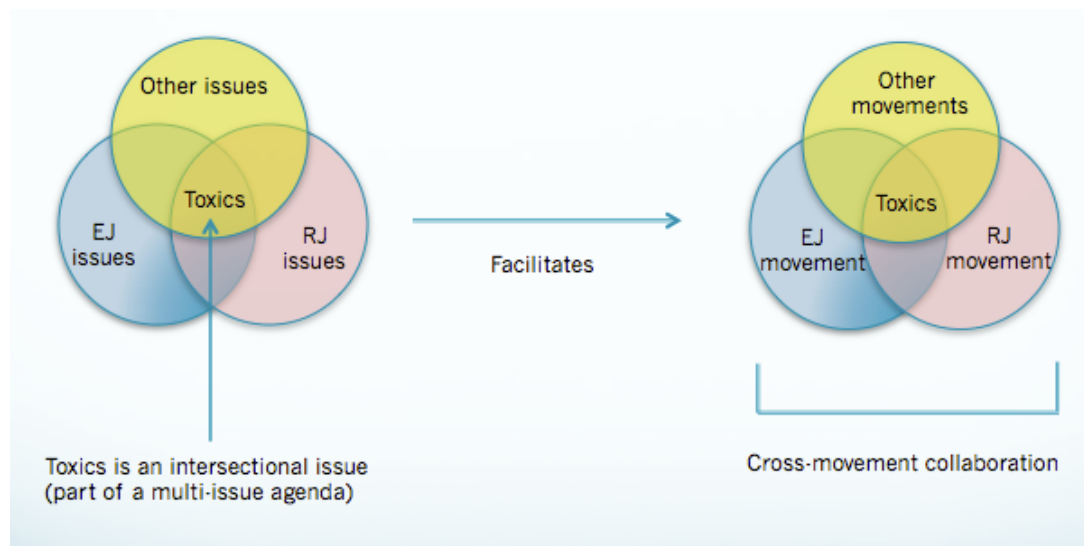
The last key component of an intersectional approach to toxics and reproductive health that emerged from the interviews was the strategy of working across social movements. At the outset of this study, the goal was to interview advocates who work at the intersection of the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements. While I did not expect all advocates to self-identify as environmental justice or reproductive justice advocates, the diversity of social movement affiliations among advocates far exceeded my expectations. Beyond environmental justice and reproductive justice, there were advocates who identified with environmental health, mainstream environmentalism, the reproductive rights movement, labor, immigrant rights,

women's health, racial justice, economic justice, the toxics movement, the green movement, and the peasant's movement (among others).

There were also a few advocates who referenced a reproductive health movement in the context of toxic exposures, though upon further investigation of this term, it appears that this currently represents a frame more than a formal movement. This frame refers to improving access to reproductive health services (Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, 2005; Luna & Luker, 2013), which is not the subject of this dissertation. I was not able to find literature pointing toward the emergence of a modern-day reproductive health movement. Where I did find references to a reproductive health movement, they tended to use this language loosely. For example, I found a historical reference to a reproductive health movement that gained traction in the early part of the 20th century, though the term was used interchangeably with a maternal and infant welfare movement (Rosen, 2003). I also spoke with two professionals who are involved in reproductive rights, justice, and health, and both thought that there is no formalized reproductive health movement. For all of these reasons, I have not included reproductive health as a separate movement in this dissertation, but rather, as a content area that is subsumed under other movements. Additionally, I do not use the term to refer to access to reproductive health services, but rather, to a broader set of issues that includes toxic impacts on reproductive health.

The majority of advocates with whom I spoke identified with more than one movement. This richness of movements is conducive to cross-movement collaboration, which can strengthen momentum behind advocacy efforts. Toxics can act as a catalyst to bring many kinds of advocates together. I have depicted the relationship between toxics, multi-issue work and cross-movement work, as follows:

Figure 4.1. Relationship between Multi-Issue and Cross-Movement Work



In my view, toxics is situated at the intersection of multiple issues, and therefore is conducive to forming a multi-issue agenda. This grouping of issues can, in turn, facilitate cross-movement collaboration because it expands the universe of potential stakeholders, each of which may be interested in any number of the issues that intersects with toxics. In the following sections, I discuss efforts to unite advocates who work in environmental and reproductive justice, as well as many of the perceived benefits of cross-movement collaboration. I discuss challenges to cross-movement collaboration in the next chapter.

Efforts to unite movements

Advocates with whom I spoke have identified cross-movement collaboration as a valuable organizing strategy. Miriam characterized social justice movements as being “too siloed.” Her organization’s website identifies cross-movement building strategies as an important part of an intersectional approach. In the following sections, I describe cross-movement strategies that focus on both dialogue and partnerships between advocates.

Coming together in dialogue

Advocates are dialoguing with other social movement advocates to generate interest in cross-movement collaboration. Kimberly, who is one such advocate, said:

I have spoken to reproductive health audiences about all of the ways in which chemicals are very harmful to reproductive health, making the case that if you are in the business of protecting reproductive health, you ought to be in the business of eradicating toxic chemicals that are a direct threat to sexual and reproductive health and fertility.... I have also spoken in environmental settings, once again raising awareness and making the case for environmental groups that are already engaged in toxic advocacy that it's important that they understand that these chemicals hurt communities of color, they hurt low-income people. Very specifically, I talk a lot about the ways in which women of color are exposed to toxic chemicals at work—so whether Latinas who are working in hotels or whether it's Asian Pacific Islander women who are in nail salons—a lot of bridge building kind of work.

Kimberly strategically identifies and recruits advocates who are poised to care in general about the link between toxic chemicals and reproductive health, and who are poised to care about the impact of toxicants on reproductive health in vulnerable communities, specifically. In this way, she is “frame bridging,” defined by Benford and Snow (2000) as the “linking of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem (p.624).” Frame bridging can take place between a movement and individuals that it aims to recruit, or across social movements (Benford & Snow, 2000). The fact that her audience is comprised of advocates who are already focused on reproductive health problems but who are either not making the connection with toxics or are not incorporating this connection into their advocacy agenda suggests that many groups are siloed into issues, and that there is significant untapped potential there. Transitioning these groups into intersectional approaches through bridge building work could strengthen momentum behind movement efforts.

Others have also engaged in efforts to bridge movements. For example, in 2008 SisterSong began an initiative to bring together advocates in the environmental justice and

reproductive justice movements. Monica Simpson, Executive Director of SisterSong in Atlanta, Georgia, explained the impetus behind a series of three meetings, the last of which was in 2012, to discuss the intersection between EJ and RJ issues. She said, “It was a myriad of reasons as to why all of this came together, but the thing that was really evident was that we needed to convene the thought leaders on these two issues to talk about what the issues were and for exploring what this looked like for the [reproductive justice] movement.”

Additionally, the Women’s Foundation of California formed the Environmental Justice/Reproductive Justice Collaborative, a cohort of environmental and reproductive justice advocates in California. This initiative was documented in the 2009 report published by the Women's Foundation of California, *Climate of Opportunity: Gender and Movement Building at the Intersection of Reproductive Justice and Environmental Justice*. Tina Eshaghpour, who was at Women, Environment, Health and Justice Consulting in the San Francisco Bay area at the time of our interview and was a program officer at the Women’s Foundation of California when the cohort was formed, was involved in the genesis of that initiative. She commented, “The intention was to create the space to have advocates actually talk to each other about their work because we realized they were speaking different languages, even though their work was very complementary.” She spoke about the role that foundations can play in bringing together advocates:

I think that’s a unique role that funders have been able to play, is at least to have the resources to help convene and identify [what] we’re seeing from the 30,000 foot view perspective, where we are seeing a lot of synergy and overlap in terms of the kind of work the groups are doing on the ground that maybe isn’t always evident to the groups who are just doing the work day to day and either aren’t working beyond their immediate geographic areas, are may be less familiar with what’s happening elsewhere, or simply due to lack of resources are focused very much on immediate work at hand and don’t necessarily have the luxury of carving out time to go and talk with potential allies.

Collective action frames are the result of negotiated shared meaning (Gamson, 1992a). By coming together through initiatives such as those described above, environmental justice and reproductive justice advocates can negotiate the scope of a shared frame, including decisions about the types of issues that make it onto their agenda, and ways in which to form their arguments that are consistent with the pre-existing goals and values of both movements. Funders, who may have perspectives or resources that advocates themselves do not have, can facilitate these efforts.

Nia, who attended the SisterSong meeting, noted that the “beauty” of the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements is that “there is so much space created for creativity and for cross-movement building because of the vastness of each of them.” Therefore, the holistic nature of intersectional frameworks discussed previously, which gives plenty of “space” for the full realization of advocates’ identities, is conducive to creating cross-movement alliances.

Working together on specific projects

In addition to dialoguing in order to create shared understandings and goals, advocates have worked together on specific deliverables. Most of the participants in this study have worked with advocates in other social movements around toxics and reproductive health to create outreach materials or engage in policy advocacy. For example, in 2009 SisterSong published an environmental justice issue of its newsletter, *Collective Voices*, which focused on bridging the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements, and on highlighting issues at the intersection of these movements. Contributing authors included advocates from SisterSong, Women’s Voices for the Earth, NAPAWF, and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative (all participants in this study). The Sierra Club, Reproductive Health Technologies Project, and

WE ACT for Environmental Justice worked together to write *Creating a Climate for Change: THE EARTH KIT (Environmental And Reproductive Toxins and Health)*. This is a toolkit for advocates to help educate them about the intersection between environmental and reproductive justice so that they can, in turn, educate and mobilize their communities or school campuses. Another example of a cross-movement collaboration is the *Detox the Box Campaign* by Women’s Voices for the Earth, WE ACT, COLOR, NLIRH and Teens Turning Green. This campaign targets manufacturers of feminine hygiene products to list all ingredients in their products and remove harmful chemicals.

Benefits of cross-movement collaboration

This next section focuses upon benefits of cross-movement collaboration discussed by advocates. It includes benefits stated by advocates who are motivated by intersectionality when bridging movements, as well as benefits stated by advocates who are not specifically motivated by intersectionality, but whose work still contributes to an intersectional frame. Both of these types of advocates cited similar benefits, regardless of motivation.

Expanding their base

A key benefit that advocates spoke of was expanding their base. This is a valuable political strategy because it increases the chances that organizations can find individuals whose viewpoints will resonate with elected officials. Pat (pseudonym) commented:

I think the biggest contribution that both groups bring to the table is that it’s really about global issue building and expanding our base and network of support for our issues. So I think it’s beneficial for environmental groups to have reproductive health groups be part of our work because then that’s another constituency that we can say supports our work. So if we are talking with a legislator—a legislator who is really passionate about women’s reproductive health issues and women’s reproductive rights, I think that’s a powerful constituency or spokesperson that we can bring in to lobby or an important

talking point that we can raise with an elected official. And I think that is also valuable for reproductive health groups as well to expand their base and network.

In this example, cross-movement collaboration is valuable because having a diverse array of partners strengthens their human resources, and by extension, their ability to persuade policymakers. Similarly, Ogonnaya Dotson Newman, who was Director of Environmental Health at WE ACT at the time of our interview, said that expanding the base via cross-movement collaboration means gaining “more allies and more voices,” and this is important because “people are power.” Advocates noted that allies do not always need to center their attention on an issue or take on a leadership role in order to be good allies. As Nourbese noted, “there is a space for each movement to work on different issues” and sometimes “we high five and support our allies,” and vice versa. This flexibility leaves room for people to come together without having to spread themselves too thin.

Engaging in holistic, intersectional analyses that recognize the ways in which issues intertwine to impact health can help advocates to expand their base. A good example of this comes from a collaboration between WV FREE, a reproductive justice organization, and People Concerned About Chemical Safety (PCACS), an environmental justice organization – both located in Charleston, West Virginia. In 2014, a massive chemical spill contaminated the local water supply in Kanawha Valley, also known as Chemical Valley. Even after a drinking water ban had been lifted for the public at large, it was reinstated for pregnant women and children. In the wake of this spill, WV FREE contracted Maya Nye, Executive Director of PCACS, to conduct *Women and Water* listening sessions. The goal of these sessions was to hear from women and families about how the spill impacted them, their questions, concerns, and the kinds of action steps they wanted to see. She said:

What was successful in this collaboration was making the direct connection between environmental justice issues and reproductive justice issues and really helping to expand the conversation around toxic exposure or chemical exposure... expanding the conversation equates to building power because you're engaging a whole new base of people and getting them to think about your issue, whereas before it might have been more monolithically focused.

In this example, engaging a new base of people is linked with having a broader conversation about environmental impacts on reproductive health, rather than having conversations that are “monolithically focused.” A broader conversation is seen to promote greater mutual understanding between people who initially may have been siloed from each other in their interests. Bonnie (pseudonym) thought that this particular cross-movement collaboration in West Virginia helped reproductive health advocates to understand how their issues are connected to other people, and conversely, helped others to better understand reproductive health issues.

Contributing new perspectives

The greater mutual understanding that developed between advocates as a result of the chemical spill touches upon another theme that emerged, which is that when movements come together, advocates bring new perspectives to the table. Luna directly linked the notion of breaking free from movement siloes with the ability to better see how issues intersect and, consequently, to build a stronger coalition. She said, “We need to get out of silos and work in partnership because the more we can see intersections, the more people we can have at the table asking for the changes, pushing for the same goal and the stronger we will be.”

Participants noted that advocates in different movements bring their own understandings of their respective issues, thus making discussions more multi-faceted. For example, they thought that the environmental justice movement brings an environmental health and justice perspective, as well as a sophisticated analysis of institutionalized racism as it relates to health disparities. They thought that the reproductive justice movement brings a focus on women and

an understanding of the broader issues. This confluence of perspectives can strengthen movement efforts when advocates begin to shape each other's thinking. Ogonnaya said that when you combine movements or broader groups of people, you get “an interesting potential to really see how the two kind of different areas or groups can really be able to influence each other.”

Sandra (pseudonym) commented on the value of encountering new ideas through cross-movement collaboration:

Cross-movement collaboration is always really exciting because it crosses those boundaries of the way we normally think about things, and that's where the most exciting things come. I think that any time you think outside of your normal way of framing the issue and thinking about it, it's going to open your eyes and it's going to present something new and there's going to be new opportunities.

Her comments suggest that thinking in new ways can result in innovation and opportunity, which can potentially further movement efforts. Adjoa asserted that it is critical for advocates to actively foster the cross-fertilization of ideas by inviting advocates from other movements to join if, for example, an organization is going to have a panel or workshop. Donele gave an example of how the Detroit Institute for Equity in Birth Outcomes (DIEBO), a citywide initiative to improve birth outcomes in Detroit that is largely staffed by healthcare practitioners, invited her to the table and how this gave her the opportunity to contribute a different perspective to their initiative. She described her experience:

I am able to bring an environmental social justice framework to the conversation and ideally get folks who are doing traditional work around improving birth outcomes and reproductive health to consider environmental exposures and other things that may impact an individual who is attempting to reproduce, help them to understand that there are multiple reasons beyond the individual's decision-making that may result in poor birth outcomes.

When advocates like Donele have a seat at the table in reproductive health initiatives that have not traditionally incorporated an environmental health perspective, new leverage points for change may become apparent. For example, air pollution exposure in vulnerable populations is

an environmental issue that Donele has done significant work to address. To date, efforts to improve birth outcomes have largely focused on individual level risk factors and on structural factors related to social, political and economic neighborhood conditions (Geronimus, 1992; James, 1994; LaVeist, 1989; Lu & Halfon, 2003; Osypuk & Acevedo-Garcia, 2008; Reagan & Salsberry, 2005). However, researchers are now recognizing the importance of reducing exposure to air pollution, as well as susceptibility to its effects, in order to improve reproductive health (Miranda et al., 2009; Morello-Frosch & Shenassa, 2006; Ponce et al., 2005). Donele's presence at the table can provide a new point of view that might lead the DIEBO initiative to consider addressing air pollution, in addition to other key factors, in order to reduce adverse birth outcomes in Detroit.

Sharing resources, information and expertise

When organizations collaborate across movements, they can also share resources, information and expertise, thus improving their efficiency and efficacy. As Kimberly stated, “the notion that we ought to work together, the notion that intersectionality is a good thing, it's not really that hard of a sell... everybody has got more work than they have time.” Camille (pseudonym) elaborated on this point, speaking about collaboration, which she thinks is so important that she calls it an “obligation”:

We don't have the time. One organization doesn't have the time to know everything, so we need EJ to work with the RJ to work with the public health, for all of it to come together so people can be collaboratively educated and empowered as to what needs to be done because if you don't, you'll sleep. If you only focus on one thing, you won't know about the others. That's why collaboration is an obligation.

In framing collaboration as an obligation rather than only as a beneficial strategy, she is focused on the greater good rather than on only organizational outcomes. Advocates noted that organizations can share content expertise (e.g., scientific expertise, the ability to create culturally

competent outreach materials), information (e.g., the latest developments in their field), strategies, tips, print resources (e.g., fact sheets) and even their relationships (e.g., community academic partnerships).

More effectively countering opponents and fostering progressive change

Working across movements may also help advocates to more effectively counter opponents and foster progressive change. Nia commented on how breaking out of movement siloes might help advocates on the left to counter the rightwing American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a conservative membership organization of state legislators funded by the Koch brothers:

When I think a lot about who is fighting us, I think about ALEC... they are attacking us on a multi-issue level. So as long as we stay siloed in movements, we aren't able to fight back in a multi-issued way.... I believe that there's strength in us working together and in honoring and participating in each others' existence and supporting each other and in doing cross-movement work and cross-issue work because we don't live single-issue lives so we need to do multi-issue work.

Here, Nia bundles together a number of subjects that have been discussed in this chapter. She cites the need to engage in cross-issue work because issue siloes fail to address the complexity of people's lives. She also connects the need to engage across issues with the need to engage in cross-movement work because siloes make it impossible to fight back in a multi-issued way, which she sees are more effective. Nia suggests that the rightwing is strategically packaging their issues together in order to rally support, and that advocates on the left need to bridge across movements and issues in order to gain similar momentum.

Amy made similar comments regarding the rightwing's ability to successfully organize around a multi-issue platform, and the need for the left to use this strategy:

We actually must work together if we are going to have a movement that is sustainable and that can really operate effectively in the face of a very well-organized, well-funded conservative movement. We can no longer exist in silos of LGBT movement,

reproductive healthcare movement, environmental justice, racial justice. We are going to have to start crossing those justice barriers because the right certainly has done that with their whole ‘gays, guns, and God’ thing that they have been doing for the last several decades with a lot of success. We are going to have to unify in that sort of way too.... It will mean to a degree, people will have to give up their silos, and that’s scary.... And [the right has] somehow—not ‘somehow’—they strategically have packaged these things as one unit and that if you are a good Christian, you are going to oppose all or be for all of these things. And I think, definitely, it is my theory that this is coming from a strategic plan at the highest national levels on the far right as a way of activating their electorate... the left absolutely has not done this.

Amy is suggesting that the right and the left have been organizing themselves in very different ways, with the left being siloed with regard to both issues and movements, and the right taking advantage of a strategy in which they bundle together seemingly unrelated issues by bringing them under the larger umbrella concept of being a good Christian. The framing strategy that the rightwing is using can be categorized as frame extension. Benford and Snow (2000) define this concept as follows: “Frame extension entails depicting an SMO’s interests and frame(s) as extending beyond its primary interests to include issues and concerns that are presumed to be of importance to potential adherents (p.625).” By combining issues within their agenda that their target constituency is likely to care about, the rightwing can activate its electorate. According to Amy, it would be advantageous for the left to take up similar strategies and apply them to their own set of issues. Silliman, Fried, Ross and Gutierrez (2004) have argued along these same lines, stating that in response to the rightwing’s successful organizing campaigns against reproductive rights, the leftwing needs “a broad grassroots strategy capable of reaching across social movements and linking health and reproductive rights to other social justice issues.”

Comments by Daniela (pseudonym), a funder, revealed how toxics could be part of a frame extension strategy. She thought that focusing upon toxics alone is too narrow, but that linking toxics within other broader social issues, such as workers’ rights, reproductive justice, economic justice, immigration, and racial justice, which she says nail salon advocates have done,

presents an opportunity to form a broader progressive coalition. This idea of narrow and broad agendas speaks to an important distinction between efforts to coalition build in order to reduce exposure to specific toxic chemicals (a narrow orientation), as opposed to cross-movement efforts that aim to reduce toxic exposures and achieve widespread social change in the process (a broader orientation). Alex Gorman Scranton, Director of Science and Research at Women's Voices for the Earth in Missoula, Montana, spoke about the way in which her organization mobilizes women: "we work on finding ways for women to take what we believe is in their inherent interests and needs and desires and finding ways to get those voices out so that they are heard more strongly." She compared this strategy to other groups that might say "we really want to get bisphenol A out of baby bottles or whatever, oh, we need some women spokespeople to do this." Both approaches can reduce toxic exposures, but the former approach also aims to fundamentally change power imbalances related to gender while the latter approach uses women as a means to an end. Similarly, broad-based coalitions that address toxics from an intersectional perspective can extend their influence beyond the intersection of toxics and reproductive health to rupture power imbalances that contribute to a host of inequities. In this way, toxics can be a potential catalyst for more widespread progressive change.

Conclusion

Closing gaps in the literature

Bowleg (2012) has noted a lack of public health research on intersectionality, and has called for more attention to this area in order to better understand and address health inequities. Additionally, Schulz and Mullings (2006) have argued that the social science literature on intersectionality has been abstract, and needs to more concretely identify the ways in which

intersections of race, class, and gender manifest in people's daily lives, and also the ways in which these inequalities intersect in specific contexts to shape health. The above analysis contributes to filling in these gaps in the literature because it demonstrates the ways in which advocates are using the concept of intersectionality to inform their thinking and carry out grassroots change. They are applying this framework in practical ways in order to break free from identity-based, issue-based, and movement-based siloes. For example, they are using intersectionality to create spaces that allow for the full participation of advocates with multiple marginalized identities, and to shape advocacy strategies that combine issues and movements. While this analysis was contextualized within advocacy efforts focused on toxics and reproductive health, the findings are applicable to other intersectional areas as well, both inside and outside of public health.

The potential impact of a cross-issue, cross-movement approach

In a report on the intersection between the reproductive justice movements and other movements, Daniel, Herzing & Lerza (2012) asserted the importance of cross-issue, cross-movement efforts:

For decades, conventional wisdom argued that organizations that stuck to a single issue or sector had the greatest impact. We believe that the success of Groundswell grantees suggests a new conventional wisdom: organizations that work strategically across issues, sectors, and constituencies are better positioned to win policy and systems change while strengthening all of the movements in which they participate. (para. 12)

This statement is consistent with points of view expressed by many participants in this study.

They view cross-movement collaboration as a valuable strategy to achieve better policies, and to change underlying structures in society that contribute to inequities fueled by race, class, gender and other social categories.

A good example of the increase in momentum that can result from intersectional efforts took place in 2004 when four national mainstream women's organizations were spearheading a march called the *Save Women's Lives March for Freedom of Choice*. After SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective was invited to join this group, the organization successfully advocated to move the agenda away from pro-choice messaging in favor of a broader array of issues relevant to the reproductive lives of women of color (e.g., poverty, racism, homophobia, incarceration, domestic violence). They also successfully advocated to rename the event as the *March for Women's Lives*. Women of color responded to this shift in framing by showing up in unprecedented numbers, and this became one of the largest marches in U.S. history (Luna, 2010; Roberts, 2004). Thinking about these same linkages in the context of toxics and reproductive health, expanding conceptions of reproductive well-being to include freedom from toxic exposures may appeal more strongly to populations who feel that toxics are a genuine threat to their reproductive health. Similarly, constructing frames that position the body as the environment rather than separate from the environment, such as the "woman is the first environment" frame, may make environmental issues feel more relevant to people whose concerns extend beyond traditional environmentalist issues, such as land preservation and protection of wild animals. These reframings could translate into stronger showings at advocacy events, and increases in other means of support.

Increasing the number of supporters is very relevant in today's political and economic context. Wealth in the United States is disproportionately concentrated among the top 1% (Keister & Lee, 2014), and these top 1% are more politically active than the average citizen with regard to their voting rates, campaigning and donations to politics (Cook, Page, & Moskowitz, 2013). One example of this top 1% are the Koch brothers, who Nia mentioned in our interview

as significant opponents to environmental and reproductive justice work. The Wall Street Journal reported that conservative groups funded by the billionaire Koch brothers plan to spend \$889 million on the 2016 election, which is more than any other amount in election history (Ballhaus, 2015). If vulnerable populations and their allies want to amass the public support needed to try to counterbalance these kinds of resources and power, creating cross-issue agendas that might generate national interest in broad-based, cross-movement alliances may represent one promising strategy.

Challenges going forward

The issue of toxics can potentially be a powerful catalyst for change because it can help to unite many different kinds of advocates who have overlapping social movement agendas. However, collaborating with more people, particularly with ones who have different social movement orientations, may present significant challenges as well. If advocates want to unite behind toxics and a broader shared agenda, they will likely need to compromise and exercise a willingness to withstand the growing pains that may accompany change. The next chapter primarily focuses upon challenges that advocates face when engaging in cross-movement collaboration, and some potential avenues to resolve them.

Chapter 5

Tensions and Challenges in Movement Building Around Toxics and Reproductive Health

“Movements are like families—big, wonderful, loving, and dysfunctional.”

-Nancy (pseudonym)

Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the benefits to advocates of working across identities, issues, and movements. This chapter focuses on some of the challenges of engaging in cross-movement or cross-issue work. The first four obstacles discussed contribute to challenges when working across movements. The last obstacle, securing funding, can present a challenge when engaging in cross-issue EJ/RJ intersectional work. This obstacle is applicable to organizations working on their own or in collaboration with others.

The first obstacle concerns privilege, namely White privilege. Participants reported that organizations in the environmental, environmental health, and reproductive rights movements tend to come to the table with more privilege than do organizations in the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements. These differences can compromise the quality and strength of collaborations. Advocates cited the need for intentional efforts to create more diverse alliances and equitable power sharing.

A second obstacle is that there are disagreements between advocates over how to frame policy advocacy. These are disputes that take place within and among social movement

organizations that have the same broader goal, but differ in their opinions with regard to objectives, strategies, and tactics. This chapter first discusses frame disputes with regard to prognoses (i.e., solutions) to reducing toxic exposures. This discussion relates to both objectives and strategies. It then discusses frame disputes amongst advocates who disagree about what type of messaging will resonate most with potential supporters. This type of dispute relates to strategies and tactics.

A third obstacle is that the continuing national controversy around reproductive rights (i.e., abortion, contraception) increases obstacles among reproductive groups to engaging in toxics work. This includes not being able to focus on toxics because they must channel their resources into debates over abortion and contraception; challenges in allyship with stakeholders who support toxics reform but are not supportive of a core reproductive rights agenda; and sensitivities over language and visual representations that could be seen to imbue the fetus with personhood.

Fourth, messages that promote toxic-free products may seemingly be in opposition to issues that potential allies care about. Issues that require special attention to messaging include advocating to reduce toxicants in breast milk without reducing breastfeeding; advocating for the removal of nitrosamines from condoms in a way that does not reduce safe sex practices; and developing language around adverse birth outcomes that does not stigmatize disabled individuals with these outcomes. In the absence of careful messaging, there can also be misunderstandings between advocates around population control.

Lastly, participants reported that it can be difficult to find funding for intersectional EJ/RJ work, whether that be independently or in collaboration with other organizations. This is because funders often favor approaches that fit into discrete categories rather than ones that straddle

multiple issue areas; funders may find such frames to be over-ambitious and thus question if their funding dollars will have an impact; and there is a need for better language to describe intersectional work in funding applications.

This chapter examines and analyzes these themes in the forthcoming discussion, illustrating them with ideas and examples provided by participants.

The role of privilege in tensions between social movements

When I initially approached this research, one of my goals was to explore tensions and synergies between environmental and reproductive advocates with regard to how they frame their work at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice. However, as the research progressed, it became clear that some of the most significant tensions had nothing to do with bringing an environmental lens versus a reproductive lens to advocacy efforts. Instead, they had to do with social dynamics, primarily racial tensions, between organizations that occupy different social locations and converge at the intersection of EJ and RJ. The forthcoming discussion focuses on the five primary movements that advocates mentioned in interviews in the context of racial tensions. These are the environmental justice movement, the environmental movement, the environmental health movement, the reproductive justice movement, and the reproductive rights movement.

Much has been written about the contentious relationship between the environmental movement and the environmental justice movement. Environmental justice activists have deemed the “mainstream” (as it is often called) environmental movement to be racist and classist. They have criticized it for failing to prioritize the need to address racism in both their advocacy agendas and internal operations. Environmental justice scholars and activists have

asserted that the whiteness of the environmental movement has created a barrier with the environmental justice movement. EJ activists have also portrayed the environmental agenda as overly focused on protecting wilderness and endangered species, and lackadaisical about protecting neighborhoods where people of color live that are disproportionately subject to environmental contamination. In 1990, both the Gulf Coast Tenant Leadership Development Project and the Southwest Organizing Project sent letters to the “Group of Ten”² national environmental organizations and leveraged these criticisms against them. These criticisms were further discussed at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991 where a panel of representatives from both the EJ and environmental movements spoke on the relationship between these movements and how to improve it (Pezzullo & Sandler, 2007).

Comments provided by interview participants were consistent with this historical perspective. For example, Kimberly Inez McGuire, who was Director of Public Affairs at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health in Washington, DC at the time of our interview, described the environmental movement as having a “mixed history when it comes to accountability to communities of color.” Jeannie Economos, Pesticide Safety and Environmental Health Project Coordinator at the Farmworker Association of Florida in Apopka, Florida, stressed that “it’s really important to make a distinction between environmental and environmental justice because environmental groups, although there is some improvement, often do not get at all the environmental justice piece. A lot of low-income, minority communities of color are alienated from environmental groups because they feel like it’s rich White people that want to save the whales.”

² The “Group of Ten” was a nickname for the Audubon Society, Environmental Defense Fund, Friends of the Earth, Izaak Walton League, National Parks and Conservation Association, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resource Defense Council, Sierra Club, Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, and The Wilderness Society.

