The Color of Commitment:
Social Change, the Development of Collective Commitment toward Collective
Action, and the Negotiation of Race

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(Educational Studies)
in the University of Michigan
2018

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is first dedicated to my sister, Tamica.
In our last conversation, we talked about getting our PhDs at the same time.
Unfortunately, we didn't get to do this together, but this one is for us both.
You were my biggest supporter, and now my greatest inspiration.

Second, to one of my most influential mentors- Kenneth Hutchinson.
I started my full-time career working with young Black men under your leadership.
Now, given your memory and lessons learned, I'm so grateful for where I started.
"Our success is tied".

Lastly, to my parents, family, and friends who allowed me to be selfish with my time
to finish this project, this is dedicated to you all. I've missed birthdays, holidays,
weddings, and more. Thank you for giving me some grace and understanding.
Love you all.

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ABSTRACT

Background/Context:

Theory suggests that improving the education system and improvement of educational outcomes will require collective action generated by cross-sector partnerships. Yet as multi-sector groups attempt to pursue collective work, understanding the connection between collective commitment, collective action, and the role of race may be paramount to realizing change.

Purpose/Focus of Study:

The purpose of this study was to examine how collective action (via cross-sector partnership work) has been and could be used to address large social problems, and how collective commitment contributes to the success (or lack of success) of the collective action pursued by cross-sector initiatives aiming to make change in communities of color.

Research Design:

I first present a review and synthesis of four historical cases that examine how collective commitment and action was established and pursued within two grassroots (community-based) initiatives and two grass-high initiatives (initiatives started or charged by those with high influence and power). I drew data from primary and secondary sources that spoke of and/or provided an evaluation of these initiatives and conducted a two-phased analysis of each case first focusing on the contexts and mechanisms through which collective action was pursued with what outcomes and second on the role that collective commitment played. I then

present a narrative of each case using these frameworks, followed by a cross-case analysis.

Second, I provide an extended case study of a local grass-high initiative--Highland County My Brother's Keeper-- where I spent a year researching and working with the initiative as it evolved. I addressed the same questions as with the historical cases, using participatory ethnographic methods, and drawing on data from audio recordings of 13 team meetings, team meeting notes, 30 interviews with participants, fieldnotes of informal interactions, personal reflections, artifacts developed, and electronic communications.

Lastly, I use critical race theory (CRT) to challenge the narrative of all cases, and examine evidence of how White interest-convergence was employed as a racial negotiation strategy across all 5 cases.

Conclusions/Implications:

I find that the grass-high initiatives attracted powerful people to the table, yet the initiatives pursued by the grassroots cases were more sustainable, and these groups were also more successful in developing collective commitment. Analysis also revealed that race was indeed crucial to the ways in which commitments were acquired. Whereas all partnerships showed evidence of using White interest-convergence as a racial negotiation strategy, this tactic did not guarantee successful outcomes. Rather, creating spaces that privileged the voice, needs, and desires of communities of color, as each grassroots initiative did to some extent, appeared to make a critical difference in the collective commitment that was garnered and collective action they accomplished. This work and findings are significant because they challenge cross-sector leaders to consider whose interests are truly being served and think about the intricate connection between collective commitment, race, and power in a praxis-based way.

Chapter I. Introduction

<u>Purpose</u>

The purpose of this study was to examine how collective action (via cross-sector partnership work) has been and could be used to address large social problems, and how collective commitment contributes to the success (or lack of success) of the collective action pursued by cross-sector initiatives aiming to make change in communities of color[1]. I use realist synthesis (Pawson & Bellamy, 2006) to evaluate prior cases in which collective action was employed to pursue social change, and participatory ethnography informed by realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 2004) to empirically investigate a local My Brother's Keeper community, former President Obama's initiative aiming to address persistent opportunity gaps for boys and young men of color. This inquiry is significant because theory suggests that improving the education system and improvement of educational outcomes will require the collective action and commitment of those across many sectors (Kania & Kramer, 2011; Seitanidi, 2008; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Understanding the connection between collective commitment, collective action, and the role of race may be paramount to realizing change.

Throughout the dissertation, I conceptualize collective commitment and

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[1] While race was not initially foregrounded in my study, it emerged as a critical factor, and I later analyze it as central to answering my research questions.

collective action as mutually reinforcing mechanisms. This concept develops from the premise that patterns of individual commitment and collective commitment continuously affect each other and similarly reconcile as they're developed from interactions and shared feeling within a collective group (Gardner, Wright, & Moynihan, 2011; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). I also use the cases studies and empirical work to examine how grassroots partnerships and grass-high partnerships connect to individuals' values and beliefs, and foster, detract, or sustain these commitments towards the collective level. I then theorize and evaluate how group environments foster, contribute, and sustain collective commitment during the early phases of their initiative. Lastly, I investigate how race and power intersect and are negotiated in the process of developing collective commitment towards collective action.

I find that vision, trust, and space to learn are critical elements towards fostering collective commitment, and consequently are critical towards achieving collective action. Grassroots initiatives are more likely to develop and foster collective commitment, and ultimately employ collective commitment to galvanize towards collective action. I also find that racial dynamics are central to groups' ability to realize collective commitment and action.

Motivating Concerns

Structural inequity is not uncommon in American systems, in particular its public systems. Consequently, individuals, organizations, and systems have long attempted to address inequity through programs, interventions, public policies, the

court of law, and social movements. Yet as social problems and inequity rises from the interplay and behaviors of multiple public, private, and nonprofit entities, theory speculates that the isolated impact of one sector, program, institution, or system cannot address multi-system failures (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Rather, this theory purports that "large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 38).

Some educational scholars have extended this ideology, and see schools and educational leaders at the forefront of such social change and collaborative partnerships (Anyon, 2014; Elmore, 2000; M. Fullan, 1993; Payne, 2008). M. Fullan (1993) contends that education is the only societal institution that has the potential promise of contributing to the goal of cultivating dynamic citizens who proactively deal with change both individually and collaboratively (p. 15). In contrast, some organizational and public policy scholars have conceptualized collaborative cross-sector work as a retroactive response to system failures, including the failure of the educational system (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006). From this perspective, cross-sector partners "fail" into collaborative work (Bryson et al., 2006; Hudson, Hardy, Henwood, & Wistow, 1999; Roberts, 2001).

Yet cross-sector partnerships that arise to 'fix' social ills vary in mission, structure, process, the sectors they engage, and even subnational level of operation. Moreover, the theory of change each partnership uses to achieve its desired outcome varies, and also has deep implications for how the group builds and connects to the mission and commitment of individuals involved.

These variations lead to the two particular concerns that motivate this study.

Concern 1: The constant attempt to evaluate and understand 'what works'.

Perhaps one of the most prevalent policy questions of our time is the relentless pursuit and questioning of 'what works?'. Program and policy makers alike attempt to understand what programs, partnerships, tactics, policies will 'fix' a particular social problem, and if and how these things can be replicated in other spaces to produce similar results.

This question and pursuit has led to a variety of program evaluations, research, reports, and attempts to find 'silver bullets' that can holistically fix social ills. An example of this can be observed in the rhetoric used throughout the My Brother's Keeper Initiative, which provides communities with a loose framework to "...identify, invest, and build what works" (Taylor & Johnson, 2017, p. np). While communities are given freedom to explore solutions that seem appropriate towards addressing local issues, the rhetoric of lifting up what works and replicating successful programs from one area to the next suggests an attempt to find panaceas for social barriers inhibiting young men of color. Others, such as Whitehurst and Croft (2010), have critiqued this notion-

> "President Obama was a community organizer before he was a politician, so it is natural that his instincts are to invest in community programs. But President Obama has repeatedly called for what works. Doing what works depends on evidence not instincts" (p. 9).

Further critique of this criticism would likewise question the types of data and evidence used to assess 'what works'. Whitehurst and Croft (2010) and guidebooks used to help establish the initiatives I investigate here in this dissertation assert that strong evidence comes from "studies with designs that can support causal conclusions" ("Evidence-Based Practice: A Primer for Promise Neighborhoods," 2015, p. 1). Yet these studies often exclude an understanding the environments in which interventions, programs, and practices flourish, as well as the critical lens as to how crucial factors such as race and power play a role in the process of program creation, engagement, and implementation.

Nevertheless, many of the social ills we've attempted to programmatically solve persist. This brings a question of whether we've yet to find 'real solutions', or, if we've fallen short of asking better and more critical questions, aiming for more meaningful outcomes, and addressing the confounding individual, institutional, and systemic barriers of change.

Concern 2: Insufficient understanding of how change is made within collective spaces

Multi-sector partnerships require collaborative effort and the use of collective action to achieve collective outcomes or goals. Yet effective collective action within these spaces requires both individual and collective commitments. Precisely, "the commitment of organizational participants- to each other and the organization itself- becomes a critical, and at times, even necessary mechanism for

directing their behavior towards collective goal accomplishment" (Robertson &

Tang, 1995, p. 67). This notion is further complicated by how race and power are

negotiated within these spaces, as the initiatives I study all use a multi-sector space

to pursue change in areas, neighborhoods, or schools that primarily serve people of

color.

Given this framework, both effective collective action and collective

commitment can be understood as essential tools towards achieving change within

complex problems. Consequently, understanding collective action (i.e. what is it

about it that works, for whom, in what circumstances, and why), in addition to

collective commitment (how it's formed, its contributors, detractors, and sustainers)

are imperative inquiries towards the task of comprehending theories about change

making in collaborative spaces.

This dissertation takes up both areas of concern. First, it examines cross-

sector partnership work and its use of collective action to address complex social

problems. The historical case studies and empirical case for this study highlight the

interworking of collective work by examining their various theories of change,

contexts, mechanisms, and observed outcomes. Secondly, it attempts to understand

the ways in which collective commitment and collective action interact within

collective spaces. In particular, it examines the dynamic ways in which individual

level values, beliefs, and commitments matriculate and are fostered (or not) at the

collective level, and how race and power are represented in this process.

Research Questions

The primary questions for this study were:

1) How does collective action work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why when addressing large social problems?

2) How does collective commitment contribute to the success (or lack of success) of the collective action pursued by cross-sector partnerships aiming to make change in communities of color?

   i. What are the ways in which the partnership does/does not connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies; and what are the conditions and mechanisms through which those individual commitments are fostered, detracted from, or sustained towards the collective level?

   ii. How are race and power represented and negotiated in these collective spaces, particularly in the process of achieving collective action and commitment?

Definition of Terms

As stated, this study investigates how those working in collaborative spaces use collective action to carry out social change for underserved communities and people of color. Before presenting a theoretical framework for this study, I identify and define the terms and ideas that are significant in this project.

Cross-Sector Partnerships[2]. A cross-sector partnership can broadly be defined as "...the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities, and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly an outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately" (Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44). S. A. Waddock (1991) also provides an early definition for particular cross-sector partnerships that attempt to organize and collectively work around large social problems as-

> "Voluntary collaborative efforts of actors from organizations in two or more economic sectors in a forum in which they cooperatively attempt to solve a problem or issues of mutual concern that is in some way identified with a public policy agenda item" (Selsky & Parker, 2005, p. 850).

Multi-sector work that addresses social problems can take a variety of organizational forms. Some of these forms include funder collaboratives, social sector networks, public-private partnerships, and collective impact initiatives (Kania & Kramer, 2011). Warren (1998) and Campbell (1994) also provide examples as to how grassroots organizations navigate cross-sector spaces and engage multiple organizations to realize change.

Organizational theorists, scholars in public management, and change-making practitioners all suggest that cross-sector collaborations are often the response of those who realize addressing complex problems may not be accomplished by the efforts of one separate sector (Bryson et al., 2006; Kania & Kramer, 2011; Selsky & Parker, 2005, 2010; White, 2001). Moreover, just as M. G. Fullan (1996) suggests

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[2] I will use the terms cross-sector partnerships/collaboration, and multi-sector partnerships/collaboration interchangeably throughout the dissertation.

that systems are infamous for maintaining the status quo, cross-sector partnerships are often acknowledged as crucial to change and addressing social challenges, as they propose to combine and improve resources, capabilities , and communication across sectors (Austin, 2000; Seitanidi, 2008; Selsky & Parker, 2005; S. Waddock & Smith, 2000; S. A. Waddock, 1991).

Yet partnerships across sector lines provide a keen acknowledgement of the intricacy and interwoven nature of complex social issues. As cross-sector collaborative take on the intricacies and dynamics of multiple structures, organizations, systems, people, and- in this study- cities, they often do so in order to address large problems that impact people, organizations, and systems represented within and outside of the collaborative. Bryson et al. (2006) state that "people who want to tackle tough social problems and achieve beneficial community outcomes are beginning to understand that multiple sectors of a democratic society- business, nonprofits and philanthropies, the media the community, and government- must collaborate to deal effectively and humanely with the challenges" (p. 44). As a result, Seitanidi (2008) suggests that cross-sector partnerships can also serve as a form of social entrepreneurship, as they have potential to be innovative social processes that provide bridges across organizational boundaries and deliver change.

Yet fewer acknowledgements have been given to the role of race in these cross-sector spaces. While proponents of multi-sector collaborative readily emphasize that "authentic engagement with people who are experiencing the problem first hand is critical to ensuring that strategies are effective", the race of those "experiencing the problem first hand" is often omitted, and most often they

are Black and Latino/a (Kania, Hanleybrown, & Splansky Juster, 2014, p. 3). Moreover, these partnerships often give little consideration to the historic struggle for civil and human rights communities of color have engaged in for many years, and the systematic ways people of color have been underserved. While McAfee, Blackwell, and Bell (2015) attempt to highlight the role of equity in collective action and impact work by emphasizing the importance of race in these conversations and spaces, further consideration is needed.

Collective Action. While collective action has and can be used to infer many things, in this work, I will utilize to Robertson and Tang's (1995) definition of collective action, stating "collective action refers to activities that require cooperation among individuals to achieve desirable outcomes" (p. 78). Given this definition, I conceptualize collective action as the mechanisms groups use to achieve their desired outcomes. As Pawson and Tilley (2004) suggest via their definition of mechanisms, collective action is then an act/acts, or processes that is used to bring about change, or in these specific cases, social change.

Collective action in cross-sector work proves to be a significant concept as those working in various sectors and systems see the limitations of isolated work, and see value in strategic partnerships. Yet collective action is not always conceptualized as a mechanism, or a process that can be used to leverage change. This conceptualization requires one to consider relationships between people, organizations, and progress that is (or isn't) made towards shared objectives, and the potential tools and resources that are leveraged to reach these objectives (Kania & Kramer, 2011). One key resource and tool is that of collective commitment.

Collective Commitment. A simplistic understanding of collective

commitment revolves around the notion of "individual commitments multiplied", as

Evans (1996) indicates that collective action towards real change is first

accomplished person by person (p. 71). Yet throughout the dissertation, I adopt a

definition of collective commitment from Gardner et al. (2011), which defines

collective commitment as "a shared mindset and shared psychological state among a

delimited collective of individuals regarding their employer typified by feelings of

loyalty and a desire to invest mental and physical energy in helping the organization

achieve its goals" (p. 318)[3].

Robertson and Tang (1995) illuminate the two dominant perspectives on

commitment in collective settings; one originating from literature on organizational

behavior (OB), and the other stemming from rational choice literature often used in

theories of economic behavior. While the two perspectives differ in how they define

collective commitment and its role in collective action spaces, the authors point to a

point of consensus that asserts the importance of collective commitment in such

collaborative settings-

> "Both the OB and rational choice perspective share in common the belief that
>
> commitment is an important factor affecting collective action systems.
>
> Furthermore, implicit in both perspectives is the notion that individuals with
>
> higher levels of commitment will be more likely to engage in behaviors
>
> oriented toward the good of the collective. In other words, commitment can

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[3] Gardner et al. (2011) use this definition to define collective affective commitment, which I explain in Chapter 2. Moreover, I recognize that the cross-sector partnerships and groups studied in this dissertation do not all serve as employers of the individuals within the collectives/groups I investigate. However, this definition does present an insightful perspective as to the connection between the individual and collective levels of commitment, and commitment as it's directed towards outcomes and action.

motivate individuals to act cooperatively in pursuit of shared collective ends"

(p. 69).

Collective commitment also bears importance from the perspectives of realist

evaluation and theories on race and commitment. Realist evaluation purports that

social change is triggered by the thinking, doing, and resource employment of those

involved and affected by the intervention (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). This perspective

consequently purports that collectively achieving a desired outcome is highly

dependent on the active engagement and commitment of individuals involved in the

group. Moreover, studies have also shown that perceiving one's group as

disadvantaged and the racial composition of a working group compels the

commitment of those that share that identity (Frankenberg, Taylor, & Merseth,

2010; Zaal, Van Laar, Ståhl, Ellemers, & Derks, 2012). Examining collective

commitment from a realist perspective and also looking at how race is represented

in these collective spaces adds to a deeper understanding of commitment and its

connection to action.

Overview of the Dissertation

This dissertation has two major sections. Chapter 2 begins with a theoretical

and conceptual framework for both sections. I ground the research synthesis and

empirical work in theory from public management. Yet, I also draw heavily from

scholarship in education, social innovation, psychology, and human resourcing.

Chapter 3 presents the first major section, which includes a research synthesis of

historical cases of cross-sector partnerships. The methodology used to examine

these cases is included in this chapter. Nonetheless, these studies were systematically selected and serve as examples of cross-sector partnerships that attempt to create change for underserved communities and people of color. I pay particular attention to the early stages of collective action, as well as the power-origin of these cases; delineating between cases that are grass-high initiatives (or initiatives started or charged by those with high influence and power) and those that I consider grassroots initiatives. In addition to charting themes and variations across these categories, I also (a) use realist evaluation to evaluate the theories of action, context, mechanisms and intended outcomes across these cases; and (b) evaluate how and if groups foster and sustain individual commitment towards a collective level, as well as create an environment that fosters collective commitment. I also provide a cross-case analysis of the grassroots cases, and later the grass-high cases.

The second section begins in Chapter 4 where I present empirical data in the form of a realist participatory ethnography. In this study, I examine how Highland County My Brother's Keeper (HMBK), a countywide multi-sector collaboration, attempts to make change for young men of color within the county. As a local community associated with of the larger grass-high My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge initiated by former President Obama, MBK charges local communities to "…convene leaders, identify effect strategies, and to work together" to address barriers of opportunity for young men of color ("MBK community challenge for action," 2014).

I spent a year within this group space as a researcher and group participant,

collecting data in the form of interviews, fields notes, recordings of group meetings, reflective memos, and artifacts created by or for the group. Similar to the case studies, I employ realist evaluation to evaluate the theories of action, context, mechanisms and intended outcomes of HMBK and evaluate if and how collective action and commitment is used and formed among the group.

Chapter 5 presents a second analysis that centers race and the representation of race in the cases I previously reviewed. Originally, race served as an aspect of the selection criteria I used to solidify the cases I would study, but it was not initially foregrounded. However, race emerged as a critical factor as I studied the development of collective commitment and the progress towards collective action for these cases. Consequently, Chapter 5 uses critical race theory to evaluate how race is represented and negotiated in the process of attaining (or not attaining) collective commitment towards collective action. In particular, I examine the function of White interest-convergence and its use as an intentional strategy within each case. Chapter 6 then concludes the dissertation with a summary of the findings.

Logic of Inquiry for the Dissertation

Methodologically, I employ realist synthesis (Pawson & Bellamy, 2006) to unveil how social change is conceptualized and enacted by those involved in the initiative. Realist evaluation and synthesis acknowledges that social change is contingent on "the social circumstances" of those involved in the initiative, and as such, change cannot be built on an assumption that intervention resources spur

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transformation (Pawson & Tilley, 2004, p. 4). Consequently, the realist approach intentionally investigates contextual characteristics, relationships, and the positionality of organizations and individuals involved (Pawson & Tilley, 2004). I concur with Kania and Kramer (2011) that simply encouraging more partnership and collaborative work won't produce the radical change sought by those involved in change-making work. Consequently, this dissertation unwraps the particular theories that drive the work of multi-sector collaborative groups that seek to change, evaluates their realization and progress towards change through a realist lens, and critically examines how race is reflected and negotiated in this process.

As previously stated, the purpose of this project was to evaluate and understand how collective action (as carried out through multi-sector initiatives) has been and could be used to address large social problems, and how collective commitment contributes to the collective work that is pursued. Here, I should note that in both the synthesis and empirical analysis, my intent is not to make the work and collaborative space of the initiatives studied appear neater than they actually were. Moreover, even in studying the contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes of these initiatives, I cannot make claim to the total reasoning as to why things worked in the ways it did. However, in evaluating each case from a realist perspective, considering collective commitment as a crucial resource towards collective action, and later appraising findings from a critical race perspective, I do intend to add to the literature that elucidates how effective change can be made. Furthermore, I seek to shed light on the contributors, detractors, and sustainers of collective commitment in these spaces.

I am also very aware that my personal identity and the role that I took on during the empirical project greatly influenced my perspective in this work. I am a Midwestern Black woman that attended public schools serving predominately Latino/a students for my K-12 education, and later attended a predominately White university for undergraduate education. I spent my early career years working as a college counselor at an all boys high school on the south side of Chicago, and later a program manager for a cross-sector mentorship program for Chicago Public School students. These experiences not only refined my skills around teaching and learning, but also illuminated as to how (often broken) systems join forces with each other to treat their ills.

These experiences also led me to my doctoral program, and a quest to understand why those working in difficult educational spaces chose to work in those settings, and why they remained committed. I conducted a study during this time on highly committed educational leaders that purposefully work in challenging contexts. My findings from this study showed that while the Black educators and White educators I interviewed stated they were committed to different things, both the actions and thoughts about their work proved very similar[4].

In addition, my personal commitment to practice and research application drew me to working with my local school district while I pursued by doctoral program, and later the county school district that led much of the collaborative work among the local districts. As a district consultant, I worked on the strategic plan for

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[4] Similar actions included each participant's long tenure in their school, their purposefully supporting Black, Brown, and other vulnerable students within the school, and the time they spent in their schools on a daily basis. Similar "thinking about their work" was exemplified through acknowledging their commitment as a sacrifice they were willing to make, as well as acknowledging that their role allowed them to give marginalized students voice and power.

the merging of two financially unstable local districts, as well as strategic plans for the county district's focus and priority schools[5]. When I came to the point of designing a study for my dissertation work, I naturally sought insight from leaders within the district as to questions they had and wanted to explore through research. Their insight and own inquiries led to the county's My Brother's Keeper project, an emerging cross-sector partnership focused on addressing barriers for young men of color within the county. The district had embraced the effort, but was unsure of the best ways to support.

Consequently, I was contracted to consult as a partnership facilitator for the effort. In this role, I directly connected with stakeholders and partners that were a part of the initiative, facilitated conversations around strategic decisions, and managed the work of two AmeriCorp VISTAs that were also hired to work on the initiative. Hence, the perspectives I take reflect my views as both a facilitator and participant in the effort, and also a researcher studying on the project.

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[5] Priority schools are schools located in Washington's bottom 5% in academic performance indicators. Focus schools are schools that have large achievement gaps across various categories of students (i.e. race, socioeconomic status, ESL and Non-ESL, etc.).

Chapter II. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study investigates how those working in cross-sector spaces use collective action and collective commitment to address large social problems. Here, I identify, define, and explain the use of particular terms and ideas that are significant in this project and clarify how these concepts connect to one another.

Collective Action

As stated, I am using Robertson and Tang (1995) definition of collective action which states "collective action refers to activities that require cooperation among individuals to achieve desirable outcomes" (p. 78). I intellectualize collective action to be the mechanism that cross-sector groups use to achieve their desired outcomes. Yet how and why these groups are formed, and the perceived and enacted power of individuals and the group all have implications as to the how the group proceeds, the theory of change it utilizes, the type of action it pursues, how it is able to accomplish it's desired outcomes, and much more. Consequently, I've organized the historical cases in terms of power-origin and dynamics as a means to specifically understand how power is reflected and negotiated in collective action spaces.

Theories on How Power is Negotiated and Reflected in the Process of

Achieving Collective Action

Collective Action via Grassroots Organizing

In their introduction to community organizing, Schutz and Sandy (2011) affirm that in comparison to other approaches to change, "...[community] organizers believe that significant social change only comes through conflict with the entrenches interests of the status quo" (p. 12). In similar light, Moses and Cobb Jr (2001) emphasize the need for demand in organizing. As systems depend on the lack of voice and demand from the bottom, in order for change to occur, "...the system has to be challenged" (Moses & Cobb Jr, 2001, p. 4). Hence, organizing groups apply pressure to powerful institutions and individuals by bringing "...masses of people together in actions where they make demands through their leaders in a collective voice" (Schutz & Sandy, 2011, p. 12). While the idea of "community" within community organizing is often misunderstood, Warren and Mapp (2011) suggest that strong forms of community organizing preference the perspective of "engaging people through their shared connections" rather than approaching people as "isolated individuals" needing to join for a common purpose (p. 19).

Setting the agenda*. In community organizing groups, 'organizers' are generally paid staff that are tasked with the day-to-day operations of the organization, including supporting campaigns and training leaders. In contrast, 'leaders' serve as the face of organized work and are more often unpaid volunteers. They direct the organizing group, decide which issues will be worked on, and will

speak on behalf of the group in public settings (Schutz & Sandy, 2011, p. 24). Hence, it is important to note that the majority of those participating in collective work via community organizing/grassroots work are volunteers, and are not compensated by the organization for their participation.

Players at the table. Grassroots organizers and leaders use large, public, democratically structured meetings, which allow group members to vote on the actions and pursuits of the group. However decisions made in these larger meetings reflect direction-setting and the decision-making of a smaller group of organizers and leaders (Schutz & Sandy, 2011). Traditional grassroots organizing also emphasizes the importance of context and leaders working within communities they work and live (Moses & Cobb Jr, 2001).

Strategy. Warren and Mapp (2011) suggest that organizing begins with relationship building, as "organizers seek to connect people to each other for the purposes of taking public action" (p. 24). Strategically, leaders within organizing groups use tactics such as house meetings and interviews to remain connected to the interests and needs of their large constituencies. Community organizing groups also employ the following strategies to accomplish their goal of shifting relational power-

- o increasing their membership
- o nurturing and training leaders
- o gaining a reputation for canny strategy
- o demonstrating a capacity to get large numbers of people out to public action (Schutz & Sandy, 2011, p. 12).

Potential challenges in grassroots organizing. One potential challenge in organizing at the grassroots is what Moses and Cobb Jr (2001) call "dealing with the particulars of time and space" (p. 3). Understanding how to build and work within the time (i.e. current events and current political agendas) and space (i.e. political and geographic issues, local resources available) in order to reach where power is can often be a challenge for community organizing groups, and particularly for young and inexperienced groups (Moses & Cobb Jr, 2001). Warren and Mapp (2011) also note potential challenges in knowledge and know-how on building various kinds of social capital, navigating unequal power relations, and resource acquisition via staffing and budgeting.

Collective Action via Grass-High Approaches

Another method to organizing towards collective action is through grass-high approaches. I am defining grass-high approaches as initiatives started or charged by those with high influence and/or power[6]. While grass-high initiatives may use similar strategies and tactics to those of grassroots organizing groups, there is a distinct difference in the origin of the initiative, as well as how those with power are involved in the decision-making process of the collaborative effort. In their seminal piece on collective impact, Kania and Kramer (2011) provide a brief index of frameworks for grass-high collaborations, including funder collaboratives, public-private partnerships, multi-stakeholder initiatives, social sector networks, and collective impact initiatives. While the authors argue that the sustainability of

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[6] I was first introduced to this terminology in an interaction with Dr. Kristie Dotson, an epistemologist and philosopher at Michigan State University. While the term (as defined) does not appear in scholarly literature, given its importance to this project, I believe it is important to share where my interaction with the concept was initiated.

these efforts vary, they recognize that large, complex social issues require "…a systematic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress towards shared objectives" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 39). Given that empirical work for this project and another historical case example attempt to utilize the collective impact approach to organize their collective work, I concentrate on the features of this framework in the descriptions below.

      Setting the agenda. Agenda setting varies across the type of collaboration and goals that are pursued in the collective group. Yet most frameworks recognize that "…transformative work in communities requires the participation and alignment of many people, organizations, and sectors… " (McAfee et al., 2015, p. 463). In attempt to help nascent collective impact groups move their work forward, Hanleybrown, Kania, and Kramer (2012) investigate the critical preconditions for collective work in grass-high spaces. They find that one critical necessity for multi-stakeholder groups was the need of financial rescores "…to last for at least two to three years, generally in the form of at least one anchor funder who is engaged from the beginning and can support and mobilize other resources to pay for the needed infrastructure and planning processes" (Hanleybrown et al., 2012, p. 3). Hence, there is a clear initial connection to resource-rich funders, and a clear call for implementers to work with funders early on in the collaboration. Consequently, the agenda for grass-high cross-sector groups is most often set by influential leaders (Anthony, Fewins-Bliss, Jacobs, Johnson, & King, 2013). The day-to-day work and operations however is often tasked to a "backbone support organization", or

"…dedicated staff separate from the participating organizations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative…" (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 40).

Players at the table. In Turcotte and Pasquero's (2001) case study of a multi-stakeholder collaborative roundtable on environmental protection , the authors inform that the most active players in environmental waste management were invited to join the collaborative they investigated. Consequently, at the group's first meeting, many of the group's participants were perceived to be "particularly significant" (p. 453). Hanleybrown et al. (2012) also suggest that in collective impact initiatives, "the most critical factor by far is an influential champion (or small group of champions) who commands the respect necessary to bring CEO-level cross-sector leaders together and keep their engagement over time" (p. 3). As such, the individuals that participate in grass-high cross-sector initiatives most often include high-ranking personnel within institutions and sectors that (in some way) impact the social issue being address. Collective impact practitioners note these collaborations are more effective when building off existing organizations and collaborative efforts rather than creating new solutions from scratch (Hanleybrown et al., 2012; Kania et al., 2014; Kania & Kramer, 2011)

Potential challenges in grass-high approaches. Similar to grassroots approaches to collective work, grass-high initiatives also face potential challenges towards effective collective action. One such limitation is the potential gridlock due to diversity in thought. In their study of a multi-stakeholder collaborative roundtable, Turcotte and Pasquero (2001) find that while consensus and "small wins" towards the group's larger objectives were achievable, the perceived value of

the group (diversity of perspective) actually served as a limitation, as "[diversity of perspective] increased the possibility of deadlock as each participant tried to impose his or her own logic (or perceptual framework) and each had veto power" (p. 459).

Cross-sector groups using the collective impact model also face the challenge of inclusion, in ensuring that those that are most affected by the problem they are addressing are also valued in the work. Given that these issues more often follow along socioeconomic, racial, and power lines, McAfee et al. (2015) cautions that those using the model make sure "... that low-income communities and communities of color are included as equal partners in planning, implementing, and governing initiatives "(p.4). Hanleybrown et al. (2012) also suggest that funding for backbone support organizations presents a challenge for groups utilizing the collective impact framework, as "...few funders are yet stepping up to support backbones associated with the issues they care about" (p. 6).

Collective Commitment

I'm adopting Gardner et al. (2011)'s definition of collective affective organizational commitment, which expresses collective commitment as "a shared mindset and shared psychological state among a delineated collective of individuals regarding their employer typified by feelings of loyalty and a desire to invest mental and physical energy in helping the organization achieve its goals" (p. 318). While the cross-sector partnerships and groups studied in this dissertation do not all serve as employers of the individuals within the collectives/groups I investigate, this

definition does present an insightful perspective as to the connection between the individual and collective levels of commitment, and commitment as it's directed towards collective action.

Theorists on collective commitment have suggested the important connection between collective commitment and collective action, as higher levels of commitment are often attributed to greater ability to achieve collective action (Reichers, 1985; Robertson & Tang, 1995; Walton, 1985). Yet as the definition for collective commitment acknowledges the significance of individual commitment, I begin to unpack the notion of collective commitment at the individual level. I also review literature that emphasizes commitment in challenging spaces, such as hard-to-staff or low-resourced schools. I parallel these environments to nascent collective action groups, as both represent places where resources to pursue collective action are more often scarce, the organization has little resources to induce commitment from those that are engaged in the work, and the communities that are often most impacted are low-resourced communities of color.

Theories on Individual Commitment

Individual Commitment as Measured by Organizational Commitment. The concept of individual commitment is most popularly understood through organizational commitment, and was introduced by Mowday, Porter, and Steers (1982). Their empirical and theoretical work showed that links between the individual employees and the organization led to strong beliefs and acceptance of the organizational goals, strong desires for organizational membership, and a

motivation to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization (Reyes, 1990).

Reyes (1990) presents a precise definition of organizational commitment as "...the

global evaluation of the linkage between the individual employee and the

organization" (p. 143). Dee, Henkin, and Singleton (2006) reinforce this definition

by noting these linkages measure "the relative strength of an individual's

identification with, and involvement in a particular organization" (Mowday, Porter,

& Steers, 1982 in Dee et. al., 2006, p.604). Hence, affective commitment can most

easily be understood as the "psychological bond" between an employee and

employer (Gardner et al., 2011, p. 317).

Rosenholtz (1991) also identifies a sociological perspective of organizational

commitment, which purports that "organizational members are motivated to

remain within a setting and to contribute productively only so long as the

inducements offered are as great or greater than the contribution they are asked to

make"[7] (March & Simon, 1958 in Rosenholtz, 1991, p. 140). More individual

commitment (as measured by organizational commitment) is considered to be

better for the organization, as Reyes (1994) cites Scholl (1981) who acknowledged

that "individuals who are committed represent a more stable, consistent body of

employees who will exert effort when work conditions are not ideal"(p. 229).

Employees with strong organizational commitment are considered to employ more

effort as they have clearer intentions in stay with the organization (Reyes, 1994).

Hence, early theoretical constructions of individual commitment via organizational

commitment upholds the notion that commitment from organizational employees is

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[7] Rosenholtz refers to this concept as "psychic rewards".

dependent on strong connections between the employee and the institution, as well as employees' perception of rewards acquired from their commitment to the institution.

In her empirical test of how individuals' attitudes and behaviors affect performance in government agencies, Kim (2005) speaks to two approaches of understanding organizational commitment. The first approach, attitudinal commitment, positions "commitment as an attitude reflecting the nature and quality of the linkage between an employee and organization" (p. 247). Meyer and Allen (1991) suggest that attitudinal commitment is measured by affective commitment, which is indicated by "employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Kim, 2005, p. 248). Researchers attempting to measure affective commitment have often utilized the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire; a survey-based measure developed by Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) to quantify an individual's attitude as related to the organization they work for.

The second approach, behavioral commitment, is "…the process by which individuals develop a sense of attachment not to an organization, but to their own actions" (Kim, 2005, p. 247). This approach is measured by continuance commitment, which Meyer and Allen (1991) define as an the awareness of the cost associated with leaving the organization. Of the two approaches, evidence proposes that affective commitment is the most important measure of organizational commitment, as affective commitment and organizational performance have been

positively correlated in some studies (Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly, Goffin, & Jackson, 1989; Somers & Birnbaum, 2000).

Critiquing the use of Organizational Commitment. Whereas organizational commitment dominates American conceptions and models of individual commitment in workspaces, international literature presents a compelling critique of this model. While the organizational commitment perspective places a great amount of responsibility on the workplace to cultivate employee commitment, more complex models of commitment reflect the intricate interconnection between external and internal orientations and motivators of commitment. While affective commitment considers emotional attachment and involvement in an organization, this traditional interpretation considers the interaction between the concept and the organization as measured by survey methods, rather than deconstructing what leads individuals to become emotionally attached or involved in their work. Consequently, more consideration for internal factors that induce commitment is needed in order to form a more holistic and fitting conceptualization of commitment.

Day (Day, 2004, 2008; Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005) and Crosswell (L. Crosswell, 2006; L. J. Crosswell & Elliott, 2004; Elliott & Crosswell, 2002) add to a growing body of literature that attempts to challenge the notion that commitment is focused and motivated exclusively by external factors[8]. They use individual interview and survey data to argue that commitment can be highly personal and

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[8]Day and Crosswell study commitment in the context of schools, teachers, and education leaders. They pay particular attention to challenging school contexts (i.e. low-resourced schools). As I mention earlier, I've drawn a parallel between these contexts and nascent social-change collective action spaces.

maintains an internal orientation, and this multidimensionality is seldom explored in research. Although individuals within these contexts may speak of their commitment being linked to external factors (such as organizations, students, etc.), both authors present evidence that participants' conceptualizations of commitment were tied to their individual values, beliefs, passions, and personal ideologies (L. J. Crosswell & Elliott, 2004; Day et al., 2005). Moreover, while these individuals "…worked in situations which may reasonably be described as difficult, personally, emotionally, and cognitively challenging, sometimes turbulent and, occasionally, violently disruptive", Day found that their work required a " …passion to maintain a commitment over time, and courage to persist in caring for every student in the class" (Day, 2004, p. 428; 436).

    Summary. In sum, traditional conceptualizations of commitment orient individuals' commitment to the organization and workplace and concentrate on measures between the individual and external motivators induced by the organization. More complex understandings of commitment point to the idea that commitment is driven and connected to internal motivators, such as individuals' values, beliefs, passions, and personal ideologies. I will later show how this notion of individual values, beliefs, and ideologies is critical to achieving collective commitment.

Theories on Collective Commitment[9]

Public management scholars have found that collective commitment is developed through repeated interaction among individuals. Those with higher levels of commitment can transfer feelings and influence to those with less commitment and vise versa (Barsade, 2002; Gardner et al., 2011; Levinson, 1965). Hence, individual patterns and collective commitment patterns continuously affect each other and function similarly as they develop from interactions and shared feeling amongst the group (Gardner et al., 2011; Kozlowski & Klein, 2000).

As Gardener et al.'s (2011) definition of collective affective commitment and similar to theories of individual commitment suggest, theories on collective commitment are primarily positioned within the concept of organizational commitment, and are theorized in two distinct ways. The first theory is often used by scholars who study organizational behavior (OB), and aligns with the individual commitment conceptualization of affective commitment. This body of literature supports that commitment reflects an individual's identification and involvement within the organization (Mowday et al., 1982; Porter et al., 1974). However, the OB literature is sparse in drawing explicit connections between individual commitment and collective commitment. Indeed, Robertson and Tang (1995) note that "many scholars writing in the organizational behavior literature (Bennis, 1966; McGregor, 1957) have assumed, at least implicitly, that individual organizational members are

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[9] My understanding of a 'collective' is informed by Morgeson and Hofmann (1999), who define a collective as a interdependent, goal-centered, group of individuals. Hence, a 'collective' can be a team, unit, department, or entire organization (Gardner et al., 2011).

able and willing to cooperate with others to achieve shared or collective goals" (p. 69).

The second conception, most often housed in rational choice literature, aligns with the individual commitment conceptualization of behavioral commitment. It maintains that individual behavior is governed by self-interest and their perceptions of costs and benefits (Robertson & Tang, 1995). Unlike the organizational behavior literature, scholars using the rational choice conception do not make assumptions between the individual and collective levels of commitment. Instead, they voice a clear argument that individuals, instead, are self-interested humans who make choices for their own gain, which makes collective action intrinsically difficult (Radnitzky, 1987; Robertson & Tang, 1995). Similarly, Olson (1965) argues that "even if all of the individuals in a large group are rational and self-interested, and would gain if, as a group, they acted to achieve their common interest or objective, they would still not voluntarily act to achieve the common or group interest" (p. 2). Changing their orientation to acting the group's interest would require coercion, correlating to many theories of change that purport pressure or force as an important ingredient for change (Evans, 1996; M. Fullan, 1993; Olson, 1965).

Castelfranchi (1995) also introduces the concept of social commitment as a mediator between individual and collective commitment. He defines social commitment as "the commitment of one agent to another" and proposes that it is relational in nature (Castelfranchi, 1995, p. 42). Consequently, he suggests that individuals will first commit to one another (social commitment), and this relationship is later reflected in the collective action of both individuals.

Considering the Connections Between Collective Action and Collective

Commitment

Theoretical Connections. The concepts of collective action and collective

commitment connect in many ways. Theoretically, Robertson and Tang (1995)

propose that collective commitment and collective action are mutually dependent.

They argue "the commitment of organizational participants – to each other and to

the organization itself- becomes a critical and, at times, even necessary mechanism

for directing their behavior toward collective goal accomplishments" (p. 67). This

argument also infers that while all collective action may not require collective

commitment, the quality and success of the action is significantly interconnected to

collective commitment.

Likewise, Zaal et al. (2012) look at increasing levels of collective commitment

to collective action through the lens of regulatory factors. They find that perceived

success within a collective action pursuit increased the likelihood that individuals

would commit to a collective action outcome. Moreover, individuals that maintained

a high concern for safety and/or fulfillment of duty and responsibility were more

likely to commit to collective action if they perceived its goals as important as

opposed to achievable.

A number of scholars also propose how groups might harness individual

commitment, or what groups can do to garner collective commitment towards

collective action. Hassan and Rohrbaugh (2011) consider psychological climate and

how this can be used to foster affective commitment (or emotional attachment to

the organization)[10]. While they are clear that psychological climate is analyzed at the individual level, their test of its four domains reveal that goal ambiguity within an organization was negatively related to employees' affective commitment, and that social environment characteristics (i.e. social cohesion) and leadership support and facilitation were highly correlated to greater individual affective commitment to the organization (Hassan & Rohrbaugh, 2011).

Whereas study participants in Hassan and Rohrbaugh (2011) were predominately white, Zaal et al. (2012) suggest that more disadvantaged groups may collectively commit and act on that commit differently. The authors verify "research has demonstrated that perceiving one's group as being disadvantaged increases an individuals' motivation to engage in collective action aimed at improving the group's relative position" (p. 94). Given that the authors find that individuals were more willing to commit to collective action towards social change when they personally attached higher responsibility, duty, or importance to the goal the collective group was attempting to achieve, this also raises the particular question as to the connection between perceived racial disadvantage and willingness to commitment to collective action, which the authors do not address.

Lastly, Robertson and Tang (1995) also review informal social mechanisms that could induce collective commitment towards collective action. They suggest that social processes (i.e. recruitment and selection), leadership, and structural

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[10] "Psychological climate refers to an individual's cognitive representation of relatively proximal situational conditions, expressed in terms that reflect psychologically meaningful interpretations of the situation" (Hassan & Rohrbaugh, 2011, p. 31). The authors note that individuals' perceptions of the significance of their work spaces and their personal well-being are primary components of psychological climate.

design (i.e. development of organizational goals and values) may all help to facilitate greater commitment, and ultimately help groups achieve greater collective action.

Summary. In sum, the literature supports that there is a clear connection between the development of collective commitment and a group's ability to undertake and accomplish collective action. Those that use orientations of organizational commitment such as affective commitment (Hassan & Rohrbaugh, 2011; Kim, 2005) often highlight the need for alignment of personal and organizational goals to satisfy the emotional connection between individuals and organizations. Others that highlight the rational choice perspective (Olson, 1965; Robertson & Tang, 1995) note that social processes can lead or develop collective commitment towards collective action.

Methodological Connections. In this study, the concepts of collective action and commitment connect methodologically, as Pawson and Tilley (1997)'s concept of mechanisms serves as a solid description of the potential relationship between the two concepts. According to realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, 2004) theory, "mechanisms describe what it is about programs and interventions that bring about any effects" (Pawson & Tilley, 2004, p. 6). Hence, mechanisms represent the things that individuals (and similarly groups) do, act on, and perform in order to get from point A to point B. Given this, I am conceptualizing collective action and collective commitment as mutually reinforcing mechanisms. As collective action describes the doings of an organized group, collective commitment represents a driving force that enables the group to pursue collective action (See Graphic I). Both are critical towards achieving a group's desired outcomes.

Interconnections Between Race, Gender, and Commitment

(Evidence from Challenging School Contexts)

In addition to examining the interconnections between collective commitment and collective action, I also aim to critically examine the role of race and power in the process of achieving collective commitment and ultimately, collective action. Zaal et al. (2012) suggests that perceiving one's group as disadvantaged uniquely influences individuals' decisions to participate in collective action, particularly if one believes collective action will make their group better off. Literature from education on teachers' commitment to working in challenging contexts presents a compelling parallel to this concept[11]. While studies show that school conditions and leadership are critical factors when examining individuals' preferences and tenure in urban and urban-rim schools, "there is also some evidence to suggest that racial composition of a school's student body, regardless of conditions may be the most important factor associated with teachers' decisions to change jobs" (Frankenberg et al., 2010, p. 314). Hence, teachers of color are more likely than White teachers to commit and work in schools with higher numbers students of color.

In attempt to understand why this might be, Su (1997) conducted a case study of African-American, Asian-American, and Latino/a teacher candidates at a

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[11] As mentioned, I've drawn a parallel between commitment in challenging school contexts (i.e. low-resourced schools particularly those with higher percentages of students of color, students eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches, and/or families who live below the federal poverty level) and nascent changing-making collective action spaces. The reasons why individuals may commit, the actions employed by those involved, and the challenges faced by those in both spaces bare many similarities. Moreover, as with cross-sector partnerships, teaching is a unique profession that "involves a complex combination of working relationship with not only the school [one's organization], but with various stakeholders including students" (Park, 2005, p. 463).

state university in the US. Candidates of color frequently stated that "…a good teacher [was] someone who not only [cared] for children and learning, but also [was] sensitive to diversity in the schools and society, and [was] committed to improving and transforming the society" (Su, 1997, p. 329). This belief remained consistent with the reasons for which the many of the candidates of color entered the field. While all candidates expressed altruistic/intrinsic desires as a reason for entering the field, White candidates did not express concern or a desire to teach poor children or children of color (Su, 1997). Yet this was a driving factor for many of the teaching candidates of color.

> "…About one third of [the teaching candidates of color], especially those who perceived their early school experiences as particularly or uniquely negative due to their racial status and language difficulties, demonstrated a strong awareness of the unequal educational opportunities for the poor and minority children, the irrelevance of the existing curriculum and instruction for minority students, and the need to restructure schools and society. The black students were among the most conscious of social justice… These minority students are clearly committed to entering teaching as social change agents. For them, the rewards for teaching would be less financial than emotional and cultural" (Su, 1997, p. 332).

Commitment to serving underserved students as displayed by the teacher candidates of color in Su's study is not uncommon. Irizarry and Donaldson (2012) study of Latino/a high school students and teacher candidates reveals a similar conviction. The authors found that feelings of reciprocity and giving back to their

communities were among students' primary reason for entering the field of teaching.

> "Latinas/os displayed a forceful commitment to returning to schools like
> those they had attended to address systematic injustices in their own
> educational backgrounds. At three points in the teacher pipeline [prior to
> teacher preparation, upon entry to the field, and after completing a two-year
> teaching commitment], Latina/o teachers exhibited a strong commitment to
> teaching in schools serving students of color and low-income students"
> (Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012, p. 167).

In a literature review on the recruitment and retention of teachers of color, Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, and Freitas (2010) describe an emergent theme of a "humanistic commitment", which authors define as a commitment to serve nondominant racial and cultural students to enhance their academic outcomes (p. 82). In relation to teacher turnover rates, Ingersoll (2001) found that teachers of color, specifically Black and Latino/a teachers, maintained lower rates of turnover, and thus sustained commitments made to spaces they worked in. Likewise, Irizarry and Donaldson (2012) found that Latina/o teachers were more likely to remain in the teaching profession than their White counterparts. In a 5-year study on teachers of color, Achinstein and Ogawa (2011) also revealed a connection between the "humanistic commitment" amongst teachers of color and retention.

> "A primary reason that teachers gave for remaining in their schools through
> the 5th year of teaching was a commitment to working in schools with
> students from nondominant cultural and linguistic communities. These

teachers saw themselves as cultural and linguistic resources to youth and

their families and wanted to give back to their communities by making a

difference in the lives of students of color" (Achinstein & Ogawa, 2011, p. 80).

Yet literature also points out that all teachers of color are not the same and bring

different factors to the table. Kauchak and Burbank (2003) discovered this very idea

in their study of two minority teachers enrolled in an urban teacher preparation

program. The authors acknowledged that although both White and non-White

candidates enrolled in the program with a desire to work in urban schools,

"different minority teachers [brought] unique voices and perspectives" and this in

turn determined the ways in which they approached classroom instruction and their

beliefs about teaching (Kauchak & Burbank, 2003, p. 73). Moreover, they propose

that teachers of color could not be viewed as better teachers of students of color due

to the fact that they may share similar racial or ethnic backgrounds.

> "What is needed," they propose, "…is an understanding of the factors that
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> might make minority teachers better at addressing the needs of minority
>
> children. Such an understanding would be a great benefit because it would
>
> provide a means for enhancing the skills of all teachers who work with
>
> minority children" (Kauchak & Burbank, 2003, p. 63).

Drawing on this parallel, I recognize commitment to teaching in challenging

contexts presents many similarities to a commitment to work in multi-sector social

change-making initiatives. As the cases I focus on aim to serve populations of people

of color, those underserved, and foreground educational outcomes as part of their

desired change, it is highly likely that leaders and those that work within these

initiatives commit to participation in these collectives for similar reasons, such as racial identification and connection. Yet as these partnerships work towards addressing social inequities, critical race theory foregrounds that "racism is and has been an integral feature of American life, law, and culture, and any attempt to eradicate inequities has to be centered on the socio-historical legacy of racism" (Howard, 2008, p. 963).

Whereas starting initiatives and using multi-sector partnerships to address large social problems aligns with a more progressive agenda, applying a critical lens to this type of collective work forces one to counter the "dominant narrative of rational, objective, color-blind policy formation", and consider what Gillborn (2013) describes as the "taken-for-granted traditional view of policy as an incremental process moving toward greater justice and inclusion" (p. 130). Hence, as I recognize that identity such as race and gender may compel individuals to commit to collective action that addresses issues rooted in a socio-history of racism, I am also questioning how race is represented and negotiated in these collective spaces, particularly in the process of achieving collective commitment and action.

Consequently, in addition to conceptualizing and analyzing around the ways in which individuals' values and commitments (such as race and gender) are fostered at the collective level, I will also apply a critical lens to help illuminate how, and whose beliefs, values, and biases are being legitimized and marginalized by way of race and power (Khalifa, Jennings, Briscoe, Oleszweski, & Abdi, 2014).

A Conceptual Framework For Individual Commitment, Collective

Commitment, and Collective Action

Here I present the conceptualization of individual commitment, collective commitment, and collective action I will be using to situate my work given the aforementioned theories and literature. The literature reviewed on individual commitment point to a tension in the traditional theory and study of commitment. Most scholars using the organizational behavior theory of commitment have conceptualized and attempted to measure individuals' attachment, involvement, and their motivators committing them to the organization via quantitative analyses and the measurement of affective commitment. The rational choice literature then suggests how organizations may use external motivators (i.e. social mechanisms) to induce commitment. However, empirical studies rarely consider *both* internal and external motivators to commitment. Moreover, there is little qualitative work on how internal motivators (individuals' values, beliefs, passions, and personal ideologies) are/aren't aligned to collective commitment towards collective work, and also little work on what critical factors new and developing groups need to foster when attempting to pursue collective action.