I examined the annual reports of three organizations in the Group of Ten in order to see how participant perceptions aligned with their financial reporting and their agendas. These reports did show that the vast majority of their dollars are used to protect natural resources (e.g., promoting clean energy, preserving wildlife and wetlands, reviving oceans), though each also did dedicate a smaller portion of funds to protect human health (e.g., reduce pollution, improve drinking water quality, advocate for safer product regulations). One of the organizations reported that it allocated less than 0.5% of its grantmaking funds to environmental justice and community partnerships in low-income communities and communities of color. Information on allocations to EJ work was not made explicit in the other reports. Participants also described the environmental organizations as having more money than environmental justice groups. I reviewed financial statements of several environmental and environmental justice organizations in order to check the veracity of this statement as well. The numbers did lend support to the assertion that environmental groups have more money. For example, one Group of Ten member reported net assets of approximately \$230,000,000, while an environmental justice organization that operates nationally reported net assets of approximately \$425,000 (less than 1% of the environmental organization's assets).

Two interview participants referred to tensions between justice advocates and the environmental health movement. The environmental health movement is distinct from the environmental movement. According to Davies (2013), whereas the environmental movement focuses on the environment, the environmental health movement is focused on human health and has primarily been concerned with protecting people from toxic chemicals. Davies acknowledges that the EJ movement is also concerned with human health as well, but she asserts that the EJ movement centers its arguments around human rights, while the environmental health movement

centers its arguments around human health. Nancy (pseudonym) described the environmental health movement as “predominantly run by middle-class White women” and out of touch with the needs of low-income women. She said that “if you're progressive and to the left and have a justice focus, then our conversations are easy. Oh, let's learn about each others' issues, but we don't have fundamental disagreements about values and in whose name you work. I think that that changes a little on the environmental health side.” These tensions did not appear to be as pronounced as tensions with mainstream groups, but they were mentioned nonetheless.

Tensions between movements focused on reproductive issues appear to be similar to tensions between movements focused on environmental issues. The reproductive justice movement has criticized the reproductive rights movement, which has been primarily led by White women (Silliman et al., 2004), for being unresponsive to the needs of women of color. RJ advocates have also characterized the reproductive rights movement as being myopically focused on abortion, and have called for an expanded framework that moves beyond dichotomous pro-choice messaging to capture the many other concerns that women of color have with regard to their reproductive lives, including social and economic well-being and neighborhood conditions (Price, 2010; Ross, 2006).

The comments of participants reflected tensions documented in the literature. Nia Martin-Robinson, Eastern Region Organizing Manager for the Sierra Club's North Carolina chapter, characterized the reproductive rights movement as having a “White-based frame of reproductive rights, often very spearheaded by White women, ignoring the issues of women of color or poor women.” Participants also noted the financial prowess of reproductive rights groups. Nancy said that “the big girls have the money—I mean, this is the language that the reproductive justice folks have, the big girls. And the big girls are the reproductive rights groups.” Planned

Parenthood, one of the most well-known reproductive rights organizations in the country and therefore likely one of the “big girls” that Nancy refers to, does indeed have significant resources. The organization reported that in 2014, its assets were \$1,416,700,000 (Planned Parenthood, 2014), an amount that no doubt dwarfs the budgets of RJ organizations, which tend to be small.

Participants did not cite strong tensions between the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements. On the contrary, they perceived them to be well-aligned and noted that they even organize in the same communities. Nia drew parallels between the birth of the environmental justice and reproductive justice movements, stating that there was a “very similar necessity” for them to exist. Both sprang up as countermovements to the environmental and reproductive rights movements, respectively. Both adopted justice-based frames. Loretta Ross (2009) provides a similar viewpoint, highlighting the fact that these movements, in her words, “share critiques of the “dominant” mainstream movements for not addressing key justice and equity issues facing low-income, communities of color and Indigenous communities.” She cites their many similarities, including leadership by women of color and Indigenous communities, and analyses of race, class and gender that are fundamental to their work.

Despite tensions between certain movements, there is also widespread recognition that building diverse coalitions can benefit everyone. Ross (2006) notes that bringing together people across races and classes can create a stronger grassroots movement. Participants provided many examples of successful collaborations between these diverse movements in order to build the momentum and the broad base of political support needed to achieve reform around toxics. As described by participants, organizations situated in these different movements can bring complementary assets to partnerships. For example, justice organizations have a deep knowledge

of what is going on in vulnerable communities and can bring electoral support from a growing population of communities of color. Environmental and reproductive rights organizations can bring their significant financial resources and communications capabilities.

In writing about the division between the environmental and environmental justice movements, Pezzullo and Sandler averred that, “What is ultimately at issue is *not* whether one movement has more worthwhile goals or moral authority over the other, but, rather *how the goals of both movements might be achieved together effectively* (p.2).” Expanding this observation to the many movements coalescing at the intersection of EJ and RJ, we might ask how they might more effectively achieve their goals by working through their differences. In taking the long-term view, confronting these differences might ultimately allow them to strengthen partnerships and benefit from potential synergies.

In light of the many benefits that can come from collaboration and the tensions that can potentially derail such collaboration, a new research question emerged early in my fieldwork: How can justice organizations (e.g., environmental justice, reproductive justice) and mainstream organizations (e.g., environmental, reproductive rights) best work together? Monica Simpson, current Executive Director of SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective in Atlanta, Georgia, framed the question in a different way: “What does true allyship really mean for movement work?” The interview excerpts and analysis in this chapter explore this question, focusing largely on the relationship between true allyship and “privilege,” a concept that came up repeatedly in interviews.

In the following discussion, it is worth bearing in mind that many advocates and many organizations hold more than one movement affiliation. For example, Jeannie identifies as both an environmental justice advocate and an environmentalist. Alaska Community Action on Toxics

identifies as both an environmental justice and environmental health organization. Additionally, there are advocates whose individual identities are not representative of their organization as a whole, such as women of color working for environmental organizations and White women working for environmental justice organizations. Thus, individual and organizational privilege do not always correspond. Therefore, I insert the caveat into this discussion that sometimes labels do not fully represent the diversity of thinking within social movements and social movement organizations. It is not possible to say that *all* people in one movement, organization or social category think in a certain way or have a specific life experience. This may be promising, as these individuals and organizations may provide sparks for change, opening up possibilities for transformations in thinking and creating tipping points that may bring different social movements and social movement organizations into stronger alignment.

The text that follows touches upon the following subthemes that surfaced with regard to privilege: 1) understanding the dynamics of privilege; 2) how to approach partnerships in ways that are sensitive to privilege dynamics; 3) the need to diversify partnerships in order to increase power among those with less privilege; 4) having honest conversations about privilege and associated tensions; and 5) sharing credit, resources, the spotlight, and information to reduce power differentials.

Understanding the dynamics of privilege

The concepts of individual and organizational privilege came up repeatedly in interviews, particularly with regard to White privilege. As noted previously, individual and organizational privilege do not always correspond. However, as also described previously, participants perceive certain organizations and movements to be largely White (e.g., environmental, reproductive

rights, environmental health), and perceive others to be largely comprised of people of color (e.g., environmental justice, reproductive justice). Thus, in general, there does appear to be a correlation between individual and organizational privilege when it comes to race, though the correlation is not a perfect one. A number of participants of color brought up the theme of privilege without prompting, while some White participants brought up the term or a related concept when I prompted them to tell me how EJ, RJ and other organizations might best work together. These trends in the data suggest that privilege is primarily something about which participants of color are aware. This implies that the dynamics of privilege are most acutely felt by those who have less of it, and confirms assertions that those with privilege are often unaware of it (McIntosh, 2007; Pease, 2010).

Nancy deemed issues around race and gender to be the “the biggest tensions in the movement.” She referred to bad experiences of institutionalized racism, and to differences in power between social groups that are “sticky” and “uncomfortable” to discuss. According to Jones (2000), institutionalized racism is defined as differential access to goods, services, and opportunities due to race, and unearned privilege is a form of institutionalized racism. While these issues are challenging to discuss, Nancy said that paying attention to them is “foundational to building a broad social movement” to address toxics and reproductive health. She noted that in the wake of Ferguson, there have been discussions about race and allyship, but she does not know that the environmental movement has had a similar conversation. It is important to understand, she said, “how to be a good ally and issues around race and gender... how a White person can be a good ally to people of color. How can people of privilege be good allies?”

Nia described the numerous dimensions to privilege, and the internal work needed to overcome destructive patterns of thinking that perpetuate structural inequality. She said:

I feel like we all need to examine the particular privileges that we hold... it's important for people to work to be anti-racist, anti-classist, anti-sexist. To know and honor the communities as experts, even if you hold a PhD because your PhD in toxicology or environmental science or urban planning doesn't make you an expert in the lives of these particular folks. So I think that there will be tension there and I think that that tension exists... because we exist in a society that is foundationally built on racism and patriarchy. And when that is our existence and our foundation, then we have to work to undo those things in our daily lives, in our professional lives and in our personal lives.

Privilege here is associated with race, class, gender and educational status. In her calling for “all” of us to examine our particular privileges, she is not exempting anyone from noticing ways in which she or he might be privileged. This suggests that individuals who are privileged in one or more of their identities can simultaneously be less privileged in one or more of their other identities. Roberts and Jesudason (2013) have noted this as well. In their discussion of movement-building work by *Generations Ahead*, a social justice organization that focuses on reproductive genetics, participants in a group meeting acknowledged that everyone was privileged in at least one of their identities (e.g., immigration status, class, sexual orientation, gender, age), even as they were less privileged in another.

Nia refers to both racism and patriarchy, which can be considered to be ideologies at the macro level. A macro-system refers to the overarching institutional patterns of a culture or subculture, such as its economic, social, and political systems. This level carries information and ideologies that give meaning and motivation to agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and the interplay between these entities (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). Ideologies surrounding race and gender can shape organizational agendas, as well as the dynamics between social movement organizations. These patterns are so pervasive that they manifest, as Nia describes, in people's personal and professional lives at the micro level. A microsystem involves the relations between an individual and her or his most immediate environment, such as home or the workplace (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). The notion that individuals can work to undo systemic beliefs through

conscious effort suggests that societal norms are not only subject to change through better policies that may reduce the ubiquity of raced and gendered thinking at the micro level, but also that there is the possibility of effecting change in the other direction. That is, if enough people do the conscious work of changing racist and patriarchal patterns of thinking, that these kinds of collective differences in thinking can alter overarching institutional patterns at the macro level.

While Nia mentioned numerous dimensions to privilege, the issue of White privilege carried the greatest tensions. For example, she and other participants were critical of the biases that they perceive some Whites to have when they try to “help” communities of color. Nia said: “When you are consistently inundated with ideas that our particular people are inferior, that's how the savior complex becomes so prevalent in White folks in justice-based work because you feel like you need to save people because they don't have the capacity to save themselves. People have been saving themselves for forever, or we'd all be dead.” The White savior complex can be seen as personally mediated racism, which is defined as prejudice (i.e., assumptions about the abilities, motives or intentions of others due to their race) and discrimination (i.e., acting differently towards others because of their race) that can be either intentional or unintentional (Jones, 2000). If motivation comes from a place of superiority, then even efforts to help are seen as perpetuating racist ideology.

How to approach partnerships in ways that are sensitive to privilege dynamics

Several participants spoke about how to best approach partnerships in order to sidestep issues around privilege. For example, Sandra (pseudonym), who thinks a lot about issues of privilege because she feels herself to straddle the two worlds of justice and mainstream work,

gave some concrete suggestions regarding how to approach partnerships in a more equitable way:

A lot of the groups with the power and privilege don't see it... and within my own organization I feel responsibility to try and raise those issues and to have conversations about inclusion and diversity and justice and power and privilege to the extent that I can do that. I also think it's important to help those organizations that do have the power and privilege and the resources to understand that the way to partner with the community is not to come with an agenda, but to come with ears open and with "how can we help?," but not, "hi we're here to help," but help as in listening and understanding what the issues are and what you can bring and making sure it's what people want to receive.

"Hi, we're here to help" may be seen as condescending. Conversely, "How can we help?" suggests a greater respect for others and what they have to offer. Researchers maintain that when those seeking to help a community come from outside of that community, they may focus more on the community's deficits rather than assets, which feeds into beliefs that solutions must come from outside of the community, or that someone should "come in and "save" the community from itself" (Chávez, Duran, Baker, Avila, & Wallerstein, 2003, p.85). Such sentiments that may come from within a community may provide evidence of internalized racism. It may be worthwhile for outsiders to first ask, "Do you want our help?"

Sandra also mentioned a quote by Lilla Watson, an Australian aboriginal activist, the exact wording of which I looked up after our interview. The quote is as follows: "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." (Lilla: International Women's Network, n.d.). Sandra commented on her interpretation of this quote, which she uses as a framework for how to approach partnerships:

I'm doing this not because I want to solve your problem. I'm doing this because I want my children to have a healthy world to live in too, and I want healthy food and I want a healthy planet and healthy air to breathe and clean soil to garden in, and if we solve this problem, it will help you but it will help us all.

Her interpretation suggests that an important motivation for collaboration is the recognition that everyone will benefit by working to protect vulnerable communities. This framing diminishes an unequal power dynamic because it positions everyone as in need of each other, rather than a unidirectional benefit. The implication here is that approaching work through a selfless lens may not necessarily strengthen partnerships in the long-term. Instead, having a personal vested interest in the outcome may strengthen ties through symbiosis.

The need to diversify in partnerships in order to increase power among those with less privilege

Cecil Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director at WE ACT for Environmental Justice in New York City, commented on a lack of diversity in organizational partnerships that focus on eradicating toxic chemicals, and the role of privilege in creating gaps in diverse representation:

Oftentimes people setting the table [for discussions] can be pretty myopic so they will look around the table and they will notice no diversity—and by diversity we are speaking of both race, class, sexual orientation, et cetera, all the various ways in which you can slice representatives at the table—and they will not lift a finger to address some of the gaps at that table. And some of that is because the privilege in which they operate allows them not to have to pay attention to that.

Here, advocates are represented as aware of who is missing, and yet uninterested in diversifying the partnership. The statement that privilege allows them to disregard the current state of affairs suggests that so long as the status quo is beneficial to them and they hold more of the power, then they do not feel pressure to implement change.

Bekezela Mguni, Director of Programs and Strategic Partnerships at New Voices Pittsburgh, who has led trainings for predominantly White organizations around diversity, inclusion and anti-oppression, spoke of a different experience in which staff at an organization

were oblivious to the actual racial/ethnic make-up of their group. She described the interaction as follows:

They haven't realized they're a predominantly White staff because it's normal to them. ... we had a group conversation and they kept saying, "This is an all-White staff, this is an all-White staff" and I looked around and there was one Asian woman, and she was a light-skinned Asian woman and I was just like, "You need to stop saying that this is an all-White staff because you are erasing this woman's very presence by doing that."

This appears to be an example of personally mediated racism that is unintentional. The invitation to Bekezela to conduct the training indicates a conscious desire on the part of the organization to increase their sensitivity to issues surrounding race. Yet, the fact that they make comments that negate their colleague's presence in the midst of such a training suggests that their biases are deeply ingrained and unconscious.

Adjoa Tetteh, a National Volunteer Committee Member who works with the Sierra Club's Washington, DC office, reinforced the need for organizations to engage in conscious efforts to change the status quo. She commented: "Sometimes that means if you are an organization that historically has looked not like marginalized communities, you have to do some intentional work to change that to elevate leadership of people of color, of low-income folks, of queer and other LGBTQ folks too."

Several participants noted the intentional work done by one organization in particular to increase diversity and to change their approach to developing partnerships. Nancy said that she has seen this organization change their board, reach out to women of color and say, "let's plan things together" instead of "we've planned this thing, we need you." She noted that "it's actually kind of cool to see an organization take criticism to heart and actually see them change." This example shows both organizational ability to make changes, and also the receptivity amongst potential partners to strengthening a relationship after changes are made. Nancy sees these kinds

of changes as critical in laying the foundation for successful social movement activities. She commented:

Any movement that figures out how to lift the leadership of people of color and justice voices and not just use them but have them read and define the agenda, that's who's going to get it right. And that means that people are going to have to sacrifice. It means that they're going to have to question the power and the money that they currently have and find ways to authentically get it into other hands. It's not just about hiring a bunch of people of color. It's about fundamentally shifting who you do your policy for... it's that question of allyship.

Genuine allyship here requires shifting who is in control and who benefits from policies.

Power and money are depicted as limited; more control by one group means less control by another. This “sacrifice” is seen as a crucial stepping stone to success. Nancy goes on to describe why power sharing is not simply a selfless act, but a necessary strategy in the face of shifting demographics in the United States. She explained:

If you have a strong justice focus, then these concepts of who benefits from a policy becomes really important. And in [my state]... it's power politics, and Latinas matter more now, but the environmental movement and the environmental health movement is still very White and so they are finding themselves needing communities of color and groups of color but often the policy choices that they're making and the policies that they are pursuing bring little benefit to the communities that they need to win. And that's creating, it's shaking things up in a way that we haven't seen.

Unlike in Cecil's example, where those with privilege did not feel the need to change the status quo in order to serve their own best interests, in this example, Nancy assesses that there is growing pressure on Whites in the environmental and environmental health movements to change their agendas. At least in instances of state and local policy change, this difference in needs may be due to differences in location within the United States. Nancy's state appears to be in a period of transition, and in her view, unless these groups change with the times, they will reduce their political power.

Nicole, who described her organization as largely White, has recognized the value that diversity adds to their collaborations. She said:

If it's a women of color organization, then I think what they bring, the lens that they're working through is a lot different... because of, for example, the racial injustice and how that plays into it. That's something we can't necessarily bring. I mean the institutional racism—that's all wrapped up in this too. That's something that a group like Black Women for Wellness, for example, or WE ACT, brings to the table that we just can't. Because we don't have that background. And so that's really important to have that represented.

Her comment that shedding light on racial injustices is “something we can't necessarily bring” suggests that firsthand accounts from communities that speak for themselves contribute something to discussions that cannot similarly be captured by outsiders speaking for these communities. In thinking about how Whites can be good allies, one way appears to be by acknowledging that people of color organizations bring something to the table that White organizations cannot. Through this acknowledgement, Nicole is positioning differences as strengths and disrupting power imbalances.

Having honest conversations about privilege and associated tensions

Having open and honest conversations emerged as a critical step to building alliances across organizations with differences in privilege. Michele Roberts, National Co-Coordinator for the Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform in Washington, DC, said that in order to build collaborations between justice organizations and other organizations, “We must be truthful. We must be able to have a willing, listening ear. And we must be able to embrace what people are sharing. But in addition to that, be willing to move forward. And it might have some challenges.” Part of this challenge is that open and honest conversations can be uncomfortable. In light of these challenges, Nancy asked a key question: “What makes you stick

with people even though it's uncomfortable?" She went on to describe the kinds of raw conversations that can take place, and possible outcomes of these conversations:

There's groups that we've had really big fights, horrible fights, I mean, wanting to get me fired fights and saying something in a moment of anger and I'm not tactful, saying something inappropriate and getting called on it—so bad stuff. And it mattered. The policy choices matter. But we stayed in a coalition together and it's rocky, not perfect, and we still argue and fight but there's real, in some cases, real long-lasting friendships that will be lifelong friendships. Others, not so much, but real respect and a struggle to figure out how to see things together, and that's authentic. And not everybody's willing to do that. Other people are like, "Fuck you, I'm just going to build a space where you can't be at this table because you're going to be disruptive." Others are like, "No, I'm going to keep at this table even if it's uncomfortable"... I think that's the biggest problem in our movement, is that when we're uncomfortable with someone we find ways to marginalize the voices.

This example suggests that true allyship entails the willingness to disagree and have uncomfortable conversations, and yet at the end of the day, to still remain in partnership. For those who develop long-lasting friendships or respect for each other, entering into uncomfortable dialogue seems to pave the way to deeper relationships. Conversely, marginalizing voices among those with whom people disagree perpetuates barriers to authentic allyship. Research literature supports the call for honest conversations. Roberts and Jesudason (2013) argue that applying intersectionality in movement building (i.e., fostering conversations about how issues impact people with different intersecting identities) can create stronger cross-movement collaborations. The authors encourage active reflection on differences in order to build solidarity, stating that "activists interested in coalition building must confront their differences openly and honestly." They advocate for an intersectional approach, which can "force us into a risky place of radical self-reflection, willingness to relinquish privilege, engagement with others, and movement toward change" (p.315). While their research focused on conversations between women of color about their differences, I suggest that these insights could be applied more broadly to examining differences between individuals working at the intersection of EJ and RJ.

Group dynamics literature also favors addressing conflict head on as part of the group development process, rather than avoiding it. This base of literature suggests that this can result in more creative and effective decision-making (Becker, Israel, Gustat, Reyes, & Allen, 2013; Forsyth, 2009; Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Perhaps addressing conflict head on and a willingness to remain in partnership after having conflictual conversations demonstrates a commitment to the relationship that may have not been evident before. This could, in turn, create a greater feeling of mutual acceptance, and make people feel more welcome to disagree going forward. A climate in which people have the confidence to disagree without worrying about compromising the relationship may be more constructive.

Sharing credit, resources, the spotlight, and information to reduce power differentials

Participants also noted the need to ensure that justice organizations receive more of the credit for work done in partnership. As Cecil noted, the failure to receive credit can result from capacity differentials that allow more mainstream organizations to better publicize their own accomplishments—a self-reinforcing trend since groups that receive more credit are then more likely to receive future funding from donors. According to Jones (2000), differences in organizational infrastructure are a form of institutionalized racism. These capacity differentials may therefore be seen as one form of institutionalized racism, and efforts to share credit and resources can help to mitigate this form of racism.

Participants shared some concrete suggestions to bridge capacity differentials. Alex Gorman Scranton, Director of Science and Research for Women’s Voices for the Earth in Missoula, Montana, said: “If you want to work with another organization and make it a lasting partnership, you have to give them as much as you’re getting from them. You have to share the

spotlight.” Victoria (pseudonym) noted that her organization develops a memorandum of understanding (MOU) up front that lays out expectations, including who will get recognition. Nancy mentioned a particular type of MOU called a non-compete agreement, whereby organizations in a coalition agree not to compete with each other for funding and to do joint fundraising in order to get to deeper levels of collaboration.

Monica detailed the importance of sharing information, social networks and space at the table in order to uplift justice organizations and issues:

I think that the role of these other organizations that are not necessarily EJ or RJ, their role is to show up authentically as allies, and that means to, when possible, make sure that they are sharing information about this movement work with their constituents, that they are encouraging their constituents to connect to our organizations and our issues. It really is about making the space at their table, which in most cases are a lot larger than ours. It's about making space at their table for our voices and for our issues.

The reference to mainstream groups having larger tables speaks to the unequal power dynamic. The suggestion that these groups should share some of the power gets at some of the complexities of disrupting unequal power dynamics. While other groups can place pressure upon mainstream organizations to share power, there must ultimately be a willingness to do so. The suggestion to build bridges with constituents in order to expand support for justice issues represents a genuine sharing of power, as once messaging from EJ or RJ groups reaches new constituencies, the more privileged groups no longer exclusively control avenues of communication to these potential supporters.

Jose Bravo, Executive Director of the Just Transition Alliance in San Diego, California, made similar comments with regard to the need to make space at the table for other issues and concerns. He said: “Our brothers and sisters in the environmental movement and the reproductive rights movement still have to understand that there is a way to move forward, and the way to move forward is being more inclusive of environmental justice issues, reproductive

justice issues, and put that privilege—leave it at the door.” Here, the idea of privilege is linked to ignoring issues that are important to justice advocates. In order to develop a more neutral space in which agendas are more inclusive of a multiplicity of needs, he invites advocates to leave their privilege behind before they engage in collective decisions about advocacy agendas. Again, this requires a certain willingness and introspection on the part of those with privilege in order to foster a new social dynamic between advocates.

Frame disputes

This next section focuses on another key challenge that advocates face, which is disagreement amongst themselves with regard to their policy asks. This kind of disagreement comes under the umbrella of “frame disputes,” which is part of “contested processes” that surround the development of collective action frames (Benford & Snow, 2000). Contested processes take place because, as Benford and Snow (2000) write, “activists are not able to construct and impose on their intended targets any version of reality they would like.” They therefore engage in “reality construction work” to form movement frames. Benford (1993) uses the term frame disputes to refer to disputes that take place within and among social movement organizations that wish to achieve the same broader goal, but differ in their opinions with regard to objectives, strategies and tactics. Benford also discusses a separate, but related concept, which is counterframing by movement opponents. Even though the forthcoming discussion includes descriptions of disagreements between advocates who are in different social movements (e.g., environmental versus environmental justice) and thus one could potentially argue that these are movement opponents, I intentionally use the concept of frame disputes *within* movements rather than between movements. This is because this analysis primarily draws from examples of

coalition efforts where advocates who are in different movements are supposedly on the same side of the negotiating table, and are thus in a sense part of the same movement in this process (e.g., a movement to reform toxics).

Frame disputes over prognoses

One of the primary kinds of intramovement frame disputes involves conflict over the prognosis (i.e., solution) for a problem (Benford, 1993). This concept is very relevant to advocacy efforts to curb toxic exposures harmful to reproductive health where advocates often disagree on the kinds of policies that are needed to reduce toxic exposures in the United States.

For example, Nancy said:

[The environmental health movement is] busy thinking it's going to push the companies to do stuff. I'm like, but you want these women to go to your hearing and talk about how fucked up their lives are because of these cleaning products, but the bill that you're proposing does nothing to solve their problem. And we're in a room and this is happening and that's a transactional relationship. "Oh, you are the brown faces that I need, but the bill doesn't solve your problem." So that's kind of where some of these tensions arise [between movements].

Here, according to Nancy, women are being asked to testify for a bill that "does nothing to solve their problem." This is one example of many that came up where the proposed solution did not adequately benefit vulnerable populations. In addition to stating that policies to reform cleaning products are inadequate for these populations, she also noted that passing a bill to label flame retardants will not help poor people if they cannot find non-flame retardant products and that the environmental health movement's right-to-know campaign does not help low-income women who may not know what chemicals are, even if they are disclosed. These inadequacies in part stem from differential access to resources, and potentially health literacy skills. She noted that a middle-class white woman concerned about her exposure is more likely to conduct an

Internet search on the ingredients in her cleaning products than is a domestic worker who works daily with the same products, even though the domestic worker faces greater health risks.

Nancy uses the term “transactional,” which was defined for me by Miriam Yeung, Executive Director of National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum in New York City, as “I’ll do this for you if you do this for me.” While a transaction might suggest giving something in exchange for something else, Nancy’s scenario implies that the women testifying are not truly receiving anything in this transaction. Instead, they are facilitating the passage of a bill that will help more privileged populations. In addition to the exploitation that these women face by being exposed to toxic chemicals through their occupations, the use of these women to testify for bills that will not help them represents an added layer of exploitation. Nancy commented on the need to change this situation, stating that, “we believe that to build real alliances it has to be reciprocal; it can't just be transactional.” In reciprocal relationships, “we're actually building and deepening our relationships. Mutual understanding of each others’ issues and figuring out how to collaborate more deeply.”

Ana (pseudonym) gave another example of a policy solution that left vulnerable populations behind. She worked in a coalition to pass a bill to significantly reduce bisphenol A (BPA) in baby bottles and sippy cups. She said that during final negotiations, “we needed to take amendments to get the bill passed. One of the things that was given up was addressing the BPA in canned foods, including infant formula.” This, she explained, was problematic because low-income communities and communities of color are more likely to use canned goods due to poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and women in these communities may be more reliant upon infant formula because their jobs are less likely to give them the space and the flexibility needed to pump breast milk. She continued: “Those are the real justice elements. Taking that lesson

learned, we are really trying to—in our platform of bills that we are pushing this year—make sure that we are trying to address actively the justice elements of it to dig deeper and figure out what those are, to be actively asking our EJ members or our RJ members, hey, what do you think about this policy, and are there elements that we need to address?” This learning experience has heightened her organization’s awareness of the pitfalls of compromise when it comes to protecting vulnerable communities, and may help them to strengthen their approach going forward.

The most contentious example of intramovement frame disputes that surfaced was with regard to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). Many of the advocates with whom I spoke are part of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families Coalition, which is a large, broad-based national coalition of over 450 organizations and businesses that is working to reform TSCA (Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, 2016). Nicole explained how justice groups felt that their interests were being marginalized in this process by certain groups in the coalition because the bipartisan reform bill introduced into Congress did not include hot spots. She explained that hot spots refer to the locations that are most impacted by industrial pollution, and are often areas that are disproportionately lived in by people of color. In the following example, Nicole speaks about how there was a lot of opposition to the TSCA proposal because justice communities felt overlooked:

There's so much there in terms of their feelings of being like, “what we're saying, what we want is not represented.” It's not as important to the environmental movement is the feeling that I got. And there's a whole history there, but that's an example of a time where it's like, look, these are the people that are really getting screwed and oftentimes they would say a lot of these groups—and I think this is true—would say that that aspect of it is just not talked about enough in the environmental health field. The fact that, where is L'Oreal based? What kind of chemicals are they spewing into the air? Like, Cancer Alley. There's not a lot of talk of the chemicals they are actually producing, wherever they're situated at. The end product, which everyone is being exposed to in their home, but undoubtedly disproportionately people who are living near a facility like that, their

health is being more impacted by someone using a cleaner with that chemical. So that's definitely something I would say that still doesn't get the attention that it deserves.

She indicates that the environmental justice groups are present at the table, and yet they feel that they are not being represented. By referring to “the whole history,” she is depicting this as an incident that is not isolated, but rather, a continuation of past tensions between movements, such as those described earlier in this chapter. At the heart of the tension in this example is inequity. Nicole refers to Cancer Alley, which is an 85-mile corridor of land on the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge where 14 major manufacturing companies produce chemicals, plastics, fertilizers, and other products. The local community there, which is largely low-income and African American, has a high premature death rate and has reported a high incidence of numerous health issues, including cancer, skin inflammation, and respiratory problems (Singer, 2011). Environmental and environmental health groups are portrayed here as not caring about the impact of the production process on communities situated next to industrial facilities. The seeming invisibility of advocates who are at the negotiating table is therefore mirrored by that of the people in Cancer Alley, who are invisible to the consumers who buy the toxic products manufactured there.

During the process of formulating the TSCA policy proposal, internal debates between advocates became so intense that, as Jose described, there was one mainstream organization that wanted to drop language about legacy chemicals in communities of color and low-income communities and as a result, “they ended up taking the industry line on TSCA reform and they had to be removed from the workgroup of the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. We asked them to leave.”