If collective commitment is conceptualized as a collective of individual commitments, then collective commitment, at its core, can be thought of as the collection of individuals' values, beliefs, passions, and personal ideologies. If collective entities and groups are going to harness collective commitment towards collective action, the group/entity needs to (1) speak to, relate, and align with individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies, and (2) create an inspiring environment

in which individuals aspire to achieve the social-change and outcomes of the collective group. This idea is all the more true when the collective group is a developing entity, and there aren't many outside resources (i.e. money or prestige) to reward individuals and/or induce their commitment.

As nascent groups attempt to forge collective commitment and use it towards the implementation of a successful initiative, I contend that consideration must be given to both the internal and external motivators to commitment, as individual beliefs, values, and passions as well as environment are critical to new groups as they begin to develop their own values and establish their own culture. This project considers the ways in which collectives connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and passions, and the conditions and mechanisms through which those individual commitments are fostered, detracted from, or sustained at the collective level. I look at alignment between individual and collective values, and the critical environmental factors that can aid new collective action groups in their development of collective commitment and achievable outcomes.

I contend that collective spaces that foster and create vision, trust, and a space to learn fare better in speaking to, relating, and aligning with the values and beliefs of those that join them. One can decipher what ignites, detracts, and sustains individual commitment and ultimately collective commitment by analyzing if and how critical factors of vision, trust, and space to learn are developed, by unpacking individual to collective alignment of values, beliefs, and ideologies, and by understanding how identity (i.e. race and power) are negotiated in the process of achieving collective commitment and ultimately collective action.

Chapter III. Historical Cases (Realist Synthesis)

Using collective action as a social-change making space is not a new endeavor. Specifically, cross-sector collaborations are often the response of those who realize addressing complex problems may not be accomplished by the efforts of one separate sector. In light of the MBK/HMBK's cross-sector approach to addressing equities for boys and young men of color, and given that many social change-making projects have similarly attempted to use partnership and collective action to achieve system level change and impact, here I present a research synthesis on social change initiatives that have attempted to create change for underserved populations and people of color.

I approach this review of literature using realist evaluation to evaluate these initiatives and projects. While traditional program evaluation inquiries ask questions such as 'what works?' or 'does this program work?', realist evaluation assesses a program through probing its theory of change, understanding the conditions for change, and acknowledging the complex nature and multiple ways change can be achieved. Consequently, this research synthesis illuminates the mechanisms, contexts, and outcome patterns that explain the observed programmatic choices, moves, and outcomes of social change-making initiatives. Moreover, I investigate these historical cases with respect to the development of

collective commitment, and how race and power is represented and negotiated in the process of achieving (or not achieving) collective action.

<div align="center">**Methodology**</div>

Sample Cases and Case Selection

The cases I explore are cases that exemplify the use of collective action to tackle a large social problem and/or create social change for underserved and people of color. Given this frame, I began my case exploration and selection with some preemptive boundaries. First, all cases had to incorporate some degree of cross-sector partnership, in which people from different spheres agree to collaborate and collectively pursue change. Secondly, I looked for cases that both represented initiatives that were charged by those with high influence and power (grass-high initiatives), and those that were initiated by communities that desired change for themselves (grassroots initiatives)[12]. I also required that cases date within the last 50 years, and those working within the case had outcome measures that aimed to positively serve underserved populations and people of color.

I conducted a systematic review of the literature through electronic databases such as ERIC, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest to find examples cases that fit the aforementioned boundaries. I conducted a hand search of bibliographies of handbooks such as The Handbook on Social Change and the Oxford Handbook of Social Movements. I used books on school reform, systematic change, and personal

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[12] My proposal work for this project revealed that the power origins of a social change initiative could profoundly impact observed outcomes (Kania et al., 2014; Kania & Kramer, 2013; Philpart & Bell, 2015). Hence, an appeal from an influential or powerful figure to pursue a social change could operate differently from a grass roots initiative, in which communities that are experiencing a problem decide to organize themselves. For this reason, I chose to use power-origin as a boundary and organizing tool within this review.

references to direct my case search. I also referred to other sources (i.e. the Stanford Social Innovation Review, The Harvard Business Review, the Collective Impact Forum, and audio-visual sources such as public talks), as I recognized that information on these ideal cases might not be represented in scholarly forums.

Ultimately, I identified 14 cases that meet the initial boundary criteria. I then created a matrix to organize these cases using general questions (i.e. source, location, power-origin, and social issue) and also questions from a realist evaluation framework (i.e. mechanisms, outcomes, theory of change). After organizing these cases, I foregrounded the cases that were domestic (occurred in the US), and this decision eliminated one case. I then foregrounded cases that sought some degree of educational change as a desired outcome, and cases for which I could find an array of sources that pointed to multiple perspectives on the case. This excluded 5 additional cases. After applying these additional boundaries, I was left 8 cases, and with a larger number of grass-high cases (five grass-high, three grassroots).

I decided to investigate the same number of grass-high and grassroots cases, as I wanted to give parallel attention to both types of cases. One of the remaining grassroots cases presented a concerning complication, as the case participants likely would have classified the case as a grassroots initiative, yet given my definition for 'grass-high' and reading further documentation on the case, I began to see the case as a grass-high example. In view of this complication, I decided not to include this case and eliminated it from the remaining three potential grassroots cases.

The remaining two grassroots cases maintained geographic origins in Western and Southwestern parts of the country. Knowing this, I decided that I

wanted both grass-high cases to include a larger geographical base, as I was curious

if geographic range or nation-wide initiatives would reveal any "left-out variables"

(George & Bennett, 2005, p. 32)[13]. These decisions helped to eliminate two grass-

high cases, as both had originated in California, and did not reach beyond this

geographic area. Furthermore, these two cases highlighted university-initiated

community partnerships, but involved multiple partnerships/programs within each

case. Given that I wanted to expand geographic boundaries and realizing the

multiple partnerships/programs within each case would austerely complicate a

realist analysis of these cases, I made a final decision to eliminate both of them.

I then eliminated the final grass-high case on the basis of lack of

documentation. After an ample search, I was unable secure enough sources that

provided different perspectives of stakeholders within the case, as well as sources

that had direct articulations from case participants. Given this, I eliminated this final

case, and as such, solidified the four cases are that represented in this synthesis.

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[13] I should also note that I was intentional in selecting cases that would complicate a simple interpretation on the basis of power-origin (i.e. "grass-high cases were successful, and grassroots cases weren't"). Consequently, I was careful to include cases that would perplex my findings. Yet I also knew the limitations of realist evaluation, and having multiple cases/programs within one case (as with the last two California grass-high cases) would have been beyond the methodological capacity of this small study. Hence, I attempted to be mindful of complexity in areas in which I was able to address it confidently.

Case	Location	Power-Origin	Social Issue	Description of Partnership
Project Quest	San Antonio, TX	Grassroots	San Antonio community lost 5,000 jobs in manufacturing, textiles, transportation, construction, etc. in the early 80's, yet experienced job growth in other industries. Project Quest was an attempt to rectify the mismatch of job opportunities and skilled workers	Community-based organizations, businesses, education institutions, elected officials
Padres y Jóvenes Unidos (PJU) and the Redesign of North High School	Denver, CO	Grassroots	Parents and students collectively organize with education partners to address the depleting state of a popular local high school is West Denver	Parents, students, school administration, education partners, local media, local elected officials
PUSH/Excel	Nation-wide	Grass-high	Collective pursuit of excellence in education initiated by Jesse Jackson	Parents, students, school staff, local program staff, national PUSH/Excel staff, media, churches, businesses, foundations, National Institute of Education (NIE), US Department of Education
Promise Neighborhoods	Nation-wide	Grass-high	Improve educational outcomes for children in distressed areas and reduce generational poverty	US Department of Education, local educational institutions, faith-based organizations, non-profits, family and community organizations

Table A. Overview of Historical Case

Data & Analysis

After selecting the 4 cases, I conducted a systematic study of each case. I first searched for articles, books, media pieces, and reports that spoke of and/or provided an evaluation of the case. I looked for and focused on material that (1) represented the perspective of particular stakeholders within the case; (2) served as a program evaluation report for the case; (3) utilized direct quotations from those that participated in the activities of the case; (4) provided a detailed account of a primary actor within the case. This prioritization led me to secure 7-12 documents per case.

Once I determined what documents I'd analyze, I used realist evaluation as a frame for my first pass through each document. I crafted an analytic question outline that summarized questions around the realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, 2004) conceptualizations of context, mechanisms, outcomes, and theory of change that I would consider as I read through each case document (See Table A -1st Phase Analytical Questions Outline). In particular, I used the descriptions of the realist evaluation codes in Pawson and Tilley (2004) to develop and abstract specific questions that could be used to answer as to how a code would operate in a program/initiative/policy.

For example, as Pawson and Tilley (2004) describes context as "those features of the condition in which programs are introduced that are relevant to the operative of the program mechanisms", I began to think of questions that would help to identify such contextual features (p. 7). Hence, questions such as "what is the case?"; "what is the social issue the program is addressing?", "what is the program /

intervention being used?"; "who and how are people involved throughout the

program's course?" all deemed as relevant and critical questions to ask within each

case in order to understand its contextual features. I repeated this exercise for the

mechanisms, outcomes, and theory of change codes. Once I constructed the outline,

I then went through each document I collected for each case and coded them using

this outline and framework.

Realist Area of Focus	Theory of Change	Context	Mechanisms	Outcomes
Attending Questions	• What's the broad theory of change, and where does this theory draw from? • What was the theory of action, hunch, expectation, or rationale for why this program/intervention might have worked?	• What is the case? • Where did the action originate? (geographic location) • What is the power-origin of the action? (grass high/grassroots/etc.) • How is the partnership described? (sectors involved, description of organizational and community collaborators) • What is the social issue this case is addressing? • What are the a priori outcomes the collective group is hoping to achieve? (general or specific) • What is the program/invention being used? (generated or applied intervention) • How were people involved throughout the program's course? • Who was involved in the program? What role, knowledge, and resources did they bear individually? What influence, knowledge, and resources did they bring as a representative of their sectors/institutions? • How do individuals relate to each other within the program? • How are individuals visualizing the work?	• What are the actual doings of individuals involved in the program? • What tactics/methods do they employ to reach their desired outcomes? • In what ways are partners and leaders choosing to build their program/intervention?	• What leads to successes and failures along the program's course? How do these successes and failures point to the program's collision with the context, and its initial desired outcomes? • How do the expected outcomes compare to actual outcomes? • What argument was made around measuring the "right" outcomes? (i.e. does it seem like the outcomes the program aspired to were the right outcomes to measure? If no, why not, and what seems to be missing?) • How well does the theory of action/program rationale appraise to the outcomes that are observed?

Table B. 1st Phase Analytical Questions

After coding, I then reconstructed a narration of each case using statements regarding the theory of change as central points of the case. Given that all the codes during this analysis phase foregrounded questions regarding what works, for whom, in what circumstances, and why (realist evaluation [Pawson and Tilley (2004)]), I narrated each case from this realist perspective, showing how various aspects of context and mechanisms supported and/or challenged each theory of change statement.

Once each case was reconstructed using my initial analytic questions/realist framework, I then considered both the initiative's intended outcomes and the outcome of interest for this study (collective commitment). As each case document had already been coded with the realist framework, my second pass through the material focused on outcomes, or my 'O' code. I compiled all the notes from this code within the case, first paying special attention to both the outcomes of interest that emerged from the case. In particular, I noted how the case accomplished, or failed to accomplish, its desired outcomes, how outcomes aligned with individual and collective visions for the project, as well as how expected outcomes compared to actual outcomes.

Asking these 1st phase analytic questions also allowed me to consider and look for evidence of collective commitment. Understanding the CMOs of each case supported me in constructing a theory on collective commitment, specifically looking for contributors, detractors, and sustainers of a group level commitment. I recognized that the notion of collective commitment represented a higher inference concept, and most often would not be explicitly named or explained in the original

case documents. Nonetheless, the act of using the realist evaluation (Pawson & Tilley, 1997, 2004) coding scheme gave me the opportunity to look for collective commitment while engaging in coding of the original documents. Consequently, I consistently asked myself how collective commitment was functioning, noted if and how authors were talking about commitment, and looked for instances of disconfirming evidence towards the notion of harnessing collective commitment as I parsed through the original documentation (Erickson, 1985).

Erickson (2012) characterizes this process as analytic induction, which is a "…recursive process of reviewing evidence with an assertion in mind" and "revising the assertion in light of the evidence", and reviewing the evidence again (p. 1460). As such, using analytic induction enabled me to systematically detect patterns across cases in which (1) groups were able to align and draw on individuals' beliefs, values, and ideologies towards collective goals and outcomes, and (2) the group environment helped to develop, contribute to, and sustain (or failed to develop, contribute and sustain) collective commitment. Whereas this process differs from directly coding one's original data, it allows the researcher to recognize patterns of variation of groups, actions, and opinions even within a particular phenomenon, make inferences, and use the data to challenge and modify their inferences.

I used memos to name environmental features (i.e. trust, vision, and space to learn) and document patterns I saw, and tested the veracity of these features within each case. These environmental factors represented "the conditions under which specified outcomes occur, and the mechanisms through which they occur" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 31). I then began to formulate positive statements that explicitly

stated what served as evidence for each of these statements. For example, within

trust, I made note that trusting environments within the cases were places where

individuals could share their thoughts, feelings, and insights with the group

believing they will be heard and acknowledged, places where individuals were

willing to be honest about the collective work (i.e. where the initiative is heading,

leadership, decision-making process, etc.), and the group would be open to listening

and grappling with thoughts and concerns of those within the group, among other

positive indicators. This led to an iterative process of theory development on

collective commitment, which I ultimately organized into 2nd Phase Analytical

questions (see Table B). I then used this conceptualization to trace and explain the

development of collective commitment within each case, and convergence and

divergences across cases.

 After I constructed the 2nd phase questions, I then analyzed how trust, vision,

and space to learn contributed to the development (or stasis of) collective

commitment. As with the first phase, I went through my written cases and

annotated using indicators from the 2nd phase analytical questions. In addition, I

looked for evidence as to how race and power was represented and negotiated in

the process of achieving (or not achieving) collective commitment. I also used a data

matrix to organize and synthesize my findings.

Collective Commitment Contributors General inquiries: How is collective commitment formed? What are contributors, detractors, and sustainers of collective commitment?			
Critical Factor	**Trust**	**Vision**	**Space to Learn**
Definition	The security individuals feel and have in the group and overall initiative, and the belief that they can work openly and honestly within their group space	A clear idea of what the initiative is about, why it exists, and what the group is attempting to do reach its desired outcomes	The time and capacity for the group to grow (individually and collectively) in knowledge and understanding of the problem, context, barriers, and each other. STL encompasses the meaning individuals attribute to the collective space, as relationships and interactions contribute to a development of personal and group identity. STL allows for learning through doing, and making missteps without harsh consequences.
Evidence	✓ *Individuals share their thoughts, feelings, and insights with the group believing they will be heard and acknowledged* ✓ *Individuals are willing to be honest about the collective work and each other (i.e. where the initiative is heading, leadership, decision-making process, mistrust of another, etc.)* ✓ *Group is open to listening and grappling with thoughts and concerns of those within the group* ✓ *Group has confidence in the vision for the initiative* ✓ *Group has confidence in the leadership for the initiative*	✓ *Group has clear idea of outcome, goal, ideal, and strategy that they're working towards achieving* ✓ *Passion and knowledge drives pursuit of seeking best course of action for group* ✓ *Individuals within the group see themselves contributing to realizing the vision* ✓ *Group takes time to understand the problem before creating a solution* ✓ *Group is 'close enough' [close-aligning mindsets, close in communication, may even include close in proximity] to understand the vision* ✓ *The vision for the space and initiative incorporates the conceptualization of all group members, not just leaders'*	✓ *Individuals are allowed space to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from both successes and failures* ✓ *Time is used to pursue what's important to the group, not only select individuals* ✓ *Individuals are willing to learn from group members despite potential power differentials* ✓ *Individuals are given space to grow personally in their understanding and connection to the problem* ✓ *Leaders and individuals may situate and understand their work in context of a historic struggle* ✓ *There is opportunity to reflect and recalibrate as the group works towards their vision and desired outcomes* ✓ *Leadership supports and encourages their own learning and others' knowledge, and promotes wanting to learn through the process of development* ✓ *Competition does not impede adaptive learning*

Table C. 2nd Phase Analytical Questions

I conducted this two-phase analysis for each case, alternating between completing a grassroots and grass-high cases. I then went back into each case with the 1st phase analytical question outline with the intent of answering the overarching first research question (*How does collective action work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why when addressing large social problems?)* to complete the cross-case analysis sections. I annotated the cases I had written, looking for themes and evidence regarding contexts, mechanisms, and outcomes. I abstracted the themes and evidence and used a data matrix to organize and analyze my findings with respect to the questions and categories in Chart A. While each case narrative provides rich description of case particularities, the analysis following the grassroots and later grass-high cases looks to characterize and compare these features via a lens of collective commitment (with respect to the characterizations in Table B) and answer the second research question (*How does collective commitment connect to the success [or lack of success] of the collective action pursued by cross-sector partnerships?).* The next section provides individual case narratives followed by a comparative analysis across all the cases, which explores points of convergence and divergence around how these groups pursued collective commitment and collective action.

Case: Project Quest
Location: San Antonio, Texas
Type: Grassroots

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Overview
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Project Quest depicts collective action that arises from a community-

organizational base that shifted into a cross-sector partnership and program over

time. As San Antonio city residents felt the economic ramifications of the closure of

large manufacturing plants within the city, they also recognized the suburban and

metro areas around the city had thousands of jobs in other fields such as health care,

mechanics, and education (Anyon, 2014).

Project Quest became the creation of two regionally affiliated community-

based organizations joining together and partnering with San Antonio's business

community, local employers, education and job training institutions, the City of San

Antonio, the city's regional Private Industry Council, and social service agencies

(Campbell, 1994). Project Quest organizers, developers, and partners utilized a

relational organizing approach to understand residents' experiences, garner

political will and relational capital, and ultimately push for the creation and

implementation of a program designed to put people at the center of job training

education.

The goals of the training program included providing community members

with high quality and better paying jobs, improving the economic vivacity of San

Antonio, matching the needs of both participants and employers, and aiding

program participants in becoming more self-sufficient and finding social stability

(Osterman & Lautsch, 1996). While program evaluations reflected how participants

made considerable economic and social gains (as measured by outcomes such as increases in hourly wages, decreases in welfare recipiency, increased enrollment in college, etc.), the three year development of Project Quest was characterized by keen political strategy, leaders' and residents' extensive participation in research and learning around San Antonio's labor market and residents' experiences, and tactical partnership building with San Antonio's business community. The case of Project Quest ultimately represents how those who were most affected by the breach in the San Antonio's old order (i.e. the factory closures) shifted to making change meaningful enough to for them to transformation individually, and ultimately work collectively to create a robust employment training opportunity.

Project Quest Theory of Change (TOC)

TOC 1- The use of individual experiences and transformation are imperative towards collective work and change.

Context. The vision and creation of Project Quest was initiated by the erosion of San Antonio's manufacturing industry and the resulting economic dislocation of San Antonian residents. By early 1990, major factories such as Levi Strauss, Roeglein Meat Packing, Miller Curtain, the Kelly Air Force Base, and San Antonio Shoe had all closed, draining the city of over 14,000 living-wage jobs.

The loss of jobs had the greatest repercussions for San Antonio's economically disadvantaged communities, whom were mostly Latino residents living in the city's south, east, and west sides that often lacked education or advanced training (Campbell, 1994; Warren, 1998). Father Jost, a Catholic priest widely recognized as the initiator of the conversations that led to Project Quest, noted that despite skill-level, people "…got jobs through relationships", and low-skill jobs with moderate wages gave residents an opportunity to achieve a middle-class standard of living (Campbell, 1994, p. 4).

Both he and Episcopal priest, Father Will Wauters, witnessed the individual experiences of their congregants and others, reflecting how job disruption led to financial insecurity, family disruption, domestic abuse, drug use, and what they considered, hopelessness (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996, p. 7).

> "'I saw the strains, the burdens, that so many people were under,' Father Jost recalled. Divorces increased. I saw women becoming heads of households, not making it on one income. And even when two members of the family

might be working, they weren't making enough money to support a family. The result of that was a lot of domestic violence, a lot of drinking, a lot of drugs. There was no sense of purpose in life. We saw people trying to work through this burden, trying to make a better life for themselves and their families and not being able to'" (p. 4).

This led both leaders to begin conversations with two community-based organizations, Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS) and Metro Alliance, in hopes of finding solutions. Both COPS and Metro Alliance had over twenty years of experience working on community issues in San Antonio. While COPS members were predominately Catholic and Mexican-American, Metro Alliance drew constituency from predominately African-American, Latino, and White congregations[14] (Warren, 1998).

Mechanisms. The initial work for Project Quest was built on the existing efforts of several community organizations and religious leaders, including COPS and Metro Alliance. Nevertheless the insights as to how these organizations and alliance should move forward came from the local level, in which COPS and Metro Alliance leaders organized house meeting with four to fifteen people that were impacted by the plant closings (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996). COPS co-chair Virginia Ramirez recounted-

"When Levi's closed, people were so upset. It was a tremendous opportunity for us to really get people to understand the things that were affecting them.

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[14] COPS was founded among Catholic parishes in west and south San Antonio where most residents were Latino/a.

More than anything else, the political will had to be there, and Levi's gave us

that" (Campbell, 1994, p. 12)

COPS and Metro Alliance church leaders committed thousands of hours to

organizing nearly 300 house meetings during the summer of 1990 (Campbell,

1994). During these meetings, leaders listened to community members' accounts of

job displacement, and also heard about their experiences with current or prior job

training programs. House meetings provided leaders opportunities to reconnect

with their neighbors, and draw valuable insight as leaders listened to community

members' accounts of job displacement, and also heard about their experiences with

current or prior job training programs. Common experiences included increased

indebtedness, feeling their training certification was worthless, and inability to find

work after the training program was over (Campbell, 1994; Osterman & Lautsch,

1996). The meetings also served as a mechanism to build the political will of the

community they would later need to collectively create a cohesive program plan and

participate in the demand of city funding (Campbell, 1994).

As leaders carried out research actions and conduct house meetings, they

found that house meetings changed from spaces where they simply listened to their

neighbors', to spaces where leaders were also teaching community members about

evidence of possible changes that could be made to address problems many

community members were facing. Campbell (1994) notes-

"The meetings transformed the anger over lack of jobs into clamor for job

training opportunities, and eventually, willingness to sacrifice time and

money to participate" (p. 17).

This fundamental shift from lamenting job loss and employment opportunities to a commitment to endorse new training opportunities provided community members and COPS / Metro Alliance committee leaders with the ammunition to collectively work with community members and local experts in crafting a strategy that would change residents current economic and social realities. Hence, the individual experiences and transformation underwent through house meetings served as the fuel for collective action and change-making.

TOC 2- Find opportunity amidst loss.

    Context. Although San Antonio's economy showed signs of decline with the loss of manufacturing jobs, this shift was counterpoised by a gain and opening of other higher skilled well-paying jobs. Factory closures contributed to 14,000 jobs lost, yet 19,000 new jobs within the fields of healthcare, education, auto repair, and law research offered job seekers well-paid positions, yet demanded workers with higher skills (Campbell, 1994; Osterman & Lautsch, 1996; Rademacher, Bear, Conway, Educational Resources Information Center (U.S.), & Aspen Inst. Washington DC., 2001). If displaced San Antonioan workers were going to meet the needs of employers and the demands of the emerging technology-driven industries and jobs, they would need customized training programs. Hence, "Quest was designed to bridge the gap between skill and opportunity" (Rademacher et al., 2001, p. 7).

    Current job training programs were federally funded by Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs, yet were state implemented (Barnow, 2000). San Antonio's local data of JTPA programs pointed to a broken system, ineffective

programming, and negative success indicators. "JTPA programs encouraged short

term rather than long-term training..." which likely led participants to dead-end and

low-waged jobs (Campbell, 1994, p. 19). In addition to the short length of

programming, typical JTPA programs provided trainees with few resources and

support (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996). Most training programs utilizing JTPA funds at

this time did not provide substantial financial supports such as childcare,

transportation, emergency rent/utility/phone funds, clothing for professional

engagements, nor specialized academic or social support via counseling.

Consequently, economically disadvantaged youth and adults often could not afford

to take on training (Warren, 1998, p. 9)

     Mechanisms. In addition to conducting house meetings, initiative leaders

organized and educated themselves in order to push their efforts forward. In spring

1991, COPS and Metro Alliance leaders formed a 40-person job training committee,

which met bi-weekly for two years (Campbell, 1994; Osterman & Lautsch, 1996).

These core leaders dedicated their time to researching the San Antonio's economic

trends and previous and existing local job training efforts.

     Findings showed the city's loss of low-skilled jobs was being accompanied by

new high-waged jobs that also required high-skill (Rademacher et al., 2001). Hence,

San Antonians needed help obtaining the new high-skill jobs that were being

created. Committee leaders saw that training for future jobs presented an

opportunity to secure good jobs for city residents (Campbell, 1994).

     Furthermore, the joint committee researched and identified potential

funding that could be applied to job training programs. Should they pursue job

training, leaders estimated they would need $5 million in public funds to sustain the program for at least two years (Warren, 1998). They learned that they could apply federal JTPA funding to their potential program, but federal funding came with restrictions that would limit how monies could be spent. COPS and Metro Alliance would have to work with regional leaders to lobby for additional local and state funding that would provide for a more innovative and flexible program strategy (Rademacher et al., 2001).

TOC 3- Relational organizing can strategically build community and political capital for politically challenging collective action.