Nancy attributes these differences to a lack of understanding:

I think that the environmental health folks don't always understand the justice issues and there's a strain—oh, they say they do. I always feel like whatever is important to us, we're always getting told, “That’s too hard and you have to wait.” It's like the issue with TSCA reform and the hot spots and vulnerable populations. That's too hard. We're going to let that go. Well, you know what, you can't win without environmental justice communities and that hot spot, that's actually where you save lives if you prevent the creation of those hot spots.

To her, dropping the justice piece means forgoing the opportunity to save the most lives. Her commentary also demonstrates the jockeying for power that takes place between advocates. On the one hand, the justice advocates are being “told” to wait. On the other hand, Nancy sees it as impossible to win without their support. In the above descriptions, the failure to stand together is contributing to distrust. At the same time, expulsion of a member from the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition did demonstrate some measure of solidarity. In their own work on cross-movement collaboration, Beamish and Luebbbers (2009) found that a racially/ethnically and ideologically diverse coalition of advocates was able to maintain its group cohesion in the face of differences by expelling activists who were perceived as insufficiently supportive of the group’s main interests. According to the authors, while these expulsions may have harmed the coalition’s efficacy in some ways through loss of talent, they also reaffirmed expectations regarding participation in the coalition and strengthened ties between the remaining coalition members. It is possible that some of these same effects may have resulted from the expulsion of a member from the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition.

Social movements scholars have written much about the relationship between collective identity and social movements. As Klandermans and de Weerd (2000) simply state, “Acting collectively requires some collective identity or consciousness (p.69).” Snow and McAdam (2000) write that “although there is no consensual definition of collective identity, examination of most conceptualizations suggests that its essence resides in a shared sense of “one-ness” or

we-ness” among those individuals who compose the collectivity (p.42).” People from the same racial or ethnic groups, or from the same neighborhood, are likely to have a shared collective identity (Snow & McAdam, 2000). It may be that given the disparate racial and ethnic compositions of the environmental justice movement, the environmental movement and the environmental health movement, people with different interests become pitted against one another, as each group represents a different social demographic. In the absence of a collective social identity, there is no collective “we” and the group is vulnerable to fracturing.

At the heart of these framing debates between advocates is the question of whether to pass a policy that only focuses on the population at large, as opposed to a policy that focuses on or includes provisions to protect vulnerable populations. Frohlich and Potvin (2008) argue for a combination of population-level approaches and approaches that target vulnerable populations. They point out that sometimes those who are at lower risk of exposure can benefit more from a population approach than those at higher risk because the benefits of population-level interventions are not always equally distributed. Population-level approaches can therefore inadvertently increase health inequities. They assert that these unintended consequences take place because population approaches do not address the fundamental causes of disease that account for different distributions of risk of exposure between different subpopulations (Frohlich & Potvin, 2008). According to Frohlich and Potvin, vulnerable populations are at a higher risk of risks due to shared social characteristics (e.g., socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity) and because they more frequently experience simultaneous exposure to multiple risk factors.

Applied to the issue of toxics reform, this viewpoint would suggest that policymakers need to consider provisions in TSCA reform that focus on communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities, such as those in Cancer Alley. This framework also suggests that

interventions that focus on single risk factors, such as one chemical exposure, do not adequately protect these populations. This conclusion provides support for opinions expressed by Kimberly, who is concerned about people in hot spots who face multiple exposures. She said, “It’s not only that X number of American homes have a water bottle with BPA in it, but it’s that some people are in a neighborhood where the ground is toxic, the air is toxic, the water is toxic, and they are getting these consumer products. So trying to think about how do we create policies that acknowledge that is a reality and then address some of those needs in some way?” These multiple exposures translate into cumulative effects, defined as “the combined risks from aggregate exposures to multiple agents or stressors” (Environmental Protection Agency, 2003). According to recent literature, the EPA has not developed an agencywide policy regarding use of a cumulative risk methodology in its environmental decision-making, nor has it included non-chemical stressors (e.g., SES, psychosocial stress) in its cumulative risk assessments due to a lack of scientific consensus regarding the most accurate way to understand the combined effect of these stressors (Alves et al., 2012; Linder & Sexton, 2011; National Research Council, 2009; Sexton & Linder, 2011). Lack of policies that take into account cumulative effects may be seen as privileging the life experiences of those who do not face a barrage of exposures.

Helping vulnerable communities helps everyone

Kimberly was among those who strongly felt that it was essential to craft messaging that targets vulnerable communities. She said:

I am a firm believer that social justice trickles up, not down. And by that I mean in a world where an undocumented farm worker, Latina, living in a colonia without any higher infrastructure, she doesn’t speak English, you know, and in a world where she has justice, we all have justice.

She noted, for example, that having Seventh Generation cleaning products on the market does not help the industrial cleaner who is cleaning 80 hours per week and does not have access to

these products. She is therefore interested in “centering the experiences” of those who are most affected because she said that “mainstream approaches may or may not help them.” From this vantage point, focusing on the public at large does not produce a ‘rising tide that lifts all boats’, as vulnerable communities may not be helped at all by policies that target the public at large. She thinks it is best to use, for example, a pregnant Latina migrant worker who has already been chronically exposed to toxic pesticides as the standard for toxicity burdens because “that’s going to dictate a very different set of policies.”

Jose also stressed the need to focus on the most vulnerable communities as a beneficial strategy for everyone: “I want you to understand that once we deal with the issues that we believe are disproportionately affecting our communities, society as a whole will benefit because those are the worst of the worst.” Nancy voiced a similar opinion in the context of commenting on the feasibility of collaboration across justice movements and other movements:

I think it's possible [for these movements to collaborate] and I've seen it happen and I think it does go back to who frames the issue and who defines what the policy work is. I was at a recent meeting of flame retardant advocates and when we said, “All of this is fine, but you realize that you’ve not done anything to protect people who buy used couches or do this or do that. It becomes shopping your way out of problems,” and one of the funders said, “It's sort of like, if you have a market campaign, the target should be the 99-cent store. Because if you clean up the supply chain or whatever the products are at that level, then you’ve lifted all boats.” You're transforming the most toxic and the most difficult of the markets, the low-end market.

This conversation and other similar ones birthed the 99-cent store campaign, also called the dollar store campaign, which draws attention to the disproportionate number of dollar stores in communities of color and low-income communities, and the significant number of toxic products in their inventories. Above Nancy makes clear that the tide that lifts all boats is the tide that lifts vulnerable communities, rather than the tide that lifts the public at large. The placement of these stores in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color is consistent with

research that points out the ways in which economically deprived neighborhoods, which are often marked by racial segregation, have poorer access to resources that can promote health (e.g., nutritious foods, pharmacies), and instead have increased access to harmful goods (e.g., alcohol and tobacco) (Gee & Payne-Sturges, 2004; Osypuk & Acevedo-Garcia, 2008).

The arguments presented here by Kimberly, Jose, and Nancy bring an important point to light. In these examples, specifically targeting vulnerable populations is positioned as also benefitting society at large. Whereas Frohlich and Potvin argue for a combination of population-based approaches and an approach targeted towards vulnerable populations, the argument here is that an intervention that is constructed to benefit vulnerable populations *is* simultaneously a good intervention for the population at large, such that there is no need to create two separate interventions. At the same time, though, it is unclear if the kinds of stricter policies needed to simultaneously protect vulnerable populations and the public at large would win politically against corporate lobbies and unsympathetic politicians (two major obstacles to reform mentioned by participants) that want less stringent standards.

Frame disputes over frame resonance

The frame dispute above involves disagreements over solutions. However, there is another kind of intramovement frame dispute applicable to social movement efforts around toxics reform that has to do with how to best represent an issue in order to gain support. Benford (1993) describes this kind of dispute, which concerns frame resonance:

Here the issue is not what is or ought to be real, but rather how reality should be presented, that is *frame resonance*. Which rhetorical strategies are likely to strike a responsive chord and thereby mobilize the greatest number of people? Should framing activity that undermines ideological purity be allowed? Should interpretive work be tailored to recruit and activate those who have the greatest potential power to effect change? (p.679)

Apart from what is most ideal from a public health perspective, it is also important to consider the present political context. Jose explained that the group that was asked to leave the Safer Chemicals, Health Families coalition reasoned that this was the only chance that they had had in 30 years to pass TSCA reform and there probably would not be another chance for 30 more years. To them, it was better to pass legislation that would get through than to risk passing no legislation at all. This reflects a difference in priorities. Some groups are willing to compromise on the justice piece if need be in order to pass legislation because they view that as more beneficial on the whole, while for other groups, this is a deal breaker that would force them to compromise on core principles. It also represents a difference in assessment of the situation. It appears that those who want to pass a weaker bill without justice elements think that it is unrealistic that a bill will get through otherwise, whereas others think that if advocates stand together, they can ultimately achieve better legislation.

While the organization that was asked to leave the coalition reasoned that it was best to pass weaker legislation than to risk passing no legislation, given the sparse opportunities to reform TSCA, Kimberly used the exact same rationale to argue that provisions that protect vulnerable communities should be prioritized in legislation. She said, “I would be deeply concerned about a toxics legislation that was designed to be mainstream in order to be easily passable but that left communities behind because the very fact of such a bill passing could make it harder for those communities to have their voices heard subsequently.” She explained that once congressional legislation is passed, the likelihood of making additions to improve it is small and Congress might not overhaul the legislation for another generation. From her point of view, passing a poor bill could therefore do more harm than good to vulnerable communities in the long run.

The example of TSCA reform brings up key questions about political strategy. Are groups such as the one that left the coalition accurately assessing the political landscape in determining that focusing on the population at large is the most resonant frame at the present time? If the group had refused to compromise on the justice pieces, is it true that no bill would have passed, or might they have achieved everyone's goals if they had remained in solidarity with others in the coalition? Should groups committed to justice principles consider compromising on their "ideological purity" in order to gain some political wins? Definitive answers to these questions regarding political strategy around TSCA reform are beyond the scope of this dissertation. However, I did ask participants, given their assessment of the current political context, what they saw as the most effective way to protect vulnerable populations: to specifically target vulnerable communities or to target the general population and help vulnerable communities in the process? The question here was not intended to assess commitment to helping vulnerable populations, and it was not specific to TSCA reform. Instead, the question was focused on learning which strategy they saw as most politically viable when specifically seeking to help vulnerable communities. Did one strategy present a frame that they saw as more resonant than the other?

Monica thought it critical to focus on vulnerable communities. She said:

I think that whenever you center the most vulnerable communities, the stories, the reporting, the data that you get has so much more of an impact on state legislators or people who are in power that could potentially move legislation to benefit the whole... whenever you are able to really break it down and have people see in real time the impact that this is having on the most desperate communities, I think that's what actually moves the needle a lot faster.

She gave an example of a report that her organization released that brought attention to high maternal mortality rates among Black women in the South, putting these high rates on par with maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa where there are far fewer resources. By focusing

on the most vulnerable, they were able to bring their arguments to a body of world leaders in Geneva, Switzerland. She said that they were able to get more compelling data and stories by focusing on this population rather than on maternal mortality rates in the population at large. Monica described the benefit of this frame as extending to other populations as well. She said that “the U.S. was forced to see this as a serious issue that's impacting everybody” and that she thinks “that ripple effect then starts to affect those who are on the very top.” In this example, the tide that lifts all boats is the tide that first lifts vulnerable communities.

Donele Wilkins, CEO of the Green Door Initiative in Detroit, Michigan had a different point of view, highlighting the value of focusing on the population at large. She talked about her organization's work with the University of Michigan School of Natural Resources and Environment to pass a statewide policy that would regulate whether or not schools can build on top of contaminated sites. While hot spots for these sites are places like Detroit, Donele is interested in gaining broad-based support to protect all areas of the state.

My mantra at the table is, I'm so glad that we're able to take the attention off of the most vulnerable communities because this is something that can resonate with anybody. If we can bring in the PTAs and others across the state who really, I think, will embrace this because they think their children deserve to go to schools that are not placed on top of contaminants, then we'll be able to get some policy in the state and it will automatically bring the most vulnerable up.... People move when it can impact them. Our approach has been, in this work around school siting, we need to get Republican moms in the room with Democrat moms and city dwellers and farming communities and whatever all in the same room because these moms are going to care about whether their kids are safe. That's what's going to move an agenda. They're not going to be moved by, oh, Detroit is so bad off. They expect Detroit to be bad off and some people are more comfortable with that because quite honestly, somebody has to be on the bottom.

Here, focusing more broadly on the population across Michigan is seen as a better political strategy. The subtext here is that many people in other parts of the state do not care about children in Detroit, but they do care about their own children. By working towards a statewide policy that aims to protect children from all families, regardless of socioeconomic

status, race/ethnicity and the political backgrounds of their families, they can gain a broader base of support. This approach is consistent with sentiments expressed by Victoria: “I think that as with unfortunately, a lot of issues, until people who have money and power see that issue as impacting them, a lot of action won't be taken.” Bonnie’s organization also took a similar position, focusing less on the justice slant in their work and more on general health messaging. She said, “I'd say there's always been a recognition that the communities that are more greatly impacted are low-income communities of color. But I think that there was an effort not necessarily to focus on that angle because they wanted it to be seen as an issue that affected everyone and so everyone had a role in changing the problem, fixing the problem.” These advocates are all assessing the political landscape quite differently from Monica, making the calculation that policy arguments that focus on vulnerable communities will not be persuasive to the public at large.

While my question regarding the best approach to help vulnerable populations was general and participants were free to cite any examples that came to mind, it is perhaps worth considering that the answer to this question may vary by context—both geographically and temporally. That is, what is most strategic in Michigan may not be most strategic in a state with a different political profile. Moreover, political strategy may differ across local, state, and federal levels of government. Additionally, what might appear to be the best strategy with one particular body of elected officials could change if different politicians were elected. As Benford and Snow (2000) note, “social movement framing activity and the extent of its resonance are affected by the cultural and political environment” (p.626). Thus, the more effective social movement advocates are at judging the current political context, the more effective they may be in pushing through the best policies that they can at a given time point in time.

Kimberly also mentioned the Overton window, which she said refers to the idea that “the bounds of any political debate is just what people are talking about... the political center is necessarily defined as the midpoint between whatever people are talking about.” Russell (2006) explains that the “Overton Window of Political Possibilities,” a theory originally developed by Joseph Overton, posits that successful politicians are constrained by the set of ideas that their constituents hold. Thus, in order to push for policies that lay outside of this set of ideas, it is critical to reframe the debate by working to change commonly held ideas, attitudes, and presumptions. Kimberly described the impact of strategically using knowledge of the Overton window to influence the policy process:

So taking this to the toxic chemical legislation, if we only ask for the four policies that White soccer moms in Iowa will just fall head over heels for and we are not addressing marginalized communities... then we are limiting the political conversation of what’s possible unnecessarily. So I think it’s good for any social movement to create a space for those who are advocating for the most effective policies. Whether we win or lose, we change the conversation. We have opened up a range of things that one might be compelled to care about or take action on.

This argument also ties into the issue of resonance, as reframing the debate may change the resonance of various positions. That is, if a position shifts from the fringe to the center, then this may increase receptivity to the idea among potential supporters. This strategy of fundamentally shifting the conversation reflects the kind of reality construction that is central to framing processes.

Debates over abortion and contraception

Another key obstacle is the continuing controversy around reproductive rights, which can make it harder for reproductive groups to engage in work around toxics. This is because

reproductive rights and justice groups continue to be entrenched in and tend to prioritize efforts to protect access to abortion and contraception. Nicole explained:

With choice under attack, the way women's reproductive rights are being attacked, a lot of reproductive health groups have had to focus more on that aspect and not so much on the toxic chemical work. So that's just been hard because they don't have the resources that they once did to commit—not all of them, but a lot of the groups we work with—they don't necessarily have the resources to devote to this issue specifically.

Ogonnaya Dotson Newman, who was Director of Environmental Health at WE ACT in New York City at the time of our interview, explained that reproductive justice groups are fighting to maintain access to birth control, abortion and emergency contraception. As Pam Miller, Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics in Anchorage, Alaska, said, these groups are in “defensive mode” and are working not to “lose ground” on reproductive rights. Cristina Aguilar, Executive Director of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights in Denver, Colorado, confirmed these observations: “During the electoral cycle, we were working to defeat “personhood” and so that took a lot of our efforts. And so we have really had to determine what our policy priorities are.”

Not only are these issues taking away from the ability of reproductive groups to focus on environmental issues, but they can also create some tension between EJ and RJ groups. One RJ advocate noted that RJ groups are standing up for EJ issues, but environmental groups are not always standing up for core reproductive rights issues (e.g. abortion). Carla (pseudonym) explained:

I can't say that we're still always seeing even some of our best partners here in the EJ world testifying for our bills, and we testify for their bills, and that can be hard. And I know that that's a little bit more of what RJ orgs tend to feel nationally, across different states, that they're being asked to come stand for issues and then they're not standing for our repro issues. [Interviewer: Which are the specific repro issues that the environmental justice advocates have been reluctant to speak out on?] I think it really is when it comes down to abortion... sometimes it is that individual donors will say, I'm just about, for

example, the economic justice work that you're doing or the environmental work, but I can't stand behind your organization taking the position on abortion.

Referring back to the notion of authentic allyship, fear among environmental groups over becoming embroiled in the abortion debate and possibly losing funding makes it challenging to build reciprocity in their alliances with reproductive groups. Earlier, I noted Nancy's comments about the need for reciprocal relationships between advocates rather than transactional ones. In Carla's example, reciprocity is lacking. Her comments are also consistent with Nancy's description of events in her state surrounding abortion. She said, "In [my state] there were attacks on reproductive health and justice, and so we opposed—[my organization] was one of the only environmental groups that actually opposed the parental notification bills." She gave this as an example of a reciprocal relationship. However, her indication that they were "one of the only" environmental organizations to do so suggests that others were not similarly engaging in reciprocity by standing alongside their allies. Nancy works in a different state than Carla, which also lends support to Carla's assertion that this problem is happening across different states.

The contentiousness of the abortion debate and other reproductive rights issues could potentially also make it difficult for reproductive groups to create alliances with conservative Republicans who might be good allies on environmental issues, but who oppose them on reproductive rights. Pat (pseudonym) commented that this has not been an issue thus far, but that it could present a tension since sometimes conservative Republicans are interested in environmental issues because they are right-to-life and support the position that babies should not be born "pre-polluted." However, Pat noted that some of these same legislators might oppose a woman's right to choose, making it difficult for a reproductive health or justice organization to participate in a lobby visit or meeting with them. Bonnie, a reproductive health advocate, confirmed Pat's speculation. Her organization is part of an environmental coalition and when the

coalition suggested bringing the Catholic bishops on board, her organization said, “you bring them on and they’re going to change the language so that fetus is defined as a person, and if you do that then we can’t be a part of this.” Environmental advocates may not face this same dilemma, making it easier for them to forge alliances with conservatives.

The continuing controversy around abortion also creates sensitivity around language used to describe the fetus. It is perhaps important to note that according to the demographic survey that participants answered, there were no Republicans in the study sample. As such, the forthcoming discussion about language reflects the liberal orientation of participants.

Victoria said, “I think [the] women’s health, rights, and justice movement is a lot more sensitive to language because of the ways that that community has been talked about and has been treated in the past.” I received mixed responses from advocates regarding the best terminology to use, though terms that seemed to be safe across the board were “pregnancy,” “pregnant women” or “a woman’s pregnancy.” Some advocates avoided using the term “fetus” or “unborn child,” while others were fine with those terms. Pat’s organization does not often use the term “fetus,” instead talking about babies or infants in the womb. Nourbese Flint, Program Manager at Black Women for Wellness in Los Angeles, California, noted that her organization had a long talk about “why we needed to make sure that we use words like pregnant women and not women and fetus or unborn child, and that we don’t take those two apart.” There cannot be, she said, “a quote, unquote ‘unborn’ child or a fetus without a woman there.” Using the term pregnant woman underscores that you cannot separate the two entities. Ansje Miller, Eastern States Director for the Center for Environmental Health in New York City, also shies away from fetal language, and explained the rationale behind this choice:

When you are talking about vulnerable populations, instead of talking about the fetus as a vulnerable population, talking about pregnant women... [because] if you are declaring

the fetus as a population, it could be considered a person and with rights separate from its mother.

Therefore, in their care over language, advocates are trying to protect women's autonomy and to avoid setting a precedent that could overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

However, some advocates thought that it was fine to use the word "fetus." Adjoa, a reproductive justice advocate, told me that in addition to using the term "pregnancy," she uses the terms fetus and avoids saying "the baby" because she thinks that intellectually it is a fetus. Nancy also noted that reproductive rights advocates do not want to imbue the fetus with rights, but she said that reproductive justice advocates want to use the term "fetus" instead of unborn child so as not to use language that the right has appropriated. At the same time, she made remarks consistent with not wanting to separate a woman from her pregnancy, calling for the need to avoid language depicting "women as vessels" and to avoid giving the impression that women "only matter between our necks and our pelvis and our knees." Monica thought that "both movements really do lean on the medical term of fetus" because she views both the right to have or not have a child as a health care decision, and so thinks that it makes sense to use medical language. The above examples demonstrate the wide variability in perspectives, not only across movements, but also within movements.

Reproductive and environmental advocates have had explicit conversations with each other regarding the most appropriate terminology to use. For example, reproductive justice advocates sat on a panel for a toxics coalition to talk about the issue of fetal language. According to reproductive justice advocates, environmental advocates have been receptive to requests from reproductive advocates to change language. As Miriam explained regarding a bill:

There was language in the bill about vulnerable populations that would be affected by toxins and in the initial draft that was written by environmental health and justice folks, it put fetuses in as a vulnerable population. And from the repro rights movement side, you

don't want to give fetuses rights at the expense of the woman who is carrying them. So one of the explicit ways that we linked was after reading the model bill, being able to flag for our friends to be like, oh, that's going to undercut all or a lot of the principles that the reproductive rights, health and justice movements are working on.... I think we took out 'fetus'—we just put in pregnant women.

In addition to language, advocates were also sensitive to visual representations of pregnant women that separated them from their pregnancy. Bonnie noted that “the environmental health movement was using photos in some of their stuff of a pregnant woman's belly and that's where we were like, yeah, totally cool to use pregnant women, but can you include her?” This kind of open dialogue regarding the importance of language represents an opportunity for greater mutual understanding that can potentially lead to stronger alliances.

Messaging

Messaging can present another challenge. Sometimes crafting messages can be tricky because ones that promote toxic-free products may seemingly be in opposition to issues that potential allies care about. Several participants spoke about the difficulty of messaging around breast milk contamination. For example, Jennifer Canvasser, Environmental Health Advisor for the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, noted that “the breastfeeding community really doesn't like to hear that message [about toxic chemicals in breast milk] because they feel like it scares moms and it makes them not want to breastfeed at all. And it makes the health professionals a little bit nervous too because they are like, okay, breastfeeding is still best and so maybe we shouldn't even tell moms about this at all.” This kind of dilemma can be particularly problematic in places like Detroit, where another participant noted that the infant mortality rate is very high. By talking about environmental toxicants and breast milk, breastfeeding supporters there are afraid of deterring women who already have other reasons as to why they do not want

to start or continue breastfeeding. In response to this dilemma, rather than message to mothers, her organization messages to healthcare providers to try to get their support in changing the food supply so that breast milk will no longer be contaminated. Nancy was present for a conference call during which top breastfeeding researchers and advocates and top environmental advocates and scientists worked out their own solution to this issue. They talked about the need to be very clear with the public that it is still better to breastfeed even when there are contaminants, how to support breastfeeding as much as possible, and to have a pre-and post-test protocol when telling people about their body burden of breast milk contaminants.

Another issue that presented messaging challenges was the use of nitrosamines in condoms, which are carcinogenic chemicals used in the manufacturing process (Altkofer, Braune, Ellendt, Kettl-Grömminger, & Steiner, 2005). Bonnie explained that when her organization wanted to put out a report calling for companies to remove nitrosamines from condoms, they received tremendous pushback from the reproductive health movement. Some advocates did not want them to report this information for fear that it would discourage people from using condoms, and in particular, that this could elevate sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates in communities of color where STDs are disproportionately prevalent. As a result, her organization tried to very clearly message that people should by no means stop using condoms, but that they did not think it was necessary or appropriate for companies to put nitrosamines in them.

Sensitivity to disability rights language was another area of concern. Monica explained that the reproductive justice framework incorporates a disability rights standpoint. They want to challenge use of language, including the word “normal,” which is routinely used in biological, medical, and environmental frames, in order to remove stigma and sometimes inadvertent

discrimination against disabled persons. Nia attended an annual reproductive justice conference run by the Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College where they had a conversation about environmental degradation and birth defects. She relayed what happened:

There was a person in the room who did work around disability justice and she was very concerned about the sort of language that was being used that seemed to normalize particular bodies over others. I can't say that it's a tension that has necessarily been worked out... But I think that my primary concern was to say, I hear you and it's not that we want to normalize, but how do we have a conversation about something that is showing up in the birth of our children that if you left it to the natural world might happen at a particular rate? But we are seeing it at such exorbitant rates that something is not right, and so we have to be able to talk about it and I think that there are a number of people who are open to being able to have those kinds of conversations.

Monica commented similarly that this challenge of language around disability has not yet been resolved. She noted that it is unclear if a new term should be used, or if they should retain the same term and clarify its use. This appears to be an area that warrants further discussion between advocates.

Population control is another issue that can create tensions or misunderstandings. As described by Hartmann and Barajas-Roman (2009) in an article published in SisterSong's environmental justice issue, there has been escalating rhetoric from mainstream population and environmental organizations naming population growth as a significant contributor to global warming. The authors assert that these organizations advocate for improved international family planning services in order to curb this growth. According to them, this places blame for environmental degradation on poor countries and people of color, rather than on industrialized nations that actually consume the most and therefore contribute most to carbon emissions.

Sheila (pseudonym) relayed how concerns over population control were originally a point of misunderstanding between reproductive justice and environmental justice advocates at a meeting that she attended. She described the mindset in the room:

I think originally there was some concern about having environmental justice folks in the room because it is very clear to some people that environmentalists talk about population control. In reproductive justice communities we are primarily anti-population control. Because there wasn't that understanding of the difference, I believe that there was a concern early on in our meeting about where environmental justice organizations stood on population control.

Through dialogue, the advocates in the room cleared up this misunderstanding, making clear that the EJ advocates present did not support population control. However, tensions persist elsewhere. Sheila commented on the frame of one particular environmental organization that advocates for increased access to contraception for women who do not have access and want it:

I hope to get to a point one day where we see [this organization] shift to get out of that realm, of being able to just have conversations around women's health for women's sake and not necessarily just for the sake of the environment, or where we have real conversations around consumption and what that means and also talk more about the impacts that environmental degradation are having on women, not just the impact that their birth is having on the environment.... People have come to me and said at times, if you don't agree with this frame then you don't believe in family planning. And that's not true. I believe in family planning for family planning's sake, but I also think that if we're really having a conversation around population, then that conversation has to be coupled with a conversation on consumption.... We're showing these women and these babies with these distended bellies in various parts of the Global South without having a contextual conversation that says, were it not for westernized multinational corporations raping and pillaging their land, were it not for the carbon dioxide that primarily the United States are pumping into the atmosphere causing global climate change, were it not for the fact that they had been colonized and used in the first place, these folks wouldn't be in this situation. So it's not just that they're having too many babies, it's that they don't have access to the land and the resources that is inherently theirs. That's the problem.

Her concerns about not addressing family planning for its own sake are consistent with concerns expressed by Ross (2006), who wrote, "One of the tensions within the reproductive rights community is the uneasy alliance between those who support fertility control for women as a means of women's empowerment as their primary goal, and those who support fertility control for women as a means of controlling population growth (p.4)." Thus, if advocates perceive that the rhetoric used in the process of promoting access to contraception erodes the rights of women, then they may perceive this rhetoric to partly negate the overall benefit of

increased access.

The particular organization that Sheila refers to above does include some of the kind of messaging that she talks about on its website. For example, it partners a conversation about population with a conversation about consumption. However, while it lays out many components of an argument linking the U.S. to adverse health outcomes in poor countries, it is not as explicit as Sheila is in saying that “these folks wouldn’t be in this situation” if not for countries like the U.S. The reader is left to connect the dots for herself or himself between various arguments that are presented on the website (which I refer to as arguments A, B, and C). That is, if the U.S. needs to curb consumption (argument A), and if overconsumption leads to crises (argument B), and if overconsumption and crises lead to adverse health in poorer countries (argument C), then the reader can infer that A is linked with C, but the organization’s website does not directly link them. Additionally, the site does not talk about, as Sheila does, how overconsumption and a history of exploitation of these countries by outside interests contributes to an economic and social context in which women are more likely to bear many children in the first place. It is possible that the organization may not wish to be as direct as Sheila would like, for political reasons or otherwise, regarding the negative impact of countries like the U.S. on the reproductive lives of women in the Global South. Another possibility is that there are multiple agendas embedded within this organization so that it becomes more challenging to make a statement highly critical of the U.S. Their messaging might reflect an internal compromise.

Marlene (pseudonym), who is affiliated with the above organization, described how people sometimes misunderstand her organization’s goals:

I think sometimes people have shallow understandings of how population impacts the environment, and so it can kind of derail the conversation sometimes. It’s not to say people shouldn’t have conversations about population; I think that population dynamics

absolutely impact the environment. But I don't think they are necessarily the cause. And so I think that sometimes people don't know what to expect when you are talking about both environmental health and reproductive health and so people may anticipate, oh, you're going to talk about population, how people need to stop having babies so that people stop killing the forests. And that's not a) actually what's happening in reality, but that is also not what we are talking about...so sometimes there may be reproductive justice organizations that may be suspect of partnering with [us.]

Her organization's website contains messaging that lends support to the notion that the organization appreciates the effects of overconsumption as they relate to environmental degradation and social inequity, and is not simply placing blame for environmental degradation on countries with high population growth. For example, it calls upon the U.S. to curb its energy consumption in order to reduce stress on natural resources, harmful byproducts of energy production, and climate change. It also makes the connection between environmental harms and their disproportionate impact on people living in poverty, the majority of whom are women, and the fact that these harms can worsen social inequalities. However, at the same time, it also contains information that could feed into the kind of concerns expressed at the meeting detailed above between environmental and reproductive justice advocates. For example, the website presents material depicting a woman of color living in a non-industrialized country, and the accompanying information suggests that addressing global population growth could have the same impact on reducing carbon emissions as eliminating deforestation or reducing energy consumption. Though this may not be the intent, one could interpret this to mean that instead of addressing environmental degradation, it would be possible to address population growth and achieve the same benefit, thus shifting the burden of action from those who overconsume onto women with high fertility rates.