Context. Both COPS and Metro Alliance were affiliates of a larger regional organization, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). As part of the nation's largest faith-based organizing network, the southwest IAF network founded COPS, and was credited with building COPS into the most powerful community organizing group in the county (Warren, 1998). IAF's southwest network developed through state campaigns, conventions, and close partnerships with its local arms such as COPS and Metro Alliance. IAF affiliates were supported by their regional network in successful campaigns on school reforms, reconstruction of affordable housing, urban infrastructural development, community policing programs, college scholarships and job opportunities for high school graduates (Campbell, 1994; Warren, 1998). Consequently, "the Project Quest campaign…occurred in the context of the most developed IAF regional network" (Warren, 1998, p. 81).

The initial stage of change-making for Project Quest was undergirded by the regional efforts of IAF. Within the southwest network of the IAF, regional director Ernesto Coretz directed a staff of 45 that worked with 17 local affiliate organizations (Warren, 1998). Warren (1998) also notes that Cortez's well-structured regional network was the largest and most sophisticated organizing network, and did not have many competing community-based or party-based organizations within the region.

Mechanisms. IAF intentionally used a relational organizing as a political strategy to connect community building and political action towards the end creating change for residents in San Antonio (Warren, 1998). According to Warren, "relational organizing involved the deliberate building of relationship for the purpose of finding common ground for political action", and works best when institutions within the context allow for discussion amongst diverse communities as well as across and between levels of power (Warren, 1998, p. 86).

The IAF supported and undergirded the local action of COPS and Metro Alliance by this strategy to develop the capacity of local leaders, garner support and commitments from political and business leaders, and build the local community's political relationships (Warren, 1998). In spring 1990, the IAF chose to make job training and workforce development its primary issue focus (Campbell, 1994). Regional leaders also organized meetings with leading economist who showed leaders data on the shift of industry and job availability within the city (Warren, 1998, p. 83).

In addition, the IAF also supported COPS and Metro Alliance leaders in meeting with local employers and the San Antonio business community. As with house meetings, IAF leaders used small business meetings to not only listen to employers, but educate them on the possibilities of a new training program that could fill gaps in hard-to-staff positions (Campbell, 1994). "They [IAF leaders] started by gaining the involvement of a few influential employers and then leveraged their commitment in larger meetings of business leaders" (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996, p. 8).

As COPS and Metro Alliance leaders had worked with experts and employers to identify local high-skilled jobs that were available and under-staffed, regional and local leaders were endeavoring to craft a program that would directly meet the needs of these employers by specifically training graduates for these positions. IAF and COPS/Metro Alliance leaders leveraged the connections of a converted ally and local banker, Tom Frost, to call a meeting with 40 of the city's local employers (Campbell, 1994; Osterman & Lautsch, 1996; Warren, 1998). IAF leaders insisted that employers commit to hiring Quest graduates for these jobs in exchange for skilled employees (Warren, 1998). Business leaders were reluctant to do so at first (Campbell, 1994). Yet IAF, COPS, and Metro Alliance leaders' persistence, confidence, and extensive research convinced business leaders that the group "had done their homework on job training" and "earned a place at the table" (Campbell, 1994, p. 19). By July 1991, the business community committed 650 jobs to Quest graduates (Warren, 1998).

The IAF also used relational organizing as a tool to garner political support for Project Quest. As San Antonio's mayoral election coincided with the time span of research, business, and house meetings, the IAF strategically sought to pressure mayoral and city council candidates in support of funding for Project Quest. Gubernatorial candidate Ann Richards was invited to address the over 10,000 IAF members at its spring convention in Texas (Campbell, 1994). COPS and Metro Alliance churches hosted a series of highly attended accountability nights with candidates, where most candidates voiced public support for the new program (Warren, 1998). When the newly elected mayor defaulted on providing committed funds to the project, IAF organized well-attended rallies at city council meetings, demanding promised funds.

It is also crucial to note the positioning of the IAF as an intermediary institution. Given its position as a regional organization, it provided national, state, and local resources and networks that could be leveraged to support local action. Hence, using relational organizing along with aligning multiple levels of organizing with significant support from an intermediary organization proved to be a significant catalyst for change.

Outcomes

After garnering the commitment across multiple sectors and partners, the joint COPS and Metro Alliance committee contracted Bob McPhereson, an employment and training expert from the University of Texas, and Brian Deaton, an employment expert from the federal Department of Labor, to design Project Quest

(Osterman & Lautsch, 1996, p. 9). The dual team worked with IAF, business, and political leaders to produce a program centered around the San Antonio's residents and labor market (Campbell, 1994). Key principles of the program included:

- Providing extensive financial and personal supports for trainees for the duration of time enrolled in the program. Project Quest envisioned a "long term and substantial investment in its clients", and aimed to address the myriad of barriers trainees faced during skill acquisition (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996, p. 1; Rademacher et al., 2001)

- Tying the program to industry and labor market demands from local employers and ensuring the post-training jobs offered were living-wage pay and offered opportunities for advancement

- Continuing strong ties to the community organizations that initiated the work and local resources (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996; Warren, 1998).

At operation, Project Quest would run as a two-year job-training program that trained participants in skilled occupations that were strongly tied to the "occupational demands of local employers" (Rademacher et al., 2001, p. 13). The San Antonio Works Board voted to apply $2 million of JTPA funds to the program, as it had already received the commitment of guaranteed jobs through the business community (Campbell, 1994). Hence, the restrictive JTPA funding, the non-restrictive state funding, and local city funding through Community Development Block Grant funds would finance the program during its initial years.

Early committee work at the regional and local level recognized job training as an appropriate response to the plant closings across San Antonio (Warren, 1998).

Yet leaders sought to challenge and strengthen this idea through relational organizing and listening to those with power (i.e. well-known economist and business leaders) and those without (i.e. neighbors and community members) (Campbell, 1994). The development and implementation of a demand-driven job-training program also reflects perspective of local community members, and how the capacity of multi-sectors could address them (Rademacher et al., 2001).

Long-Term Outcomes. January 1993, Project Quest enrolled its first 140 program participants at Alamo Community College District campuses. By June 1994, 650 participants were enrolled (Campbell, 1994). Campbell (1994) notes that one important lesson learned during Project Quest's first year was the "...essential role played by social services such as child care, income support and counseling. The services and stipends it provides are keeping participants in school and in training" (46).

In spite of knowledge gained from this lesson, Quest was denied further funding through JTPA in 1995, and this led to a reduction funding for stipends that could be used for support services, and a reduction in the counseling staff. Consequently, the program instituted a new enrollment limit to 100 participants. Whereas secondary sources include supportive testimonials from program participants about Quest's ability to "cause real change in a person's life", and the program's tested ability to substantially impact annual earning of participants, institutional and business support and funding for the program lacked, causing program leaders to cut back on services (Campbell, 1994, p. 49; Osterman & Lautsch, 1996).

Case: Padres y Jóvenes Unidos (Parents and Youth United)
Location: Denver, Colorado
Type: Grassroots

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Overview

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In 2002, Denver Public Schools (DPS) served 71,972 students. 1,541 of those students attended North High School ("Fall 2002 pupil memebership by district, school, and grade," 2002). 85% of North High School students and families were predominately Latino, many of which were immigrants and spoke English as a second language. Yet North High's academic standing was particularly alarming. With a publicized graduation rate of 60%, North was consistently low performing ("Colorado department of education graduation and completer rates for the class of 2002," 2002). Only 15% percent of students were proficient or advanced in reading, and only 2% were proficient in math (Warren & Mapp, 2011; Warren, Mira, Nikundiwe, & Mapp, 2012). Moreover, when accounting for attrition rates between over the four years of high school, Padres and Jóvenes Unidos (PJU) calculated that graduation rates were more reflective of 38% (Warren et al., 2012).

This is the context in which PJU's campaign for North High School begins. Yet historically, PJU sees themselves as growing out of the Chicano movement of the sixties, and deeply connected to Denver's 1960 student walkouts, in which Chicano students protested against discrimination (Freeman, 2015). Padres Unidos was formally established as a community-based organization in 1989 when Latino parents organized and protested in response to a White principal punishing Spanish-speaking students by forcing them to eat lunch on the floor (Fernández, Kirshner, & Lewis, 2016). The North High School campaign presents the first

campaign in which Padres Unidos formally included youth in its work, and the group was renamed Padres y Jóvenes Unidos. Yet even as a newly minted group, PJU still maintained strong roots in the struggle of the past, and the use of traditional mechanisms "of the historical struggle for human rights [remained] at the heart of the work…" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 133).

This PJU case presents an illustration of an initial partnership between parents, students, administrators, teachers, educational intermediary agency, that later shift to a PJU-led predominately Latino multi-sector partnership. This shift (among other mechanisms) caused great conflict between PJU and Denver's primary teachers' union, and what Shirley (2016) cites as a common "outright animosity" that can spring up between community-based organizations and teachers unions (p. 46).

Whereas the North High campaign ends in a decision to redesign the school (an instance in which teachers are required to reapply for their jobs), outcomes post redesign make for a thought provoking consideration on the limits of systematic change.

PJU Theory of Change (TOC)

TOC 1: Intergenerational organizing provides a powerful foundation for current and future change.

 Context. As mentioned, PJU was originally a parent organization (Padres Unidos), founded by six parents who met voluntarily to support each other as they and their children navigated Denver's public school system. Warren and Mapp (2011) suggest that "the relationships that parents in Padres Unidos formed with one another would ultimately be crucial to education reform in Denver, as many of the organization's members and supporters would go on to become leaders in the community, including members of the city council and the school board" (p. 103). This proved true as they successfully organized their initial campaigns around a principal's maltreatment of Spanish-speaking students at Valverde Elementary School in 1997, a federal case against Denver Public Schools for racial bias and discrimination, which resulted in a ruling in PU's favor, and the high rate of suspensions at Cole Middle School. The Cole Campaign particularly taught PU parents about the importance of youth organizing, and "tapping into a long tradition of intergenerational organizing in the Chicano and civil rights movements"(Warren et al., 2012, p. 4).

 Mechanisms. With this lesson in mind, in 2002 PU parents began the North High Campaign by distributing surveys to North High students. The surveys served a dual purpose of gathering students' thoughts on their education and experience at North, and a means to recruit youth to join PU. Youth unquestionably had deeper access to the school, as well as peer relationships with those that were experiencing

the problem (Warren et al., 2012). As students became more interested and involved in the survey, the organization was renamed Padres y Jóvenes Unidos to capture the work of the new youth contingency. PJU youth redrafted and created their own version of the surveys and distributed them during lunchtime and class time with permission of teachers and administrators (Shirley, 2016; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Warren et al., 2012). For some North High students, the survey was the first time they were asked to contemplate the quality of their education. Teachers were also supportive of survey distribution, as the youth that were now working with PJU were seen as "leaders in the school" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 110).

Final outcomes reveal that students suffered stark repercussions and backlash from North teachers and administrators for their participation in PJU during the North Campaign. Yet intergenerational organizing taught both student and parent leaders the power of working together as part of a long history of struggle, and the importance of grooming young organizers who would eventually be "the future fighters for equality" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 109)

TOC 2: Organizations can use political education to educate community members and fashion strategies to counteract systematic oppression.

Mechanisms. By spring of 2003, PJU had collected nearly 700 student surveys. That summer, PJU youth and organizational leaders dedicated their efforts towards analyzing survey results. Their findings reveled that only 38% of 9th graders that entered North graduated within four years. Moreover, while 98% of

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students stated they wanted to go to college, only 56% said they felt prepared to do so (Warren et al., 2012).

Youth organizer Amy Beres used a participatory action research process to help PJU youth and parents grapple with the collected data. Yet PJU leaders also engaged youth and parents in 'political education', their primary method for organizing. Conceptually, PJU sees political education as "…the mechanism by which the members and staff get to examine what impacts structural inequities and power structure have on their day-to-day lives"(Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 108). It also focuses on connecting personal experiences with structural inequity to historical struggles.

Warren and Mapp (2011) provide a clear example of how PJU applied political education to their practices-

> "It [political education] occurs during an established meeting time, where a topic- such as machismo, racism, feudalism, colonialism, or immigration law- is introduced and people are then split into small groups to discuss the root causes of that particular topic…The staff or members in attendance then examine PJU's current organizing work as it relates to the political education topic, which help them deepen their analysis and understand how their work is tied to the long-term struggle for human rights" (p. 106).

Political education also provided a foundation for using the "Padres Approach", a strategy the organization used to understand problems and act on them. The "Padres Approach" included (1) understanding the problem, (2) analyzing the impact, (3) identifying concrete solutions. That summer, PJU youth engaged in

political education in the morning, and survey analysis in the evenings. They drafted

a report with recommendations and solutions to the issues the survey revealed.

Using the Padres Approach, they identified their first concrete solution as sharing

their results and recommendations with North's school administration, and

demanding a school reform committee.

Youth demands for a reform committee were met with the administration's

pacification, avoidance, and deflection. Given this response, PJU held a community

night with parents, community members, and others to explain the strategy for

using media to expose the survey findings, and compel power-holders to take action

(Warren & Mapp, 2011; Warren et al., 2012). PJU then held a press conference

publicizing the findings from the report.

Context. The media attention soon brought feelings of mistrust and betrayal

amongst teachers and students. Teachers felt betrayed, as they [North High

teachers] had "signaled their willingness to work with PJU by distributing surveys in

their classes, taking time away from instruction" (Shirley, 2016, p. 54). Moreover,

PJU youth were being alienated and even harassed for exposing the school's issues

(Shirley, 2016; Warren & Mapp, 2011). In support of the students and the report,

PJU "…gathered over 600 signatures from parents petitioning the Denver Public

Schools to form a reform committee to develop and then implement a plan to

improve North High School" (Shirley, 2016, p. 53). A committee finally formed two

years following the survey distribution.

"For the next two years, PJU staff and members worked in collaboration with

the administration and some teachers at North High School with the purpose of

improving the learning conditions and opportunities for all students at North, particularly Latino students" (Shirley, 2016, p. 53). Initially, the reform committee presented yet another challenge in community representation, and equal voice between those with power (i.e. administrators) and those with little power (community members). Moreover, administrators made attempts to control the meeting agendas and speaking time. Yet after attending a conference with Education Trust and seeing the alignment between missions, PJU, reform committee members, and school administration agreed to raise funds to bring Education Trust to North High school to help with reforms.

Mechanisms. The Education Trust came to Denver and worked with teachers and administrators in reviewing curriculum, and conducting series professional development. According to the educators involved, North High was making steady gains towards school improvement. "In response to the suggestions by the Education Trust, [a North High teacher] noted that they had created and implemented a Freshman Academy in addition to the Summer Enrichment Academy to help increase the achievement levels and test scores…. they were also adding additional AP classes…" (Warren et al., 2012, p. 9). Nevertheless, PJU youth and adults decided that these changes were not enough.

PJU held a different perspective. They viewed the changes made as "too incremental", and assessed that "teachers were not on board, and systemic change was not happening at the school-wide level. Ultimately, PJU concluded that this process would never lead to large-scale culture change where children of all racial and ethnic backgrounds were valued and respected" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p.

116). Julie Gonzales [a PJU youth organizer] stated, "we went from 6% proficiency to 11% proficiency; that's so sad…these are minor little ticks. We need to see 30% - 40% gains on the Colorado Student Assessment Plan, and that's not happening" (Warren et al., 2012, p. 9).

Consequently, PJU assessed that low teacher expectations were the root cause of students' low achievement (Shirley, 2016). After two years of engaging in reform committee meetings and a partnership with Education Trust, PJU students and adults partners stopped attending reform meetings (Shirley, 2016; Warren & Mapp, 2011). Given this, the organization decided they would call for redesign of North High School, which would force the revision of the curriculum and for teachers to reapply for their jobs. Karen Ursetta, president of Denver's teachers' union was unsure of why PJU stopped participating and collaborating with the group, and instead chose to pursue redesign. "No one would disagree that things need[ed] to change in our high schools," she stated. They need[ed] to change. And there [are] ways that you can bring people along and have everyone working together, or you can throw the bomb, and let it explode, and I think that they [PJU] chose to throw the grenade" (Sherry, 2007; Warren et al., 2012, p. 10).

TOC 3: If we create a cross-sector coalition with individuals who are connected to Chicano struggles, we'll realize the change we desire.

Context. The decision to pursue redesign placed a rift between PJU allies and teachers both at North and a part of the teachers' union. Many teachers believed they had become scapegoats, and preferred the collaborative efforts the reform

committee had been using. Whereas the 15% gains on standardized assessments seemed "good enough" to teachers, this was not the progress PJU was looking for, and they believed "change wasn't happening fast enough" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 119).

Mechanisms. As a result, PJU looked to its Chicano heritage and created a multi-sector collaborative, the Coalition to Save North. As a predominately Latino coalition, the Coalition to Save North included Denver business owners, city council members, politicians, renowned Chicano organizers, PJU supporters, and others who were deeply connected to the Chicano movements. "PJU was explicit about limiting the membership to those who identified as allies in the larger struggle around the Chicano and civil rights movements", as they believed these allies "understood that brown people were being systematically underserved" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 133; Warren et al., 2012, p. 11). Coalition meetings were considerably closed as the group crafted their vision for what a redesigned North High would look like.

Meanwhile, PJU also solidified a partnership with DPS' superintendent Michael Bennet, who ultimately held the power to formally call for the redesign of North High School. Bennet had met with the co-directors of PJU during the selection process for the superintendent position in 2005. Although he had little experience and was the only White candidate, PJU endorsed Bennet for the position, as his plans seemed to align with their desires for change (Warren et al., 2012). Moreover, after a controversial yearlong closing of a Denver high school that predominately served African-American students, PJU provided the superintendent with social and

political capital to pursue redesign with community support (Shirley, 2016; Warren & Mapp, 2011).

After holding a large community meeting to share its vision and proposal, PJU organized a press conference at Viking Park to express their demands and conditions for redesign of North High School in the summer of 2006. The coalition's demands for redesign included keeping North a non-charter traditional high school, and incorporating a college prep curriculum for all students with accelerated and advanced placement courses. Yet the organized effort was met with opposition,. North teachers and teacher's union displayed a counter-protest during the meeting, as they handed out brochures and pamphlets to attendees outlining the assessment gains that North students had made within the last two years (Shirley, 2016; Warren & Mapp, 2011; Warren et al., 2012).

Students also encountered negative repercussions for participation in organizing efforts, just as they had when the survey reports were released. According to youth organizer Julieta Quinonez stated that "students 'got a lot of heat' from teachers, and it that it was the training them through political education that bolstered their commitment to the work" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 124). Yet "with teachers fearful that they would lose their jobs at a school that many of them loved and had made their lives'' work for decades, and with students' active in PJU anxious that teachers would retaliate against them by punishing them with low grades, active mistrust between faculty and students came to saturate everyday life at North High School" (Shirley, 2016, p. 54).

The antagonism between PJU youth, adults, and teachers continued as PJU shared the Coalition's proposal and demand for redesign with the school board and other community members. Whereas allied parents drafted a letter to support to the reform effort, not all the students agreed with PJU. News records of the school board meeting record students' voicing their support for teachers and their disagreement for redesign (Sherry, 2007). Although the Coalition to Save North had put together their vision for North, "these dissenting voices that raised cautionary notes were ignored" as Superintendent Bennet hosted a series of follow-up community meetings to gather community insight on redesign (Shirley, 2016, p. 55).

These community meetings (later known as the 19 Nights of North) were held in neutral spaces. Superintendent Bennet went on record explaining the importance of these meetings-

"All our staff and Padres and others thought it was important to have a series of community meetings in that part of town where we could go out to the community- and actually we host it in our schools- which we did on purpose because we wanted to get the broadest representation we could form the community" (Warren et al., 2012, p. 14)

PJU adopted the slogan of "College Prep for All", and used this frame during each community meeting to relay the importance of incorporating high standards in redesign. The months after the community meetings were filled with indecision, lobbied phone calls, and persistent pressure from PJU. Yet in winter 2006, Superintendent Bennet formally announced that North High School would be redesigned, and teachers would be required to reapply for their jobs.

Outcomes

Only half of the original North High teachers were rehired the following fall when the redesigned high school opened. While many of the teachers felt alienated by the reapplication process, those that were not hired at North found other jobs in Denver in which they still would be teaching large populations of Chicano/Latino students (Warren & Mapp, 2011). In light of their attributed success, PJU was able to hire three experienced Union organizers the year after the decision of North's redesign with donor support. Furthermore, as a means to counteract teachers' deficit-frameworks towards communities of color, PJU began conducting trainings with pre-service at the University of Denver.

Yet the call and pursuit of redesign also reaped unexpected and undesirable outcomes. After organizing efforts in 2002, North High enrollment dropped by 50%, and the school experienced several administrative turnovers. According to Shirley (2016), "the turbulence created by the school redesign process did not attract students and did not retain staff. If anything, morale was worse than ever" (p. 55). In 2010, North was designated a turnaround school in adherence to the Race to the Top turnaround guidelines. By 2012, North was selected to co-locate [traditional and charter schools located in the same building] with a charter school with charter management operator STRIVE Academies (Shirley, 2016).

Youth experiences and struggle during the North campaign must also be considered. After the campaign, PJU youth organizers relayed that "organizing work can often times be stressful for youth who are on the frontlines of education reform" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 131). While PJU adults used savvy techniques to ensure

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teachers and administrators did not tamper with students' grades, the campaign caused significant mistrust among school community members. On a macro level, some have argued that PJU's pursuit of redesign gave justification to conservative educational policies that "place the onus for academic outcomes on teachers", and "dismantle traditional public education, and weaken teachers' unions" (Shirley, 2016, p. 56). In all, PJU alleged success with the North High campaign was undoubtedly weighed by the unexpected micro and macro repercussions of mandatory school reform.

Case: PUSH for Excellence (PUSH/Excel)
Location: Nationwide
Type: Grass-high Initiative

Overview

PUSH/Excel (People United to Save Humanity) is an illustration of a

charismatic movement that became a grass-high initiative via acceptance of federal

funding and conditions. As a derivative of Operation PUSH, Jesse Jackson launched

PUSH/Excel as a grassroots self-help crusade that called upon personal and

community commitments to motivate urban youth to succeed in academic and

personal endeavors (Farrar & House, 1983).

While demonstrating (and later dismissing) a staged White House protest in

early 1975, Jackson realized he had to "change his target for reform", and focus on

the moral and academic development of Black youth (Farrar & House, 1983, p. 37).

Hence, in 1976 Jackson began a crusade across the nation, assembling rallies and

making appearances in stadiums, high schools, and conferences with the financial

support of foundations and dedicated staff from Operation PUSH. His message was a

clear call for multi-sector commitment, strong parental and community

involvement, and an appeal for schools to hold high academic standards. This

message was grounded in rhetoric of hard work, self-discipline, and qualities that

would position "Black youth to strive toward solid, middle-class virtues" (House,

1998, p.25).

Jackson's message and ability to generate large support for the PUSH/Excel

movement generated local and national attention, including the attention of major

city school districts (i.e. Chicago, Los Angeles, Denver, and Chattanooga, among

others), and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). During

EXCEL's infant years (1976-1977), these local districts allocated their own funds

and initiated EXCEL programs across their districts. In late 1978, the National

Institution for Education (NIE) granted PUSH/Excel $445,000 for program and

conference planning, HEW granted $700,000 for the designing projects across major

US cities, and the Department of Labor contributed an additional $500,000 (House,

1988). The federal dollars also came with conditions, including an external program

evaluation of the PUSH/Excel program sites. Later, the evaluation would prove to be

a point of contention for stakeholders, funders, and both national and local

PUSH/Excel workers.

Five years after receiving federal funding, PUSH/Excel was struggling to

secure further funding, lacked the human resources at the national and local

program levels, and many local programs had disconnected from the national

agenda (Farrar and House, 1983). Formal evaluations of PUSH/Excel assessed its

programs as failing as local programs were quickly dismantling.

Consequently, the case of PUSH/Excel is a complex instance of how a

charismatic leader attempted to transform a movement into a program to make

change for Black youth across the nation.

<center>**PUSH/Excel Theory of Change (TOC)**</center>

TOC 1- In order to impact systematic change in Black communities, one must target youth, and work with and within their systems of support.

       Context. Operation PUSH was developed in 1971 as an extension of the civil rights movement's 'Operation Breadbasket'[15] (Cashmore, 1992; House, 1988). In addition to encouraging Black Americans to exclusively support black-owned goods, products, and services, PUSH also used economic pressure (i.e. the threat of Black boycott) to impel large companies to eliminate discriminatory hiring practices, do business with other minority-owned businesses, and support Black-owned publications and colleges (Cashmore, 1992; House, 1988).

       January 15, 1975, Jackson organized a ministerial march around the White House in demand of employment opportunities for Black Americans. Yet halfway through the march, Jackson ordered everyone to go home (Farrar & House, 1983). Cole (1977) describes-

> "The moment was spoiled. The crowd was unruly, it lacked the discipline essential to enable unarmed marchers to face armed horsemen…Jackson was shocked to see that many of the youthful demonstrators were drunk or stoned, red-eyed, and out of control" (p. 378).

The plan for PUSH/Excel was then developed as an extension of a Black-organized pursuit for economic and educational parity, for which Jackson's main target was

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[15] Operation PUSH identified as a 'civil economics' organization; "…the goal of which was to secure jobs, organize those not making a livable wage, and support the growth of black-owned business" (House, 1988). Operation PUSH contested for economic parity for Black Americans by using tested tactics from the civil rights movement (i.e. boycotts, sit-ins, etc.) (Farrar & House, 1983; Morris, 1986).

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Black teenagers (House, 1988; Jackson, 1978). PUSH/Excel's message also entreated the participation and support of entire communities, including parents, schools, churches, and influential figures (i.e. disc jockeys).