It was very clear from my interview with Marlene that she herself held a perspective that was consistent with the kind of reproductive justice perspective that Sheila described. However,

it appears that there are inconsistencies between what Marlene wishes to convey (and believes her organization as a whole wants to convey) and what is presented on the website, which may contribute to people misunderstanding her organization's goals. There are any number of possible reasons for these inconsistencies in messaging. Perhaps there are multiple agendas within the organization, staff are not coordinating their desired messaging with each other, staff are not all aware of what is on the website, or the information posted is a carry-over from old agendas. Inconsistencies in messaging might erode trust among potential allies. Efforts to fine-tune this messaging might potentially help contribute to stronger alliances with reproductive justice advocates, particularly since it appears that the programmatic work itself is very much in line with what reproductive justice advocates would want to support. Perhaps the organization might wish to request feedback from potential reproductive justice allies. The lessons learned from this particular example can be applied to other organizations who may face similar obstacles around messaging on sensitive issues.

Funding

Intersectional work does not fit neatly into funding siloes

A significant obstacle that multiple participants brought up is that it is hard to get financial support for intersectional work. Kimberly noted that “intersectional work tends to suffer when it comes to funding because there are those that fund environmental issues, there are those that fund reproductive health, and since this issue sits at the intersection, particularly if you are talking about it in the context of communities of color and low-income people, you are right in that crack between these portfolios.” While it might seem that being at an intersection provides more opportunities for funding because an organization's work overlaps with more

categories of funding, the opposite appears to be true. By being at the intersection of two content areas, funders may perceive that organizations combining environmental and reproductive issues do not fit well into either area.

Due to lack of funding, Miriam Yeung's organization had to pull back from its nail salon work. She noted:

The issue was always that we never had the institutional or foundational support for the work that we needed to sustain it...and some of the challenge might be that because it is so intersectional and multi-issued that funders didn't see us neatly fitting into one bucket or the other as maybe some of the water pollution or brownfields issue—they were kind of hot at that time, right, and that got defined as economic justice. Similarly, it didn't fit so neatly and tightly into reproductive health. I think the strength of this project is that it fits across a lot of these silos. But if [a funder's] orientation is pretty narrow, then it became hard to make that case.

The strength of this work is that it is multi-issue and intersectional, yet these are also the very same characteristics that make this work less attractive because the funding world is siloed. This places advocacy organizations into a difficult dilemma, as structuring their work and presenting it to funders in a way that they perceive is strongest could mean that they will not get funded.

Perspectives from funders on the funding challenges that advocates face

In response to the suggestion by multiple advocates that I speak with funders, I interviewed four individuals from the philanthropic world who have worked at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice. Three currently work for foundations, and the fourth person worked as a consultant to philanthropy at the time of our interview. Pam Miller characterized several of these individuals as part of their movement because they come from movement work and have been fighting to get resources for movement building at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice. These participants therefore had a unique perspective, as they were insiders to both the foundation world and social movement efforts.

Funders confirmed that it is difficult to find funding for intersectional work. For example, Sophia (pseudonym) stated that intersectional work is “more effective” in the long-term and “certainly more transformative,” but still harder to fund. Daniella (pseudonym) said:

I think anything that's intersectional is hard. I think now people are circling back or starting to circle back to thinking about a broader progressive movement and what does it mean and how do we work at intersections, but I don't think anybody's really figured that out how to do that well from a foundation. The field, particularly, this next generation of social justice advocates have figured this out. The money has not figured it out.

The funding world appears to lag behind advocates who have already figured out how to work in an intersectional way. Her words speak to the need for systems change, and the challenges associated with creating these changes, even as those involved realize the potential long-term payoffs that a broader progressive agenda could bring.

Funders also shed further light on why this phenomenon exists, and also provided several tips regarding how advocates might increase their chances of securing funding. Daniella explained that one reason these efforts are hard to fund is because initiatives that fall outside of a funder's core set of priorities are seen as “mission creep.” Core issues for most reproductive rights funders include abortion, family planning, contraception, and sex education, but not toxics work. Particularly in light of the current political context, these funders have pulled back from funding toxics work in order to focus their funding streams on supporting efforts to maintain access to abortion and contraception. Additionally, when advocates have broad agendas (as is the case with advocates with an intersectional, multi-issue agenda), funders may perceive that they are spreading themselves too thin.

Tina Eshaghpour, who was at Women, Environment, Health and Justice Consulting in the San Francisco Bay area at the time of our interview and was previously a program officer at the Women's Foundation of California, clarified the way the current funding system is set up, and

how the process for delegating funding proposals can stymie the success of intersectional proposals:

Philanthropy [is] relatively siloed, meaning that within a foundation you may have an environment program officer; you may have a women's health program officer, but the institutions aren't necessarily set up—some more than others—but they aren't necessarily set up to look at collaborative funding. And so what happens is an organization may come to a foundation with 'environment' in their organization's name and they are immediately directed to the environment program, even though maybe the nature of what they are proposing to do has very much a strong reproductive rights, health, or justice component. And, in fact, it may be that the environment program area has more of a conservation focus and so for them, they don't see it as a fit, whereas if you actually directed it to the program officer who is working in women's health—even though the organization has the word 'environment' in their name—it would very much actually be in alignment with some of the work that they are looking at supporting.

Evidently, there are missed opportunities here to fund good work that may be of significant interest to funders. If funders want to increase the chance that intersectional proposals will successfully make it through the funding pipeline, changes in the organizational structure of foundations are needed.

There are program officers within the funding world who are working to change the status quo. According to Daniella, particularly as the field of philanthropy has become more diverse, they “have been trying to make the case that people don't live lives that are siloed in this way and if we want to make progress, even in our priority areas, we have to fund differently to lift leadership that's going to be concerned with the multitude of issues.” The suggestion here is that by having more diverse representation amongst people in positions of power, there is a greater likelihood of gaining support for cross-cutting solutions that better address the needs of vulnerable communities.

Tina noted that she and some of her colleagues have advocated for ways in which program officers who are in different affinity groups can intentionally work together and present “alternative models” of funding that highlight opportunities to engage in intersectional funding.

She noted that program officers tend to be siloed into different affinity groups, with some participating in more traditional environmental ones and others participating in reproductive rights, health and justice affinity groups. Unfortunately, she is not sure to what extent these efforts have been effective in shifting dollars. In the absence of that change or until such changes are made, there are some alternative strategies that advocates may wish to use to secure funding. Sophia suggested that alternative sources of funding can even be more reliable than foundation funding. Organizations can, for example, conduct grassroots fundraising campaigns to get both large and small donations from individual donors, and can use earned income strategies, such as charging fees for speaking engagements and organizational publications.

Another challenge is that the broad nature of an intersectional framework can make it less appealing to fund. Wilma Montañez from the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation in New York City explained that “with RJ, it's such a broad definition of so many different issues that sometimes it just feels like it's over ambitious... and then [funders] feel like, wow, our small grant is not going to even scratch the surface on that.” According to her, many organizations, particularly smaller grassroots ones, will demonstrate a good analysis of the problem itself, but have trouble articulating how they will address the problem because it is so complicated. In the absence of understanding how the funds will be effectively used to solve large-scale problems, funders may be reluctant to allocate money. Sophia and Wilma provided tips on how to counteract the over-ambitiousness of an intersectional, multi-issue frame. One key strategy is to focus on interim, short-term deliverables. Both said that groups should be very clear about what their long-term strategy is, but also to scale expectations by stating their interim short-term goals.

Another key funding challenge is that applicants may not have language at their disposal that adequately describes intersectional work. Wilma’s foundation wants to fund intersectional

EJ/RJ work, but she said that sometimes they have trouble finding the groups. She said that applicants may find it difficult to articulate the work in a way that leads the funding agency to believe that they understand and are interested in this intersection. This may represent an area that advocates have the ability to improve, either through direct conversations with funders to discuss the issue of language, or by dialoguing with other advocates to collaboratively hone their messaging.

Conclusion

In her keynote address at the American Public Health Association's (APHA) Annual Meeting in 2015, Camara Jones, President of APHA, announced that the organization is starting a *National Campaign Against Racism* (American Public Health Association, 2015). In her speech, she talked about three guiding principles for the campaign: 1) value all individuals and populations equally; 2) recognize and rectify historical injustices; and 3) provide resources according to need (American Public Health Association, 2015). I focus on the first and third goals, which dovetail nicely with my research findings.

Valuing all individuals and populations equally

With regard to the first goal, Jones voiced the need to look at who *is* and *is not* at the table, and to examine what *is* and *is not* on the agenda. These goals are consistent with views shared by participants who called for more diverse representation at advocacy meetings, and the need for mainstream organizations to make room on their agendas for issues critical to vulnerable communities. Differences in privilege may contribute to tensions regarding representation and priorities if those with more privilege do not see the need to change the

demographic make-up of their organizations or coalitions, or if they do not feel invested in helping vulnerable communities—perhaps because they cannot relate to their concerns, or because they perceive that an emphasis on vulnerability may compromise efforts to protect their own main organizational constituencies. The challenge here is to create frames that cut across these different agendas and values, and in the process, to build a broader base of support for these cross-cutting issues.

While the obstacles facing diverse groups of advocates who come together can seem formidable at times, the social undercurrents shaping these movement dynamics are not unique. Cole (2008) notes that organizations that seek to create coalitions comprised of different kinds of constituencies, and comprised of groups with differences in power, face significant challenges. These include determining how coalitions with members of social groups with unequal political and economic power can avoid reproducing existing inequalities, determining what procedures will protect the voices and interests of those who are less powerful, and deciding how to set agendas. I would suggest that addressing these issues not only requires conversations between organizations, but also within organizations. For example, organizations may need to have conversations about diversifying staff and leadership, and formulating organizational policies that can better close gaps in health.

In thinking about ways to more effectively engage in collaborations where differences in privilege can compromise social dynamics, advocates may wish to consider techniques that have been applied in the area of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which faces many of the same challenges. CBPR partnerships bring together collaborators from academia and from the communities where research is being conducted. These collaborators often differ in their levels of privilege, including privilege associated with different racial/ethnic backgrounds

(Chávez et al., 2003). Yonas and colleagues (2013) recommend specific mechanisms and structures for equitable decision-making that can help to create more effective partnerships among diverse groups in CBPR. These include conducting anti-racism trainings that address power differentials and historical challenges, exchanging open and honest feedback, and having a means of formally managing and addressing conflict. Chávez and colleagues (2003), who write about the dance of privilege in CBPR, state that people may need to build less comfortable alliances in order to address racism. They give concrete recommendations on how to reduce racism and privilege in CBPR, some of which may be applicable to cross-movement collaborations. For example, they suggest examining how racism reduces the health of the entire population, and not only the health of communities of color and low-income communities. This suggestion is in line with observations by participants who suggest that the tide that lifts all boats is the one that targets vulnerable communities. Chávez and colleagues also suggest accepting that outsiders cannot completely understand another community. This recommendation is consistent with assertions by participants that outsiders should not assume that a community needs their help, and that partnerships must be approached by outsiders in a way that is not condescending. Chávez and colleagues also suggest speaking openly about White privilege and racism, and acknowledging that privilege, particularly White privilege, creates power imbalances. These recommendations are in keeping with ones from participants who maintained that open and honest conversations are needed, and that genuine allyship means remaining at the table after heated discussions.

Advocates may also wish to draw from existing social movement documents that address these kinds of issues, such as the *Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing*. This document, which Michele mentioned in our interview, was created in 1996 by a diverse group of people of

color and Whites at a meeting hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice. Their goal was to develop greater understanding between people from different cultures, political backgrounds and organizations. The document outlines principles to guide collaboration. (Please see Appendix J for a copy of the document.)

Another example that advocates may draw from comes from the social movement literature. Roberts and Jesudason (2013) suggest that advocates can use an intersectional analysis to create stronger alliances. The authors present a case study of a facilitated dialogue between advocates in several different social movements (i.e., reproductive justice, racial justice, women's rights, and disability rights) in order to build a shared agenda and cross-movement alliances. Historically, some of these movements have been at odds with each other regarding the use of reproductive technologies, such as selective abortion. Generations Ahead, the organization that facilitated the dialogue, used an intersectional analysis to inform their approach. This entailed asking participants to think about the issue through an identity-based lens (e.g., racial/ethnic lens, disabilities lens). Their approach contained three main features: having candid, face-to-face conversations about issues that cause tensions between movements; delineating common values that can provide the foundation for bridging frameworks; and creating a joint advocacy agenda with collaborative strategy sessions and collective action around specific issues. The authors found that this approach allowed participants to come to common understandings and forge new shared alliances. (Please see Roberts and Jesudason (2013) for a more detailed account of the steps used in their approach.)

Providing resources according to need

With regard to the third goal, Jones stated that we must recognize that there are differences in power and resources between people, and that those who are better off should sometimes wait until the needs of the most vulnerable are met. This too was consistent with data in this study. Many participants pointed out the organizational capacity differentials between justice and mainstream organizations. Link and Phelan (1995) write that fundamental social causes of disease involve access to resources, including money, knowledge, power and prestige. Seen within this framework, differences in money and power between organizations with different levels of privilege are themselves the result of social inequalities. These inequities, in turn, can drive other inequities because a justice organization with scant resources may not be able to meet the needs of its constituencies to the same extent that a large, mainstream organization can.

According to study data, the funding structures in the philanthropic world are not adequately set up to maximize the impact of organizations that focus on vulnerable communities. If vulnerable communities are most in need of solutions that are non-siloed, as participants noted, and yet the philanthropic world is structured to support work that fits neatly into siloes, this system fails to meet Jones' third stated goal: provide resources according to need. Efforts to change these funding structures, such as those that some within the funding world have already tried to spearhead, could have a significant impact on small, grassroots organizations that are in need of resources. Additionally, participants noted that mainstream organizations are far more well-financed than justice organizations. Mainstream organizations with significant resources may wish to assess if they are allocating their resources equitably to help both low- and high-income communities, and both non-White and White communities, and to reallocate as

necessary. As Jones noted, in order to reduce inequities, those who are better off should sometimes wait until the needs of those in less fortunate circumstances are met.

Resolving differences in perspectives between environmental and reproductive advocates

Participants also spoke about tensions between movements due to differences in environmental versus reproductive orientations, which can shape priorities and messaging. Environmental justice and reproductive justice advocates have already engaged in direct and facilitated dialogue with each other in order to address some of these issues, such as through meetings convened by SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective between 2008 and 2012, and by the Women's Foundation of California between 2008 and 2010. Several participants noted that, since that time, changes in the political environment have forced reproductive organizations and foundations funding that work to pull back from those efforts and instead focus on protecting access to abortion and contraception. This represents a real challenge, as not only is the continuation of these kinds of efforts essential to ironing out differences in messaging and language between movements, but they are also essential to building momentum behind a broader change agenda. As noted in chapter 4, one of the perceived strengths of working across issues and movements is that this approach can contribute to progressive social change that extends beyond toxics to encompass other issues impacting vulnerable communities. If advocates are pulling back from cross-movement intersectional work because they are in a defensive mode on reproductive rights issues, and yet it is intersectional work that would allow them in the long run to be on the offensive instead, then the current state of affairs is at odds with their long-term goals.

Chapter 6

Use of Reproductive Health Messaging as a Strategy for Changing Policies and Practices

“When you're talking about being exposed to something and you're pregnant, you're talking about breastfeeding and you're talking about your child, your children, people care about that.”

-Sandra (pseudonym)

Introduction

Strategies for change

The first core task of developing collective action frames is to identify a problem and its sources (i.e., diagnostic framing) (Snow & Benford, 1988). Advocates have identified adverse reproductive health as a key problem, and clearly associate this issue with a ubiquity of toxic exposures. As Lianne said, “our food chains, our air, our soil, everything is contaminated.” The study data also show that they see industry and the military as responsible for many of these exposures, current policies as insufficiently protective of public health, and corporate influence on government as a key obstacle to environmental policy reform.

The other two core tasks of developing collective action frames are to identify solutions, strategies, tactics, and targets (i.e., prognostic framing), and to provide a “call to arms” for potential supporters (i.e., motivational framing) (Snow & Benford, 1988). In response to the ubiquity of toxics, advocates are mobilizing to reduce these exposures in both the public at large and in vulnerable communities. The first part of this chapter focuses on three key strategies that

they are employing: 1) advocate for policy change at all levels of government; 2) advocate for corporate policy changes; and 3) encourage individual behavior changes that can reduce exposure to toxic chemicals. Examples are included of each type of strategy based upon the work of participants. These strategies provide a medium through which advocates use reproductive health messaging to advance their cause. For example, in the online and print materials that they produce to further their policy advocacy and educational efforts, they are including reproductive health messaging. This kind of messaging serves as a motivational frame to inspire potential supporters to take action. Documenting these strategies may provide other advocates working at the nexus of environmental and reproductive health with frames that they can potentially use to inform their own campaigns. Findings might also be relevant to advocates working on other kinds of issues, apart from environmental ones, that impact reproductive health.

The second part of this chapter hones in on messaging that *specifically* focuses on reducing toxic exposures in vulnerable communities. While there are examples in the first part of the chapter that touch upon vulnerable communities, and all of the examples in the second part of the chapter relate to governmental policy change, corporate policy change, or behavior change, the emphasis in these two sections is different. In the first section, the goal is to highlight the three main strategies for change and the associated reproductive health messaging, while in the second section, the goal is to highlight vulnerabilities associated with exposure and the associated reproductive health messaging. The types of messaging in the second part of the chapter are categorized into four dimensions of vulnerability: 1) place-based exposures; 2) occupational exposures; 3) lack of access to safe products; and 4) cultural norms that influence exposures. For each dimension of vulnerability, there are examples of environmental reproductive health messaging based upon the activities of participants in this study. This type of

messaging that combines environmental reproductive health messages with messages about vulnerability can be used to rally support amongst constituencies that want to reduce health inequities.

The third part of the chapter provides interview data demonstrating that many advocates perceive that incorporating reproductive health messaging into toxics reform can be an effective strategy with certain audiences, and why they think this is the case.

Reproductive health as an emerging issue in toxics reform

A focus by advocates on messaging around reproductive health and toxic exposures appears to be relatively new, as compared to advocacy efforts that have focused on messages that document the association between toxicants and other health outcomes, such as asthma and heart disease. For example, the American Lung Association supported adoption of the Clean Air Act Amendments in 1990, and issued its first annual *State of the Air* report in 2000 (American Lung Association, 2016). The American Heart Association came out with a statement on the association between air pollution and cardiovascular disease in 2004 (Brook et al., 2004). By contrast, professional societies focusing on reproductive health have only recently come out with statements on toxicants and reproductive health. The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the American Society for Reproductive Medicine (ASRM) issued a joint statement in 2013 in collaboration with the University of California, San Francisco Program on Reproductive Health and the Environment (ACOG et al, 2013b). The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics issued a similar statement in 2015 (Di Renzo et al., 2015).

The increase in use of reproductive health messaging around toxicants is likely due to the fact that in recent years, there has been an emergence of scientific evidence documenting these

associations (Chalupka & Chalupka, 2010; Ritz & Wilhelm, 2008; Šrám et al., 2005; Wigle et al., 2007, 2008). Advocates have indicated that the availability of this research has played a role in their decision to focus on the association between toxics and reproductive health. As Jennifer Canvasser, Environmental Health Advisor for the Ecology Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan, said, her organization and coalition talk about toxic exposures and reproductive health because “we feel like there’s enough literature to support the statements that we are making, that these toxic chemicals negatively impact reproductive health and can cause harm to individuals, families, and communities.”

Focusing on reproductive health messaging is by no means the only strategy that advocates are using. I have chosen to focus on this particular strategy because it was a recurrent theme in the data. Additionally, to my knowledge, messaging around toxicants and reproductive health represents an area that has not, to date, received much attention in the research literature. Moreover, while this chapter focuses on the reproductive health angle as motivating to advocates and to some of their intended targets, this should not imply that this is their only or even primary motivation. For example, many are motivated by the prevalence of health inequities in vulnerable communities, which include but also go beyond reproductive health.

Three mobilizing strategies for reducing toxic exposures

Strategy 1: Persuade governmental policymakers to enact reforms

Inadequate policies

Advocates consistently spoke of federal policies that inadequately protect the public from toxic exposures. For example, they are critical of the Toxic Substances Control Act that regulates thousands of chemicals on the market, and of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide

Act (FIFRA) that regulates pesticides. They have also called for passage of The Safe Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Act to improve the safety of cosmetics and personal care products. However, at the same time, advocates see federal reform as an uphill battle. As Cecil Corbin-Mark, Deputy Director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice (WE ACT), said, “We hesitate to talk a lot these days about national stuff because it just seems like such a mess in Washington, D.C.” In response to this stagnancy, advocates are also working on policy reform at the state and local levels as a strategy to circumvent the federal government. For example, Cecil is co-chair of the JustGreen Partnership coalition, which has advocated to ban certain harmful chemicals in children’s products through proposed legislation in New York State, the Child Safe Products Act.

By far, participants talked about the Toxic Substances Control Act more than any other policy reform effort. A significant number of participants are involved with Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, a nationwide coalition that has been pushing for TSCA reform. Pat, who is one of these advocates, explained that the chemical safety system in the U.S. is “fundamentally broken,” thus necessitating reforms:

The federal government has been asleep at the wheel in protecting American families from unnecessary toxic chemicals in consumer products. In recent years, scientists have been sounding the alarm on the correlation between chemical exposure and chronic diseases on the rise, such as cancer, learning and developmental disabilities, reproductive health problems such as infertility, birth defects in baby boys.... The U.S. EPA really lacks the fundamental tools to study chemicals before they are put on the market.... I think most Americans are shocked to know that chemicals are not tested for safety before they are put into products or children’s toys or cosmetics, or even the cleaning products that we have in our homes.

TSCA was enacted in 1976 and gave the EPA the authority to regulate chemicals that were not regulated by other statutes. This included the ability to get information from manufacturers on chemical safety, and to restrict the use of chemicals deemed to be unsafe.

However, the EPA's ability to regulate chemicals has been poor due to a host of factors, including limitations in the statute, insufficient Congressional oversight, and opposition by the chemical industry (Vogel & Roberts, 2011). Pat explained some of the shortcomings of TSCA:

Back in 1976, the federal government approved more than 60,000 chemicals that were in existence and they essentially said, 'we're not going to worry about these. We are going to assume that they are safe.' And since then, only about five chemicals have been restricted, which, today, with over 80,000 chemicals on the market, EPA has required very few of those to be tested for their impacts on health and the environment. The law allows chemical manufacturers to keep the ingredients in some chemicals secret. So, for example, about 20% of 80,000 chemicals are secret according to the U.S. EPA. They often use this idea of confidential business information, which is often a bogus claim.

Placing restrictions on the over 60,000 chemicals that were grandfathered in has proven challenging for the EPA, which must demonstrate that these chemicals present "unreasonable risk" to the public in order to pull them off the market. This U.S. system contrasts sharply with the system in Europe where a "no data, no market" policy now requires testing of chemicals prior to entry into the marketplace (Vogel & Roberts, 2011).

Examples of reproductive health messaging in policy advocacy

The data show that advocates are working to achieve federal, state and local governmental policy change by advocating directly to policymakers, and also by encouraging the public to place pressure on policymakers to effect change. Reproductive health messaging is an important piece of these advocacy efforts. For example, below is a report that Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families released, *Chemicals and our Health: Why Recent Science is a Call to Action* (Safer Chemicals, Health Families, 2010), in order to galvanize support for TSCA reform. It documents many adverse health outcomes, including reproductive health outcomes, associated with chemicals.

Image 6.1. Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families report



Their choice to use the image of a pregnant woman on the report's cover, as opposed to images associated with some of the other health outcomes mentioned in the report (e.g., cancer, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, asthma), suggests that the organization decided it could be impactful. The report contains an entire section on reproductive health and fertility problems that it notes are on the rise, including trouble conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy, fibroids, endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, testicular cancer, early onset of puberty in girls, reproductive tract abnormalities, and declining testosterone levels and sperm counts in men. It links reproductive health problems with a host of chemical exposures, including BPA, phthalates, perfluorinated chemicals, and cadmium. The report also contains a section on learning and developmental disabilities, which it links with lead, mercury, arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls, flame-retardants, and pesticides. Learning disabilities, in part, also fall within the category of reproductive health because, as the report notes, these problems can stem from exposures that occur *in utero* and early life development.

Another example of the use of reproductive health messaging in policy advocacy work came from Camille (pseudonym). She relayed her visit to an elected official in his local office soon after a truck crashed on a nearby highway. She described the situation:

There was a fire and there was fumes and it was dark for blocks and blocks, I mean miles. When I went to his office the next day you could still smell the fumes. We talked about it and I says, “Now all the women and all the children of people of childbearing age are breathing these same fumes you are. We have no idea what these fumes can do to a child inside the mother’s womb. We don't know how it impacts the growth, the development of the fetus, and if you know that it's hard for you to breathe and you’ve got your windows closed and your air conditioner on and all this stuff, imagine for the people who don't have air conditioners, have to open their windows and breathe this stuff in and that are now creating babies. What do you think is going to happen there?”

Camille’s decision to use this opportunity to focus on fetal development suggests that she saw this as an effective way to point out the seriousness of health effects that can result from air pollution. She also noted that it is a “blessing” that representatives have local district offices. She intentionally visits them there so that she can speak with them as they smell, breathe and hear the same things as their constituents. This strategy allows her to increase the impact of her messaging.

Strategy 2: Persuade corporations to develop corporate chemical policies

Advocates are also working to persuade companies to change their corporate policies around the chemical contents of their products. In order to achieve this, they are both directly raising awareness among corporate management and employees regarding the adverse effects of toxicants on reproductive health, and they are also raising awareness amongst the public in order to encourage people to place pressure on corporations. This is being used as a strategy to bypass the legislative system entirely. Alex Gorman Scranton, Director of Science and Research at Women’s Voices for the Earth in Missoula, Montana, explained:

The way Congress works these days, getting some sort of decent federal legislation passed is *so* hard and it takes so long...[so] we've been working more on market campaigns and getting companies to make the changes. We can get the government to pass a law that will require the companies to make changes to their products or you can get the companies to do it voluntarily because you pressure them into doing it at the risk of them losing sales or the good reputation of their company. We found that right now, with Congress so deadlocked, that that's getting a lot more results to do it that way.

Social actors may construct frames that incorporate attributions of blame or responsibility during the policymaking process (Triandafyllidou & Fotiou, 1998). Many advocates were forceful in blaming corporate lobbies, such as the American Chemistry Council (the main lobbying arm of the chemical industry), the Toy Industry Association and large pesticide companies, as significant obstacles to improved governmental toxics policies. Pat described corporations as having “a stranglehold on our federal electoral system and political process.”

Jose explained it this way:

Have you seen the suits that they wear in NASCAR? Ones with logos everywhere? If we could get congressional representatives to wear those types of suits, it would be very, very good because we would see that Monsanto, Cargill, DuPont, Chevron, Shell—all those companies put a lot of resources into a lot of our political system, and I believe and a lot of us believe in the environmental justice movement that that's why we have hardly any action on environmental issues.

By working directly with companies who are willing to make changes, either out of moral conscience or in response to consumer pressure, advocates are not beholden to the legislative system in order to make progress.

Examples of reproductive health messaging in corporate campaigns

There are a number of organizations in this study that are working to directly change company policies. Alex's organization is one of them. When possible, her organization tries to take a non-adversarial approach by trying to build relationships with companies. For example, she said that if WVE has damaging information about a company's products, instead of coming out with a surprise attack on them, they will usually give the company a chance to change their

policy before they release the information. She said that many companies have responded positively to this tactic. When asked if there was a risk that the company would try to discredit WVE rather than to change their policy, Alex responded that it depends on the company and on finding the right people. She said that “there are a lot of people in these companies who want to be more sustainable, want to have better products.” This approach of giving companies the benefit of the doubt shows that advocacy need not always be confrontational in order to be effective. The positive results that they have seen demonstrate that it is not possible to make assumptions about who may or may not be an ally simply depending upon what sector they work in.

There are, times, however, when WVE does take a more adversarial approach. Alex described a campaign against Proctor and Gamble (P&G), the makers of Tide laundry detergent, which contains a carcinogenic chemical called 1,4 dioxane in it. WVE criticized the company for marketing its Tide Free and Gentle product to mothers as a healthier choice for babies, in spite of its chemical content (Martin, 2012). Alex said that when WVE first tried a non-adversarial approach, the company was not responsive. Below is an example of WVE’s more adversarial approach to advocacy during their Tide campaign. They posted the following on Facebook:

Image 6.2. Women's Voices for the Earth campaign posting



OMG!
There's a **CANCER-causing** chemical in this?!

TIDE: TAKE THE CANCER OUT
<http://bit.ly/toxictide>

Women's Voices for the Earth
Like This Page · October 14, 2012 ·

Baby Emma just found out Tide's toxic secret: a cancer-causing chemical hiding out in Tide and Tide Free & Gentle laundry detergent!

LIKE & SHARE this image to help Emma spread the word to unsuspecting moms and dads--they deserve to know!

TAKE ACTION: Tell Tide what you think by posting this image on Tide's Facebook wall at www.facebook.com/Tide by pasting this link: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151202046344855>

Find out more at www.womensvoices.org/tide.

Like Comment Share

1,035 people like this.

3,458 shares 182 comments

The organization could have used an image of an adult user of Tide. The choice to use a baby provides an immediate visual cue that this campaign is tapping into reproductive health messaging. The image of baby Emma capitalizes upon people's desires to protect children. Her wide eyes, lack of clothing, clutching of the bottle filled with toxicants, and the impression that she is about to put the bottle into her open mouth all point toward her innocence and vulnerability. This creates a sense of urgency to act upon the message next to the image that suggests that readers have a moral obligation to let "unsuspecting" parents know that their children are at risk. As part of this campaign, WVE also released a report, *Dirty Secrets: What's Hiding in your Cleaning Products?* (Scranton, 2011), in which they revealed the results of laboratory tests that examined popular cleaning products from P&G and four other companies. After another organization brought a lawsuit against P&G following the release of that report, P&G agreed to reduce 1,4 dioxane levels in Tide (Women's Voices for the Earth, 2013). WVE deemed their campaign successful, releasing a press release entitled "Advocacy group Women's Voices for the Earth and Consumers Claim a Public Health Victory" (Women's Voices for the Earth, 2013).

WVE's *Detox the Box* campaign, done in collaboration with WE ACT, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights, the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, and Teens Turning Green, is another campaign that uses reproductive health messaging to target companies. It places pressure on the makers of feminine products to make them safer. WVE released a report, *Chem Fatale* (Scranton, 2013) that discusses the toxic ingredients in tampons, wipes, washes, douches, feminine deodorants and anti-itch creams. It also notes that while tampons and pads are used by most women of reproductive age, feminine "cleansing" products such as douches, sprays, and wipes are disproportionately used by Black and Latina women, placing them at greater risk of toxic exposures. The report encourages women to use safer alternatives, not to use unnecessary products (e.g., douches), and to support policies to improve products. As part of the *Detox the Box* campaign, they also advised women to call P&G, the makers of Always pads and Tampax tampons, to ask them to disclose their ingredients. WVE makes the connection between Always pads, toxicants and reproductive health very clear on its website, which says that "Product testing results show that Always pads release chemicals linked to cancer and reproductive and developmental harm." P&G has since started to disclose ingredients in its pads and tampons. WVE has linked this change in policy directly to their campaign, saying on their website: "This victory is the direct result of women raising their voices and demanding ingredient transparency!" This win suggests that campaigns targeting corporations can be one component of an effective strategy.

Another example of a campaign to change corporate policies is the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families' *Mind the Store* campaign that was launched in 2013 to influence the nation's top retailers to develop corporate chemical policies that identify, disclose, and eliminate harmful chemicals in their products (Schade, 2015). The campaign uses reproductive health messaging in

some of its materials, among other messages (Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, 2016).

Additionally, the Campaign for Healthier Solutions launched a dollar store campaign to persuade discount retailers to create policies to identify and remove harmful chemicals from their businesses (Environmental Justice for All, 2015). This campaign is discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

Strategy 3: Persuade the public to change individual behaviors

A third strategy is to raise public awareness about the link between toxic chemicals and reproductive health. The aim here is to encourage people to modify behaviors that are exposing them to toxicants, to the extent that they are able to do so. Individual behavior changes in no way replace the need for policy changes, but rather, represent something that people can do in the absence of adequate policies to protect them.

Examples of reproductive health messaging in behavior change campaigns

The Farmworker Association of Florida, which trains farmworkers about pesticide exposure, encourages behavior change to reduce occupational risk. Jeannie Economos, Pesticide Safety and Environmental Health Project Coordinator at the Farmworker Association of Florida in Apopka, Florida, said that “farmworkers are some of the most marginalized among the marginalized” and can experience significant adverse reproductive health outcomes as a result of their exposure. For example, she said that mancozeb is a fungicide that has been implicated in birth defects of babies born to farmworker women in Immokalee, Florida. She mentioned one case, in particular, where a baby was born with no arms and no legs to a farmworker woman who was exposed to mancozeb during her pregnancy.

Jeannie relayed that they have been conducting trainings for farmworkers on worker protection standards since the mid-1990s. One of their programs is a Farmworker Women's Reproductive Health Workshop, which aims to improve reproductive health and birth outcomes among farmworker women of reproductive age (Farmworker Association of Florida, 2015). It was developed after Farmworkers Association of Florida, Emory University and the Farmworker Health and Safety Institute conducted a four-year community-based participatory research study. According to a presentation that Jeannie sent me, the study looked at perceptions of work hazards and pregnancy health among women farmworkers, and assessed chemical, heat and ergonomic exposures that could impact pregnancy. Based upon study findings, the researchers developed health promotion materials that are used in the trainings. Jeannie explained that the training includes information on the development of the fetus (thus providing background information to contextualize the risks to reproductive development that can arise from occupational exposures), gives strategies to reduce pesticide exposure on the job, and also gives strategies to reduce the risk of transferring exposures to their children when they return home from work.

Another example of an effort to encourage behavior change is Black Women for Wellness's publication, *Black Going Green: A how to guide on avoiding toxic chemicals in your everyday life*. In contrast to the example above, this is not focused on occupational risk, but rather, primarily upon risk to the consumer with regard to product purchases. It focuses on how everyday products can impact reproductive health. For example, the guide states, "More and more, the links between toxic products, chemicals, pollutants and the reproductive health status of women and girls are coming to light (p.3)." Topics in the guide include information on chemicals in beauty products, the food supply, food storage containers and cookware. It links

chemical exposures with a host of adverse reproductive health outcomes, including early puberty in girls, fibroids, birth defects, physical, cognitive and behavioral developmental problems in babies and children (e.g., thyroid issues, cleft palate, learning disabilities, motor skills impairment), miscarriages, stillborn babies, infertility, breast milk contamination, ovarian cancer, testicle malformation, and low sperm count. The guide gives women alternatives for healthier living, such as natural hairstyles that do not require chemicals, recipes for homemade beauty products, and using cast iron, steel or glass cookware. It also encourages support for policy change.

Messaging along dimensions of vulnerability as they relate to reproductive health

Advocates use the strategies presented in the previous section to reduce toxic exposures amongst both the public at large and in vulnerable populations. The forthcoming section focuses specifically on how reproductive health messaging is being used to highlight toxic exposures in communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities. It describes messaging along four dimensions of vulnerability, as follows: 1) place-based exposures; 2) occupational exposures; 3) lack of access to safe products; and 4) cultural norms. These messages can help to increase social movement support among justice advocates and their allies. Many corporate practices directly contribute to all four of the dimensions of vulnerability discussed below, thus lending further support to the view that corporations are perpetuating risks of toxic exposures.

Place-based exposures

Michele Roberts, National Co-Coordinator for the Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform in Washington, DC described fenceline communities as

places where toxicants are “produced, stored, and/or transported to, or disposed of.” As numerous participants described, fenceline communities are primarily comprised of communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income populations. The place-based exposures facing these communities can translate into very personal narratives impacting reproductive health. Liliana (pseudonym) grew up in a fenceline community, and described her concerns over her reproductive health as a result of toxic exposures:

I don't have any children... but if I was to ever choose to have children, then it would be very hard for me. Being a person who grew up in an impacted and very heavily polluted community, I'm almost scared to find out that I can't have children or that I won't be able to have a child safely, that I'll have implications or there will be some sort of birth defect.

She said that others in her community have similar fears and know that something is happening to their bodies, but do not know how to talk about it or what is scientifically going on with them. Advocates are working to bring awareness to people in these communities regarding the risks that they face and to bring about policy reforms to decrease exposures. They are using reproductive health messaging in these efforts in order to underscore the severe health implications associated with toxic exposures.

Example of reproductive health messaging regarding place-based exposures

As first described in chapter 4, in 2014 there was a chemical spill in Kanawha Valley, West Virginia, also known as Chemical Valley. According to Maya Nye, Executive Director of People Concerned About Chemical Safety, the spill contaminated the drinking water of 300,000 people across nine counties. She said that this particular chemical disaster was unique because it not only impacted the fenceline community there, as is typical of chemical disasters in that area, but it also affected the surrounding community as well. After the CDC lifted a drinking water ban, it reinstated the ban for pregnant women and children, suggesting the particular vulnerability of these populations. According to Amy Weintraub, Health Policy Associate for

West Virginia Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality (WV FREE) in Charleston, West Virginia, the disaster hit low-income, African American women particularly hard, as they had fewer resources to cope with the disaster (e.g., to purchase bottled water, to temporarily relocate their families) than their White counterparts. Therefore, while the disaster impacted many people, vulnerabilities that stemmed from the interaction between race, socioeconomic status, and gender were highly apparent in this situation, in the same way that Hurricane Katrina disproportionately impacted low-income, African American women (Fussell & Harris, 2014). This is consistent with literature demonstrating that being of low socioeconomic status, a person of color, and a woman are among the variables that make an individual more susceptible to the negative effects of disasters (Cutter, Boruff, & Shirley, 2003).

In the wake of the spill, WV FREE contracted with PCACS and other organizational partners to mount a response. This included a get-out-the-vote initiative to elect legislators who might favor stricter environmental policies going forward. A poster from the campaign is presented here (see Image 3). The phrase, “Protect WV’s most valuable resource: our families and children” appears to tap into values and beliefs that prioritize the well-being of families and children. The notion that reproductive health must be protected appears to be deeply intertwined with these messages about families and children. The poster makes several direct statements about reproductive health, indicating that the area’s rivers and streams have the highest levels of reproductive toxins and that these are linked with birth defects; that West Virginians are concerned about these reproductive toxins; and that pregnant women and children are most vulnerable. The image of the young girl provides evidence of this vulnerability. By engaging in the childlike behavior of sucking on her wet hair, she may be ingesting contaminants from the spill that could influence her development.

Image 6.3. WV FREE poster



WE ARE BODIES OF WATER

More than any other state in the country, West Virginia's rivers and streams have the **HIGHEST RATES OF REPRODUCTIVE TOXINS** that are linked to birth defects.

This is not just a Chemical Valley problem - families across the state care about what is being piped into their homes. In fact **OVER 81% OF WEST VIRGINIANS ARE VERY CONCERNED** about the high rates of reproductive toxins found in their water sources.

Even now in the wake of the Elk River Chemical Spill, very little is known about the harmful long-term health risks of the chemicals that were spilled into the tap water of 300,000 West Virginians.

PREGNANT WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE THE MOST TO RISK from exposure to toxins. With the continued lack of regulation in West Virginia's public water systems, every family in our state is vulnerable.

Many West Virginians **DO NOT TRUST THE SAFETY OF THEIR TAP WATER.** Over 90% believe that public water systems had been poisoned prior to the Elk River Spill - they just weren't told about it.


West Virginians **pay for and depend on public water systems** and should be able to trust their tap water. West Virginia is forcing families to put their health and the health of their children at risk.

West Virginia needs **properly trained inspectors** to effectively monitor our water for toxins. We need to require public water systems to have in place **secondary intake sources** to ensure a clean, safe backup plan when the next leak occurs.

That's why this November, it's more important than ever **to vote for clean, safe water** - the health and safety of your family depends on it!

**CHANGE THE CURRENT:
VOTE FOR CLEAN WATER ON NOVEMBER 4TH**

VOTE to clean up our rivers and safeguard our water.
VOTE to invest in safe water infrastructure and monitoring.
VOTE to protect our most valuable resource: our families and children.

 WVFREE.ORG/WATER @WVFREE #CHANGETHECURRENT 

Occupational exposures

Another dimension of vulnerability that came up was occupational exposures. This included higher levels of exposures among industrial workers, nail and hair salon workers, housekeepers, janitors, and farmworkers. Participants asserted that these workers are economically dependent upon jobs that can compromise their own health, and the health of their communities through pollution. Camille explained that people are forced to take harmful jobs in order to have housing and food. She said, “if you have to choose between not having a job and having a job, which would you choose?” Below are examples of reproductive health messaging used in efforts to try to protect workers.

Example of reproductive health messaging regarding occupational exposures

The National Healthy Nail Salon Alliance, founded in 2007, seeks to improve working conditions for nail salon workers. It is co-led by Women’s Voices for the Earth and the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative. The National Asian Pacific American Women’s Forum, also originally a co-leader of the initiative, released a report on behalf of the Alliance in 2011, *Removing the Topcoat: Understanding Federal Oversight of Nail Salons*. The report documents reproductive health issues facing workers due to the many chemicals used in nail products, most notably the “toxic trio” (i.e., formaldehyde, toluene, and dibutyl phthalate), as follows:

Nail salon technicians share numerous stories of co-workers who have experienced problems with infertility, miscarriages, spontaneous abortions, birth defects, or poor infant health outcomes. Given the long-term and cumulative exposure to reproductive toxins that are found in nail salon products, there are grave concerns about the reproductive health impacts on salon workers. Workers’ concerns for their reproductive health and pregnancies often lead them to leave their jobs in order to limit the exposure to harmful chemicals to their developing fetuses (p.4).

The report, in its emphasis on the stories of co-workers, gives these workers a voice to counter their seeming invisibility. Julia Liou, Director of Program Planning and Development for Asian Health Services in Oakland, California and Manager of the California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative, thinks that sharing the personal stories of nail salon workers is one strategy that makes messaging at the intersection of environmental and reproductive health effective. She thinks that people can relate to these stories because as customers, they have personally experienced the chemical smells that emanate from nail salons. The statement that these women are leaving their jobs in order to protect their reproductive health suggests the severity of their concerns, particularly in light of Camille's comments that many workers choose to stay in jobs that harm their health rather than be unemployed. Perhaps this willingness to leave on the part of some is due to the fact that toxicants are not only impacting these women, but their unborn children as well.

Adhikaar, located in New York City, has been working since 2005 to improve working conditions for nail salon workers. In 2015, they release a report called *Behind the Polish: Experiences of Nepali-Speaking Nail Salon Workers in New York City*, in which they presented data that they collected on women working in the industry. The report notes that workers are exposed to chemicals that can cause miscarriage and birth defects, and that 11% of the women surveyed said that they had worked in a nail salon while pregnant. The issue of nail salons in New York City entered the spotlight after journalist Sarah Maslin Nir published two pieces in the New York Times on the subject. The first, *The Price of Nice Nails*, exposed the abuse of workers in the nail salon industry (Nir, 2015a). The second, *Perfect Nails, Poisoned Workers*, looked at reproductive and other health risks among nail salon workers (Nir, 2015b). In response to the New York Times investigation, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo took action by

forming a task force to address abuse in the nail salon industry. He also introduced legislation and a plan to protect nail salon workers and educate employers (Governor's Press Office, 2015a, 2015b; Nir, 2015c). In our interview, Luna Ranjit, the Executive Director of Adhikaar, who is on the task force that the Governor formed, said that these articles created a lot more visibility for the issue. While I cannot say to what extent the reproductive health messaging, specifically, in the second article influenced the Governor's decision to take action, it was clearly an important focal point and likely contributed in some part to the response.

Lack of access to safe products

Advocates noted that individuals of higher socioeconomic status are better able to avoid the ubiquity of toxic exposures in consumer products by shopping their way out of the problem. Kimberly Inez McGuire, who was Director of Public Affairs at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health in Washington, DC at the time of our interview, wrote an article for Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families entitled, *Environmental Justice: Not for Sale at Your Neighborhood Store* (2012). In it, she explained:

Shopping around the problem? As the bad news about toxic products has spread, many consumers have done their research and used "the power of the purse" to buy safer, cleaner products for their families—things like BPA-free plastics or "all natural" cleaning products. But that form of power is only available to those with time, money, education, probably an internet connection, and maybe a swanky organic market on their block. Women of color, low-income people, and migrant workers, the very populations with the worst exposures, have the least ability to avoid chemicals through consumer choice alone.

In response to this economic injustice, advocates are organizing to increase the safety of products available to low-income individuals. Reproductive health messaging is one key component of advocacy efforts that aim to achieve this goal.

Example of reproductive health messaging regarding safe product access

A prime example of efforts to improve the safety of products available to low-income individuals is a dollar store campaign by the Campaign for Healthier Solutions. This is a collaborative effort involving multiple organizations that is led by Coming Clean and The Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform. The campaign released a report, *A Day Late and A Dollar Short: Discount Retailers are Falling Behind on Safer Chemicals* (2015), which draws attention to the disproportionately high number of dollar stores located in communities of color and low-income communities. It notes that for some people, these stores are the only place where they can locally buy essential household items, including food. The report discloses the results of testing on 164 products purchased at top dollar store chains (i.e., Dollar General, Dollar Tree, Family Dollar and 99 Cents Only). They found that 81% of these products had at least one hazardous chemical above levels of concern. Of the six examples that the report presents as the most striking increases in health conditions associated with chemical exposures over the past few decades in the U.S., three of these are reproductive health problems (i.e., increases in birth defects, breast cancer, and difficulty conceiving and maintaining pregnancy). This demonstrates that the report's authors viewed these reproductive health outcomes as particularly notable, and likely thought that they would resonate with the report's audience.

Cultural norms

Another key source of vulnerability revolves around culture. In some cases, there may be cultural pressure to use toxic products. In other cases, changes in the environment may make certain cultural practices unhealthy within the current context, whereas before these behaviors

were not harmful. Both types of exposures are explored in this section.

Example of reproductive health messaging regarding cultural pressure to use toxic products

A key example of the impact of culture on toxic exposures centers around hair care among Black women. Nourbese explained that use of hair products in the Black community, such as hair relaxers and chemical perms, is a lucrative industry. She said, “African American women spend about \$225 a month on hair products... and it’s on track to triple in the next five years.” Women are using these products in response to significant sources of structural racism that place pressure on women in the Black community to conform to European beauty standards, such as having straight hair. Nourbese said that “particularly Black women have been shamed for the way their hair grows out of their heads.” She referred to commentary by Tracie Thoms, an actor, about the politicization of how her hair grows out of her head. According to Nourbese, Thoms said that “if she decided to just go natural and not do anything to her hair, there are all these types of social implications, social ideas that are implied on her, like she is radical.” Bekezela Mguni, Director of Programs and Strategic Partnerships at New Voices Pittsburgh, identified institutions in the United States that play a significant role in propagating these racist beauty norms. She stated that the army characterizes Black women’s hair as ungroomed and unkempt, and the styles they wear as inappropriate. She also said that business schools and corporate America both say that the “very way our hair grows out of our head is unprofessional.”

In SisterSong’s environmental justice issue of its newsletter, Ami Zota and Trina Jackson (2009) wrote an article entitled, *The Environmental Injustice of Beauty: Health Repercussions of Chemical Hair Products For Black Women*, to raise awareness about this issue. They wrote about the ways in which these norms, which originated outside of the Black community, have become pervasive inside of it as well:

These mainstream notions of beauty and attractiveness have not only been reinforced by the media but also by our families and community social norms causing a lot of stress and self loathing in Black women. As a result, Black women have turned to the widespread use of chemically-intensive hair straighteners as a form of self-medication, a hypothesis that suggests that Black women have used and often abused chemical hair products to cope with the constant assault of White beauty standards.

In this article, they advised Black women to avoid self-blame, and to recognize that use of hair straighteners is a coping mechanism to deal with internalized racism and systemic oppression. The magnitude of internalized racism is perhaps evidenced by the physical pain that Black women are willing to endure when using these products in order to conform to cultural beauty norms. Bekezela said that “Black women know that [a hair relaxer] burns them. It literally burns the scalp, like chemical burns, painful.” In order to confront this systemic problem, Zota and Jackson advocate that changes must take place at both individual and community levels. Nourbese and Bekezela indicated that advocates are working in a number of ways to foster a growing natural hair movement in the Black community. The article by Zota and Jackson represents one such effort. Another example is an annual Kinks, Locks and Twists conference that New Voices Pittsburgh organizes. The conference provides women of color and their allies with a forum in which to talk about ethnic hair care and other topics (New Voices Pittsburgh, 2015). Bekezela also conducts natural hair workshops, and she noted that there are natural hair salons.

In their efforts of resistance, participants are messaging heavily regarding the harmful reproductive health and other health effects associated with use of chemical hair products.

Bekezela detailed some of these impacts:

[In] using those chemicals, and particularly relaxers, Black women are constantly exposed to at least five breast-cancer causing agents. They're putting this directly on their scalp. And they're doing it for a majority of their lifespan. And now we have young girls putting perms—as young as three. So imagine if you were a Black woman—and some young men, some men do it as well, perming their hair—formaldehyde, lye, all those

really terrible products, putting it directly onto your scalp, from the age of three at least to maybe 50, 60, 70. We have a large intergenerational span of Black people, Black women specifically that are putting this very toxic chemical on their head because they believe that this is one way for them to be acceptable in society, which deeply harms their health.

Other issues that she and Bekezela mentioned that are potentially linked with these hair products are growth of uterine fibroids and early onset of puberty. Nourbese explained that beyond detrimental health impacts, early onset of puberty can have harmful social impacts, thereby compounding disadvantage. She said, “If you have little girls who look a lot older than what they really are... [they can] be prey in society, essentially.” Another health issue that came up is poor pregnancy outcomes. Bekezela’s organization began work on this topic after speaking with the Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles, who asked if they had ever thought about looking at how chemicals in everyday products, including hair products, are contributing to reproductive health disparities in the Black community, such as high rates of infant mortality, very low birth weight, low birth weight, and miscarriages. Black Women for Wellness subsequently incorporated this issue into their agenda as a result of these discussions, demonstrating the value of dialogue between advocates in creating new directions for their work.

Example of reproductive health messaging regarding the harmful impact of environmental changes on the health of traditional cultural practices

Another example regarding vulnerability and culture relates to fishing in Indigenous communities. More than one participant spoke of the increase in toxic exposures that Indigenous communities now face when they engage in traditional food practices in which they catch and consume fish and marine mammals. For example, Pam Miller, Executive Director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics in Anchorage, Alaska, spoke of the predicament of Indigenous communities there. Their food sources are contaminated by military sites and industrial sites, and

also by chemicals carried on wind and ocean currents that accumulate in the bodies of fish. The issue of contamination of local Indigenous food supplies presents a type of cultural influence on exposure that is very different from that of ethnic hair care. In the case of ethnic hair care, structural racism is leading women to engage in unhealthy beauty practices. In the case of fishing among Indigenous populations, fishing and eating the catch is normally a healthy cultural practice and is only made unhealthy by the contamination of sources of water in which marine life lives.

In response to this problem, ACAT is engaged in community-based research to address military and industrial contamination, and in policy advocacy at local, state, national, and international levels to stop the production and release of chemicals that can migrate to the Arctic. ACAT has been involved in producing documents that message around reproductive health in order to bring attention to these issues. They released an issue of the ACAT Health & The Environment Bulletin entitled, *Body of Evidence: Reproductive Health and the Environment* (Cordner & Petras, 2012), where they provide evidence for the link between environmental contaminants and reproductive health. Additionally, Viola Waghiyi, Environmental Health and Justice Program Director for ACAT, is co-author of a document that was submitted to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Expert Group Meeting, along with Andrea Carmen from the International Indian Treaty Council and Indigenous Women's Environmental and Reproductive Health Initiative. In this document, they emphasize the direct connection between reproductive health, toxics and traditional foods, as follows:

The Rights to Health and Culture for Indigenous Peoples are closely linked to the Right to Food and Subsistence. It is well documented that environmental toxins have a serious impact on traditional foods, creating a false and forced choice for Indigenous Peoples, in particular, pregnant and nursing mothers. They are often forced to choose between the cultural and nutritional value of their traditional foods and subsistence way of life, and

the health and development of their unborn children, as well as their ability to have children at all.

The assertion that pregnant and nursing mothers particularly face a dilemma positions them as a vulnerable population within an already vulnerable community. This dilemma can have significant health consequences, as relinquishing a traditional diet can sometimes bring about a different set of harms. For example, Arquette and colleagues (2002) note that when Native American communities stop eating fish in order to avoid toxicants, the new diets that take their place are often high in fat and calories, and low in nutritional content.

Perceived efficacy of reproductive health messaging

Advocates perceive that reproductive health messaging around environmental issues is appealing to numerous constituencies, and thus is a key element of their motivational framing. For example, Maya said that combining environmental health and reproductive health messaging into one frame is effective because “everyone reproduces. And everyone can relate to the problems that would occur as a result of having their reproductive health impacted.” Camille said that “everyone wants their species to continue.” This frame appears to tap into a biological drive to protect the ability to reproduce and to protect those most associated in the public consciousness with reproductive processes (i.e., pregnant women, fetuses, young children).

This widespread appeal relates to the concept of frame resonance, discussed in chapter 5. Collective action frames that resonate with potential supporters encapsulate beliefs, ideas and values that are important to them, making them more likely to join the cause (Benford & Snow, 2000). Salience, a key feature of resonance, is partly influenced by how much the movement frame resonates with the personal experiences of potential supporters (Benford & Snow, 2000). Additionally, Benford and Snow write that a key feature of resonance is credibility, and that a

frame is more credible if it has empirical evidence to support its claims. The increased body of evidence documenting associations between reproductive health and toxics, referred to earlier, therefore lends more credibility to this frame, and continued research on these linkages can further increase credibility.

This section discusses why reproductive health messaging is seen to resonate with policymakers and the public (particularly parents, and most especially mothers), which are the two groups that came up most with regard to resonance. I have chosen not to focus on resonance among representatives from corporations in this section. While advocates have been effective in getting companies to change their product formulations, it is difficult to say to what extent the message of reproductive health itself resonates with them personally as opposed to striking a chord of fear that they will lose market shares if they do not make changes.

Resonance in policy reform

Policy decisions are highly influenced by how policymakers and the public collectively understand the issues at hand (Baumgartner & Mahoney, 2008). Advocates are using reproductive health messaging in their efforts to persuade policymakers to enact stricter environmental laws, and to persuade the public to lobby policymakers around this issue. According to Bonnie (pseudonym), comprehensive chemical policy reform is a complex issue and approaching it from a reproductive health standpoint is valuable. She said, “whether you’re talking to justice communities or you’re talking to anyone, people kind of get those connections so it’s a helpful way to start the conversation.” Therefore, not only is it a helpful entrée point when discussing the impact of toxicants on the population at large, but it is also a beneficial entrée point when speaking with people who care specifically about vulnerable populations.

Many advocates have had interactions with legislators that have impressed upon them the resonance of the reproductive health frame. For example, Pat said:

When you are talking with elected officials on Capitol Hill, I think it's something that they get.... It's something that I think people can really relate to and they understand that you don't have to live next to a superfund site or a chemical plant to potentially be exposed to these chemicals that in some cases are suspected reproductive toxicants.

This quote reinforces Bonnie's assertion that one can use a reproductive health frame to talk to "anyone." Here it is valuable when speaking with elected officials who may be more concerned about exposures in products than place-based exposures, perhaps because the constituencies they represent do not live in fenceline communities.

This frame can also be valuable with legislators who have a personal experience related to toxicants and reproductive health, thereby increasing the salience of the frame for them. For example, as part of a Black hair care campaign, Nancy (pseudonym) met with a legislator who happened to be from a family of hairdressers. The visit made him think about his own family history of health problems. According to Nancy, he said to them, "I never thought that they might have been related to the stuff we were using" and subsequently became interested in supporting the issue.

Carolina (pseudonym) has found that "exposing the vulnerabilities of children has been huge in advancing policy." She said that "when we bring children to City Hall, it becomes a different story. We're talking about very small human beings that are being impacted, that are unjustly being affected, that are not even having a say." The extreme vulnerability of children, as well as the innocence associated with experiencing harm while not even having a say in what happens to them, is portrayed as something that increases receptivity among legislators. This is consistent with research by Sardell (1990). In an article on child health policy in the U.S., she asserted that "Unlike other "disadvantaged groups," children are universally viewed as innocent

and deserving of societal support. Framing child health issues *in* these terms helped to produce consensus on the expansion of Medicaid eligibility (p.271).” This viewpoint lends support to decisions to use some of the images and content presented earlier, such as the baby in WVE’s Tide campaign.

Reproductive health messaging on environmental issues, however, is not seen as foolproof. For example, Victoria (pseudonym) noted while it can be incredibly effective to talk about pregnancy, fertility, and other reproductive issues when discussing toxicants, there are also times when this is not the most ideal messaging. She said:

The more you remove a person from the experience of an issue itself, the less likely they are to get involved. If you're talking to a 65-year-old single man with no kids, is the fact that a pregnant woman is really influenced by mercury and coal ash pits in another state really going to motivate him to take action? No. And guess what? Most of our legislators are old White men. It's both helpful and hurtful, depending on your audience.

Her point speaks to the need to know one’s audience and modify messaging to target that particular audience. It also suggests the need to diversify legislative bodies. This relates to a point made by Miriam Yeung, Executive Director of NAPAWF, who explained the value of diversity in legislative bodies:

I think our democracy is not that representative of the people that it serves. The lived experiences of legislators are not necessarily those of low-income and people of color enough, or even of women, enough. And I think poli-sci folks have studied that more diverse legislative bodies actually pass better laws, more inclusive laws.

It is possible that if there were more diversity among elected officials, then this could potentially increase receptivity to reproductive health messaging. For example, there is research to suggest that both Democratic and Republican women legislators are more receptive to women’s issues (Swers, 2002) and that women are more likely to introduce bills that relate to traditional women’s issues (e.g., children, family) (Saint-Germain, 1989). At the same time, more diverse legislative bodies will not necessarily pass better laws if they do not represent more diverse ideas

and perspectives. For example, if women who are elected are White and middle class, these women may not represent the views of poor women and women of color (Weldon, 2004).

The receptivity of the audience may also vary according to other factors, such as geographic and political context. Amy said that the get-out-the-vote campaign was not successful in getting more environmentally minded legislators elected, nor did it work to convince those who were elected to pass stronger environmental laws. When I probed why, she said that their House and Senate went Republican for the first time in decades, and that “these new elected officials have no interests in bolstering any environmental laws.” She also commented elsewhere in our interview on how entrenched corporate culture is in her area, and how difficult it is to fight big business there:

Fighting industry here is so—it just seems so huge. It permeates all parts of West Virginia life! I mean, at our basketball arena, at our big civic center downtown, in the middle of the floor it says—there’s a giant ‘Friends of Coal’ logo, which is basically the coal lobby. And like everywhere you go, you see coal company influence. They are the big donors for our art center or the coal barons are the big benefactors for all your social service agencies. It’s just like it permeates our society and it’s really challenging to imagine going up against that.

Liliana (pseudonym), who lives in a city where industry is very powerful, echoed these same sentiments. She said, “A lot of the hospitals here, if not all of them, are funded by the industry in some way or another, so it's hard for the doctors to say, yeah, your asthma or your cancer is totally linked to the chemicals that are found in the community where you live.” These entrenched corporate cultures make it difficult for people in the public at large to speak out against corporate policies.

It is hard to say what, if any, kind of messaging would be effective in contexts such as these where there is a particularly steep uphill battle against industry. WV FREE continues to post reproductive health messaging, including images of children and a pregnant woman, on its

website as part of a continued campaign for clean water (WV FREE, 2016). Given the continued use of this messaging, it does not appear that the organization attributes the lack of success of its get-out-the-vote campaign to the use of reproductive health messaging, but rather, to other factors that it was not able to overcome.

Resonance with parents, particularly mothers

Participants noted that parents particularly care about reproductive health issues. For example, Jennifer said:

I think that when people become parents they often will become more aware of their surroundings in terms of what they want to do, what's best for their child and they are thinking more about health, probably, than they may have in the past. And that often will lead them to thinking about what type of chemicals am I exposing my child to?

Parenthood is portrayed here as a critical juncture point at which time people's priorities shift and they are more motivated to take action to secure a healthier environment for their children.

Thus, reproductive health messaging may resonate particularly strongly with this group.