Hence, PUSH/Excel was launched as a grass-roots movement built on middle class values of self-help, ethical conduct, and personal and community commitment (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1988). Yet critics of the movement-turned-program recognized that Jackson's message was not an education reform plan, and lacked the human capital needed (i.e. educators and program managers) to carry out a strategic and systematic change. In summary, Farrar and House (1983) note that in PUSH/Excel's infant years-

> "…what existed was an eloquent, charismatic leader of national reputation who had attracted a staff of committed followers, considerable public and private funding, and several school districts willing to make an attempt to translate a self-help ideology into a school program that could regenerate Black youth…" (p. 37).

TOC 2- If youth, parents, and school personnel are motivated and make external commitments to change, then changed behavior will soon follow.

Mechanisms. Despite loose infrastructure and lack of concrete strategy, school districts and cities across the nation began to latch on to Jackson's message. By 1979, 22 independent PUSH/Excel programs had emerged and looked to Jackson and his national staff for direction (House, 1988). As Jackson toured the country participating in pep rallies and speaking engagements, his theory of change for

PUSH/Excel became more evident in his message, actions, and activities of his the

national staff. The developing PUSH/Excel program maintained that verbal and

written commitments would create and inspire the needed change for Black youth

to be successful in school and life.

This theory of change manifested in several ways. First, Jackson's pep rallies

and speeches ended with a visible public pledge, which students, parents, and

teachers would sign to commit to a pursuit of excellence. Farrar and House (1983)

document that "Jackson would come and commence a school rally and have student

and teachers sign commitment cards, schools would sign on or commit to doing

Excel activities, "but, the methods that schools used to get the activities under way

and to increase participation were left to local invention" (p. 41) (Jackson, 1978).

Student commitment cards reflected a promise to learn, respect authority, and use

learning time effectively. Parent commitment cards reflected a moral obligation to

raise and be involved in their children's lives, and teacher commitment cards

reflected a promise to being supportive and motivating role models (House, 1988).

Once pledges were made, school leaders and local program managers would

determine and implement activities that would allow the community to achieve

their pledges.

While the decentralized approach to the program allowed for local control, it

did not provide local chapters with guidance and understanding of what a

PUSH/Excel program entailed. Eventually the national PUSH/Excel team created

two booklets with ideas of activities schools could use to sustain that commitment.

The first booklet included ideas such as "inventive programs, career day forums,

"excellence" meetings, yet had no tangible instruction on how to carry out these ideas (Farrar & House, 1983).

The second booklet proved to be more comprehensive, as it laid out the six activities that were at the core of the PUSH/Excel program: the State of the School Address, Student Pledges, Parents Pledges, Teacher Pledges, a Written Ethical Code of Conduct, Voter Registration (end of students' senior year) (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1988). "Once Mr. Jackson has spoken and moved on, it [was] up to the local PUSH-EXCEL staff, working with teachers and others in the schools, to sustain the enthusiasm" and to continue local interventions that would extend on six core activities (Fiske, 1981, p. np).

As reflected in the six core activities, the PUSH/Excel scheme maintained a strategic role for each member of a community. Whereas students, parents, and teachers used commitment cards and signed pledges, other institutions were also as vital to the success of PUSH/Excel programs. Churches were instructed to provide tutoring services and spiritual guidance, businesses were to provide jobs and scholarships for young people, and the media was seen as important stakeholder in promoting and advertising PUSH/Excel.

Theoretically, "if all these practices were followed, the student would be embedded in a web of high expectations and support that was mutually reinforced by the whole environment" (House, 1988). Youth would begin to transform as each community member and institution voiced their commitment and acceptance of their prescribed responsibility. Jackson believed communities simply needed a stimulus, such as PUSH/Excel, to propel individuals to take on their respective

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responsibilities. Hence, Jackson's theory of change was deeply rooted in the notion of inspiration and motivation. In an article written in the New York Times, Jackson is quoted saying "I assumed that if we could provide the motivation to get kids into the schools and ready to work, then the school would take over from there…I learned that it's not that simple" (Fiske, 1981, p. np).

TOC 3- Meaningful rhetoric of moral discipline will resonate and create a fervor for change in urban youth and communities.

Context. Jackson's theory for change heavily relied on the power of pontificating, and its reputed effectiveness in producing change. Here, it is important to reiterate that PUSH/Excel began as a movement. "At first, PUSH/Excel was more a message than a program, and a strongly Calvinist message at that…" (House, 1988, p. 26). Cole (1977) describes a typical speech Jackson would deliver-

> "Always Jackson's sermons mix street talk and rhythms, urban sociology and learned the hard way and down-home gospel fire…Children, he says, staff of the streets, discipline yourself…Mother's and fathers, support your child's teachers and principals; raise babies, don't just make them…Principals and teachers, go to church where the parents go, go to the store where they shop. Dollars earned in the inner city should be spent there…" (p. 379).

Accounts of Jackson's messages indicate that students and communities were captivated by the message, and perhaps more so Jackson's charisma (Cole, 1977; House, 1988; Jackson, 1978). Yet Jackson frequently dodged the critique of using "pietistic moralism" to fuel PUSH/Excel, and often explained his ideology as a

pragmatic approach, aiming to dismantle the "'...'politics of decadence', the 'diversionary' evils of alcohol, drugs, and lack of discipline that prevent black people from keeping pressure for change on white society" (Cole, 1977, p. 378).

Mechanisms. One of Jackson and PUSH/Excel's leading followers was mass media. As a movement, PUSH/Excel attracted the attention of media sources across the nation, and also garnered the financial support of the philanthropic community. Jackson's appearances at high schools and stadiums were often found in columns in the Chicago Sun-Times, the Washington Post, and the Denver Post, and interviewed as a guest on CBS' "Sixty Minutes" program (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1998). Jackson was often framed as a 'Black Moses' who "...launched a national campaign, 'PUSH for Excellence,' to break ghetto patterns of dependence and destructiveness and convince children that 'they have a responsibility to learn as well as a right to an education'" (Back Matter, 1978, p. 9). Knowing the capricious nature of mass media and his belief in meaningful rhetoric, Jackson's "...solution was to control and use the media to support his own objectives" (House, 1988, p. 33). Consequently, the use of media space and attention became a vital mechanism for obtaining buy-in for the PUSH/Excel movement and program.

Outcomes

The five years after PUSH/Excel received federal funding were wrought by tremendous momentum, yet ended in great dispersion. While the momentum of the PUSH/Excel movement and Jackson's vigor led some practitioners across the country to believe PUSH/Excel "was going to be around for a long time", signs of a

breakdown in the movement turned program were brought to bear by its third year in operation (Cole, 1977, p. 381).

PUSH/Excel's most revealing critique came from the stakeholder evaluation that was conducted due to the federal dollars attached to the new program. Although evaluation creators opted to use a stakeholder evaluation model to ensure the evaluative measures would mutually benefit program managers and funding decision-makers, retrospective analysis uncovers that there was likely a mismatch between the capabilities of a movement turned program, and the measures that were being evaluated (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1988; Nettles, 1991). Whereas students, parents, and teachers signed pledges signaling a commitment to moral excellence, the site evaluations measured outcomes such as school attendance, achievement (grades), participation in extracurricular activities, and other school related behaviors (Nettles, 1991).

Furthermore, the decentralized program model was to be used as a movement builder. However in practice, the model became a source of division and conflict. In Fiske (1981) assessment of PUSH/Excel's progress, he concludes "the program's most serious operational problem was the lack of practical guidelines for the local PUSH/Excel leaders to follow in setting up their own programs. Activities varied widely, from 'academic Olympics to voter registration drives, but they frequently lack[ed] coordination and objectives" (np). While some programs, such as the Baltimore program, were able to establish itself and pursue the work independently with little help and guidance from the national office, many others were unable to do the same (Cole, 1977).

Finally, Jackson's leadership style also served as a point of conflict. As a leader, Jesse Jackson profiled to be a controversial figure, and at times despotic in his management of Operation PUSH. Biographic and ethnographic accounts of Jackson and PUSH noted that PUSH operations often lacked systematic administration, as the organization drifted from issue to issue based on Jackson's interests and decision-making (House, 1998; Reynolds, 1975). "When he [Jackson] decided to seek reform among youth, the organization accommodated once more and added a new box to its organization chart- this time labeled Push for Excellence" (Farrar & House, 1983, p. 39). To this end, some believed that the nationalization of PUSH/Excel simply became a fleeting priority for Jackson (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1988)

Case: Promise Neighborhoods
Location: Nationwide
Type: Grass-high Initiative

Overview

In 2007, (then) Senator Barak Obama delivered a speech entitled "Changing the Odds for Urban America" during his 2008 campaign for the presidency. In his remarks, he addressed the issues and connections between generational poverty and educational achievement, proposed the political and practical framework for Promise Neighborhoods, and promised to create 20 promise neighborhoods across the nation if elected. In keeping to this promise, the U.S. Department of Education launched the Promise Neighborhood grant competition in April 2010 (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, p. 961).

"The federal Promise Neighborhoods brings together community partners to provide children and families with comprehensive, coordinated support to improve results and reverse the cycle of generational poverty" (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 37). As the model reflects the concept and approach of the Harlem Children's Zone in New York City, Promise Neighborhoods intend to turn neighborhood with concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of opportunity through cradle-to-career strategies that coordinate cross-sectorial support across health, social, educational entities (Comey, 2013). Promise Neighborhood Institute director Michael McAfee has explained, "Promise Neighborhoods [are] not just about effectively managing the federal program. It's also about using the resources of the federal program to

transcend siloed and one-off responses to complex problems" (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 40).

The U.S Department of Education describes the purpose of Promise Neighborhoods as a policy aiming to improve the educational and developmental outcomes of youth in the nation's most challenging communities by

- "Identifying and increasing the capacity of eligible entities that are focused on achieving results for children and youth throughout an entire neighborhood;

- Building a complete continuum of cradle-to-career solutions of both educational programs and family and community supports, with great schools at the center;

- Integrating programs and breaking down agency "silos" so that solutions are implemented effectively and efficiently across agencies;

- Developing the local infrastructure of systems and resources needed to sustain and scale up proven, effective solutions across the broader region beyond the initial neighborhood; and

- Learning about the overall impact of the Promise Neighborhoods program and about the relationship between particular strategies in Promise Neighborhoods and student outcomes, including through a rigorous evaluation of the program" ("Programs- Promise Neighborhoods").

With this theory of change and approach to community revitalization and education reform, the US Department of Education received a total of 720 Promise

Neighborhood planning grant applications and 95 implementation grants

applications over the span of 3 years, with applications representing communities in

every state including Puerto Rico and American Samoa (Horsford & Sampson,

2014). As Promise Neighborhoods seek to have a significant increase in the number

of families and children served by Promise Neighborhood services and programs,

successful applicants have created long-term plans (i.e. 20 year outlooks), and look

to use federal government funding to support the neighborhood's first 5 years

(McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 40).

As a more recent policy, long-term results and outcomes for Promise

Neighborhoods are impending. Yet researchers and policy-makers have used

available data to present case studies and early lessons from pioneering

neighborhoods. Findings and insights vary from encouraging feedback to pragmatic

critique. In all, Promise Neighborhoods presents a case of a progressive federal

administration's grass-high attempt to address large social issues in distressed

schools and communities.

Promise Neighborhood Theory of Change (TOC)

TOC 1: If we conduct a rigorous application process that identifies applicants that share a vision of interconnected school reform and community change, we'll reap an innovative cadre of Promise Neighborhoods that will implement a vision towards school and community improvement.

        Context. Promise Neighborhoods are deemed as the "first federal initiative to put education at the center of comprehensive effort to fight poverty in urban and rural areas" (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, p. 955). After taking office in 2008, President proposed Promise Neighborhoods as a plausible intervention for distressed neighborhoods and schools on based on the success of the Harlem Children's Zone model. As the Harlem Children's Zone had been lauded as a program and approach that takes on both neighborhood and individual student success, some studies have also shown that "the nonprofit group's work has closed the achievement gap between students in low-income communities and their middle-class contemporaries"[16](Chudnofsky, 2014; Lester, 2010, p. np).

        The theory of action for programs such as the Harlem Children's Zone and Promise Neighborhoods is grounded in the belief that neighborhoods and communities can positively and/or negatively impact student educational outcomes. As such, policies in urban and rural areas that address student outcomes must also consider ways to mitigate the effects of concentrated and intergenerational poverty,

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[16] Although studies such as Dobbie and Fryer Jr (2009) highlight the successes of the Harlem Children's Zone particularly in regards to closing achievement gaps, critics such as Whitehurst and Croft (2010) have questioned the merit and measures of these studies.

health, and other agents that could impede student success (Horsford & Sampson, 2014). This theory also suggests that agencies, schools, parents, community, and other local partners would have greater capacities to serve students if they worked collectively and in partnership (Miller, Wills, & Scanlan, 2013). Promise Neighborhoods grants were then shaped to aid self-delegated communities and neighborhoods create their own versions of the Harlem Children's Zone (Lester, 2010).

The Obama administration pursued neighborhood revitalization through Promise Neighborhoods and a suite of other similar policies grounded in this theory. These policies, entitled the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative, was "an interagency federal partnership focused on empowering local communities to develop and obtain the tools and resources they need to transform neighborhoods of concentrated poverty into neighborhoods of opportunity that support the optimal development and well-being of children and families" ("Promise Neighborhoods"). Other policies included in the initiative included Choice Neighborhoods, a housing and urban development policy linking public housing, education, social services, and other services provided by Promise Neighborhoods (Lester, 2010).

Mechanisms. The first Promise Neighborhood grant competition opened in April 2010. "To be competitive, each collaborative would need to demonstrate convincingly the need in its clearly defined target neighborhood, its plan to build a cradle-to-career continuum of solution; intentions to use data and conduct a need assessment; the strength of its experience, organizational capacity, and partners; and a commitment to work with a national evaluator" (Horsford & Sampson, 2014,

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p. 959). All Promise Neighborhood applications needed a lead agency, as well as a partnership with one of more schools within their neighborhood. One of the participating schools had to be low performing (Chudnofsky, 2014).

In line with its vision for interconnected school and community reform, the rigorous application also required candidates to utilize diverse and multi-sector partnerships to achieve its a priori goals. In fact, Miller et al. (2013) note that "…Promise Neighborhood funding instigated the diversification of programs' networks by mandating that their governing boards be actively involved in decision-making", and "…stipulated that at least one-third of each entity's board be composed of …residents who live in the geographic areas served"; lower-income residents to live in the city or county of the neighborhood yet geographically outside the boundaries of serviced area; and/or "public officials who serve the geographic area proposed to be served" (p. 553). Consequently, Promise Neighborhoods would intentionally bring in diverse perspectives to their planning and implementation settings, as well as individuals with a range or influence within their respective domains.

Context. In response to the grant competition, in 2010 the US Department of Education received 991 notices of intent to apply. 339 applications were actually received, and 21 were selected as the first Promise Neighborhoods (Chudnofsky, 2014; Horsford & Sampson, 2014; Lester, 2010). Having made the cut and selection rate of 6%, these Promise Neighborhoods received planning grants from the department with an award of $500,000 each (Chudnofsky, 2014).

Selection patterns and rates continued in similar fashion over the next two years. Yet in addition to planning grants, the federal government also made provision for implementation grants for those communities who had spent time planning and needed funds to execute their plans. "In 2011, Congress approved $30 million in funding for a second round of planning grants and a first round of implementation grants. The funding provided 15 planning grants of up to $500,000 each (out of 199 applications [7% selection rate]), and five implementation grants of $4-$6 million each, over three to five years" (Chudnofsky, 2014, p. 1; Horsford & Sampson, 2014). In 2012, 10 communities received planning grants (out of 182), and 7 communities received implementations grants (out of 60 applications) (Horsford & Sampson, 2014). As of 2014, funding for Promise Neighborhoods totaled $100 million, and promise neighborhoods could be found in 20 states and D.C. Promise Neighborhoods were represented across 50 rural, urban, and tribal communities and included participation of more than 700 schools (Chudnofsky, 2014).

TOC 2: Commitment to use a framework, data, and evidence-based practices will stimulate positive movement and achievement on selected outcomes and indicators.

       Mechanisms. In addition to a rigorous application process, the Promise Neighborhood model also required applicants to use several other mechanisms to achieve their vision of whole communities and schools. The framework used in many communities encompassed collective impact principals and tenants (McAfee & Torre, 2015). Generally, "the program's hallmarks [have been] cross-sector partnerships, a seamless continuum of solutions, a common set of ten academic and community results that make the biggest difference for low-income children with fifteen associated indicators, and shared accountability for results, using real-time data for continuous improvement and rapid response when interventions fall short" (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 38).

       In particular, the federal initiative partnered with similarly inclined institutions to create The Promise Neighborhood Institute at PolicyLink (PNI), a guidance agency for Promise Neighborhood applicants and grantees. PNI coalesces leadership from PolicyLink, Harlem Children's Zone, and The Center for the Study of Social Policy to provide resources (i.e. planning guides, early lessons, and other online resources) and guidance (i.e. consultations and conferences) to cultivate and sustain Promise Neighborhoods. As of 2015, the institute has helped more then 60 communities plan implement their promise neighborhoods (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 38). In addition, PNI has invested in a national case management system, data

dashboard for the network, and integration of these systems to prevent individual

sites from having to buy data systems (p. 41).

PNI's contribution and use of a national case management system is also

evident of the initiative's strong commitment to data usage. Lester (2010) notes that

commitment to using data was not an unfamiliar approach, as the overarching

governmental strategy during Obama administration centered around rewarding

organizations and programs that used data to provide evidence of their success and

results. Consequently, PNI and other organizational partners created multiple

guidance documents on how Promise Neighborhoods could collect data and report

results. Particularly, Comey (2013)- *Measuring Performance: A Guidance Document*

for Promise Neighborhoods on Collecting and Reporting Results- provides

neighborhoods with guidance on how to collect and report on the US Department of

Education's Government Performance and Results Act indicators (GPRA)[17].

Reporting on GPRA indicators was a condition for receiving federal funding, and

Comey (2013) provides strategies for data collection and methods on how to use

data to improve program quality and achieve results. PNI also assisted in helping

communities create data-sharing agreements with school districts and other

agencies who housed individual and neighborhood level data.

Lastly, the Promise Neighborhoods model, applicants, and grantees were

expected to maintain a high commitment to evidence-based practices. In a primer to

potential Promise Neighborhood applicants, PNI provided detail as to what was

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[17] GPRAs included 10 results around the cradle-to-career continuum and 15 indicators (i.e. attendance, graduation rates, other community-based measures) that would track the progress and overall achievement of Promise Neighborhoods ("Early Learning in Promise Neighborhoods," 2016).

considered evidence-based practice (EBP) and why these practices were required within the application and practice within promise neighborhoods. The document argues EBP as a critical mechanism given that the federal government wanted "…to invest resources and energy in programs, services, and policies that have empirical evidence demonstrating they work", and "Increasingly, funders are encouraging grantees to use evidence-based approaches. The Promise Neighborhoods initiative exemplifies this shift" ("Evidence-Based Practice: A Primer for Promise Neighborhoods," 2015, p. 1). The primer deemed evidence-based practices as practices supported by studies with "strong evidence" and designs that could "support causal conclusions", as well as studies that "include enough of the range of participants and settings to support scaling up to the state, regional, or national level" ("Evidence-Based Practice: A Primer for Promise Neighborhoods," 2015, p. 2).

TOC 3: Invest in what already exists.

        Mechanisms. As stated, the framework for collective action used by Promise Neighborhoods required applicants to fashion diverse and multi-sector partnerships, as well as use shared data, measurement systems, and evidence-based practices to support schools and communities within the designated neighborhood in breaking cycles of poverty. Yet Promise Neighborhoods were not expected to create new programs or projects to support communities in reaching this end. Instead, they were expected to use results frameworks in tandem with already existing programs, projects, and community leaders.

Michael McAfee, co-director of PNI, was clear about this concept. "A Promise Neighborhood, " he stated, "should not necessarily come in and start its own program just because it has federal money and can do that. It should work with folks who are ready to co-invest in that result" (McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 40). Rationale for utilizing existing work included a desire for families to co-invest in the neighborhood and results, as well as acknowledging the wisdom and experience of those in the area that have been working on achieving similar results. In keeping with this commitment, "applicants were also required to involve community in the plan-making process and make sure that members in the community participate in assessing progress towards the project's goals", and leadership was encouraged to include community members in meetings (Chudnofsky, 2014, p. 9; McAfee & Torre, 2015).

Outcomes

Given that Promise Neighborhoods represent the most recent cross-sector initiative within the cases analyzed for my study, it is relatively early to examine the overall effectiveness of Promise Neighborhoods (particularly those that received planning and implementation grants), although this data should be expected in the future (Horsford & Sampson, 2014). Nonetheless, the Center for Study of Social Policy created a report to document the strategies of pioneering promise neighborhoods, and how and why stakeholders have used these strategies for implementation and tracking results ("Early Learning in Promise Neighborhoods," 2016). They found that that three factors were crucial towards the success of

Promise neighborhoods, including (1) strong and trusting relationships among initiative leaders and partners, staff, and participating families; (2) institutional culture that promotes collaborative partnerships and values the perspective of families, providers, and community voice; and (3) alignment with state and federal priorities and resources.

Moreover, individual case studies of Promise Neighborhoods across the nation have emerged with initial outcomes. For example, Horsford and Sampson (2014) investigate the Las Vegas Promise Neighborhood, a Promise Neighborhood applicant that *did not* receive a planning grant when it applied in 2011. The authors present a descriptive case analysis of the group's potential to engage community capacity building, the pre-application and post-application challenges the group faced in pursuing their goals and mission, as well as a descriptive comparison of 2011 Promise Neighborhood grant applications from urban and tribal settings. They find that leadership in tribal promise neighborhoods applications were more heterogeneous, but also discover that "efforts to revitalize neighborhoods through collaboration, capacity building, resident engagement, local leadership, comprehensive support, and sustained and leverages investment" require a "fundamental level of community capacity, without which it is nearly impossible for low-capacity communities to compete for much-needed capacity building resources" (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, p. 985).

Similarly, McAfee and Torre (2015) observed through their participation and work with Promise Neighborhoods that most organizations did not have the resources or capacity to build up and support achievement of the neighborhood (or

"population-level") results they were aiming for (p. 41). Primary findings also revealed that the cross-sector nature of Promise Neighborhoods made the internal partnerships more prone to instability and "lip service" (Miller et al., 2013, p. 554). This assessment mirrors the evaluation of critical scholars such as Smyth (2009), who view Promise Neighborhoods as part of "bottom-up programs" that are in reality controlled by the state, yet use progressive language (i.e. community, social capital, equity) as part of their discourse. Nevertheless, the "real intent of [of these policies, initiatives, endeavors] seems to be to use progressive discourse to veil a cost-cutting agenda by the state" (Smyth, 2009, p. 12). Person (2011) also contends that Promise Neighborhoods are unlikely to reach longer-term goals given their neoliberal approach.

Nonetheless, Promise Neighborhoods continue to subsist even with federal administrative changes. While new planning and implementation grants have not been available since 2014, PNI hopes that a focus on results will still help promise neighborhoods make steady and incremental progress towards community and school transformation (McAfee & Torre, 2015).

Cross-Case Comparison: Grassroots and Grass-High Cases

The case descriptions above reflect narratives based on power-origin, including two examples of those at the local level working collectively to make educational change, and two examples of those in powerful spaces attempting to pursue a national agenda for educational change that intends to operate and make the most impact at a local level. Here, I draw upon evidence from these four cases. I will also note that I will be drawing from individual program level data for the two grass-high cases, which include local Promise Neighborhoods and interactions between the national and local stakeholders for the PUSH/Excel programs[18]. This evidence enables me to make reliable cross-case comparisons with the individual grassroots programs/initiatives I've reviewed.

A. How does collective action work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why when addressing large social problems?

Context. Contextually, both cases present a geographic and historical similarity. Project Quest was implemented in the southwestern city of San Antonio, and PJU's work concentrates in the western city of Denver, Colorado. As both cases are examples of grassroots approaches to systematic change, these locations prove important given the rich history western and southwestern areas have in the struggle for human rights. Sources from both cases acknowledge this as well. Warren (1998) acknowledges that COPS and Metro Alliance were affiliates of the

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[18] PUSH/Excel has been reviewed in other evaluations as an example of an attempt to use a stakeholder-holder approach within program evaluation (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1983; Farrar & House, 1983; Nettles, 1991). These evaluations include a plethora of individual level data, including interview quotes from PUSH/Excel local program directors, national PUSH/Excel personnel, and external evaluators. For this reason, I'm able to extract individual and collective level data from these data sources as opposed to using individual local program data.

southwest Industrial Areas Foundation, the largest faith-based organizing network in the county. The southwest chapter was considered IAF's most developed regional network, and had worked with the predominately Latino/a COPS group on school reform campaigns, reconstruction of affordable housing, urban infrastructural development, community policing programs, college scholarships and job opportunities for high school graduates (Campbell, 1994; Warren, 1998). Likewise, PJU saw their work as a continuation "of the historical struggle for human rights", particularly growing out of the Chicano movement of the sixties, and deeply connected to Denver's 1960 student walkouts, when Chicano students protested against discrimination (Freeman, 2015). Hence, geographic location and its connection to a history of organizing for civil and human rights is a contextual similarity that contributed towards collective action in both cases.

PUSH/Excel shared a commonality with the grassroots cases, as was also rooted in a history of struggle and organizing in Black communities. Operation PUSH, Jackson's initial organization, was an advocacy group that campaigned for economic parity for Black Americans using tested tactics from the civil rights movement (i.e. boycotts, sit-ins, etc.). According to Jackson (1978), the plan for PUSH/Excel was developed as an extension of PUSH's organized pursuit for economic and educational parity, and Jackson's main target would be Black teenagers. Hence, the PUSH/Excel movement turned program also held roots in community organizing and the struggle for human rights.