Identifying and targeting this messaging to new parents may therefore be a valuable recruitment strategy for organizations that are looking to gain more public support.

In particular, advocates noted that women are most interested in rallying around environmental reproductive health issues. Pat attributed the high involvement of mothers in these issues to their "very unique and intimate relationship with their children... especially their infants." Another reason that women are more heavily involved may be because they are more comfortable talking about reproductive health issues. More than one participant noticed that men are more reluctant to talk about the adverse health outcomes associated with toxic exposures. For example, Jeannie said that it is harder to recruit them to trainings on pesticide exposure and impacts on reproductive health. She attributed this to the "whole macho thing." I interpret this to

mean that men may feel that their manliness is compromised if they cannot have children at all, or cannot have healthy children. In Pam's organization, they mainly hear concerns about reproductive health from women and thus have tailored their programming to meet this need by holding discussion circles for women about these issues. Women who are willing to discuss these issues therefore play an important role in their families and communities because they can act as conduits of information and potentially as agents for change.

According to advocates, mothers make up a large percentage of the base of advocates that are working on toxicants and reproductive health. Pat said that they have been able to effectively use the power of mothers at advocacy events, such as a National Day of Action where parents and health advocates across the country showed up at Walgreens stores to demand safer products. Mothers have also been essential participants in their "Stroller Brigades" on Capitol Hill, a form of protest where parents showed up with strollers and their infants or young children to attend lobbying visits.

Advocates have also successfully harnessed the power of mothers as a powerful consumer force. Nicole noted that mothers make the majority of purchasing decisions in their households and therefore companies are more inclined to listen to them if they complain about chemicals in products or lack of disclosure of ingredients. The campaign against Tide described earlier provides a good example of the power of mothers to change corporate behavior.

Two participants discussed how mothers are particularly powerful advocates in the Latino community and other communities of color. Cristina Aguilar, Executive Director of Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights, said that like in many communities of color, Latina women tend to be the center of households and have "huge decision-making power and influence." Jose asserted that in the Latino community, "we've

always said that organizing starts at home, and the number one organizer is our mother. And if you look at movements, even in the environmental justice movement, farmworker movements, chemical movements, a lot of those movements are led by women of color.” These findings are consistent with those of Zimmerman and Miao (2009), who found that the leadership of women and mothers is critical at the EJ/RJ intersection.

Gender norms may play a role in the disproportionate involvement of mothers in health issues concerning their families. According to Krauss (1994), in their traditional roles as mothers, women have a history of being the ones to make the connection between toxic chemicals and their children’s health, and to identify the association between toxics and adverse reproductive health outcomes (e.g., miscarriages, birth defects). Noonan (1995) developed what she referred to as a “maternal” collective action frame, which positions women’s activism in Chile in the 1970s and 1980s as an extension of their family roles. While the context of advocacy efforts around toxics in the U.S. is different from the context in which Noonan developed her frame, the concept is still applicable. Researchers have highlighted the efficacy of the maternal frame in calling women to action in their roles as mothers, nurturers and caregivers (Goss & Heaney, 2010). This may help to explain why approximately 90% of participants in this study were women. It may also explain why organizations in this study, as well as others working on toxics, have adopted names that clearly underscore the influence of their maternal roles and of their gender on mobilization efforts, such as MomsRising, Making our Milk Safe (MOMS), Black Women for Wellness, and Women’s Voices for the Earth.

It may also be useful to consider how some of these dominant gender frames, while they enable women’s activism, may undermine men’s. Carpenter (2005) examines how international efforts to protect civilians in conflict zones have relied upon stereotypical representations of

women and children as innocent and vulnerable. She notes that this frame perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes, ignores the vulnerability of adult male civilians, and disregards the fact that there are female and child combatants. In this same way, environmental reproductive health frames that focus upon women might ignore the vulnerabilities of men, such as those who face occupational exposures that can harm reproductive function (Jensen, Bonde, & Joffe, 2006). It may also stereotype women as mothers, despite the fact that there are many women who exercise their right not to be mothers—a right which reproductive justice advocates endorse (Ross, 2006). Additionally, frames that associate women with children rather than men may inadvertently undermine movements that aim to increase male involvement in the care of their children (Levant & Wimer, 2010).

In certain contexts or with certain audiences, advocates working on toxics may wish to consider using frames that are more gender neutral. For example, whereas the “woman is the ‘first environment’” frame discussed in chapter 4 may resonate well with women, Bell and van Koppen’s gender neutral term, “the invironment,” could potentially resonate more with men. Bell (2012) defines the invironment as referring to “the inner zone of the environment, where we find the body in perpetual dialogue with the environment. Invironmental issues, then, would be issues that concern the dynamics of that inner zone of dialogue, with health being perhaps the prime example (p.127).” The term is intended to remind people that the body is not separate from and in opposition to the environment, but rather, is a continuation of the environment. It is similar to the “woman is the ‘first environment’” frame because it brings the environment inward into the human body, but it is different in its gender neutrality. Use of this more gender neutral frame might allow advocates to mobilize more men, thus expanding their base of support.

Conclusion

Multi-level and cross-movement strategies for change

Advocates are using reproductive health messaging as one strategy to build momentum behind their social movement agenda around toxics. Their use of this messaging is part of a multi-pronged approach that simultaneously aims to effect change through policy decisions within the halls of government and corporate boardrooms, and also through individual behavior changes amongst the public at large. Additionally, through their focus on vulnerability, their messaging seeks to address “fundamental” causes of disease (Link & Phelan, 1995; Phelan et al., 2010), such as racism and classism, that socially pattern toxic exposures. This combination of strategies is consistent with an environmental model of health promotion that seeks to create change at micro, meso and macro levels of influence (Schulz & Northridge, 2004). Advocates are pushing for micro level change by targeting individual behaviors, meso level change by seeking to change governmental and corporate policies, and macro level change by seeking to disrupt race- and class-based inequalities. By using multiple strategies, advocates can more effectively adapt to changing political landscapes by channeling more resources into one strategy versus another, as necessary. For example, if receptivity to their asks were to increase at the federal level, they might wish to divert resources away from corporate and individual-level campaigns in order to push harder for comprehensive federal policy reform. Alternatively, if receptivity were to further wane at the federal level, they might choose to channel even more resources into their alternative strategies.

Many of the reproductive health messaging examples provided in this chapter involved cross-movement alliances, such as campaigns by Women’s Voices for the Earth and WV FREE. These alliances are helping to create a stronger foundation for environmental reproductive health

advocacy, both nationally and locally. By creating joint campaigns, organizations can continue to appeal to their existing constituencies, and can also cast a wider net that may galvanize support amongst new constituencies. For example, reproductive health messaging on toxics might inspire reproductive health, rights, and justice supporters to care about environmental concerns, and it might spark a new interest among environmental supporters in reproductive health issues.

Countering the “treadmill of production” with messaging on *reproduction*

This chapter discussed the perception among advocates that corporations are largely responsible for creating toxic exposures. These assertions are consistent with those made by Brulle and Pellow (2006), who wrote the following:

The first and most widely discussed social origin of environmental degradation and inequality is the functioning of capitalism. Schnaiberg argues that the capitalist economy forms a “treadmill of production” that continues to create ecological problems through a self-reinforcing mechanism of ever more production and consumption (p.108).

These effects were evident in numerous ways in study data, such as via the mass production and marketing of products that can harm consumers’ health, and through industrial operations that harm both the workers who produce products and the communities that live in close proximity to production facilities. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge those companies that are responding positively to advocates by making changes to their business practices, as well as those companies that have built environmentally friendly businesses of their own accord. These companies can be powerful allies to advocates and can potentially help to create a shift in corporate culture to increase investments in public health.

The expansive reach of corporations through widespread production and consumption demonstrates their significant power in the U.S. However, this same reach can be a liability to them because it has led to a category of toxic exposures that similarly impact people across

socioeconomic strata and across different geographic regions of the country. That is, a consumer can walk into the same chain store in any number of states and purchase the same exact product. Assuming that there are very few people, if any, who are able to completely ‘shop their way out’ of the problem, this means that many communities share at least a certain baseline level of exposure associated with living and shopping in the current market economy. Whereas harmful exposures in fenceline communities and among workers in low-pay, high-risk jobs may only galvanize support amongst a subset of the population that is invested in justice issues, this shared exposure associated with use of consumer products can serve as a catalyst to bring together a diverse array of socioeconomic and racial/ethnic advocacy communities. Therefore, while corporate America is powerful in its omnipresence, this very same omnipresence can also serve to incite a groundswell of social movement activities across the country. This shared desire for changed is evidenced by national coalitions in which diverse groups of advocates have joined together to rally around toxics, such as the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition.

The use of reproductive health messaging may be seen, in part, as a tactic to counter the power of corporate influence. Advocates are confronting capitalist forces that fuel the “treadmill of production,” as Schnaiberg calls it, by tapping into opposing social and cultural norms aimed at protecting the right to *re*production. In using these messages, they are banking on the idea that talking about threats to a basic human function will move public sentiment, particularly since this function is so closely associated with groups perceived by many as vulnerable (i.e., pregnant women, children).

Advocates working at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice have historically played an important role in social movement efforts to protect reproductive capacities from corporate harm. For example, in an article about intersections between

environmental and reproductive justice in Native American communities, Gurr (2011) wrote that “alliances between reproductive justice and environmental justice reveal the ways in which Federal, regional, state and corporate interests work together to inhibit community wellness through producing or tacitly allowing environmental pollution.” Further alliances between these groups could strengthen advocacy initiatives to protect reproductive health from toxic harms, such as by lending more voices to social movement platforms that expose problems with governmental and corporate practices.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

This study contributes to public health by examining cross-movement efforts at the intersection of environmental and reproductive justice. Study findings have implications for cross-movement dynamics, environmental and reproductive justice, policies that promote health and health equity, and funding. This chapter describes the collective action frames identified in this research and summarizes the study findings. It also discusses the social construction of reality as it emerges in the framing process, potential directions for future research, and the public health impact of this study.

Overarching frames identified

As previously noted, developing collective action frames involves engaging in three core framing tasks: identifying a problem (i.e., diagnostic framing); conceptualizing potential solutions, strategies, tactics, and targets (i.e., prognostic framing); and motivating people to take collective action (i.e., motivational framing) (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988). Two collective action frames that emerged as most prominent in this analysis were intersectionality and reproductive health messaging. These two CAFs have implications for diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational tasks, as described below.

Intersectionality

Chapters 4 and 5 explored the use of intersectionality as a core analytic and organizing principle. Advocates identified risks of toxic exposures that are the result of intersecting social locations (e.g., race/ethnicity, income, gender, immigration status). In particular, many focused on how being a woman intersects with other social locations. This focus reflected women's unique biological role in reproduction (e.g., the Indigenous "woman is the 'first environment'" frame). One participant also relayed how one's spiritual identity intersects with one's work to influence the strength of advocacy efforts (i.e., an Indigenous "braiding" framework associated with "spirit-rooted activism"). With regard to issues, intersectional diagnostic framing led advocates to view the problems that afflict populations as interrelated. For example, environmental, social, and economic concerns intertwine to shape community health.

These diagnoses led to prognoses focused on an intersectional vision of change aimed at breaking free from identity-based, issue-based, and movement-based siloes. This included allowing individuals to equally prioritize multiple aspects of their identity rather than forcing them to choose one over another—a practice that resulted in more welcoming advocacy spaces and more inclusive advocacy agendas. It also included the practice of nurturing one's spiritual self in order to remain centered during the advocacy process. With regard to issues, advocates saw the need to develop multi-issue agendas in order to address the complex web of problems impacting community health and well-being. In order to effectively implement these multi-issue agendas, they also saw the need to develop cross-movement collaborations among stakeholders who are working to address the breadth of interrelated issues impacting communities.

With regard to motivational framing, the goal of improving health and well-being among vulnerable communities is deeply embedded in an intersectional framework, which focuses on

interlocking systems of privilege and oppression (Bowleg, 2012). As demonstrated by participants' organizational agendas and messaging, the goal of reducing inequities was a primary or key motivational element in their work. This included environmental reproductive health inequities, as well as other related health and social inequities impacting vulnerable communities.

Reproductive health messaging

Chapter 6 explored the use of reproductive health messaging as a key collective action frame. In their diagnostic framing, advocates identified the ubiquity of toxicants due to industrial and military activity as a significant problem that impacts reproductive health. They cited inadequate governmental policies as a reason for the status quo, and criticized corporations as obstacles to policy reform. In their prognostic frames, they identified the need to improve governmental policies (i.e., local, state, and federal) and to improve corporate policies. They also identified the need to promote behavior changes to mitigate exposures in the absence of adequate policies.

With regard to motivational framing, advocates found that a reproductive health messaging frame can serve to generate interest and inspire action amongst potential supporters who find reproductive health to be a relatable issue; who think that toxic harms threaten both the biological and cultural reproduction of communities; and who have strong inclinations to protect populations that are closely associated with reproduction and often deemed vulnerable (e.g., pregnant women, young children). Whereas the intersectionality frame was focused on oppressions facing marginalized communities (e.g., communities of color, low-income, Indigenous), the reproductive health messaging frame was used to motivate those who are

focused on reducing health inequities among vulnerable communities and/or those focused on protecting the population at large.

Table 7.1. Summary of Collective Action Frame Features

	Intersectionality	Reproductive health messaging
Diagnostic framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity-based characteristics (e.g., race, gender, socioeconomic status, immigrant status) intersect to shape risk of exposures • Communities face intersecting social issues that act jointly to shape environmental reproductive health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxics are ubiquitous, largely due to industrial and military activity • Toxic exposures are associated with higher risk of reproductive harm • Current governmental policies are inadequate • Corporations are an impediment to policy reform due to their significant political influence
Prognostic framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need solutions that address identity-based intersections that elevate risk of toxic exposures • Need solutions that simultaneously address multiple, intersecting community issues • Need to promote cross-movement collaboration in order to more effectively change the status quo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need better governmental policies • Need better corporate policies • Need to encourage behavior change to reduce exposures, where possible, in the absence of sufficiently protective policies
Motivational framing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal of reducing environmental reproductive health inequities • Goal of improving other related health and social inequities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive health is a relatable issue • Goal of protecting reproductive health in order to protect the biological and cultural reproduction of communities • Goal of protecting populations deemed vulnerable (e.g., pregnant women, young children) • Goal of reducing inequities and/or improving overall population health
Population(s) of focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable communities (e.g., communities of color, low-income, Indigenous) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable communities • Population at large

Snow and Benford (1988) suggest that the more that diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames are well-developed and interconnected, the greater the chance of achieving successful participant mobilization within and across movements. The frame components described above suggest a high level of integration, as both prognoses and motivational elements are closely linked with the problems at hand.

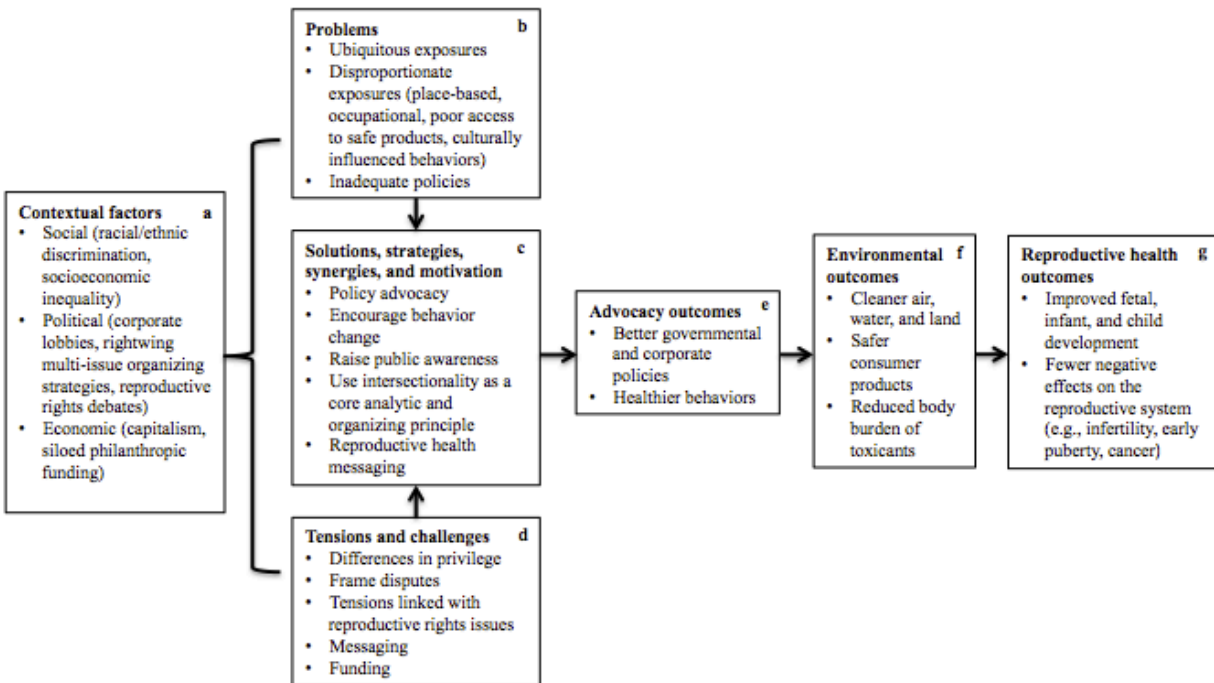
Additionally, the two primary CAFs identified can complement and strengthen one another and may create opportunities for collaboration. For example, the use of intersectionality has led to cross-movement alliances with broader bases of support, thus allowing them to disseminate messaging about reproductive health and toxics more broadly. The use of reproductive health messaging on toxics has been perceived to increase the success of intersectional efforts, as it provides a relatable issue that can engender momentum. Interactions between these CAFs may also contribute to tensions in cross-movement collaboration. For example, because intersectionality is focused on vulnerable populations whereas the reproductive health messaging frame can be applied to both vulnerable populations and the population at large, tensions can arise amongst groups who are not both focusing on vulnerable communities.

The identification of the CAFs above is not meant to imply that these are the only frames that advocates use as they mobilize around toxics or related issues. However, the ones discussed here were particularly salient in the data. Additionally, neither frame is necessarily specific to toxics. Intersectionality, by its very nature, is a frame that can be used to address numerous issues, and a reproductive health messaging frame can be applicable to other drivers of reproductive health, both environmental and otherwise. What this research contributes is an analysis of how these CAFs are operationalized in one particular context (i.e., toxics). Many of the findings may be relevant to other contexts, as well.

Diagram of findings

Figure 7.1 provides a visual overview of the primary study findings, including the primary collective action frames.

Figure 7.1. Collective Action Frames Addressing Toxics and Reproductive Health



Boxes a through d relate directly to the three overarching goals of this study. The first goal was to identify the collective action frames of advocates who are working to protect vulnerable communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health. Examining collective action frames allows us to understand how advocates identify problems (box b), solutions and accompanying strategies (box c), and how they motivate people to take collective action (box c) (Snow & Benford, 1988). An arrow points from box b to box c because the problems at hand shape the solutions, mobilizing strategies, and motivations for action.

The second study goal was to identify tensions (box d) and synergies (box c) associated with collective action frames, and how diverging and converging frames impact cross-movement

collaboration. An arrow points from box d to box c because tensions and challenges have an effect on the implementation of proposed solutions and mobilizing strategies. The third goal was to identify social, political, and economic contextual factors that shape frameworks for action (box a), and consider their implications for tensions (box d) and synergies (box c) across movements.

Boxes e, f, and g focus on the potential outcomes associated with advocates' collective action frames. There is an arrow from box c to box e because if solutions, mobilizing strategies, and synergies are impactful, they can result in favorable advocacy outcomes. These, in turn can lead to positive environmental outcomes (box f) that are associated with improved reproductive health outcomes (box g). These outcomes are stated in the positive sense since advocates aim to improve them.

The forthcoming text first focuses on boxes b through g. A discussion of contextual factors (box a) is integrated throughout the chapter since they influence many aspects of the diagram (and hence are directly linked to boxes b, c, and d). In order to highlight connections between the text and the diagram, I **bold the titles of all boxes**, *italicize the bullet points within boxes b through g*, and underline the bullet points (i.e., contextual factors) in box a.

Problems identified by advocates (box b)

Advocates identified several key, interrelated **problems**. They viewed toxicants in air, water, land, and consumer products that result from industrial and military activity as *ubiquitous*. While advocates saw toxic exposures as affecting the population at large, they also recognized that exposures *impact vulnerable communities disproportionately* due to racial/ethnic discrimination and socioeconomic inequality. This is consistent with public health theory that

considers racial/ethnic discrimination and socioeconomic inequality as fundamental causes of disease (Link & Phelan, 1995; Phelan et al., 2010). They linked these toxicants with adverse reproductive health outcomes in the population at large, and with inequities in reproductive health outcomes in vulnerable communities.

Advocates overwhelmingly cited *inadequate government policies* as an underlying cause of toxic exposures. When digging one level deeper as to why these poor policies persist, advocates pointed time and again to a capitalist system in which powerful corporate lobbies influence politicians and impede the passage of better laws. These findings are consistent with literature that argues that capitalism is a key source of toxic harm in the United States (Brulle & Pellow, 2006), that business and industry invest significant resources in lobbying the government (Kingdon, 1995) and that corporations are an impediment to environmental activism (Faber & O'Connor, 1993).

Solutions, strategies, synergies, and motivation (box c)

In developing **solutions** and **mobilizing strategies** to address these problems, advocates have strategically adopted a multi-pronged approach. A fundamental piece of this approach is to conduct *policy advocacy* in three key ways. First, they are advocating for federal policy reforms, such as TSCA reform. Second, due to the political stagnancy in Washington, DC, they are also advocating at state and local levels in order to bypass federal government. Third, due to the significant influence of corporate lobbies on the political process, they are circumventing governmental processes entirely by advocating directly to businesses to adopt greener practices. In addition to policy advocacy, they also *are encouraging people to change their behaviors* in order to reduce toxic exposures. This last strategy represents a stopgap approach in the absence

of sound policies, as it can be difficult for people to avoid such ubiquitous exposures through behavior change alone, particularly where vulnerable populations are concerned. In order to accomplish both policy and behavior change goals, advocates are *raising public awareness* in order to educate people and gain support. This multi-pronged approach helps advocates to navigate a complicated political terrain in which they must constantly adapt their strategies to changing political environments.

Many participants (particularly those with reproductive justice backgrounds) are approaching advocacy efforts by *using intersectionality as a core analytic and organizing principle*. This means that they are working to break free from identity-based, issue-based, and movement-based siloes in pursuit of more holistic conceptualizations of people, communities, problems, and solutions. This approach was perceived to result in a number of benefits or **synergies**, detailed below.

Advocates perceived that breaking free from identity-based siloes can help to create social movement spaces that are welcoming of individuals with intersecting identities. I think that the creation of these spaces is important because these advocates can bring critical environmental reproductive health issues to the forefront that relate to identity-based intersections associated with risk, such as intersections of race and gender that impact toxic exposures.

While chemical exposures no doubt impact men, the participant sample was overwhelmingly concerned with highlighting the unique vulnerabilities of women, largely because of their role in reproduction (i.e., pregnancy and breastfeeding) and the possibility of passing toxicants on to the next generation through their bodies. An example of this focus was the Indigenous “woman is the ‘first environment’” subframe that stressed the need to protect women

from toxic exposures in order to protect the next generation. A focus on women not only included concerns over the biological reproduction of communities, but their cultural reproduction as well. The analysis presented here suggested that advocates are concerned that environmental contamination can threaten the ability of women to pass along culture to future generations, such as by increasing infertility or adverse birth outcomes, reducing the ability to have children who are developmentally capable of learning their heritage, or by forcing women to interrupt long-held cultural practices in order to avoid exposures.

While a framework that focuses on women can be applied to both vulnerable communities and the population at large, when this framework is applied to women *within* vulnerable communities, I argue that it becomes a critical building block in intersectional analyses that highlights interactions between gender and other social locations (e.g., race, income, immigration status) to impact risk of toxic exposure and associated reproductive health outcomes. In this way, this framework contributes to breaking free from identity-based siloes. A focus on women does not obviate the need to address exposures among men, but does bring to light the ways in which women, particularly those in vulnerable communities, can be uniquely impacted by exposures and the need to develop agendas that fully meet their needs.

Another subframe that emerged at the level of identity was an Indigenous “braiding” framework that was associated with “spirit-rooted activism.” This frame focused on the intertwining of the many issues that impact a community’s health and well-being, the interrelatedness of the EJ and RJ groups working to move the needle on these issues, and the inextricable link between one’s spiritual self and one’s work. The frame depicted the need for advocates to nurture their spiritual sides in order to stay centered and grounded, reinforcing who

they are and why they are doing their work, and giving them the strength and composure needed to sustain long-term advocacy struggles.

Breaking free from issue-based siloes was perceived to help advocates more effectively address the complex array of factors that intertwine to shape people's health, and to ensure toxic-free environments that contribute to genuine reproductive choice by helping to preserve the ability (and therefore the choice) to have a child. Formulating ideas and efforts in this multi-issue way is conducive to creating cross-movement collaborations because it increases the chances that different movements will have overlapping interests. The many natural points of alignment enable frame bridging (Benford & Snow, 2000), as people are poised to care about each others' issues. Since toxics intersects with so many issues, including environmental justice, reproductive justice, economic justice, workers' rights and immigrant rights, it can potentially act as a catalyst to bring different social movement constituencies together into a multi-issue, cross-movement platform. This is a key point that demonstrates the significant organizing potential of a focus on toxics. Thus, the CAF of intersectionality offers an opportunity to diagnose social issues in a manner that facilitates identification of shared problems, and contributes to the potential for collaboration between groups in creating solutions to the problem.

The *ubiquity* of toxic threats and the common experience of human reproduction are likely among the factors that make it relevant to so many different movements, and thus make it conducive to cross-movement collaboration. Van Dyke (2003) found that while local threats are conducive to within-movement coalition activities, larger threats that impact multiple constituencies (e.g., federal policies) are often conducive to cross-movement coalition activities. Federal policies on toxics that are not sufficiently protective of public health make it a larger threat because the entire country is impacted. The organizing potential of addressing toxics may

also indicate that other problems that are similarly connected to a wide array of issues, including in fields outside of environmental reproductive health, may also be able to serve as catalysts that generate cohesion and momentum across movements.

The perceived benefits of working across movements included expanding bases of support; gaining new perspectives; sharing resources, information and expertise; and working towards progressive change. It is this last benefit that perhaps commands the most attention. By joining together across movements, advocates perceived that they may stand a better chance of disrupting social, political, and economic power imbalances that can perpetuate health inequities. In light of a significant polarization in power in the United States, whereby a small minority of the population holds disproportionate economic and political power (Cook et al., 2013; Keister & Lee, 2014), mobilizing across movements in pursuit of widespread, progressive change may provide an important strategy for redistributing power and associated health benefits.

The above findings on the perceived benefits of engaging in intersectional, cross-movement work are consistent with assertions that multi-issue, cross-movement efforts that unify different social justice constituencies behind shared goals can result in a broader base of support, a greater impact on policies and public opinion, and more transformative change (Khan, 2009; Miao & Zimmerman, 2009; Daniel, Herzing and Lerza, 2012). Some advocates (whose leftwing politics are representative of this study's leftwing political orientation) also saw this approach as essential to countering *rightwing multi-issue organizing strategies* in which the right links multiple issues together in order to appeal to their constituencies, which can be categorized as a form of frame extension (Benford & Snow, 2000). This perspective is consistent with arguments by Silliman, Fried, Ross and Gutierrez (2004), who maintain that the leftwing ought to bridge across social justice movements in order to more effectively counter the rightwing.

Finally, in their efforts to rally constituencies and policymakers, advocates perceived the use of *reproductive health messaging* as highly resonant amongst certain audiences. This messaging helps to provide **motivation** for them to take action in order to protect the ability of people to reproduce and to increase the likelihood of positive birth outcomes. This included resonance amongst certain policymakers and parents—most notably mothers, who they say have shown significant support for toxics advocacy and who, as a consumer base, have leverage with companies because of the many household purchasing decisions that they make.

Advocates use reproductive health messaging to draw attention to problems in the population at large, as well as in vulnerable communities. When focusing on vulnerable populations, they are messaging along four dimensions of vulnerability: place-based exposures, occupational exposures, poorer access to safe products, and cultural norms that elevate risk. When combining reproductive health messaging with messaging on vulnerability, advocates can provide motivation to those who are deeply concerned about health inequities.

By using reproductive health messaging, I argue that advocates are countering the powerful capitalist forces that fuel Schnaiberg’s “treadmill of production” (Brulle & Pellow, 2006), which can harm consumers, workers, and fenceline communities, by tapping into social and cultural norms that seek to protect the right to *reproduction*. I also argue that the omnipresence of the same consumer products in locations across the country has led to a baseline level of toxic exposures amongst the majority of people living and shopping in the current U.S. market economy. Whereas harmful exposures in fenceline communities and among workers in low-pay, high-risk jobs may only galvanize support amongst those invested in justice issues, this shared exposure across a diverse array of socioeconomic and racial/ethnic communities can help to incite a groundswell of support, uniting different constituencies behind common interests.

Movement tensions and challenges (box d)

There is a great diversity of social movements working at the intersection of EJ and RJ, making this intersection dense and complex. Some of the very same characteristics that can be assets to cross-movement efforts, such as joining new constituencies together and bringing different perspectives to the table, can fuel **tensions** and **challenges**. The first challenge primarily revolves around inter-group dynamics between organizations with *different levels of privilege*, namely race-based privilege. These are accompanied by significant disparities in resources and can influence who is at the table and what is on the agenda. These types of disagreements present real challenges for group cohesion. However, these tensions are in no way unique. Cole (2008) found that demographically diverse groups of advocates must address power differentials in order to keep their alliances intact. Additionally, these challenges are not necessarily without resolution. Beamish and Luebbbers (2009) suggest that a racially/ethnically diverse coalition can bridge differences and come to a better mutual understanding after continued, close engagement.

Cole (2008) has argued that diverse groups of advocates need to define areas of similarity in order to bring them together. A benefit of a gendered frame, such as a focus on the unique vulnerabilities of women, is that it can serve as a rallying point. To be clear, sharing the same gender does not always mean that people share the same concerns. For example, women of color have argued that the primarily White women's health movement did not adequately capture health issues impacting women of color and poor women (Morgen, 2006). However, many participants whom I interviewed spoke of engaging in diverse cross-movement collaborations in which they found commonalities over their concern for women's reproductive health. Thus,

under the right circumstances and with the right people, an overlap in concern for women's reproductive health can create synergies to overcome tensions.