Yet in contrast to the two grassroots cases, Promise Neighborhoods and PUSH/Excel began with significant funding, particularly from federal agencies. The

6% of applicants who were granted Promise Neighborhoods planning grants received an award of $500,000 each, and Jackson's PUSH/Excel campaign received over $1.6 million to begin programmatic planning and program replication across the US (Chudnofsky, 2014; House, 1988). This unique contextual feature enabled both initiatives to start their journey with substantial resources, and quickly accomplish the outcome of achieving program implementation.

Yet another interesting contextual feature of both grass-high cases was the preeminence of and race of the initiatives' leaders. As two highly influential Black men, Jesse Jackson and (then) President Obama stood at the forefront of PUSH/Excel and Promise Neighborhoods respectively. Whereas the grassroots cases were also led by people of color, the high influence and trust these grass-high leaders maintained within both Black and White communities later proved to be important to the mechanisms used to draw other powerful and influential stakeholders to the table during the programs' early stages.

Mechanisms. In analyzing the mechanisms groups used to pursue collective action, a number of commonalities and divergences are evidenced. First, both grassroots groups drew heavily on the passion and deep emotion of those that were experiencing the problem, and directed this energy towards collective action. For PJU, the inclusion and later leadership of the youth in the North High Campaign evidenced this. The North High campaign began because the parents within PU (Padres Unidos) were concerned by the school's low graduation rates, and students' unpreparedness for collegiate education. Instead of pursuing the campaign themselves, they involved North High students in the organization and organizing

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effort, as they were ones experiencing the problem first hand. Once involved in the organization's surveying of other students, the youths' passion drew them to not only participating, but also leading the campaign effort.

In a similar manner, Project Quest committee members and leaders spent hundreds of hours in house meetings with those that had been displaced by plant closures. Campbell (1994) captures Pat Ozuna's (COPS's job training committee co-chair) thoughts on how house meetings deeply connected to the challenging experiences those that had lost jobs-

> "'You can learn more at a house meeting with 10 people than in a church meeting with a hundred people,' Ozuna explains. 'You talk about what's happening with your family, because the people that are sitting around you are people like you, and they understand. This is a community that shares, and everybody's in the same boat.'" (p. 13).

Both grassroots groups also engaged in extensive research in order to position themselves to lead action towards their desired outcomes. COPS and Metro Alliance formed a 40-person job training committee across the two organizations which met bi-weekly for two years, and dedicated their time to researching San Antonio's economic trends as well as the city's current and prior job training efforts. In all, their research work and house meetings enabled their team to become extremely knowledgeable of individuals' lived experiences in training programs and post plant closures, and the demand and employment opportunities of other high-waged jobs.

PJU's youth organizers and campaign participants also used extensive research to fuel their action. Youth collected nearly 700 student surveys, and used participatory action research principles to guide their data collection and analysis. Campaign leaders and participants then spent their summer analyzing survey results, and gathering cases of high-performing schools that predominately served Latino/a populations (Warren & Mapp, 2011). These findings were then placed in a report and shared with school and community leaders.

Both grass-high cases maintained a number of commonalities, yet also diverged in particular ways. First, both Promise Neighborhoods and PUSH/Excel maintained a strong belief in the unique contributions of various partners and required participants to commit to varied stakeholder engagement. As noted, Miller et al. (2013) provide the stipulations set by the government for local Promise Neighborhood governing boards, which required a "diversification of programs' networks" and that low-income residents and public officials who serve the geographic area be a part of the decision-making process (p. 553).

Likewise, Jackson not only set a vision for PUSH/Excel programs which maintained a strategic role for each member and sector of a community, but also required students, parents, and school personnel who committed to the program to sign pledges reflecting their commitment to their role in PUSH/Excel and community at large. Lastly, personnel at the national level created and distributed guidebooks and instructions to steer the work of local communities. Yet this mechanism came with critique from both sides of the spectrum, as many local PUSH/Excel local programs found the guidebooks to be too vague, and many local

Promise Neighborhoods found they did not have the capacity or resources to create

and build out the structures outlined in Promise Neighborhood instructional

material (Farrar & House, 1983; Horsford & Sampson, 2014).

Although maintaining points of similarity, the grassroots cases diverged in

employment of their primary theory of action. Project Quest organized using a

strategy of relational organizing, which "…involved the deliberate building of

relationship for the purpose of finding common ground for political action"

(Warren, 1998, p. 86). In contrast, PJU used political education as their

"…mechanism by which the members and staff [got] to examine what impacts

structural inequities and power structure have on their day-to-day lives"(Warren &

Mapp, 2011, p. 108). Consequently, their focus was not on the developing and

building relationships, but rather ensuring those involved in the organizing work

had a similar knowledge base and understanding of the problem.

Similarly, PUSH/Excel and Promise Neighborhoods also diverged in some of

the mechanisms they used to pursue collective action. Specifically, Promise

Neighborhoods utilized competition and a rigorous application process to reward

planning and implementation grants to the promising and similarly inclined

applicants[19]. In contrast, PUSH/Excel encouraged local programs to pursue

programming that seemed to best fit their schools. Nonetheless, this decentralized

approach proved to be a barrier to the development of numerous local programs, as

many local chapters did not have guidance and understanding of what a PUSH/Excel

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[19] It is important to also note that the $500,000 grant awarded to each local Promise Neighborhood for planning was comparatively minuscule to costs of creating and maintaining the Harlem Children's Zone (the model program for Promise Neighborhoods)(HCZ). HCZ expanded to several blocks over the course of ten years, and now maintains an operational budget of $67 million dollars (Person, 2011).

program entailed. Consequently, many local chapters did not progress and closed within years of program implementation.

Outcomes. These different approaches to change undoubtedly contributed to the outcomes all four cases experienced. After two years of working within a school-based reform collaborative with the Education Trust, PJU pulled out of the effort. After assessing that teachers were not fully committed, maintained low-expectations for Latino/a youth, and systemic change would never be reached in these conditions, they created another cross-sector coalition of allies who were deeply committed to addressing the inequities Chicanos faced. They theorized that this commonality amongst the new coalition would provide them with the political knowledge base and commitment to achieve their desired outcome. While PJU ultimately accomplished their goal of redesign for North High School, this was achieved at the expense of relationships with teachers, school administration, and Denver's teachers' union. Moreover, the dissension and breach in trust had long-term implications, as the school suffered from organizational instability in the years following.

In contrast, IAF and COPS/Metro Alliance leaders deliberately built relationships with high-influence leaders in order to make progress towards the creation of a jobs training program. One example of this was their alliance with Tom Frost, a bank owner who had opposed COPS's campaigns in the past. Yet after meeting with committee leaders and seeing the opportunities embedded in t a program such as Project Quest, Tom Frost agreed to align with the project and

leverage his influence with business leaders to arrange the first business meeting and ask[20].

Nonetheless, both groups had clear outcomes they were aiming for. Project Quest leaders, committee members, and COPS/Metro Alliance at large knew they wanted a training program that could be used to help displaced plant workers recoup economic stability and mobility. PJU aimed to address the graduation rates and low achievement of Latino/a students at North High. While their strategy and aim for redesign was revealed later in the process of the campaign, they accomplished their short-term goal of achieving redesign, yet ultimately did not realize school transformation.

In contrast, neither grass-roots cases fully realized the outcomes they intended to accomplish. It's important to first recognize that within local communities, both Promise Neighborhoods and PUSH/Excel quickly attracted powerful people to the table. Moreover, as both programs provided or obtained initial funding, both programs were able to accomplish the outcome of implementing/creating a new program.

Despite having the ability and financial resources to quickly begin implementation, in both cases, most local communities still proved to be too under resourced and incapable of moving towards the large-scale change both initiatives were ultimately aiming to achieve. As Horsford and Sampson (2014) conclude, the high-order tasks of Promise Neighborhoods (i.e. collaboration, capacity building,

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[20] I should note that relational organizing was not a substitute or means to avoid confrontation. Throughout the campaign, COPS/Metro Alliance protested at city hall when pledged funding wasn't delivered, as well as held accountability nights where those running for office gave an account of their policies and potentially support efforts towards a new jobs training program (Rademacher et al., 2001; Warren, 1998).

resident engagement, local leadership, comprehensive support) required local

groups to have a "fundamental level of community capacity", and this made it nearly

impossible for low-capacity communities to compete for resources or be successful

in caring out such tasks (p. 985). Likewise, PUSH/Excel's decentralized approach left

local PUSH/Excel leaders without practical guidelines, understanding, and

objectives for PUSH/Excel activities (Fiske, 1981). Consequently, local activities and

programs lacked coordination and the majority folded with five years of starting up.

B. How does collective commitment contribute to the success (or lack of success) of the collective action pursued by these cross-sector partnerships aiming to make change in communities of color?

    i.   What are the ways in which the partnerships do/do not connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies; and what are the conditions and mechanisms through which those individual commitments are fostered, detracted from, or sustained towards the collective level?

    ii.   How are race and power represented and negotiated in these collective spaces, particularly in the process of achieving collective action and commitment?

Collective Commitment Towards Collective Action

In addition to reaching their immediate desired outcomes, Project Quest and PJU also exemplify cases in which a multi-sector collective group was able to achieve solid collective commitment from individuals, and leverage individual commitment towards collective commitment to the outcomes they set to achieve. In contrast, Promise Neighborhoods and PUSH/Excel struggled to connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies, and ultimately did not achieve collective commitment. Here, I use the three key indicators for collective commitment in early-staged collective action to evaluate how these collaboratives did/did not foster collective commitment, and the role commitment played towards the initiative's success or lack of success.

Vision. Perhaps one of the most helpful mediums to Project Quest's achievement of collective commitment was both its vision for a new job training program and strategy for collective action. A key contributor (and also sustainer) towards this vision was the group's decision to spend a great deal of time unpacking the problem before pursuing solutions leadership had previously explored in conversation. Prior to house meetings, IAF staff and organizers had been meeting with labor economists about plausible responses to the factory closings (Campbell, 1994; Warren, 1998). In these initial meetings, leaders and experts observed data about the city and determined that the most beneficial investment in San Antonio's job market would be a new jobs training program. However, IAF leaders did not follow this insight or vision right away.

Instead, they gave the task to local COPS and Metro Alliance leaders who then conducted house meetings to gather community members' insights, and to see if this vision matched the experiences and personal visions of community members. COPS and Metro Alliance then created a job training committee with 40 local community members who committed to spending up to 20 hours on research, preparation, and conducting house meetings, exploring current job programs in the city, and meeting with city and state officials. The vision of a training program was tested against their research and conversations with those that had experienced the problem, and this helped them to closely align the vision across the minds of all those involved.

House meetings, consequently, were used to "size up the employment problem in the city", foreground the insights and ideas of the broader community, and build out principles for the new program (Rademacher et al., 2001, p. 8). As

such, individual community and business members soon saw themselves as part of

realizing this vision. Father Waltuers also commented as to the fervor that fueled

the vision and ultimately the group's commitment-

> "I think the real strength [of the fight for Project Quest] was listening to
>
> people's stories and then using that anger. You had a real passionate group of
>
> folks who wanted not only jobs for themselves, but also a lot of parents and
>
> grandparents who understood that this is the future for their family and
>
> community" (Campbell, 1994, p. 16).

Race also played a key role in the development of collective commitment

towards collective action. As mentioned, job loss and economic instability impacted

San Antonio's Latino/a communities hardest, as generations of lower-resourced

Latino/a residents who often lacked education or advanced training relied on

factory jobs to achieve a middle-class livelihood. Moreover, project leaders were a

part of community organizations (COPS and Metro Alliance) who predominately

drew its based from Black and Latino/a communities. Hence, the vast majority of

participants and those committed to driving the work (i.e. engaging in house

meetings, protesting at city hall, participating in accountability nights with local

politicians) were Latino/a and Black.

In addition to leaders and participants sharing similar racial identities,

gender parity also served as an undercurrent for collective commitment and action.

Women led much of the organizing efforts for Project Quest. Both co-chairs of COPS

and Metro Alliance were women, and of the 6 individuals on the joint job training

committee, 4 were women (Campbell, 1994, p. 13). Later in its first year of

operation, 65% of Project Quest participants would be women (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996).

Vision was less developed and operated differently in the PJU case despite reaching a strong level of collective commitment. First, there was a faintly determined goal and no potential strategy at the onset of the campaign. Whereas parents were concerned about student achievement at North High School and desired to have their children prepared for college, their vision for the campaign primary focused on incorporating youth into organizing efforts and understanding students' concerns about the school via the student survey. This vision facilitated youth participation, brought passion and lived experience to the campaign, and political education helped PJU members understand the systemic and institutional injustices at work.

However, there was less attention to a holistic strategy of how PJU would address extremely low graduation rates, or the data showing that students desired to go to college, but felt underprepared to do so. The partnership with the Education Trust was not an exclusive PJU strategy, but rather occurred by happenstance following the survey report distribution and the convening of a reform committee. Moreover, unclear and misaligning strategies and goals between PJU and school personnel led to dissatisfaction and later separation. Whereas teachers and administrators deemed changes in higher-level course offerings, summer enrichment, and gains on achievement tests as successes and progress, PJU perceived 5% gains as insufficient and reflective of low teacher expectations of youth of color.

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The reconfigured coalition (Coalition to Save North) provided an alliance of similarly thinking and powerful supporters. Race and the pursuit of racial equity served as a connection that fostered and sustained commitment to the common goal of a redesigned North High School. Warren and Mapp (2011) note, "Though the political ideologies of the various allies [within the coalition] differed, there is no doubt that race was an underpinning factor in their coming together. For PJU, race and class are at the heart of the matter at North [High School], and all over the country" (p. 120). Consequently, race served as a medium through which individual commitments to improving conditions for Latino/a students were connected towards a collective level.

Nonetheless, there was still an overt disconnect between PJU's chosen mechanism of redesign and how this would practically lead to higher graduation rates and increased college preparedness. The coalition found a converging interest with Superintendent Bennet in a desire to pursue redesign in the short-term, but lacked a long-term commitment to continued partnership to ensure the health of North High School post-redesign. In all, PJU's short-term vision for the campaign demonstrated a lack of understanding of the problem's connection to the failure of multiple systems, and failed to ensure commitments endured once their goals for change were achieved.

Among the grass-high cases, vision operated in divergent ways, as Promise Neighborhoods had very clear outcomes and goals and PUSH/Excel struggled to create outcomes that truly reflected Jesse Jackson's approach to educational reform. Of all the cases I examined in this study, Promise Neighborhoods had the most

extensive and sophisticated a priori outcomes, measurements, and overall theory for what Promise Neighborhoods could be and how they could get there. The Promise Neighborhoods Institute and its partners created and shared guidance documents on the theory behind neighborhoods, how to collect and analyze data, and the precise goals and outcomes each neighborhood would be accountable for. Yet many neighborhoods did/don't have the capacity to do what's necessary to attain goals/outcomes. Consequently, despite a well-articulated vision, the means, capacity, and resources for individual neighborhoods to actually implement and attain this vision was lacking.

Conversely, PUSH/Excel struggled to match the vision and strategy of the program with the outcomes it hoped to achieve. Although the stakeholder evaluation created by American Institutes for Research (AIR) attempted to foreground PUSH/Excel leaders' conceptualization of matters and issues that should measured and evaluated, in the end there was still a mismatch between the capabilities of the movement turned program, and the measures that were being evaluated. This mismatch made it difficult to create alignment between individuals' values, beliefs, and ideas about the program, and detracted from leaders' ability to garner collective commitment. In all, neither grass-high case was able to foster collective vision, as the research revealed some Promise Neighborhoods did not have the capacity to do what was necessary to attain goals/outcomes, and PUSH/Excel's stakeholder evaluation foreseeably did not match what was being done within the movement turned program.

Trust. PJU was distinctly able to create a sense of security amongst

organization and Coalition members, and was able to foster belief that the group

could work open and honestly with each other. Despite controversial evidence on

school reform efforts, such as redesign that would call for all teachers to reapply for

their jobs, individuals within the coalition were confident in the vision for the

initiative and committed to achieving the outcome of redesign. City council and

coalition member Judy Montero's comments on the difficulty yet surety she felt

supports that she, like others, had confidence in the vision of the initiative.

> "Instinctively, I just knew... You make [a decision] regardless of how much
>
> pain it causes you, your family, your community, you just feel strongly that
>
> it's the right thing to do...But my hope is that in the reform-redesign effort is
>
> that my daughter can go there [North High]. And today, she can't, but maybe
>
> she'd be closer to being able to do that" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 119).

Building and retaining trust also served as a contributor towards collective

commitment within the Project Quest story. Warren (1998) argues that the

objective behind the relational strategy is to recruit and develop "rooted leaders"

who are then able to garner the trust and support of community members (Warren,

1998, p. 88). This approach enables leaders to organize and channel established

trust towards cooperative political action at the opportune time.

Moreover, the robust partnership and attention to the thoughts, feelings, and

insights of those involved in the partnership further solidified trust among various

levels of the group. Just as house meetings supported those on the grounds in

listening to their neighbors' concerns and opinions, the business community also

learned to trust the leadership and the prospect of the initiative given that Quest leaders provided evidence of how Project Quest was also in the best economic interests of businesses and the city. Rademacher et al. (2001) notes that in order "to create changes in employer demand, Quest first had to earn [employers'] trust...by understanding both employer needs and the barriers low-income individuals faced" (p. 41). In all, trust undergirded the commitment of many aspects of the partnership that was needed to bring Quest to fruition.

High levels of listening, sharing, acknowledgement, and lack of fear in voicing opinions were also evident in the PJU case, and consequently evidence of high collective commitment to the group's goals and outcomes. The intergenerational organizing model positioned both adults and youth as critical contributors to the work. As youth organizers led much of the research and action items for the campaign, parents and adults consistently supported the distribution of their written report, made efforts to protect PJU students academically from teacher backlash, and gathered 600 signatures of other parents within the community in petition of forming a reform committee for North High school.

Youth were also heard, acknowledged, and valued in Coalition to Save North committee meetings. Warren et al. (2012) notes, "...it was not just the adults who were the decision makers in the Coalition. In fact, the adults often looked to Julieta [PJU youth organizer] for her input, since she was working directly with the youth at North and therefore had the best understanding of the current challenges facing the youth" (p. 11). These trust-building actions aided youth and adults in connecting their values, passions, and commitments towards the collective level, and

consequently provided a rich environmental space for collective commitment and action.

Oppositely, PUSH/Excel was not able to develop trust among its various partners and levels, as it was not a space where those that were a part of the initiative could be heard, acknowledged, and unafraid to share their thoughts. While House (1988) contends that "many Black Americans looked to Jackson as their national leader" and "Jackson was among the most admired public figures in America" , as an organizational leader, House (1988) also notes that Jackson was a "controversial" and "despotic" manager (p. 5, 6). To this end, there were several accounts of PUSH/Excel personnel being laid off for dubious reasons (Cole, 1977; House, 1988).

Furthermore, there was evident mistrust between PUSH/Excel program workers and evaluators. In a personal interview, Charles Murray, a principal investigator for American Institutes for Research (AIR) spoke to how PUSH/Excel program leaders were brought in to help construct the stakeholder evaluation, but were driven to give insincere answers they believed evaluators wanted to hear.

> "'The [PUSH/Excel] program people [believed] that there were certain things they had to say: 'We are going to raise grades, we are going to improve test scores'...I said, well, this is not what you're really trying to do... And [they replied], 'We don't think we are either, but we have to [say that] in order to make ourselves plausible'... [I said], 'We want you to help us design this evaluation...to hear your priorities and adapt the evaluation to that'...The

subsequent discussion were generally very forced, very artificial" (Farrar & House, 1983, p. 45).

In all, Jackson was able to draw large crowds, and many American (particularly Black Americans) trusted his vision. This resulted in many signing commitment cards and becoming a part of local PUSH/Excel programs. However, there was little empowerment for organizational workers at the national level, and apparent suspicion between program leaders and outside evaluators. These dynamics made for an overall environment of mistrust.

Individual data reveals that building and sustaining trust in local Promise Neighborhoods was also difficult to do, and several local initiatives were unable to do so. In the Las Vegas Promise Neighborhood (LVPN), Horsford and Sampson (2014) note that community members (whom were predominately Black) had a history of community engagement and commitment. Yet this engagement had more recently been disrupted by radical racial and economic shifts within Las Vegas, as many neighborhoods that were predominately Black had now maintained a majority Latino/a population. The authors contend that the groundwork for LVPN was built on this complex history and social shift, and this "presented a unique challenge for building leadership, trust, and collaboration among groups who might feel they [were] competing for resources and community power" (Horsford & Sampson, 2014, p. 984).

Likewise, as Miller et al. (2013) investigated trends among local urban and tribal promise neighborhoods, they found that as "school failure was tightly associated with communities' very need for Promise Neighborhoods", school

leaders were less enthusiastic to participate in planning and "becoming immersed"

in the initiative (p. 569)[21]. Moreover, some of the suggested mediums for reform in

schools within Promise Neighborhoods were controversial and would inevitably

lead to further mistrust. As one planner explained, "it's hard to try and partner with

a principal when the restructuring models call for the replacement of the principal"

(Miller et al., 2013, p. 565).

Space to Learn. In addition to building trust and generating a precise vision,

Project Quest leaders and supporters made the early stages of the initiative a space

to learn. Although the common belief was that there were no jobs in San Antonio,

the thought and creation of Project Quest challenged this belief, and proved that

there was more to learn around the issue of employment dislocation in the city. PJU

leaders and members also grew in their understanding of institutionalized barriers

and student experiences at North High school through student surveys and political

education. As youth and new community members were new to organizing, a well-

supported space to learn about systemic and interconnected problems was crucial

in developing commitment and positioning both groups towards action.

The Quest initiative was also made a space to learn through the amount of

time that was used to pursue what was important to the collective. Local leaders

conducted over 300 house meetings with community members, spent months

negotiating with the business leaders, and met bi-monthly for almost two years

(Campbell, 1994; Osterman & Lautsch, 1996; Rademacher et al., 2001). Individuals

within the collective group used this time to grow in their understanding of the

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[21] As a reminder, Promise Neighborhoods applicants that met the "funding eligibility" criteria had to include a "low-performing school" within the boundaries for its designated neighborhood (Miller et al., 2013, p. 560).

problem. Later, what was learned from community members was triangulated with the experiences of the business community and public servants, as city and state officials and business leaders were called on to connect, grapple, and learn from the others' perspectives.

Moreover, power negotiation through the project development process challenged all participants to listen to others in spite of power differentials. Early committee work at the regional and local level recognized job training as the appropriate response to the plant closings across San Antonio (Warren, 1998). Yet leaders sought to challenge and strengthen this idea through learning from those with power (i.e. well-known economist and business leaders) and those without (i.e. neighbors and community members) (Campbell, 1994). The development and implementation of a demand-driven job-training program then reflected and understanding of what both powerful and less powerful individuals needed, and how leveraging the power of multiple sectors could collectively address San Antonio's employment issues (Rademacher, 2001).

Although Project Quest projected potential 'wins' for all involved, race and lack of power still presented a barrier for COPS and Metro Alliance. Business leaders had already formed perceptions of the predominately Black and Brown organizing groups from their prior campaigns. Long term fiscal conservative and city banker, Tony Frost, acknowledged, "Even though they [Project Quest leaders and supporters] started out with a radical approach, the projects they were supporting were reasonable and they were responsible in the way they approached the community…I was impressed that they were correct, and that led to my involvement

in Project Quest" (Campbell, 1994, p. 18). Frost, like other business leaders, later supported the project, yet not until COPS and Metro Alliance "had done their homework on job training", "earned a place at the table," and the project was perceived as less fanatic (Campbell, 1994, p. 19). Interest convergence consequently facilitated a bridge towards collective commitment despite racialized perceptions between sectors. In all, the iterative processes of growing in understanding of the problem, learning from others despite potential power differentials, negotiating interests over racial perceptions, and leaders supporting and growing in their own beliefs around the initiative, fostered deeper individual commitment, and resultantly contributed to a highly committed collective space.

In the PJU case, political education served as the primary learning space for individual and collective growth in understanding of the problem. As PJU youth were new to the concept and processes of organizing, political education enabled leaders to situate problems at North High School within the context of a larger historic struggle.

In addition, PJU leaders, members, and particularly youth were willing to endure and risk fall out with teachers and administrators in order to realize their desired outcomes. Using media attention to pressure administrators to act on their findings undoubtedly produced feelings of mistrust and betrayal between teachers and PJU/PJU students. Conflict also arose as PJU collectively pursued what they believed was important for Chicano/a students and families, despite other dissenting voices in the community. Nonetheless, these conflicts made for a rich space for PJU youth and members to reflect and recalibrate their strategy towards

achieving targeted outcomes. In all, while PJU incurred a number of risks and losses, the group environment resultantly was an excellent space to learn through. This learning fostered the deep individual commitments PJU youth and members already maintained, and ultimately contributed to a collective commitment.

For Project Quest, learning space also meant room for potential conflict and recalibrating so the group could move toward a collective action. The relational organizing strategy that the community groups used emphasized both negotiation and confrontation (Warren, 1998). Hence, when the city council retracted their financial commitment to the project, leaders adjusted their strategy and called for COPS and Metro Alliance members to protest at city hall (Warren, 1998). When funding faced an additional potential barrier, organizers adapted another strategy and use portions of existing community block grants to supplement the funds that were needed (Osterman & Lautsch, 1996). The constant recalibration and pushing limits was a critical part of the learning space and development of collective commitment throughout the project's advancement.

In contrast, neither grass-high case appraised to be healthy spaces to learn, and funding obligations drove the social and culture norms for both groups. As Promise Neighborhoods and PUSH/Excel both received initial external funding, national and local leaders were impelled to quickly organize and prove impact, and this led to a culture that disallowed for mistakes, risks, or learning through doing. In the case of PUSH/Excel, Jackson initially refused to accept the HEW funding, telling HEW Secretary Joseph Califano "I have no program" (Farrar & House, 1983, p. 34). After promising a grant writer and government technical assistance to help

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transform Jackson's movement into a program, Jackson accepted. Yet acceptance of the funding came with obligation for evaluation, and there was no sincere time to package movement as a program.

This undoubtedly impacted the implementation of local programs. As there was no time to grow in understanding and connection to their primary concern of Black youth disengagement in schools, local leaders scrambled to create local PUSH/Excel programs, but soon struggled to keep them afloat. House (1988) highlights the programmatic realities of the local agendas-

> "Financial woes and political turmoil in other districts that adopted the Push/Excel left few still operating after the first two years. The Chicago program was initiated in 10 schools. Although local philanthropy and national office funds provided resources for start-up, district support was halting, and the program was never fully implemented. Kansas City had programs in two high schools, but only one was endorsed by the district. Local infighting followed, and the district eventually lost confidence in the program" (p. 41).

Hence, PUSH/Excel leaders and participants did not have the time to pursue what was important to the group, the opportunity to reflect and recalibrate as programs experienced setbacks, nor were given space to make mistakes and learn from missteps. This subsequently hindered PUSH/Excel from cultivating a space to learn within the national and local spaces.

Promise Neighborhoods also did not cultivate spaces to learn. One particular aspect that interfered with developing this critical factor was the highly competitive

nature of its funding structure. Competition for Promise Neighborhood planning

grants made it hard for local communities to take risks, make mistakes, and learn

from failure. As the grants had selection rate of 6% in first year and only 5

communities were given implementation funds to follow up on their planning

grants, neighborhoods were pressed to develop and implement precise and well-

tested programmatic ideas without the time to learn what would best serve the

people within their designated neighborhoods.

Race, racial dynamics, and the ways in which race was (or wasn't) negotiated

also played a critical role in the learning space of these cases. Within Promise

Neighborhoods, race was primarily acknowledged as a statistic. Miller et al. (2013)

notes that neighborhoods were required to report the racial identities of those

within the designated neighborhood. Yet very little (if any) attention is given to how

race may interconnect to the systems and reforms they call for. Instead, the

guidelines focus conversations, measures, and ideas around destitution and

mobilizing the power, influence, and resources of institutions to fight the

intergenerational poverty. This in turn created a space and norm among individual

Promise Neighborhoods where race was decentralized, although most of the people

that would be impacted by Promise Neighborhoods were people of color.

PUSH/Excel however presents an interesting case in which the racial and

power dynamics show a challenge of 'who was playing who', rather than

participants genuinely being willing to learn from others despite potential power

differentials. Jackson focused on reaching Black youth, as Black Americans trusted

him as a "survivor" and second-generation leader of the civil rights movement

(House, 1988). Yet his influence and charisma as a black leader was not enough to sustain the movement and local programs. On the other hand, Jackson's message resonated with powerful Whites, and predominately White organizations funded his endeavor given that Jackson's race and rapport with the Black community gave a platform to voice opinions that would have been politically unacceptable for anyone else. As Cole (1977) noted, "what White could get away with telling black girls that they have fully developed bottoms and half-developed brains?" (p. 379).

Jackson was also very strategic, and used mechanisms such as media as a solution "...to control [and] support his own objectives" (House, 1988, p. 33). Despite this tactics, ultimately the evaluators maintained the most power, as they represented the steam of funding PUSH/Excel had garnered. Consequently, as evaluations of PUSH/Excel programs showed to be ineffective, funding rescinded and the national and local agendas for the program came to a halt. Jackson was quoted in the *Chicago Tribute* following the dismantling of the program expressing that grant funding was a trap.

> "I vehemently fought again government grants and programs. It is a trap. The requirements are so technical that if you don't dot the i's and cross the t's, you can be cited for a violation. Whenever the federal government want to move or neutralize they do it through regulation." ("PUSH-Excel gets low grades: Poor management hurts educational programs," 1983, p. 1)

Chapter IV. Empirical Case – Highland County My Brother's Keeper

In this chapter, I share my findings from the empirical study I did with Highland County's My Brother's Keeper (HMBK)[22]. HMBK is a grass-high collective action group case, and the group was in its early stages when I began my participation and research. HMBK was a county-based response to President Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge.

MBK communities were tasked with creating local action plans to address opportunity barriers for young men of color, as measured by outcomes in education, workforce development, and criminal justice. This study examines the early phases of HMBK, and the connections between collective action, collective commitment, and observed outcomes.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather an empirical understanding of how those working within a social-change making initiative used collective action to shape change for young men of color. In addition to unpacking collective action from a realist perspective (Pawson & Tilley, 2004), I consider if collective commitment was achieved or not and how collective commitment contributed to the action that

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[22] All names, institutions, and locations (both state and cities) have been anonymized to protect the identities of those that participated in this study.

was pursued. As such, the guiding research questions were-In the case of Highland County My Brother's Keeper (HMBK), how does collective action work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why?

1) How does collective commitment contribute to the success (or lack of success) of the collective action pursued by HMBK?

    a. What are the ways in which HMBK does/does not connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies; and what are the conditions and mechanisms through which those individual commitments are fostered, detracted from, or sustained towards the collective level?

    b. How are race and power represented and negotiated in the collective space, particularly in the process of achieving collective action and commitment?

Context of Study

My Brother's Keeper Task Force and Community Challenge. President Obama launched the My Brother's Keeper Initiative in 2014. Whereas the MBK Task Force was charged with building a framework and providing recommendations "to help ensure all in America are on the path to success", the MBK Community Challenge was designed to bring together citizens, community, and government leaders with "leading experts in youth and community development to design and implement cradle-to-college-and-career action plans" (Force, 2014, p. 3; 5; "My Brother's Keeper Task Force One-Year Progress Report to the President.," 2015). Within six months of accepting the President's challenge, MBK Communities would

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commit to reviewing local policies, hosting a community summit, and developing

and implementing a locally tailored plan to address opportunity gaps for boys and

young men of color within the designated community[23] ("My Brother's Keeper Task

Force One-Year Progress Report to the President.," 2015).

The My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge draws from multi-sector

collective action models to engage communities in change-making spaces that

address disparities faced by boys and young men of color in America. While the MBK

Task Force report references collective action frameworks such as collective impact

as an example of a promising multi-sector, "comprehensive, outcome-focused

approach to improving the lives of young people", the national community challenge

technical support documents also reference other cross-section action and

frameworks that could support MBK communities in "develop[ing] rigorous and

well-planned strategies specifically targeted to help boys and men of color

succeed"[24] (Force, 2014, p. 16; Philpart & Bell, 2015, p. 2). Hence, collective action

through multi-sector engagement is presented as a method that can be used to

address complex issues.

Highland County My Brother's Keeper. Highland County formally accepted

the national MBK Community Challenge on August 31, 2015. Prior to this date,

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[23] The MBK 2016 Progress Report informs that as of 2016, nearly 250 communities have taken on the President's Challenge, more than 140 local action summits have been called, and over 100 local action plans have been developed and/or released ("My Brother's Keeper 2016 Progress Report ", 2016).

[24] In Building Place-Based Initiatives for Boys and Men of Color and Vulnerable Populations, the primary community planning guide being used nationally by MBK communities, the authors state the following: "Here [in this document], we examine how communities can develop rigorous and well-planned strategies specifically targeted to help boys and men of color succeed. If done well, these efforts will enable communities to develop approaches that improve outcomes for all young people, including girls and boys and young people of all races and ethnicities…This guide provides access to those practices and is designed to help communities across the country get started on the important work of creating opportunity for all. The broad principles of collective impact provide a useful framework (cited reference to Kania & Kramer, 2012)" (Philpart et al., 2015, p. 2).

Congresswoman Beth Moore (a White female elected official) appointed two African-American men, Washington State Representative Ryan Connor and Highland County Sheriff Aaron Bailey, as overseers of the effort. By August 15th, it had been determined that the entire county would take on the challenge, and the three elected officials appointed an executive director, John Walters, an African-American professor from Northern Washington University, to oversee the daily operations of the initiative. At this time, the overall mission for HMBK was articulated as "to develop and implement an action plan, undergirded by evidence based strategies, that would:

- Close the opportunity gaps concerning boys and young men of color in Highland County;

- Build a sustainable pathway for their successful entry into adulthood; and

- Secure this vital resource for the country's future" (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16).

This study was conducted in Highland County. Highland County is comprised of 27 cities, villages, and townships, and is home to approximately 354,000 residents ("The Basics," 2017). The county also serves as home to two large universities- the University of Washington (Greenville) and Northern Washington University in Brampton, as well as five other colleges and universities.

Study Design

Site Selection

Prior to this study I worked for Highland County School District as a consultant on a number their strategic projects. When I came to the point of

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designing a study for my dissertation work, I naturally sought the insight of leaders

within the district as to questions they had and wanted to explore through research.

These conversations led me to their initiative for young men of color in connection

to the national My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge. While the district fully

supported the newly established local county effort (HMBK), they were unsure of

how it would unfold, and the best way it could support the effort.

These concerns led to my hire as a partnership facilitator for the initiative

during the summer months. In this role, I connected with stakeholders and partners

that were a part of the effort, facilitated conversations around strategic decisions,

and administered the work of two AmeriCorp VISTAs that were also hired to work

on the initiative. In addition to working in this role, I also received consent to use

this project as a research space[25]. My role as both facilitator during the summer

months and researcher undoubtedly had methodological implications. I discuss how

I attended to these implications later in this section.

I worked with HMBK and collected data from November 2015 – November

2016. During the early phases of my work (November 2015- May 2016), I primarily

served as a note taker and archivist. Meetings during this time were sporadic and

engaged what I will continue to refer to as the steering committee. From June 2016

– August 2016, I was contracted to be the group's facilitator. I spent much of my

time with key partners helping to outline common interests and agenda items

between the organizations, as well as meeting, training, and thinking through the

potential infrastructure of the initiative with the HMBK core team. Lastly, in

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[25] This study was IRB approved. I also obtained written consent forms from each participant before interviews, as well as verbal consent before each team meeting I audio recorded.

September 2016-November 2016, I reassumed the role as a participant researcher, as focusing on this role supported me in complete data collection for this project.

Participants

Study participants occupied two groups within this study. I refer to the first group as the HMBK steering committee. The steering committee included (roughly) 20 individuals that represented various sectors, organizations, and institutions within Highland County including (but not limited to) the county government, the county-level school district, universities, as well as business owners and elected officials (see Appendix A for list of organizations represented). HMBK's executive director initiated and called HMBK steering committee meetings. While there was no formal protocol or ask made to these individuals to participate on the committee, participants on the committee represent and direct programs, organizations, or institutions in the county that directly serve boys and young men of color, and most supported the idea of a local section for My Brother's Keeper[26]. I'll note that although the communication list for this committee included 20 individuals, participation amongst group members varied during the timespan of the project. For this reason, I prioritized interviews and data analysis with respect to those that were more active members[27].

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[26] I interviewed the vast majority of steering committee members and make this generalization based on the interview responses regarding their participation and contribution to HMBK.

[27] I considered "active" participants to be those that most frequently attend core committee meetings, were most responsive to electronic communications, and dedicated more time than others to HMBK work. There were roughly 8 committee members who displayed these behaviors.

I refer to the second group of participants as the backbone group[28]. This group represents the individuals that were dedicated to coordinating and directing the bulk of the work of HMBK. This group formed in the summer of 2016 following the hire to two AmeriCorps VISTAs, and became the administrative and executive support for the initiative[29]. The backbone ultimately included (roughly) eight individuals, including the HMBK executive director, the two MBK AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, three NWU administrative partners, one school district partner from HCSD, and me[30].

Data Collection

Data collection for this project can be conceptualized through three stages (see Table D). During the first stage (November 2015 – May 2016), I took fieldnotes, as well as created and disseminated formal committee meeting notes from the HMBK steering committee. I took on a more formal responsibility for record keeping for this committee in January 2016, and used district resources to gather documents from the major event HMBK hosted prior to my involvement in the group.

During the second phase of this project (June 2016 – August 2016), my primary source of data I collected were the audio recordings of backbone meetings that were held weekly on Friday mornings. I recorded 6 meetings during this phase, and another 7 during the third phase. These meetings illuminated the planning,

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[28] The idea of a "backbone organization" is a tenant of the collective impact model (Kania & Kramer, 2011). While the group adopted the identification of being a "backbone organization", they did not fully adopt nor use the collective impact model.

[29] Prior to the formation of the backbone group, the steering committee served as the forum in which decisions and ideas were presented. These responsibilities shifted to the backbone group once it was established.

[30] Just as with the steering committee, individuals in the backbone group shifted over time, as members moved out of state, disengaged, or the like during the summer and winter of the data collection.

insight, and collective work that was done among the (~8) individuals that organized the administrative and executive functions of HMBK.

In addition, I also took fieldnotes /personal notes from HMBK events, one-on-one meetings with HMBK backbone or steering committee members, and meetings with HMBK partner organizational leaders. After each individual meeting, I made a practice of recording what was said and done as a formal record for the team member and I. At the end of each week, I also wrote a reflective memo of my own thoughts and feelings regarding the group space, processes, and overall progress of the work.

In addition to my own fieldnotes and personal notes, one of the VISTA members took on the role of coordinating and note taking for the backbone organization. Hence, I collected her notes as another source of data to enhance objectivity and balance across the sources I analyzed. I also evaluated artifacts that were created by this group, including (but not limited to) stakeholder-meeting notes, online infrastructure (i.e. a website and social media presence), databases and interfaces created to communicate across the backbone organization, and documents created by and disseminated on behalf of the group.

During the third and final phase of data collection (September 2016-November 2016), I conducted my interviews for this study. All members of the steering HMBK committee (active and less active), the backbone group, and the two county overseers were invited to participate in a semi-structured interview. I conducted 30 interviews in total. Interviews ranged from half hour discussions to an hour and a half. The interview protocol included large contextual questions on

participants' perceptions of the initiative, personal histories and reflection on

how/what lead to their involvement, their perceptions of their contributions to the

work being done, and their estimations of progress towards outcomes (see

Appendix B for interview protocol). In addition to interviews, I also recorded

backbone meetings, continued to compile fieldnotes and personal notes from major

HMBK events, and collected artifacts created by HMBK.

Phase	Time Frame	My Role	Regular Meetings	Other Major Events	Data Collected
1	November 2015 – May 2016	Steering Committee Record Keeper	• 3 Steering Committee Meetings • 1 Washington MBK Summit (Liberty)	• Debrief of HMBK Local Action Summit I • Creation of HMBK Policy Review • Recruitment of HMBK VISTA	• Fieldnotes of steering committee meetings and Liberty summit • Formal steering committee meeting notes • Artifacts created during and prior to my involvement
2	June 2016 – August 2016	Partnership Facilitator, Backbone Group Member	• 6 Backbone Group Meetings • 7 VISTA Check-in Meetings (Me w/the VISTAs)	• Points of Light Conference w/MBK Luncheon (Union City, WA) • Highland County Unity Town Hall Meeting (partly sponsored by HMBK)	• Fieldnotes and personal notes of all major events, backbone meetings, and VISTA Check-in meetings • 8 weekly reflective memos of my experience in dual role as facilitator and researcher • 6 Backbone group meeting recordings • Backbone meeting minutes (from VISTA member) • Artifacts created by group during this period
3	September 2016 – November 2016	Backbone Group Member	• 10 Backbone Group Meetings • 1 Steering Committee Meeting • 3 Young Brothers/Youth Meetings	• Awarded Youth Voice Grant from Neutral Zone • HMBK Local Action Summit II • Creation of young men of color youth council (Young Brothers)	• 30 interviews • 7 Backbone group meetings recordings • Fieldnotes and personal notes of all major events, backbone meetings, steering committee meeting, and youth meetings • Backbone meeting notes (from

					VISTA member) Artifacts created by group during this period

Table D. Forms of Data and Researcher Role Outline

Data Analysis

The analysis for this portion of the dissertation mirrors the analysis done for the prior systematic review in chapter 3. For this reason, I use the same analytic questions developed through work analysis of cases within that review. I began my analysis with two analytic outlines that were constructed during the systematic review. The first outline was crafted and used to investigate the data through a realist lens (see Chart B, Chapter 3). Specifically, I delineated the four major features of realist evaluation (context, mechanisms, outcomes, and the theory of change) and shaped particular questions around each feature using resources on the theory including Pawson (2013), Pawson and Tilley (1997), and Pawson and Tilley (2004). This outline was then tested and used on the synthesis cases and empirical work presented here.

Whereas each case I examined in Chapter 3 maintained different goals and outcomes, I determined that collective commitment was an outcome I was interested in tracking and understanding across all cases and my empirical work. Consequently, I created a framework around patterns of commitment that could be observed or traced in both cases where collective commitment was both positively and unsuccessfully developed. Using information from both the cases and my experience in the field as a participant and facilitator for HMBK, I identified these patterns as environmental factors that contributed, detracted, and sustained collective commitment. This framework led to the creation of the second outline (see Chart C in Chapter 3).

Once these sets of analytic questions were crafted, I used an electronic data analysis program to program questions from both outlines as a priori codes. I then coded all interviews using the imported codes. I also created emergent codes throughout the process, and delineated these codes from the others. I refined both the analytic outline and theory on collective commitment throughout the coding process as informed by the data. I went through each interview using this coding schema.

I followed a similar process for the recordings of the group meetings as well as field notes. For group recordings, I took fieldnotes and annotated each recorded meeting. I then went through these annotated memos with my two analytic outlines, looking for evidence of the questions within the outline, and also noting emergent codes relating to collective commitment. I applied this process to field notes from HMBK events, large committee meetings, and meeting artifacts as well.

In addition to using the analytic outlines, I also coded for race and power across all the data. I began with three large a priori codes (race, gender, power) and highlighted each time there was an explicit mention of these ideas. I speak rather explicitly about how race and power are negotiated in my reflective memos, and I coded these memos as well. After general coding, I then went back into each code using the second analytic outline as a guide (Collective Commitment Contributors, Chart C, Chapter 3) and crafted analytic memos on the cross-section between the code and the forming of collective commitment.

These processes aided me in addressing research question 1, as it separated the data with respect to the four main elements of realist evaluation (context,

mechanisms, outcomes, and theory of change). I then used the parsed data to reconstruct the narrative of this case. I divided the narrative into the three phases of work focus on (see Chart A, column 1). I used field notes, interviews, audio recordings, and other data I collected for this project to reconstruct and support this narrative. At the end of each narrative phase I also summarized aspects of contexts and mechanisms that were present.

I then went back in each phase and considered how the contexts, mechanism, and later outcomes were being represented, and what observed theory of action could be at work in driving emergent patterns amidst these features. Given that I was also participant in the group space for this project, I had keen insight from conversations, what was repeated in meetings, and what I documented in memos regarding how group members (and particularly leadership) seemed to enact how change would be pursued and made during these particular phases. I then placed these observed theories at the beginning of each phase as to provide a reference and lens reflecting group participants' approach to change making during this phase.

I then created an analytic matrix that aided me in evaluating the group's progress towards collective commitment, and how this connected to the outcomes/collective action that was observed. I first looked at how those within the core group spoke of vision, space to learn, and the trust within the group. I also looked at how opinions on leadership and the idea (or mention) of commitment were referenced. I also looked for how individual values, beliefs, and commitments were expressed, and I looked for similarities, distinctions, and tensions across race

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and gender on all these areas. I examined and referenced these across interviews, meeting recordings, field notes, and my reflective memos.

I then summarized how each person reflected on these areas and placed these summaries in the matrix. Once I completed this process for the backbone group, I complete the same process for the steering committee. Lastly, I noted the engagement of each individual (as signaled by attendance and participation over time), and I analyze similarities and differences between similarly engaged individuals. These analyses aided in my assessment of HMBK's collective commitment, and how each environmental factor (vision, space to learn, and trust) connected to the collective action that was pursued[31].

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[31] My final analysis of the empirical data was conducted through the lens of critical race theory (CRT). I provide this analysis within my discussion in Chapter 5.

Research Question 1

In the case of Highland County My Brother's Keeper (HMBK), how does collective

action work, for whom, in what circumstances, and why? How are the intended and

observed theories of change for a My Brother's Keeper community reflected in the

early phases of collective work?

As mentioned, President Obama made an appeal for the formation of MBK

communities in February 2014 after the MBK Task Force completed their analysis of

what could be done to develop opportunities for young men of color in the US. The

Task Force Report presented "cross-cutting recommendations and areas of

opportunity", advocating for comprehensives cradle-to-career strategies, learning

and doing what works, and tracking progress; all in effort to addressing opportunity

barriers for young men of color (Force, 2014). This report also outlined six focus

areas, or milestones, where communities could focus efforts and use as outcome

goals. The six milestones included:

1. Entering School Ready to Learn

2. Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade

3. Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career

4. Completing Postsecondary Education or Training

5. Entering the Workforce

6. Reducing Violence and Providing Second Chances (Force, 2014)

    In addition, the administration and partners provided various resources and

guides about creating MBK communities[32]. These support documents aim to help support MBK communities in "develop[ing] rigorous and well-planned strategies specifically targeted to help boys and men of color succeed" (Philpart & Bell, 2015, p. 2). These documents draw from various principles of collective action, and provide further instruction as to how groups can approach implementing an MBK community.

MBK Theory of Change (Realist Evaluation). Realist evaluation diverges from other forms of program evaluation in a number of ways. One area of departure is in the framing of a theory, as Pawson and Tilley (1997) propose "theories must be framed in terms of propositions about how mechanisms are fired in contexts to produce outcomes" (p. 85). Pawson and Tilley (2004) also suggest "mechanisms describe what it is about programs and interventions that bring about any effects" (p. 6). Moreover, the contexts in which these mechanisms are triggered, the interpretation and carrying out of mechanisms, and the patterns that produce observed outcomes reflect the theory of change operating behind the program.

The theory of change presented by the national MBK initiative outlines a 4-step process to laying the groundwork for an MBK community. These include (1) Accepting the President's Challenge; (2) Convening a local action community summit; (3) Conducting a policy review and for recommendations for action; and (4) Launching a plan of action, next steps, and a timetable for review. At a high-level, these steps serve as the mechanism through which MBK communities are formed.

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[32] These resources include an MBK Executive Playbook, the MBK Task Force report, MBK annual reports, and a community-planning guide published by PolicyLink (see Philpart & Bell, 2015). All of these resources were nationally distributed.

Yet in moving down a level of abstraction, there are clearly multiple other mechanisms at work.

While HMBK accepted the MBK challenge and consequently subscribed to the larger theory of action driving the national initiative, the simple four steps as outlined by the challenge weren't taken up in ways the national MBK theory might have suggested. In the following section, I provide a narrative of what occurred during the three phases of data collection and participation I was a part of (see Chart A for distinction of these phases). As with the historical cases, each theory of action statement at the beginning represents observed theory that is confronted by an account of the mechanisms, areas of context, and outcomes that illustrate the fruition of the particular theory statement. In addition, in Table E I've included a list of participants that are mentioned in the following narrative.

Name	Role, Organization	Role in HMBK	Phases of Participation	Race	Gender
Aaron Bailey	Sheriff, Highland County	Co-Chair	I	Black/African-American	Male
Amanda Saul	Director, Highland Early Start Collaborative (Early Childhood)	Steering Committee	I, II	White	Female
Anita Jackson	HMBK VISTA for Infrastructure and Budget	Backbone Team	III	Black/African-American	Female
Beth Moore	Congresswoman for Washington's 12th District, House of Representatives	Legislative Supporter	I, III	White	Female
Bobby McQueen	Local Business Owner, Brampton	Community Member	I, III	Black/African-American	Male
Linda Bay	Professor, NWU	Steering Committee; Backbone Team	I, II, III	Black/African-American	Female
Harry Kennedy	Superintendent, Highland County School District	Steering Committee; Backbone Team	I, II, III	White	Male
Jay Johnson	Director of Community Engagement, Highland County Sheriff's Office	Steering Committee	I, III	Black/African-American	Male
John Walters	Professor, NWU; Executive Director of MBK	Executive Director	I, II, III	Black/African-American	Male
Josh Hill	Director of Diversity and	HMBK	I	Black/African-	Male

	Community Engagement, NWU	Leadership		American	
Juan Ruiz	Professor, NWU; Director of NWU Brotherhood Initiative	Steering Committee	I, III	Latino	Male
Meghan Andrews	Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, Highland County School District	1st Working Group; Milestone Group Facilitator Local Action Summit I & II	I, III	White	Female
Michael Johnson	Assistant Director for Community Relations	Steering Committee; Backbone Team	I, II, III	Black/African-American	Male
Richard Olson	Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families, and Communities (ISCFC)	NWU Support	II	White	Male
Ruth Nicole	Assistant Superintendent, Highland County School District	1st Working Group; Milestone Group Facilitator Local Action Summit I & II	I, II, III	White	Female
Ryan Connor	Washington State Representative	Legislative Supporter	I, III	Black/African-American	Male
Samuel Davis	HMBK VISTA for Local Action Planning	HMBK VISTA	II, III	Black/African-American	Male
Sean Worth	Director, Washington at Work	Steering Committee	I, III	Black/African-American	Male
Seth Rutters	Washington State Representative	Legislative Supporter	I	White	Male
Sharena Johns	Achievement Initiatives Supervisor, Highland County School District	Milestone Group Facilitator Local Action Summit II	II, III	Black/African-American	Female
Derrick Bell	Director, Washington State My Brother's Keeper	Speaker, Local Action Summit II	III	Black/African-American	Male

Table E. List of Participants mentioned in Narrative

Phase I (November 2015 – May 2016)

TOC: Bringing strategic partners to the table and engagement with and between community stakeholders will lead to progress towards change for young men of color.