Focusing on the vulnerability of women may also represent a frame alignment tactic (Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, & Benford, 1986) to galvanize support amongst those holding the widespread perception that women need more protection than men (Carpenter, 2005). Participant perceptions that a focus on women, as well as on children, can be valuable are consistent with findings by Zimmerman and Miao (2009). In their interviews with EJ/RJ organizations, participants reported that advancing frames that focused on the health impacts of toxic substances on women and children helped them to gain "political traction" (p.12).

A gendered frame focusing on women may be advantageous in advancing certain protections for women. It could also benefit men if arguments focusing upon women are what resonate most strongly with potential supporters *and* if any subsequent policy interventions are inclusive of men. However, this frame might have drawbacks as well. For example, it could perpetuate stereotypes regarding the inferiority of women, or reinforce links between women and roles of motherhood, despite feminist efforts to break women out of the confines of this role. This frame may also neglect the health needs of men who face significant occupational exposures. Additionally, mobilizing efforts that focus on recruiting mothers could marginalize the roles of fathers in the care of their children.

A second challenge was that organizations faced *frame disputes*. These kinds of contested processes are typical social movement processes in which advocates argue over which objectives, strategies, and tactics are best to use in order to reach a common goal (Benford, 1993). The first kind of frame dispute, a prognosis dispute, was about whether to focus on vulnerable populations or on the population at large in order to reduce exposures. This type of

dispute was sometimes perceived as related to issues of privilege in cases where mainstream organizations were depicted as insufficiently committed to helping vulnerable communities. In pushing for agendas that focus on vulnerable communities, some advocates made the case that the best way to help society at large is to help vulnerable communities. That is, they saw the rising tide that lifts all boats as the tide that lifts vulnerable communities. By creating stricter policies that would be protective of the most vulnerable individuals (e.g., pregnant women, low-income workers) and in the most vulnerable communities (e.g., ones that experience elevated and cumulative exposures), they envisioned improved health for everyone.

The second kind of frame dispute, a frame resonance dispute, was with regard to whether to focus messaging on vulnerable communities or on the population at large when trying to gain political and public support. Some perceived that it was unrealistic to expect adequate support for reform by focusing messaging on vulnerable populations, assessing that most people will not care about an issue until it affects them personally. Others thought that focusing on the most vulnerable provided the most compelling data and stories, and that even in instances where advocates could not successfully push through their agenda, it was essential to at least change the parameters of the conversation by bringing these issues to light. This latter approach, derived from the concept of the Overton window (Russell, 2006), represented a long-term strategy because changing the conversation might contribute to a societal evolution in thought that could take years to mature.

Another challenge was that the rightwing and leftwing continue to debate over reproductive rights (i.e., access to abortion and contraception). As a result, reproductive justice and rights advocates have had to prioritize core reproductive rights issues, making it harder to engage in cross-movement collaborations on toxics. These reproductive rights controversies can

also contribute to tensions between advocates if reproductive advocates feel that they are speaking up for core environmental issues and environmental advocates are not reciprocating, and by creating different sensitivities over language (e.g., fetal language that could indicate “personhood”). The larger reproductive rights debate also influences *funding* streams, as funders have pulled back their resources from toxics work in order to channel their resources into core reproductive rights issues. These challenges may mean that if environmental advocates wish to partner with reproductive allies, they may need to lead these efforts (and anticipate that their colleagues will take on more of a supporting role during this time), contribute more resources, and increase their sensitivity to language.

Messaging around toxics is another key challenge when messages may conflict or seem to conflict with other issues that potential allies care about. This includes advocating for removal of nitrosamines from condoms in a way that does not reduce safe sex practices; advocating to reduce toxicants in breast milk without deterring mothers from breastfeeding; developing language around adverse birth outcomes that does not stigmatize disabled individuals; and messaging around population control issues in a way that does not place blame for environmental degradation on poor women in the Global South. These kinds of issues require dialogue between advocates to resolve them. Some of these dialogues have already been initiated, though it appears that the larger reproductive rights debate has stymied these efforts since reproductive justice and rights advocates must focus their attention on their core issues rather than dialogue about toxics.

Another challenge that came up was the observation that intersectional work falls through the cracks when it comes to *funding*. Advocates stated and funders confirmed that it is more challenging to fund intersectional work. The philanthropic world tends to be set up in a siloed fashion where proposals are vetted into one “bucket” or another, and proposals that do not neatly

fit into a bucket might be disregarded. The implications here are that organizations may be reluctant to pursue multi-issue work if it is more challenging to gain support for it. Less multi-issue work may mean fewer cross-movement alliances and therefore, less transformative change.

Potential outcomes

If advocacy efforts are successful, then the result can be **advocacy outcomes** (box e) such as *better governmental and corporate policies*, and *healthier behaviors* that reduce exposures in people's occupational and personal lives. This, in turn, can result in positive **environmental outcomes** (box f), such as *cleaner air, water, and land* for both the population at large and in "hot spots," such as fenceline communities, where vulnerable populations have been burdened by disproportionately high exposures. Advocacy can also result in *safer consumer products*, such as improved beauty products, cleaning products, and kitchenware, and a healthier food system. Another potential outcome is a *reduced body burden of toxicants*. I include this outcome under "environmental outcomes" in keeping with the paradigm of some participants that the body *is* the environment, as suggested by Cook's "woman is the 'first environment'" frame. These positive environmental outcomes, in turn, can lead to improved **reproductive health outcomes** (box g), such as *improved fetal and infant development*, and *fewer negative effects on the reproductive system*, such as infertility, early puberty in girls, and cancer in reproductive organs. Participants are calling attention to these and other outcomes, and are backing up their arguments with the steady increase in scientific evidence that documents the associations between toxics and reproductive health.

Constructed realities

Benford and Snow (2000) write that the activity of framing “denotes an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction... it involves generation of interpretive frames that not only differ from existing ones but that may also challenge them (p.614).” At its heart, this research is about advocates’ competing constructions of reality within and across movements, as well as with movement opponents, and how these competing realities translate into the strategies that they use to advance their efforts.

For example, by advancing an intersectional frame, advocates have constructed a reality that stresses the interrelated nature of problems and the need for solutions that simultaneously address this multitude of issues. This framework stands in contrast to siloed approaches that fracture identities into discrete characteristics and consider them separately, that attack problems by isolating and addressing their constituent parts one by one, and that seek to mobilize supporters within the confines of their own movements. By advancing a reproductive health messaging frame, advocates are putting forth a reality in which toxicants, even at low levels, are a genuine threat to reproductive health. By contrast, many corporations and policymakers who support them have put forth their own version of reality in which humans and the environment can safely absorb a certain amount of chemical harm.

Reality construction has both implications for interactions between advocates, as well as implications for the extent to which they are successful in achieving their goals. The challenge is, when possible, to create frames that cut across different agendas and values in order to build a broader base of support. For example, frames inclusive of multiple populations (e.g., vulnerable populations and the population at large, women and men) may be able to amass more political support. On the other hand, the political reality might sometimes simply be that focusing on one

population is more resonant than focusing upon another, even if this framing is not most ideologically desirable to certain movement supporters. There are, in short, no blanket recommendations because context matters. The more effective that advocates are at assessing what will resonate most strongly with the public and policymakers at any given time, the greater their chances of achieving their desired goals. The dynamic nature of the political landscape, which shifts constantly, makes this a challenging task.

Potential directions for future research

The last analytic chapter presented focused on the perceptions of advocates regarding the resonance of reproductive health messaging. There is reason to think that assessing perceptions of advocates may be a good indication of what is effective. Benford (1993) writes:

... answers to the questions of frame resonance can be elusive. SMOs are seldom able to evaluate the effects of their framing efforts in any systematic fashion. Moreover, the mobilizing potency of proffered framings can vary across individuals, situations, and time. Activists do, however, develop a sense of what works and what does not, based in part on interpretations of their organizing experiences (p.691).

At the same time, perceptions do not necessarily equate to genuine efficacy, and as noted previously, what is effective in one context may not be effective in another. Additionally, since I recruited participants who message around environmental impacts on reproductive health, the study sample is likely biased towards those who view this messaging as effective or they would not use it in the first place. In searching the academic literature for evaluations of the efficacy of reproductive health messaging to advance an advocacy agenda regarding toxics or other issues, I was not able to find information in this area. I suggest this as a potential area for future research, such as by interviewing policymakers to assess their receptivity to this type of messaging, and how and why this receptivity might vary by context (e.g., geographic region, level of

government, demographics of policymakers). A better understanding of the efficacy of reproductive health messaging might help advocates to better tailor their campaigns to their immediate context.

It would also be worthwhile to evaluate frame resonance with regard to which population to focus messaging on—the population at large, vulnerable communities, or both. This was an area in which advocates disagreed, and perspectives regarding what was most effective did not fall neatly along lines of which type of organization they worked for (e.g., mainstream, justice). This would be an interesting area for future research in order to understand under what contexts and with what audiences each type of approach might be most resonant.

Additionally, while many of the advocates interviewed for this study focused on the unique vulnerabilities of women, perceived this focus to be resonant with potential supporters, and pointed towards women as a strong base of support for advocacy efforts, it would be worthwhile to engage in further research that explores the potential impact of a male-centered frame on mobilization (or alternatively, a frame that focuses on both men and women). This research could assess, for example, if focusing on one gender, the other, or both is most effective in advancing an environmental reproductive health agenda.

Lastly, this study was confined to efforts to address toxic exposures. However, there are other issues at the intersection of EJ and RJ, most notably climate change, that advocates are working to address (Di Chiro, 2008; Onis, 2012; Rojas-Cheatham, Paredes, Griffin, Shah, & Shen, 2009). There are also non-environmental issues that intersect with reproductive justice, and non-reproductive issues that intersect with environmental justice. All of these areas are lines of inquiry that can further contribute to understanding the benefits, challenges, and dynamics of cross-movement collaboration in the environmental and reproductive fields.

Public health impact

Implications for understanding cross-movement dynamics

This research makes a number of important contributions. Most studies of social movements have focused on within-movement collaborations (Beamish & Luebbers, 2009; Van Dyke, 2003). Additionally, among studies and reports that do focus on cross-movement efforts, few focus on the EJ/RJ intersection (Daniel et al., 2012; Di Chiro, 2008; Khan, 2009; Zimmerman & Miao, 2009). The findings in this study can help to address this literature gap by highlighting the specific synergies and tensions that arise from cross-movement collaboration between advocates working at the EJ/RJ intersection. Perspectives of advocates suggest that they see significant value in social movements coming together, but that the confluence of so many movements creates a high level of interpersonal complexity and competing priorities that can influence the strength of alliances, message framing, agendas, and ultimately, the ability of advocates to reach shared goals in improving public health. In order to build well-functioning cross-movement collaborations, there is a need to invest more in inter-group processes that can help these collaborations to flourish. The content in this research can provide a springboard for discussion between advocates at the EJ/RJ intersection in order to resolve issues and move towards joint goals. Many of the findings are also applicable to other diverse cross-movement collaborations that seek to unite groups with different levels of privilege and who are approaching a body of work from different social movement perspectives.

While EJ and RJ advocates previously engaged in conversations with each other to discuss how to build stronger cross-movement collaborations, such as through meetings convened by SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective and the Women's Foundation of California, the data from this study indicate that these dialogues are no longer

taking place. Resources permitting, advocates may wish to resume these talks in order to improve cross-movement dynamics, and could borrow strategies to improve collaboration from others who have worked to achieve similar goals. For example, advocates could use strategies from community-based participatory research in order to build partnerships between diverse stakeholders who differ in levels of privilege (Chávez et al., 2003; Yonas et al., 2013). They may also wish to examine existing social movement documents that seek to build respect amongst diverse social movement actors, such as the *Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing* that were mentioned by one participant (see Appendix J). Additionally, Roberts and Jesudason (2013) present a framework for facilitated dialogue to help advocates situated in different social movements create stronger alliances. Implementing these types of efforts could potentially help to increase the ability of advocates to successfully engage in cross-movement alliances, and thus to more effectively advocate for protective public health policies (as described below).

Implications for policies that promote health and health equity

Toxic exposures have been associated with an increase in reproductive health problems over the last several decades (ACOG et al., 2013). A sizeable body of evidence on the impact of toxicants on reproductive harm (Chalupka & Chalupka, 2010; Ritz & Wilhelm, 2008; Šrám et al., 2005; Wigle et al., 2007, 2008) has spurred reproductive health professionals to call for policy reforms to protect the population at large, and vulnerable populations in particular (ACOG et al., 2013b; Di Renzo et al., 2015). Yet, there is often a disconnect between the translation of science into public policy (Brownson et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2012; Green et al., 2009). Advocates can play an important role in shepherding science into policy. According to Blackwell and colleagues (2012), “community builders and organizers increasingly are turning to policy

approaches as among the most potent for affecting the health and well-being of communities (p.371).” The many advocates interviewed in this study are calling attention to the latest science in order to gain support amongst policymakers and the public for environmental policy reforms that can positively impact reproductive health.

According to the Ottawa Charter signed at the First International Conference on Health Promotion organized by the World Health Organization, empowering communities to act on their own behalf, advocating for sound public policies, and seeking to change social, political, and economic contextual factors that shape health are all critical to health promotion and health equity (First International Conference on Health Promotion, 1986). This research examines the work of advocates that are doing all of these things in order to protect themselves, others, and future generations. By pointing out ways in which people and entire communities are being contaminated and are suffering from higher associated levels of morbidity and mortality, advocates are challenging pervasive ideologies that a certain threshold of harm is acceptable in order to fuel economic growth. Their efforts not only aim to protect the biological reproduction of communities, but as interview and document data indicated, their cultural reproduction as well. Health equity in environmental reproductive health is therefore not simply about equal opportunities to pass genetic material from one generation to another, but also about equal opportunities to keep communities intact and have a high quality of life.

While my original interest was in the environmental and reproductive justice movements, the snowball sampling technique that I used led me to an interconnected web of advocates who identify with numerous social justice and mainstream movements. This demonstrates the breadth of activists across the United States who are interested in protecting vulnerable populations from toxic harm. It also demonstrates that toxics is an issue that can help to bring people together into

coalitions and other forms of collaboration to further policy reform. Findings from this research, as well as the organizational resource list that many advocates have signed onto, could potentially encourage more advocates to join these efforts to protect communities of color, Indigenous, and low-income communities, as well as to protect the public at large.

This research can help advocates to strengthen the kinds of broad-based coalitions needed to push through policy change by shedding light on many of the tensions and challenges that arise from cross-movement work, and by presenting multiple perspectives that can inform policy asks. For example, a number of advocates suggested that policies that target the most vulnerable populations represent the best strategy for helping society at large to improve health. This includes cleaning up the dirtiest side of the supply chain and taking into account cumulative effects when determining policies. However, gaining the political support to pass more stringent standards can be challenging. This is where the benefits of cross-movement work (e.g., expanded bases of support) might help to further advocacy efforts in this direction. Additionally, frames introduced by advocates into policy circles and amongst the public at large may shift the parameters of the debate. Even if there is currently insufficient support amongst elected officials for policy asks, by changing the bounds of the debate per the Overton window (Russell, 2006), advocates may be better positioned to push through their asks when a policy window opens (Kingdon, 1995).

Cross-movement collaboration between advocates can also help to provide a foundation for a “health in all policies approach” that promotes health and health equity. The Public Health Institute and the American Public Health Association, in their joint report, *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*, have noted that agencies working outside of public health are oftentimes responsible for improving the physical, social, economic, and service

environments that impact health (Rudolph, Caplan, Ben-Moshe, & Dillon, 2013). In the report's introduction, former APHA President, Adewale Troutman, and current APHA Executive Director, Georges Benjamin, wrote: "Solutions to our complex and urgent problems will require collaborative efforts across many sectors and all levels, including government agencies, businesses, and community-based organizations (p.1)." This approach requires precisely the kind of cross-movement collaboration that an intersectional collective action frame encourages. Groups already engaged in cross-movement, intersectoral efforts can therefore help to implement a "health in all policies" approach.

Implications for funding

Advocates cited lack of funding for intersectional EJ/RJ efforts as a major barrier to their environmental reproductive health work. Through supplemental interviews with funders, this research has contributed to a better understanding of this barrier, and how both advocates and funders might address it. Most notably, participants expressed that it is challenging to get financial support for intersectional work because the philanthropic world is relatively siloed in how it vets funding applications. This work is often sent to the wrong program officer for review. There have been efforts by people within the funding world to change this system, but apparently with limited success. If vulnerable communities are most in need of intersectional solutions in order to improve health, and yet the philanthropic world is not structured to support this work, then organizations that are in need of resources may not be able to adequately serve their constituencies. The philanthropic world may wish to build upon efforts that some funders have already initiated to break down funding siloes.

There were other barriers to funding as well. For example, funders reported that intersectional frames may come across as over-ambitious and therefore less appealing because they feel that their dollars will not have a sufficient impact. Funders provided strategies to address this problem, suggesting that applicants focus on stating their interim, short-term deliverables while simultaneously being clear about how these goals fit within their long-term strategy. Funders also noted that sometimes advocates may lack the appropriate language in their proposals to describe intersectional work. Advocates might be able to improve upon the language at their disposal by dialoging with funders, or by collaborating with other advocates to hone their messaging.

Funders also suggested that advocates look into alternative sources of funding. This includes grassroots fundraising campaigns to secure large and small individual donations, as well as earned income strategies, such as charging fees for speaking engagements and organizational publications. Additionally, I would suggest that mainstream organizations with more financial resources have a role to play in supporting justice efforts. Conducting internal assessments of how they are allocating their resources and reallocating dollars to benefit vulnerable populations could translate into much needed support for EJ/RJ intersectional public health work.

Concluding comments

Aiken and Mechanic (1986) assert that social science research can make a significant contribution by influencing the way in which policymakers and the public think about health and social problems. This research can serve as a conduit for information that can ultimately help to shape opinion. By capturing advocates' perspectives in their own words and compiling these perspectives into a single analytic document, this study provides one particular snapshot of how

advocates are currently framing their ideas and translating these ideas into action. This compendium of information, which I plan to disseminate to study participants, might be used to further inform their diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames in order to strengthen collective action. More successful collective action can, in turn, help to improve policies to address environmental reproductive health issues in vulnerable populations, as well as in the population at large. This research can also be used by other advocates, policymakers, and public health professionals to gain a deeper understanding of how they might apply intersectional approaches and reproductive health messaging in their own work.

Appendices

Appendix A. Framing matrix

Key aspects	Prompts (to identify and code data)
Overall description	How is the issue described? What is the emphasis?
Type of problem	Why is the issue a problem? What type of problem (health, social, economic, moral) is it?
Affected groups (depiction of those affected)	Who is the issue a problem for? Is it an individual, specific community or whole population problem? Are age, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic dimensions mentioned? Who is excluded from or not affected by the problem? How are those affected (those with the problem) described?
Main cause	What is identified as the main cause? Is the cause environmental or individual? Please elaborate. Is there any additional focus or emphasis in the discussion of causes? Who/what is to blame for the problem?
Non-causes	What are dismissed or explicitly identified as non-causes?
Existing policy	What are the views on current policy?
Policy prescriptions	What solutions are proposed/emphasized? What issues are included and excluded? Are the solutions targeted or universal? Who is responsible?
Non-solutions	What solutions are opposed?
Appeals to principle	What values or principles are evident in the problem representation?

The above framing matrix provides two columns from a matrix developed by Jenkin, Signal and Thomson (2011), who in turn built upon work by Kwan (2009). I excluded a third column from their matrix that focused on signature rhetorical devices since that was not a focus in this study. Instead of using the matrix to identify and code data, as they did, I used it to aid in developing topics for the interview guide.

Appendix B. Interview guide for advocates

[Note: I fine-tuned the guide as the research progressed. This is the last iteration of the interview guide.]

Thank you for agreeing to this interview. As I mentioned before, I'm a doctoral student at the University of Michigan's School of Public Health. I'm researching advocacy efforts to protect communities of color and low-income communities from environmental toxicants harmful to reproductive health. I'm particularly interested in how advocates in different social movements addressing environmental and reproductive issues approach this work.

After I analyze our interview, I'll send you a write-up of it in case you would like to give me feedback on my analysis before I finalize the results. After the whole study is over, I'll give you a written summary of the findings, and will also have either a conference call or webinar with participants to share the findings verbally. I hope that the results of this study will be useful to you.

If signed consent electronically: *Thank you for signing the consent form. I'm going to review a few points from it. [Your answers will be kept anonymous/You signed the optional confidentiality waiver so your answers may not be kept anonymous.] If there is any question that you don't want to answer, we can skip it. I would like to record this interview so that I can listen carefully instead of taking notes. Only those with a role in the study will be allowed to listen to the recording. Is it alright for me to begin recording?*

If did not sign consent electronically: *I sent you a consent form. Did you have a chance to review it? **If no:** Do you want me to wait for you to go over it, or alternatively, would you like me to summarize key points?*

If participant would like to review it herself/himself, *offer to resend the form right now via email if participant is at a computer and get consent electronically before beginning.*

If participant would like me to go over it, *proceed with key points:*

- 1. The interview will likely take about an hour to an hour and a half, though could be longer or shorter depending upon how much information you would like to share.*
- 2. With your permission, I'd like to audiotape the interview.*
- 3. Your answers will be anonymous, unless you choose to make your identity known.*
- 4. You can skip any interview question you don't wish to answer or stop your participation at any time.*

Is it alright to start recording this interview so that I can get your verbal consent?

- 1. For the purposes of consent, I need to state your name and ask you for consent. [Participant's name], do you consent to participating in this interview?*
- 2. Do you consent to my recording this interview?*
- 3. Do you give permission to reveal your identity on the transcript and in the write-up of this study? Please note that even if you give your consent, if others from your*

organization who are interviewed do not wish to share their identity, we will not publish your name and the name of your organization so as to protect their identity.

For all participants: *Do you have any questions or concerns before we begin?*

[Note: The order of questions may change, depending upon the flow of the conversation with each participant. It is alright to use EJ and RJ language from the beginning if I have seen it on their website and it's clearly central to their work.]

Organizational/Individual Intersectional EJ/RJ Work

1. Please tell me about the work that you're doing to protect low-income communities or communities of color from environmental toxicants that can harm reproductive health.

Probes:

- a. What are the issues you focus on?
 - b. What are the populations that you focus on? Why?
 - c. What do you see as overall solutions to these problems?
 - d. What kinds of advocacy strategies are you using?
 - e. Who are your main audiences for your advocacy efforts?
 - When you speak with these audiences, can you give me an example of what you would say to get their support? *Might ask for elevator speech.*
 - f. What are your specific asks? (*Probe: What does 'support' look like?*)
 - g. Who do you see as your allies in your efforts? How do you appeal to them?
 - h. Who do you see as opponents to your efforts? How do you address their opposition?
 - i. What do you see as the underlying causes of the issues you focus on? (*Potential probes: e.g., social, political, historical, geographic factors*) *Might ask about root causes of a toxic society, and root causes of inequities.*
2. What is unique/effective about advocacy work that *combines* both environmental health and reproductive health, as opposed to advocacy work that *only* addresses environmental health or *only* addresses reproductive health? (Can probe for strategies, outcomes.)
 - a. Why does your organization choose to work at this intersection?
 - b. Can you comment on the impact of talking about pregnancy, fertility and other reproductive issues when discussing toxicants?
 3. What do you think of when you think of reproductive health?
 4. *If not already clear by this point:* Would you say that you're more closely aligned with a social movement that addresses environmental issues, with reproductive health or rights issues, or are you equally aligned with movements that address both? OR Which social movements do you consider yourself to be a part of when you address environmental reproductive health issues? Of these, what is your primary social movement lens? (*This information will help contextualize future questions. Can use EJ or RJ terms, or other similar terms, if they already have. Can probe for environmental justice, environmental, environmental health or reproductive justice, health or rights.*)

5. My next question has to do with terminology. (*Can mix and match a and b if necessary.*)
- a. *If uses RJ:* I notice that you use the term RJ to describe your work. What does this term/these terms mean to you? How would you define it?
 - i. Some individuals specifically mention women and girls when they define RJ. Would you also include men or boys as populations of focus for RJ work? Why or why not?
 - b. *If does not use EJ or RJ language:* I notice that when you've described your work, you do not use the term/terms [EJ or RJ]. Do you ever use this term/these terms to describe your work? Why or why not?
 - i. What does the term RJ mean to you? How would you define it?
 - ii. Some individuals specifically mention women and girls when they define RJ. Would you also include men or boys as populations of focus for RJ work? Why or why not?
 - c. Discussions about the fetus generate a lot of controversy in the U.S. Does this controversy influence the way that you frame discussions (i.e. language) about protecting pregnancy health? Please explain.

Collaborations

For the following, use the movement that is alternate to the participant's movement.

For this next section, I'm interested in cross-movement collaborations – that is, collaborations between advocates who primarily bring an environmental lens to the table with advocates who primarily have a reproductive lens. I'm interested in understanding the similarities and differences in how people in different social movements approach their work, and how these similarities and differences might either facilitate or hinder cross-movement collaboration.

6. Have you collaborated with any [environmental health/justice organizations OR reproductive justice/health/rights groups] in your advocacy efforts to protect low-income communities or communities of color from toxicants that can harm reproductive health?

If no, skip to question 7.

- a. *If yes:* Please describe this/these collaboration(s). *Probes:* Who was at the table?
- b. What did you work on?
- c. What were the unique contributions of EJ/EH group(s) to these efforts?
- d. What were the unique contributions of RJ/RH group(s) to these efforts?
- e. What worked well? What did not work well? Please give examples.
- f. Was there anything about the way in which the [EJ/EH or RJ/RH] advocates framed their work that was very different from how advocates from your movement framed it? If yes, please give specific examples. How did this influence the collaboration? (*Probe for differences in how they constructed their arguments, language, points of synergy, points of tension.*)

- i. *If influenced collaboration negatively*: Were you able to overcome these differences? If so, how?
 - g. How did you create this collaboration? How did you maintain it?
- 7. How does the utility of cross-movement collaborations compare with the usefulness of within-movement collaborations? What do you see as the key differences?
- 8. Going forward, would you find it useful to collaborate with [cite the opposite movement: EJ/EH or RJ/RH] organizations on environmental reproductive health issues in low-income communities or communities of color? How? Can you give some specific examples?
 - a. How do you think EJ and RJ groups could impact environmental reproductive health issues if they were to come together more?
- 9. When you think about EJ and RJ organizations, and then about organizations that work on EJ and RJ issues but are not EJ or RJ organizations, per se, how can these two types of organizations best work together to reduce toxic exposures that can harm reproductive health in communities of color and low-income communities? How do you view their roles in working together?
(The following question emerged in the course of the research.)
 - a. I've noticed two different approaches among advocates to protect communities of color and low-income communities from toxicants harmful to reproductive health. One is to specifically target these communities, and the other is to target the general population, and help vulnerable communities in the process – 'the rising tide lifts all boats' approach? Given the current political situation, what are your thoughts on these two strategies? Is one more effective than the other? Why?

EJ/RJ Intersectional Movement Overall

(Skip this section if short on time and move directly to demographic questions.)

- 10. Thinking very broadly now about social movement activities that you know of across the U.S. that aim to protect low-income communities and communities of color from toxicants that can harm reproductive health:
 - a. Would it be accurate to say that this is a growing movement? Why or why not?
 - b. To your knowledge, when organizations work to prevent toxicants from harming reproductive health, are they working with other organizations within their same movement, or are they working across movements?
 - c. To your knowledge, are there certain areas in the U.S. where EJ-EH/RJ-RH intersectional work is happening the most? If yes: Where? Why do you suppose this is the case?
 - d. To what extent is this work bringing together organizations with different political orientations (e.g., liberal, conservative)? Why do you think this is the case?

- e. How, if at all, has this intersectional work changed over time? (Can probe for framing, issues of focus, strategies, outcomes, collaborations.)

11. Is there anything else that you'd like to comment on?

12. As part of my research, I'm reviewing documents as well.

- a. Are there any documents that your organization has used to advocate around EJ/RJ issues that would help me to see how you frame your messaging to stakeholders? This could be any kind of document, such as a report, email, newsletter, article, position statement or press release. How can I get a hold of these documents?

- i. *Prompt:* If I found a particular document online that looks relevant: Is this a document that would be good for me to look at?
- ii. Were you directly involved in writing this document? If yes, which part(s)?

13. I'm in the process of expanding upon a list of people to potentially interview. Are there any people in your organization or in another organization who you would suggest that I interview? I'm interested in interviewing advocates who are knowledgeable and experienced when it comes to protecting communities of color and low-income communities from toxicants that can harm reproductive health. *If designates one or more people:* If I contact her/him/them, is it alright to say that you referred me? [If relevant, note that I am only able to conduct interviews in English. If this is the third interviewee in an organization, do not ask for someone else within the organization.]

14. I'm giving participants the option of including their organizational name and contact information on a list of organizations that participated in this study. This list will be given to all study participants as a resource. This information may also be included in the write-up of the study, which non-study participants may see. Contact information may include your organization's website, main phone number, main email address and mailing address. I would not include your name or your personal contact information. *[If relevant:* I will not include your organization's information unless *all* people who were interviewed from your organization want to include this information.] Do you want your organization to be included on this resource list? *If yes:* I will follow-up with you via email to get your written consent and the contact information.

Before I end, I would like to ask you a few demographic questions so that I can describe my participant pool. Please feel free to skip any question that you don't want to answer.

1. What is your current job title? _____
2. How many years have you been with your current organization? _____
3. How do you define your gender? _____
4. How do you define your race or ethnicity? _____
5. With which political party, if any, do you affiliate? _____
6. How many years have you been involved in EJ work [or EH work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____

7. How many years have you been involved in RJ work [or RH/reproductive rights work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____
8. How many years have you been involved in intersectional EJ/RJ work [or EH/RH intersectional work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____

Thank you for speaking with me. I'll follow up with you via email to [get your consent to include your organizational contact information in the resource list and to] get copies of the documents that you mentioned. I would like to send you \$25 as a token of appreciation for participating. To what address should I send the check?

Again, after I finish my analysis of our interview, I will send you a write-up of it in case you'd like to give me feedback before I finalize my analysis. I'll also get in touch next year, probably in May of 2016, to share my overall study findings with you and other study participants, both via a written report and either a conference call or webinar.

Thank you again for your time.

Appendix C. Interview guide for funders

1. Are you currently funding EJ/RJ intersectional work? Why or why not?
 - a. What did you fund in the past?
2. What are the barriers that they face in funding this work?
3. What would allow you to facilitate more of this work?
4. Some participants have said that it is challenging to get funding for this intersection. Do you agree? Why or why not? If yes, what about this intersection makes it challenging to fund?
5. Some participants have said that there were previously funds to support this intersection, but this funding has dropped off. Do you share this perception? Why or why not? If yes, why has funding dropped off?
6. Do you think that EJ individually (without incorporating RJ) and RJ individually (without incorporating EJ) get more funding on their own than they do when they're combined? Do you agree? If yes, why would it be easier to fund them independently than to fund the intersection?
7. How does funding the EJ/RJ intersection compare to funding the environmental health/reproductive health intersection?

Before I end, I would like to ask you a few demographic questions so that I can describe my participant pool. Please feel free to skip any question that you don't want to answer.

1. What is your current job title? _____
2. How many years have you been with your current organization? _____
3. How do you define your gender? _____
4. How do you define your race or ethnicity? _____
5. With which political party, if any, do you affiliate? _____

6. How many years have you been involved in EJ work [or EH work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____
7. How many years have you been involved in RJ work [or RH/reproductive rights work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____
8. How many years have you been involved in intersectional EJ/RJ work [or EH/RH intersectional work in communities of color or low-income communities]? _____

Appendix D. Consent forms

Consent form for advocates:

Consent to Participate in a Research Study On Advocacy at the Intersection of Environmental Health and Reproductive Health

Principal Investigator: Rebecca Mandell, M.S., Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan

Dissertation Advisors: Barbara Israel, Dr.P.H., Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan; Amy J. Schulz, Ph.D., Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan

You are invited to be a part of a research study that looks at organizations and coalitions that are engaging in advocacy efforts to address environmental issues in communities of color and low-income communities that can impact reproductive health. The purpose of this study is to: 1) understand how advocates in different social movements frame their work; 2) identify what kinds of historical, political and geographic contextual factors influence their frames; 3) identify how frames may differ across social movements that address environmental reproductive health issues in vulnerable communities; 4) generate a theory as to how frames shape this work and can be used synergistically across movements. Study findings could potentially be used to inform advocacy work, either within or across organizations, should this be useful.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in one interview via video chat (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts), telephone or in some cases, a face-to-face interview. The interview should take about 1 – 1 ½ hours, though could be shorter or longer depending upon how much information you have to share. We will audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately. The discussion topics will include questions about the kind of work that you have carried out at the intersection of environmental and reproductive health with regard to low-income communities and/or communities of color, how you frame this work, the nature of any cross-movement collaborations you may have had in this area, and your overall thoughts on social movement activities at the intersection of environmental health and reproductive health. You may choose not to answer any interview question and you can stop your participation in the research at any time. You will also be asked to provide any documents or texts that you think would show how you message to stakeholders regarding environmental reproductive health issues, and that you are comfortable sharing. Documents may include, but

are not limited to, reports, brochures, emails, newsletters, articles, position statements and press releases.

You will be given \$25 after the interview as a token of appreciation for your time. We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you or your organization, unless you give explicit permission to do so. The researchers will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected. To protect confidentiality, your real name will not be used in the transcript of the discussion, unless you sign the confidentiality waiver below. We may use direct quotes from you, but will not identify your name when using these quotes, unless you sign the confidentiality waiver below. The researchers plan to keep this study data indefinitely for future research.

After our interview, you will be sent a write-up of the analysis and interpretation of our interview in order to give you an opportunity to give your feedback on the findings before the results are finalized. At the close of the study, you will also be sent a written summary of study findings, and will be invited to participate in either a conference call or webinar in which the study findings will be shared and discussed. Participating in this call or webinar is completely optional.

At the end of our interview, you will also be invited to include your organization's contact information in a resource list that will be shared with other participants. This information may also be included in the write-up of the study, which non-study participants may see. Contact information may include your organization's website, main phone number, main email address and mailing address. We would not include your name or your personal contact information. Being included on this list is entirely optional. If you are interested in being included, you will receive a separate email after the interview to ask for your consent and the appropriate contact information.

There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly (such as university faculty), and transcribers who will help with transcription of the interview. The University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight. If you have questions about this research, you can contact Rebecca Mandell, MS, University of Michigan, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, mandellr@umich.edu.

By signing this document (with either your handwritten or electronic signature) or by providing your verbal consent, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. You will be given a copy of this document for your records and one copy will be kept with the study records. Please be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study and to be audiotaped as part of the study.

Name (please print)

Signature (either handwritten or electronic)

Date

Optional confidentiality waiver:

If you would like to give permission to reveal your identity in the transcript and write-up of this study, please sign the waiver below. Please note that even if you give your consent, if others from your organization who are interviewed do not wish to share their identity, we will not publish your name and the name of your organization so as to protect their identity.*

I agree to waive my right to confidentiality. You may use my name, position and/or organization when referring to information that I share, including direct quotes.

Signature (either handwritten or electronic)

Date

Note: If you are being interviewed by video chat or phone, please return this consent form via email to Rebecca Mandell at mandellr@umich.edu.

[*As the study progressed, I realized that if one participant from an organization waived confidentiality, this would not jeopardize the confidentiality of another participant from the same organization and that some people may prefer to have their ideas attributed to them. I therefore contacted IRB and, at their advice, reached out to people who had signed the confidentiality waiver, but whose organizational colleagues had not, to see if they wanted me to reveal their identity. This only applied to a few participants, as most participants were the sole participants from their organization.]

Consent form for funders:

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
on the Intersection of Environmental Justice and Reproductive Justice**

Principal Investigator: Rebecca Mandell, M.S., Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan

Dissertation Advisors: Barbara Israel, Dr.P.H., Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan; Amy J. Schulz, Ph.D., Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, University of Michigan

You are invited to be a part of a research study that examines advocacy efforts to protect communities of color and low-income communities from toxicants that can harm reproductive health. The purpose of this study is to: 1) understand how advocates in different social movements frame their work; 2) identify what kinds of social, political and economic contextual

factors influence their frames; 3) identify how frames may differ across social movements that address environmental reproductive health issues in vulnerable communities; and 4) generate a theory as to how frames shape this work and can be used synergistically across movements. The purpose of reaching out to your foundation is to learn more about objective 2 above – the contextual factors that influence advocacy efforts.

If you agree to be part of the research study, you will be asked to participate in one interview via telephone or video chat (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts). The interview should take about 30 minutes, though could be shorter or longer depending upon how much information you have to share. We will audiotape the interview to make sure that our conversation is recorded accurately. The discussion topics will include questions about whether or not your foundation is currently interested in the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice, how your foundation sees its role in supporting work at this intersection, and barriers and facilitating factors to supporting this work. You may choose not to answer any interview question and you can stop your participation in the research at any time.

We plan to publish the results of this study, but will not include any information that would identify you or your organization, unless you give explicit permission to do so. The researchers will enter study data on a computer that is password-protected. To protect confidentiality, your real name will not be used in the transcript of the discussion, unless you sign the confidentiality waiver below. We may use direct quotes from you, but will not identify your name when using these quotes, unless you sign the confidentiality waiver below. The researchers plan to keep this study data indefinitely for future research.

There are some reasons why people other than the researchers may need to see information you provided as part of the study. This includes organizations responsible for making sure the research is done safely and properly (such as university faculty), and transcribers who will help with transcription of the interview. The University of Michigan Health Sciences and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board (IRB) has determined that this study is exempt from IRB oversight. If you have questions about this research, you can contact Rebecca Mandell, MS, University of Michigan, Department of Health Behavior and Health Education, mandellr@umich.edu.

By signing this document (with either your handwritten or electronic signature) or by providing your verbal consent, you are agreeing to be part of the study. Participating in this research is completely voluntary. Even if you decide to participate now, you may change your mind and stop at any time. Please be sure that questions you have about the study have been answered and that you understand what you are being asked to do. You may contact the researcher if you think of a question later.

I agree to participate in the study and to be audiotaped as part of the study.

Name (please print)

Signature (either handwritten or electronic) Date

Optional confidentiality waiver:

If you would like to give permission to reveal your identity in the transcript and write-up of this study, please sign the waiver below.

I agree to waive my right to confidentiality. You may use my name, position and/or organization when referring to information that I share, including direct quotes.

Signature (either handwritten or electronic) Date

Note: Please return this consent form via email to Rebecca Mandell at mandellr@umich.edu.

Appendix E. Email consent for organizational resource list

Consent to include organizational contact information

I would like my organization's name and contact information to be included in a list of organizations that participated in this study on advocacy at the intersection of environmental health and reproductive health. I understand that this list will be given to all study participants as a resource. This information may also be included in the write-up of the study, which non-study participants may see. This information will only be included if all members of my organization who participated in this study agree to include this information. My name and personal contact information will *not* be included.

Please type your name here to give consent: _____

Please confirm that your organizational contact information below is correct.

- Organizational name:
- Main phone number:
- Main email address:
- Mailing address:
- Website:

Appendix F. Organizational resource list

The following is a partial list of organizations that participated in this study. It includes the contact information for an organization if all participants from that organization gave written consent to be on this list.

Alaska Community Action on Toxics
907-222-7714
info@akaction.org
505 West Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 205 Anchorage, Alaska 99503
www.akaction.org

Black Women for Wellness
323-290-5955
info@bwwla.com
P.O. Box 292516, Los Angeles, CA 90029
www.bwwla.org

Bronx Health Link
718-590-2648
info@bronxhealthlink.org
851 Grand Concourse, Suite 914, Bronx, NY 10451
www.bronxhealthlink.org

California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative
510-986-6830 ext. 267
info@cahealthynailsalons.org
California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative c/o Asian Health Services, 818 Webster St.,
Oakland, CA 94607
www.cahealthynailsalons.org

Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy (CHANGE)
(510) 655-3900
www.changecalifornia.org

Center for Environmental Health (New York office)
212-689-6999
info@ceh.org
42 Broadway, Suite 12-133 New York, NY 10004
www.ceh.org

Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
303-393-0382
info@colorlatina.org
P.O. Box 40991, Denver, CO 80204
www.colorlatina.org

Ecology Center (Ann Arbor office)
734-761-3186
info@ecocenter.org
339 East Liberty St. Suite 300, Ann Arbor, MI 48104
www.ecocenter.org

Ecology Center (Detroit office)
313-733-0039
info@ecocenter.org
4750 Woodward Ave., Suite 307, Detroit, MI 48201
www.ecocenter.org

Environmental Health Coalition
619-474-0220
ehc@environmentalhealth.org
2727 Hoover Ave. Suite 202 National City, CA 91950
www.environmentalhealth.org

Environmental Justice and Health Alliance for Chemical Policy Reform
802-251-0203
ej4allnow@gmail.com
28 Vernon St., Suite 434, Brattleboro, VT 05301
www.ej4all.org

Farmworker Association of Florida
407-886-5151
info@floridafarmworkers.org
1264 Apopka Blvd., Apopka, FL 32703
www.floridafarmworkers.org

Green Door Initiative
313-922-8055
info@greendoorinitiative.org
5555 Conner St., Detroit, MI 48213
www.greendoorinitiative.org

Just Transition Alliance
619-573-4934
2615 Camino del Rio South, Suite 400 San Diego, CA 92108
www.jtalliance.org

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
202-470-3170
info@napawf.org
1735 Caton Ave. #7C, Brooklyn, NY 11226
www.napawf.org

Native American Community Board/Native American Women's Health Education Resource Center
605-487-7097
P.O. Box 572, Lake Andes, SD 57356
www.nativeshop.org

New Voices Pittsburgh
412-363-4500
info@newvoicespittsburgh.org
The Beatty Building, 5907 Penn Ave., Suite 340, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
www.newvoicespittsburgh.org

People Concerned About Chemical Safety
304-389-6859
chemicalsafetyadvocates@gmail.com
179 Summers St., Suite 232, Charleston, WV 25301
www.chemsafety.org

Reproductive Health Technologies Project
202-530-4401
info@rhtp.org
1634 Eye Street NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20006
www.rhtp.org

Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families
info@saferchemicals.org
641 S St. NW, 3rd Fl., Washington, DC 20001
www.saferchemicals.org

Tewa Women United
505-747-3259
info@tewawomenunited.org
P.O. Box 397 Santa Cruz, NM 87567
www.tewawomenunited.org

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (t.e.j.a.s.)
6731 Harrisburg Blvd., Houston, TX 77011
www.tejasbarrios.org

WE ACT for Environmental Justice
212-961-1000
1854 Amsterdam Ave., 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10031
www.weact.org

Women's Voices for the Earth
406-543-3747
womensvoices@womensvoices.org
P.O. Box 8743, Missoula, MT 59807
www.womensvoices.org

Appendix G. Introductory email

Dear [Name],

I was referred to you by [name] (if applicable). I'm a doctoral student in public health at the University of Michigan. I'm interviewing advocates who are working to protect vulnerable communities from environmental toxicants harmful to reproductive health. I'm particularly interested in how advocates in different social movements frame their work, with implications for cross-movement collaboration. I'm contacting you to see if you might be interested in speaking with me.

I will follow up with you via phone to see if you might be interested in scheduling an interview. Alternatively, if you think that you are interested or if do not wish to be contacted, please let me know. I have included more information about the study below.

Thank you.

Best,
Rebecca

Overarching research questions

- How are advocates framing efforts to address issues that lie at the intersection of environmental health and reproductive health in communities of color and/or low-income communities?
- What are the implications of these frames for collaboration with advocates in other social movements who also address issues at this intersection?

Study goals

- Identify how advocates in different social movements frame their work to protect low-income communities and/or communities of color from toxicants that can harm reproductive health;
- Identify social, political and historical contextual factors that influence their frames;
- Identify similarities and differences in frames, and how they impact cross-movement collaboration; and
- Generate a theory as to how frames shape advocacy work at the intersection of environmental health and reproductive health in communities of color and/or low-income communities, and how they can be used synergistically across movements.

Benefits of participating

- Participating in this research could inform your personal and organizational thinking on environmental reproductive health issues, and can provide a networking opportunity with others engaging in similar issues.
- You will receive a written summary of study findings, as well as an invitation to participate in an optional webinar or conference call where findings will be shared and discussed.
- You will receive a resource list of organizations who would like to share their contact information with other participants to facilitate networking.
- You will receive a \$25 check or gift card as a token of appreciation for your time.

Interview details

- The interview will take about 1 -1 ½ hours, though could be longer or shorter depending upon how much information you would like to share.
- Prior to being interviewed, you will need to electronically sign or verbally agree to a consent form that explains study expectations and your rights as a participant.
- The interview will be done over the phone or via video chat (e.g., Skype, Google Hangouts), or in some cases, face-to-face.
- With your permission, the interview will be audiotaped.
- Your answers will be anonymous, unless you choose to make your identity known.
- You can skip any interview question you do not wish to answer or stop your participation at any time.
- After the interview, you will be asked to provide any documents that you feel would help to show how your organization messages to stakeholders on environmental reproductive health issues, and that you are comfortable sharing.
- After the interview, you will be sent a write-up of the analysis and interpretation of the interview in order to give you an opportunity to give your feedback on the findings before the results are finalized.

Eligibility

You must be able to answer *yes* to all of the following questions in order to participate:

- Has your organization worked to address the impact of toxicants on reproductive health? This could be current work or significant work in the past.
- Does a portion or all of this environmental reproductive health work focus on communities of color and/or low-income populations?
- Does a portion or all of this environmental reproductive health work focus on issues within the United States?
- For coalitions only: Does your coalition have staff who oversee operations? (If not, organizations within the coalition may still be eligible to participate.)

Appendix H. Phone call recruitment guide and screening questionnaire

My name is Rebecca Mandell and I'm a doctoral student at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. I was referred to you by [name] (if applicable). I'm interviewing individuals who work to protect low-income communities and communities of color from environmental toxicants that can harm reproductive health. I'm calling to find out if you're interested in being interviewed for my study. Do you have a few minutes to see if you're interested and eligible to participate? If so, we could set up an interview for a later time.

1. Do you currently do work that addresses the impact of environmental toxicants on reproductive health? *[If yes, proceed.]*
Prompt: For example, some advocates are working to prevent toxic chemicals in air, soil, water or consumer products from harming reproductive health.
2. Does a portion or all of this environmental reproductive health work focus on communities of color and/or low-income populations? *[If yes, proceed.]*
3. Is a portion or all of this environmental reproductive health work focused on issues within the United States? *[If yes, proceed.]*

Participating in this study might be beneficial because both the process of being interviewed and seeing the findings of the study may influence your personal and organizational thinking with regard to addressing environmental and reproductive health issues in these communities. Findings will speak to how participants in different social movements frame their work, with implications for cross-movement collaboration. After my study is over, I plan to give a report with my findings back to study participants, and also to hold either a conference call or webinar with participants to report my findings. This may be a good opportunity to network and dialogue with other organizations in the study that are engaging in similar work, should you wish to do so. You can also just listen anonymously. I also plan to give out a resource list of organizations who would like to share their contact information with other participants. You would also receive \$25 for participating as a token of appreciation for your time. I anticipate that the interview will take an hour to an hour and a half and can be done [over the phone/via web chat/in person]. Answers will be anonymous, unless you choose to make your identity known.

4. Would you be interested in participating?
5. *For coalitions only:* Does your organization have a staff that oversees operations? *[If yes, proceed. If no, aim to recruit organizations within coalition.]*

[If eligible, set up interview time. Participants must also be conversant in English, though I will not ask this eligibility question unless it appears that this may be relevant].

Appendix I. Member checking email and summary

Below is the information that I provided to participants as part of the member checking summary. As I noted below, the summary of themes that I shared was preliminary. I anticipated that as my analysis continued, these themes would continue to develop and mature. For this reason, the themes reflected below do not directly mirror those presented in the dissertation itself.

Dear [name],

Thank you again for doing an interview with me regarding your work to protect vulnerable populations from toxicants harmful to reproductive health. I have completed a total of 36 interviews with advocates across the U.S. who are engaged in work at the intersection of environmental justice and reproductive justice. At the suggestion of several participants, I also completed interviews with 4 funders who have supported work in this area.

Based on these interviews, I have identified key themes that have emerged across all of the interviews. I have summarized these themes in the attached document. Before I finalize my analysis and write up the findings, I would like to give you the opportunity to give me feedback on these themes, should you wish to do so. If you have comments, please give them to me by December 18, 2015 in whatever way is most convenient for you – either by email or we can set up a time to speak via phone or video chat.

Please note the following:

- Providing me with feedback is completely optional. There is no expectation that you will provide more of your time than you have already generously given to this research project.
- I have included this step in the research process to check that I am on the right track with my analysis. Any additional insights that you may share, including alternate interpretations of the material for me to consider, are most welcome, and will add richness and depth to the analysis as it moves forward.
- The summary of themes attached is a preliminary one. As you and other participants share your feedback, and as my analysis continues, these themes will continue to develop and mature.

I greatly appreciate your considering this request. I value your insights and expertise and look forward to hearing from you, as desired. If you have any questions for me regarding this step in the research process, please do not hesitate to ask.

Thank you again for being a part of my dissertation research. I will be in touch again after I have finalized my analysis to share the results via a written summary, as well as verbally via a conference call or webinar.

Best regards,

Rebecca Mandell, MS, PhD Candidate
University of Michigan School of Public Health
mandellr@umich.edu
[Personal cell number]

Summary of Preliminary Findings on “Intersections of Environmental and Exposures that Impact Reproductive Health”

The content below is based upon responses from interview participants. I have divided my findings into three overarching themes, each of which will be the subject of a chapter of my dissertation. In the chapters, I will flesh out the themes below in greater detail, along with quotes from interview participants. Your thoughts and comments on these themes are most welcome as I continue to finalize the analysis. Please submit any comments by December 18, 2015.

Theme 1. Breaking Free From Siloes: Working at the Intersection of Issues, Identities and Movements

This first chapter focuses upon the theme of working at the intersection of issues, identities and movements when advocating to prevent toxic exposures that can harm reproductive health in vulnerable communities. I will explore defining characteristics of working at intersections, and associated benefits and challenges.

Intersecting issues

Advocates are using intersectional, multi-issue frames to bring attention to the impact of toxic exposures upon reproductive health. These frames are *intersectional* in that they draw attention to interrelated factors that jointly impact risk of exposure and vulnerability to toxicants. They are *multi-issue* in that they encompass multiple topic areas, including environmental health and justice, reproductive health and justice, racial justice, worker’s rights, immigrant rights, and economic justice (among others). In some intersectional frameworks, the environment and reproduction are so tightly linked that the body itself is equated with the environment, highlighting the need for a toxic-free maternal environment to support fetal and infant development.

Intersectional, multi-issue frames have many benefits with regard to advocacy around toxicants and reproductive health. They are responsive to the intertwined nature of issues as they influence risk, and consider solutions that cut across issue-based siloes. They create space for discussions about genuine reproductive choice that move beyond abortion and contraception to include a broader focus on the need for a toxic-free environment supportive of fertility and healthy child development. These frames also present challenges. It may be difficult to find funding because funders often favor approaches that fit into discrete categories rather than ones that straddle multiple issue areas; funders may find such frames to be over-ambitious and thus question if their funding dollars will have an impact; and there is a need for better language to describe intersectional work in funding applications. An additional challenge is that the policy world is often siloed, making it difficult to pass intersectional policy approaches.

Intersecting identities

Advocates are using frames that allow them to equally consider different aspects of their own identities with regard to toxic exposures, as well as the multi-faceted identities amongst those who they are working to protect. These frames are critical in addressing issues in which risk of toxic exposure is impacted by the intersection of two or more social categories, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status or immigrant status. In particular, many advocates are focusing on how being a woman intersects with other social categories to increase vulnerability. In addition to social characteristics, some advocates also consider intersections with spiritual aspects of their identities when they engage in advocacy work. One participant described a “braiding” framework that braids together environmental justice, reproductive justice and the advocate’s spiritual core, which represents who advocates are and how they do their work. Braiding in the spiritual core helps people in her organization to stay centered as they do their work. Both of the approaches detailed above can help to ensure that advocates bring their full selves to the table, which may strengthen advocacy efforts.

Intersecting movements

Given that the link between toxics and reproductive health is situated at the intersection of so many issues, it naturally invites attention from advocates in a diverse array of social movements. These include environmental justice, environmental health, mainstream environmentalism, reproductive justice, reproductive health, reproductive rights, labor, immigrant rights, women’s health, racial justice, economic justice, the toxics movement, the green movement, the peasant’s movement, and others. This richness of movements is conducive to cross-movement collaboration, which can strengthen momentum behind advocacy efforts. Benefits of cross-movement collaboration include expanding a base of support, and gaining partners with complementary perspectives, resources and expertise. It can also help advocates to develop a multi-issue agenda, which may allow them to more effectively counter right-wing political opponents who are already successfully using multi-issue platforms. There are also a number of challenges associated with cross-movement work, which I explore in Theme 3 below.

Theme 2. Capitalism, Pro-Business Culture and Toxics Reform

This chapter will explore the relationship between capitalism, pro-business culture and exposure to toxic substances. It will describe advocacy efforts to navigate the current political environment in order to achieve better protections against toxicants, with a particular focus on efforts to protect communities of color, Indigenous and low-income communities.

Capitalism and pro-business culture

When asked about the underlying causes of toxic exposures in vulnerable communities, many participants pointed toward a capitalist system that prioritizes profit over human health. This system makes it challenging to pass stronger governmental regulations to protect the public’s health. A pro-business culture is particularly pervasive in certain pockets of the country where corporations provide both jobs and charitable donations to the local community, thus creating a strong economic dependency upon them. Pro-business interests also influence

international conversations where, as one advocate noted, the U.S. and Canada consistently block efforts to reduce toxicants. International agreements are important, as pollutants can cross national borders.

Strategies for reform

In response to the ubiquity of toxic exposures, advocates are employing a number of strategies for reform. First, they are engaging at the national level to push for better federal policies. For example, participants are working to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Federal reforms would have a far-reaching impact, but at the same time, achieving them is challenging amidst political gridlock in Congress and strong lobbying efforts by industry to block federal reforms. In response, advocates have developed a number of alternate strategies. These include pushing for better policies at the local and state levels; working collaboratively with companies to enact reforms; leveraging consumer purchasing power to place pressure upon companies to improve their products; and educating the public and workers about how to avoid toxic exposures.

In their efforts, advocates are drawing attention to the heavy burden of toxicants in communities of color, Indigenous and low-income communities due to the disproportionate siting of industrial facilities in their neighborhoods, dependency upon harmful jobs, poorer access to stores with toxic-free foods and goods, and lack of financial means to purchase less toxic products. In calling for better protections for these communities, advocates are highlighting inequities fueled by racism, classism and economic injustice.

Theme 3. Opportunities for Growth: Challenges and Synergies in Movement Building Around Toxics

The confluence of many social movements around toxics results in a wide range of perspectives. Some of these are complementary and others are in tension or provide a teaching moment to reduce misunderstandings. Taking advantage of opportunities for greater mutual understanding could facilitate cross-movement building. I will reflect back challenges and synergies in cross-movement collaboration that advocates noted in interviews, primarily focusing upon the environmental justice, environmental health and mainstream environmental movements, and the reproductive justice, rights and health movements. Advocates can potentially use the material below to initiate or continue discussions with each other on these subjects.

The following *challenges* were noted by advocates:

- *Privilege*: Some advocates or organizations come to the table with more “privilege” which can become problematic if they dominate advocacy efforts (e.g., impose their views, take more credit for work, do not value the work of others) or do not understand justice concerns. Advocates recognize the value in creating diverse alliances that include both organizations and advocates who are representative of vulnerable communities and those who are not representative. They also recognize the benefit of creating alliances that are inclusive of organizations that bring different kinds of resources to the table (e.g., financial resources, communications infrastructure, community knowledge). However, it

is critical to address and sensitize people to this issue of privilege in order to improve allyship.

- *Assault on reproductive rights*: The continuing controversy around reproductive rights (e.g., abortion, contraception) can create obstacles amongst reproductive groups to engaging in work around toxics. This includes not being able to focus on toxics because they must channel their resources into the battle over abortion and contraception; challenges in allyship with environmental groups and politicians who support toxics reform but are not supportive of a core reproductive rights agenda; and sensitivities over language imbuing the fetus with personhood, or visual representations of pregnant women that do not include the entire women (both of which are perceived to erode reproductive rights). Moreover, there have been misunderstandings between reproductive justice and environmental justice advocates around population control – a position sometimes mistakenly attributed to environmental justice advocates.
- *Messaging*: Sometimes messaging can be tricky, as messages that promote toxic-free products or food may seemingly be in opposition to issues that potential allies care about. Issues that require special attention to messaging include: advocating for removal of nitrosamines from condoms in a way that does not reduce safe sex practices; advocating to reduce toxicants in breast milk without reducing breastfeeding; and developing language around adverse birth outcomes that does not stigmatize disabled individuals with these outcomes.

Many advocates are using similar frames in their work, which can provide points of *synergy* for cross-movement collaboration. These include the following frames:

- *Focus on inequities*: Advocates are using race-based and income-based frames that highlight inequities in toxic exposures and associated adverse reproductive health outcomes.
- *Reproductive health frame*: Advocates are using a reproductive health frame, including a focus on protecting pregnancy and children. Advocates have found that many people can relate to this frame and that it provides an impetus for involvement among parents.
- *Focus on women*: Reproductive justice, rights and health advocates, as well as advocates from the women's movement (some of whom work for environmental organizations), have introduced gender-based frames to environmental work. For example, they are highlighting the way in which women are sensitive to chemicals due to biology and pregnancy, and are mobilizing women as a powerful constituency to effect change.
- *Human rights*: A number of groups are using human rights-based frames, such as by engaging in international human rights work, framing the right to toxic-free water as a basic human right, and by engaging in reproductive justice, which emerges from an international rights-based framework.

Again, the above are preliminary themes that I will explore in greater detail in my dissertation. I look forward to any feedback you may wish to provide.

Appendix J. Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing

Source: <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/jemez.pdf>

Meeting hosted by Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice (SNEEJ), Jemez, New Mexico, December 1996

Activists meet on Globalization

On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the “Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.” The Jemez meeting was hosted by the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice with the intention of hammering out common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations. The following “Jemez Principles” for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants.

#1 Be Inclusive

If we hope to achieve just societies that include all people in decision-making and assure that all people have an equitable share of the wealth and the work of this world, then we must work to build that kind of inclusiveness into our own movement in order to develop alternative policies and institutions to the treaties policies under neo-liberalism. This requires more than tokenism, it cannot be achieved without diversity at the planning table, in staffing, and in coordination. It may delay achievement of other important goals, it will require discussion, hard work, patience, and advance planning. It may involve conflict, but through this conflict, we can learn better ways of working together. It’s about building alternative institutions, movement building, and not compromising out in order to be accepted into the anti-globalization club.

#2 Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing

To succeed, it is important to reach out into new constituencies, and to reach within all levels of leadership and membership base of the organizations that are already involved in our networks. We must be continually building and strengthening a base which provides our credibility, our strategies, mobilizations, leadership development, and the energy for the work we must do daily.

#3 Let People Speak for Themselves

We must be sure that relevant voices of people directly affected are heard. Ways must be provided for spokespersons to represent and be responsible to the affected constituencies. It is important for organizations to clarify their roles, and who they represent, and to assure accountability within our structures.

#4 Work Together In Solidarity and Mutuality

Groups working on similar issues with compatible visions should consciously act in solidarity, mutuality and support each other’s work. In the long run, a more significant step is to incorporate the goals and values of other groups with your own work, in order to build strong relationships. For instance, in the long run, it is more important that labor unions and community economic

development projects include the issue of environmental sustainability in their own strategies, rather than just lending support to the environmental organizations. So communications, strategies and resource sharing is critical, to help us see our connections and build on these.

#5 Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves

We need to treat each other with justice and respect, both on an individual and an organizational level, in this country and across borders. Defining and developing “just relationships” will be a process that won’t happen overnight. It must include clarity about decision-making, sharing strategies, and resource distribution. There are clearly many skills necessary to succeed, and we need to determine the ways for those with different skills to coordinate and be accountable to one another.

#6 Commitment to Self-Transformation

As we change societies, we must change from operating on the mode of individualism to community-centeredness. We must “walk our talk.” We must be the values that we say we’re struggling for and we must be justice, be peace, be community.

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