Accepting the Challenge.[33] Highland County completed the first step in becoming a My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community by formally accepting the MBK Challenge on August 15, 2015[34]. Congresswoman Beth Moore and Washington State Representative Ryan Connor convened a meeting with representative stakeholders at Northern Washington University, and during this meeting, they agreed that-

• Highland would accept the challenge at the county level as Highland My Brother's Keeper (HMBK)

• Northern Washington University would serve as an anchor institution for HMBK

• Washington State Representative Ryan Connor, and Highland County Sheriff Aaron Bailey should serve as Co-Chairs for the effort; and

•Josh Hill, and John Walters would provide the day-to day operational direction for the effort [with John Walters as the Executive Director]. (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16).

The First HMBK Working Group. Following the county's formal acceptance

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[33] Some of the events described during this phase occurred prior to my involvement with HMBK. Hence, what I recount comes from interview data with others that were a part of the group during this time, and other artifacts. I will later signal where I enter the group as a participant.

[34] Prior to taking on the MBK Community Challenge, different personnel and streams at Northern Washington University were pointing to working on an initiative for young men of color. The university's Brotherhood Initiative and Men of Color Degree Completion Program were presented at the White House as a best practice for higher education institutions prior to the countywide effort. John Walters and Josh Hill were integral parts of the presentations and conversations, and continued this involvement into county effort.

of the challenge, the first working group for HMBK included John Walters (Executive

Director, HMBK), Josh Hill (Director of Diversity and Community Involvement, NWU,

Black male), as well as a strong contingency of employees from Highland County

School District who were appointed by superintendent Harry Kennedy (White

male), a strong supporter of the effort. This group took on the organization and

planning for the second step of the national MBK Challenge, convening a local action

summit[35][36]. According to the national playbook, "MBK community challenge for

action" (2014), the local action summit called for "…a coalition of partners with an

ownership stake in the strategy, and a sense of empowerment to help lead the

effort", and aimed to "…assess needs and assets, determine priorities, and set

concrete goals" (np).

Despite the array of resources the working group partners brought to the

table, and guidance from the MBK national playbook on the objectives of convening

and building partnerships and coalitions, there were no direct instructions as to

how to do this, to what end, and how these actions could carry into addressing

barriers of opportunity for young men of color. Consequently, group members

scrambled in attempt to thoughtfully organize the first local action summit. Asst.

Superintendent Ruth Nicole commented-

"I became involved [in HMBK] two weeks prior to the first summit, when

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[35] I did not attend nor was a part of the initiative for the completion of the first two steps the group completed as outlined by the national MBK Community Challenge. I joined the effort in November. Hence, evidence from these events do not include my perspective.

[36] I must note that race of some study participants was self-identified, and I identified the race of others (particularly those of Black members). While ensuring self-identification would have been ideal, it was often challenging (and some times did not occur) for me, a Black participant researcher, to ask how an individual identified, as we often already knew each other and knew we shared the commonality of identifying as Black. Later, the only interviewee that would present a question as to their racial identification (based on interview responses) would be Samuel Davis. I address this concern in my response to Research Question 2.

Harry said, 'Somehow, we need to have tabletop discussions – how do we do

that?' And so, we had, like, a couple days to kind of figure out what it might

look like, and rally the troops, and figure out who could possibly facilitate at

the tabletop locations, and give people a little background on that…"

(Interview).

Despite the dash to organize, the first summit maintained a half-day program

(8am-12pm) and drew a crowd of over 200 individuals, including non-profit

professionals, students, community activists, public officials, faith-based leaders,

entrepreneurs, and educators. The event's programming included 'state of the

problem' presentations, a panel of high school males of color, and breakout groups

around all six MBK milestones (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16). In addition to the

notable attendance of people from a wide range of sectors, reflections of the summit

also pointed to the energy that was generated and expressed during the convening.

Megan Andrews (Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, HCSD;

White female) commented-

"The energy I saw from the first summit was probably the first time that we

gathered together people from this community that were I would say

predominantly African-American that were very passionate, that had a lot of

opinion, expertise, and perspective that do not traditionally engage in other

ways of engaging. And that was really exciting for me." (Interview)

Following the summit, Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and

Community Partnerships,) and Ruth Nicole (Asst. Superintendent, HCSD) worked to

create a document that outlined the notes from the tabletop discussions, including

community members' thoughts related to the six MBK milestones, and their ideas on "quick-wins" and "game-changers" that could be pursued to address barriers for young men of color in the county. This document was circulated, yet was not used in a further instance.

This first initial planning group met three weeks later at Northern Washington University. While the agenda for this meeting was sparse, the group did propose creating a steering committee for the HMBK effort, and noted that developing MBK communities in Washington would be convening in Liberty, Washington in December to share insights, resources, and connect at the state level.

Mixing with the State Level Effort[37]**.** Despite the energy shown during the first local action summit, commitment and action focused on advancing local change appeared to be fleeting, as members from the initial planning group and other stakeholders reconvened two months later at a statewide convening for local MBK communities in Liberty (the state capital). The Washington MBK Summit in Liberty drew 6 MBK communities, and HMBK had the largest contingency with over 30 people representing (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16).

While the event was advertised as a space to connect to resources and idea possibilities around MBK communities, attendees and I were met with ambiguity and uncertainty during sessions, and what seemed to be a reflection of the progress and condition of the initiative at the state-level. The individual MBK communities had no data, and were unsure of what data needed to be collected to have

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[37] My participation with HMBK begins in late November with an initial orientation to the space with Ruth Nicole. My first interaction with others that had attended the local summit and had been a part of the first working group was at the MBK Summit in Liberty.

meaningful conversations around the milestones as it related to their communities (TB Reflective Memo, 12/2/15).

Back in Highland, a new steering committee had been designated, and met weeks later to discuss the third step of MBK Community Challenge, creating a policy review document[38]. Linda Bay (Professor, NWU; Black female) volunteered to take the initial step in crafting the document, and would later circulate it among the team for comments. During the first the second half of the meeting, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) informed attendees about the summit in Liberty. Josh Hill (Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, NWU) spoke on the possibility of acquiring full-time VISTA workers for HMBK. While there were questions around where the VISTAs would be stationed and their cultural proficiency, Josh volunteered to continue to look into the opportunity (TB Meeting Minutes, 12/14/15).

HMBK and MLK Day. Linda Bay (Professor, NWU) organized a panel session and roundtable discussion during Northern Washington's Martin Luther King Celebration with a focus on the HMBK effort later the next month. As advertised, HMBK leaders would provide the community with an update on the initiative, and host a forum in which communities members could "Let their voice be heard!" as to opinions on what the work of HMBK should entail (Josh Hill c/o HMBK, Electronic Communication, 1/11/17).

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[38] There isn't clear evidence on how the new steering committee came to be. Interviews later revealed that some individuals stepped back from engagement on their own, and other individuals attended 'steering committee meetings' but did not identify as a 'steering committee member'. There were some members from the initial group that carried over (i.e. Harry Kennedy, Josh Hill, John Walters); and representatives from Congresswoman Beth Moore and Representative Ryan Connor remained symbolic members. Nonetheless, the 'steering committee' is the group I engaged with when I began working with HMBK in November.

Although the session was advertised as this, the actual event proved to be different. As none of the HMBK leaders had been solicited to be a panelist prior to the event, new steering committee member, Amanda Saul (Director, Highland Early Start Collaborative; White woman), John Walters, State Representative Ryan Connor and I were asked to join the panel minutes before it started. As there was no time to create continuity or a common theme through the panel discussion, we all just spoke on how we were contributing to the effort thus far (TB, Reflective Memo, 1/17/18).

I later joined a roundtable conversation around the 2nd MBK milestone- ensuring all youth are reading at grade level by third grade (see Image 1). We were given a scenario that reflected the milestone, and then were tasked with generating ideas and policies (both immediate and long term) that could address that issue. Each milestone table/group was given a similar task, and presented out their ideas to the large group after 40 minutes of discussion. I later asked for the artifacts from these discussion and share-outs as we had advertised that they would be considered in future planning for HMBK. The artifacts could not be found. Consequently, the steering committee and other group members did not return to these ideas after the event.

Completing the Policy Review. The steering committee used email communication to draft and finalize a HMBK policy review, the third step in the MBK Community Challenge. The review included a foreword by State Representative Ryan Connor and an initial policy review which HMBK planned to use as a base for its local action plan (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16). The progress report section

also presented the first iteration of HMBK's mission-

"The overall mission of Highland MBK is to develop and implement an action

plan, undergirded by evidence based strategies, that will:

• Close the opportunity gaps concerning boys and young men of color

in Highland County;

• Build a sustainable pathway for their successful entry into

adulthood; and

• Secure this vital resource for the country's future."

(HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16).

The policy review section included a description, analysis, and policy review

of a policy related to each of the MBK 6 milestones. For example, the review for

Milestone 2 (ensuring all children read at grade level by third grade) outlined the

contextual issues, target population, and systems involved in attaining the milestone

goal. It then provided a brief review of a selected policy (for Milestone 2 this was the

Every Student Succeeds Act), and an analysis of the policy's impact on African

American young men. Each milestone section then concluded with a policy

recommendation-

[Milestone 2] Policy Recommendation: That the recently passed federal

legislation, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the successor to No Child Left

Behind (NCLB), be implemented with a targeted eye to eliminating the

statistical disproportionalities pertaining to young males of color in their

engagement with public education. (HMBK Policy Review, 1/15/16]

The review was electronically submitted to Broderick Johnson, Cabinet Secretary

and MBK Task Force Chair, and Michael Smith, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of Cabinet Affairs for My Brother's Keeper in mid-January. There was no further follow-up on the document from the steering committee or White House.

Stalled. After submitting of the policy review, communication and work on the initiative was sporadic. In interviews, some steering committee members retrospectively mentioned being willing to participate but were unsure of how to engage or how to move the initiative further along.

> "But I will say that since [the first summit], I've been coming to steering committee meetings, I haven't been clear about what my role is…But I don't know how to engage… because I think there hasn't been work done to be clear on what the process would be going forward." (Amanda Saul, Director, Early Start Collaborative, Interview)

Even Josh Hill (Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, NWU), who was appointed and a recognized leader within the initiative, was also unsure of how to engage when momentum lacked. He recognized the conversations that were being had, yet was unable to see how he could continue to be involved. He felt in the times he "faded out", the initiative lost momentum. This dynamic and changes within the university's leadership ultimately led him to determine that he "needed to step back even further from involvement" (Josh Hill, Interview).

The various HMBK groups (i.e. the first working group, and later the new steering committee) met a combined total of three times following the first local action summit. On March 18th, 2016, the nascent steering committee held its first

meeting of the New Year. During the meeting John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) stated that "Work [was] being done on each milestone" (Meeting Notes, 3/18/16)[39]. While this may have been true, most committee members felt like this was work that they were already doing, and it could not be accredited to HMBK efforts. Moreover, the local action plan (the fourth step for creating an MBK community as set by the national MBK initiative) remained incomplete. To this end, professor, steering committee member, and director of NWU's Brotherhood Initiative Juan Ruiz (Latino male) commented-

> "All those things [the work being mentioned in meetings] are moving because of that program or unit or organization, they're not moving because MBK... I think MBK works as an umbrella, but the work that they are doing does not go back to MBK to report, to talk, to challenge, to account. It's just they're two different systems and now they're talking to each other." (Interview)

At the March 18th meeting, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) also informed steering committee participants that the Washington Community Service Commission (WCSC) had been granted money to appoint AmeriCorps VISTAs in MBK communities. As a new MBK community, HMBK was eligible to host one VISTA, and John was considering how the group could attain two. As progress of the group had been slow, the possibility of having two full-time VISTA workers was appealing to core group members.

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[39] I should note here that I made a short presentation to the steering committee at this meeting about my study and participation as researcher. At this point, my research focus was on the use of a collective impact model within cross-sector partnerships. I carried this lens throughout the first phase and a portion of the second. I then realized that the collective impact model intrigued people (including leadership), but the group (particularly leadership) was not in a position to nor looking to truly take on the model.

VISTA host sites were required to pay $4000 upfront to establish their commitment to hosting. Whereas NWU agreed to support the first VISTA, HCSD agreed to commit to being the second host site and put forward the financial support to do so. Around this time, the district was also reconstructing their institutional framework, organizational values, and engagement with community partners. Subsequently, the district affirmed their partnership with HMBK not only with sponsorship of the second VISTA, but also contributed to the thinking as to how HMBK and HCSD could continue to align and pursue similar outcomes and potentially embed HMBK into its work. Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) drafted a written communication to this end with rationale as to how embedding the MBK initiative within the district's larger Cradle to Career work "would provide access to additional resources and allow the MBK leadership to influence the larger system in a way that wouldn't be possible if the initiative stood alone or attempted to re-create a comparable structure" (Harry Kennedy, Written Communication, 4/6/16). While I followed up with John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) to see "...if [he'd] circled back to linking the HCSD/ Cradle to Career Collaborative work with HMBK", HMBK leadership never formally reaffirmed this partnership (TB, electronic communication, 4/26/17).

In the following weeks, conversations about linking and partnerships were silenced by the challenge of acquiring two full-time VISTAs within a two-week turn around. John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) worked with NWU to secure candidates and a space for interviews. John (Executive Director, HMBK), Harry (Superintendent; HCSD), Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental

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Affairs, NWU; Black male), and I served as the interview team for the first round of interviews for the local action planner VISTA. There was a clear top choice of the three candidates we interviewed that day. John (Executive Director), Dr. Bay (Professor, NWU), and I then served as the interview team for the second round of interviews we conducted five days later with one candidate who applied for the resource and budget development VISTA. We decided to move forward with the top choice from the first round, Samuel Davis, and the applicant that interviewed during the second round, Anita Jackson.

While there were concerns of experience (particularly with community organizing for the local action planning position) and possible skill set (particularly with creating budgets and financial plans for the budget and resource position), we still believed both candidates were appropriate selections for the positions. In a communication to WCSC with our recommendations for the positions, John Walters conveyed that Anita Jackson and Samuel Davis as a team "possessed the skill sets and the work ethic to give shape and direction" to the foundational work HMBK would pursue in the coming months (John Walters, Written Communication, 5/4/16).

Phase I Summary. In reviewing the mechanisms at play during this first phase, one could see that having underutilized and loosely coupled working groups created an unstable foundation for HMBK. Both the first group and the new steering committee were called sporadically, and like Amanda Saul, many steering committee members later echoed an apprehension of not knowing how to engage in the steering committee and/or planning group. Furthermore, as the data were

inconspicuous around how the new steering committee was formed, issues of race,

representation, and how power would be negotiated in this group were looming.

While the steering meetings attracted racially and organizationally diverse

participants, they did not include (and also were not organized) by Black and Brown

men in the county that could (or were) to be impacted by the milestone areas. This

jarring intersection of power, racial, and experiential representation is not

uncommon to grass-high initiatives, and the HMBK group working space was

becoming no exception[40].

In addition, organizational leaders and steering committee members

attempted to solidify partnerships with HMBK through contracts or memos of

understanding, as well as engage the broader community through strategies such as

round tables. HMBK's summit participants and organizers also attempted to engage

with other local MBK communities and state level organizers. There was a great

assumption that the state level could provide direction and support, and aid in

building the capacity of local groups. Yet this expectation was not met. Furthermore,

personal choices also created shifts and questions regarding who would be

responsible for leading the various levels of engagement[41]. All in all, while

individuals were evidently willing to contribute and participate, impending

questions of '*how* does one participate in HMBK?' and 'how will HMBK urge

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[40] As mentioned, Kania et al. (2014) acknowledge that when using grass-high frameworks (i.e. multi-stakeholder initiatives, collective impact, etc.), "people who will ultimately benefit from program or policy changes are excluded form the process of understanding the problem and then identifying and implementing solutions" (p. 3). McAfee et al. (2015) further acknowledge that such choices and practices push poor Black and Brown community members out of these potentially powerful spaces. As such, McAfee et al. (2015) suggests that those using the model ensure "... that low-income communities and communities of color are included as equal partners in planning, implementing, and governing initiatives" (p.4).
[41] One particular impactful shift was Josh Hill's (Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, NWU) departure from NWU two months after the March 18th meeting. Given that Josh had be a designated leader and partnership facilitator during HMBK's first year, his departure was significantly felt.

productive conversations at the local and state level?' still remained.

Here, HMBK also began to forge a pattern of producing documents and artifacts, yet never referencing or using these documents after they were created. For example, the policy review was a required step groups took towards becoming an MBK community. Although HMBK steering committee members employed a significant amount of personal time to create the document, it was not used after it was submitted to the White House. Whether the review's significance or use was a matter of neglect or the document's usefulness, the pattern of creating but not using was later seen with the MLK table conversation artifacts, and in instances in upcoming phases.

In all, this phase challenged the notion that simply bringing strategic partners to the table and engaging with community stakeholders in some way would led HMBK towards progress in change for young men of color. While people came to meetings and community conversation, many still did not know where they fit in and how (or if) they would be engaged further. Engagement at the state level effort also seemed to be ineffective. Furthermore, initiative leaders and participants had yet to unpack the power and racial dynamics that were recurrent in similar power-led initiatives, and these undercurrents were playing true for HMBK as well.

Phase II (June 2016-August 2016)

TOC: If additional personnel are dedicated to the initiative full-time, HMBK will make further progress in addressing barriers of opportunity for young men of color.

New Personnel and Points of Light. Hiring the VISTA volunteers was perceived as a significant win for HMBK. Those who were a part of the steering committee and had participated in HMBK meetings thus far were all full-time employees of partnering institutions. John Walters commented that this arrangement led to leaders and HMBK participants "simply sort of carving out from [their] own overcommitted [schedules] and carving out time to try to get this done" (Interview). Hence, having two full-time staff that would be working on HMBK seemed to be a large step towards building the initiative and ultimately making change for young men of color in the county.

Prior to the VISTAs' start date, they were required to attend the Points of Light Conference, an annual 4-day volunteer prep conference that is hosted in various cities across the county. The conference was being held in Union City (Washington's largest metropolitan area) this year, and all VISTA volunteers were sponsored to attend and learn tactics and tools on how to work within communities as a volunteer. This year's conference was particularly unique, as the kick-off lunch was being sponsored by the national MBK initiative, and was dedicated to rallying local MBK communities around the state.

The lunch was a space for MBK local and national leaders, organizational partners, and youth to connect and solidify their commitment to the MBK cause. City

leaders, and state and federal legislators were in attendance, including

Congresswoman Beth Moore and Michael Smith, an African-American male who was

the national MBK Senior Director[42]. Local MBK Communities were encouraged to

bring youth to the event. Given that HMBK had not established direct work with

youth to this point, Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental

Affairs, NWU; Black male) and I came to the conference with a contingency of Black

young men whom he worked with for another organization. The lunch started with

a focus on connecting the young and older men through their attire, as they all

received red untied bow ties, and had to help each other assemble and tie their ties

(TB, Field Note, 6/27/16).

The lunch resembled a merge between a rally and formal dinner. While the

program maintained a number of speakers such as Lonnie Ali, wife of former

Muhammad Ali, as a keynote, there was a constant crowd recitation of "I am my

Brother's Keeper" throughout the lunch. Although the event attracted a seemingly

equal number of Black and White attendees, I noted that the majority of the local

MBK community participants (including me) and Black youth from these

communities were seated in the back of the event facility. Policymakers,

organizational leaders, and other powerful guests remained at the front of the room

(TB, field notes, 6/27/16).

On our way home, Michael and I asked the young men what sparked their

interest at the event. A couple mentioned the food, and others said learning how to

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[42] I later found out that day that Congresswoman Beth Moore had been on the MBK Task Force that released the
MBK Task Force Report ("My Brother's Keeper Task Force One-Year Progress Report to the President," 2015).
This discovery was significant, as it helped to explain her deep interest in the local effort.

tie the bowtie and the food were most memorable. Kasey, an African-American

freshman at one of the county high schools acknowledged, "seeing other Black boys

from other cities that wanted to come together was cool. It was nice to feel a part of

something" (TB, field notes, 6/27/16).

Who Directs? Once John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) confirmed the

VISTA hires, Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) and I quickly realized that

there wasn't an organized structure for the VISTAs' work. While they would

technically be John Walter's employees, the school district had also financially

invested in the VISTAs' position. Consequently, I was hired as a contractor during

the summer months (June – August). My job description included facilitating and

aiding in agenda setting for HMBK, reconnecting with stakeholders and partners

who had been a part of the initiative, and most importantly training and directing

the work of the two VISTAs.

Clarity and Preparation. I quickly set up meetings with John Walters

(Executive Director, HMBK) and a few other integral stakeholders prior to the

VISTAs start date in order to gather a pulse and vision for how both leadership and

stakeholders were envisioning and conceptualizing HMBK. In my meeting with John

on June 23rd, I attempted to get a scope of the work he envisioned the VISTAs

accomplishing during the summer (while I was on-board in a greater capacity) and

over the next year.

While this question wasn't answered, I was asked to write out my

perspective on this question. Two days later, I submitted a memo to John on my

vision for HMBK. Within the memo, I stated that I saw him, Samuel, Anita, me, and

possibly Michael (depending on how he'd like to engage) as the backbone

organization for HMBK, and thus we'd be responsible for the operation and

activities of the organization. Moreover, our goal as an organization would be "to

understand what is already being done for our boys and young men of color, align

the work across these initiatives to both our MBK milestones and to/across the

organizations that are working in that milestone area, and help these programs

work on mutually reinforcing activities that lead towards our collective goals…" (TB,

Memo to JW, 6/28/17). Yet I did not receive a response to this memo.

 The First Weeks. The day before the VISTAs' first day, John (Executive

Director, HMBK) sent a communication to Anita (HMBK VISTA), Samuel (HMBK

VISTA), Michael (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU), me, and

the director of a community center in the largest predominantly Black

neighborhood in the county[43]. Whereas the steering committee, me, and other

participants hadn't formally spoken or planned around the specific tasks the VISTAs

would taken on, John's electronic communication relayed that Anita and Samuel

would observe and engage with students in a summer program taking place at one

of Ashton Community Center which Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-

Governmental Affairs, NWU) had coordinated. Their engagement here would "…be

an early installment of one of the core goals of the AmeriCorps MBK initiative --

youth organization mobilization" (John Walters, Email Communication, 7/4/16).

 I met Anita (HMBK VISTA) at the community center her second day there, as

I was later informed that Samuel (HMBK VISTA) would not be able to come. She and

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[43]The city of Brampton retained Highland County's largest population of Black residents, and Ashton Community Center was located in one of the largest predominantly Black neighborhoods within Brampton.

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I observed some of the morning classwork the youth were involved, and also helped

the course coordinators with facilitating the course, as the youth became increasing

disinterested as time passed. All the youth and facilitators (including me and Anita)

could identify as Black.

John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) sent an electronic communication

later that evening indicating that Samuel's (HMBK VISTA) availability to work on the

initiative would be hampered by another employment commitment. Samuel's

second commitment required him to be away from HMBK "for the better part of the

day on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday", yet John assured he was working with

Samuel " to resolve this conflict [and] to clear the way for fulfilling the full time

obligations of the AmeriCorps VISTA program" (John Walters, Electronic

Communication, 7/5/16).

This news impeded Anita's enthusiasm, and she and I scheduled a check-in

for later that day. Given Samuel's time restrictions and the fact that there was no

central 'team' space, she preferred having a schedule on hand so we'd all know who

to expect when[44]. We spent the beginning of our meeting crafting a schedule,

talking about collective impact model and the idea of a 'backbone' organization.

When we came to a conversation about the needs at the Ashton Summer Program, I

sensed her hesitation. Although she had ideas on programming HMBK could offer

there, she made clear that providing direct service was not in the VISTA job

description (TB, Meeting Notes, 7/6/16).

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[44] HMBK was given a cubicle space in the Institute for the Study of Children, Families, and Communities at Northern Washington University. Highland County School District also prepared a dual desk space for Anita and Samuel with a computer, phone, and printing access. While I already had work space at the district, there still wasn't a physical space that had room for the VISTAs, John Walters (as the executive director), and I. Lack of collective space for everyone proved to be a challenge throughout the second and third phase.

Two days later, Samuel (HMBK VISTA), Anita (HMBK VISTA), and I met to solidify our schedules and talk about meeting expectations moving forward. I was seeing a potential danger in only having Friday group meetings with no in-person or phone conferences in between, and was hoping to set a more consistent meeting schedule. We collectively decided on a schedule and shared it with John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) and Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU). Ultimately, we decided we'd be in contact three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and hoped this would prevent future communication challenges. We would all participate in a direction-setting phone meeting on Mondays, and later in the week have our weekly team meeting in-person (Anita Jackson, Meeting Minutes, 7/8/16).

The next day after our Monday phone meeting, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) sent an electronic communication indicating he would only commit to a once a week meeting on Fridays at 10am (John Walters, Email Communication, 7/11/16). In a subsequent electronic communication, Anita (HMBK VISTA), Samuel (HMBK VISTA), and I decided that we would continue to meet and use the schedule we created, yet would only expect John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) to be a part of the Friday team meetings.

Our week's work was later brought to halt when Anita (HMBK VISTA) sent a concerning electronic communication relaying her discomfort with the responsibilities at the community center and Samuel's (HMBK VISTA) additional employment commitment that left her to run programming alone. Anita spent her week crafting a community-centered curriculum for the youth at the center for

Tuesdays and Thursday mornings. However, without Samuel's help, she would be responsible for both spearheading and implementing the curriculum. She believed spending time at Ashton "doing direct programming" was taking away from "what is in [her] job description" and what "[she] agreed to do for this position". In all, she was "rather stressed from the situation "and "[had] tried to accommodate" (Anita Jackson, Electronic Communication, 7/13/16).

John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) and I met with Anita (HMBK VISTA) later that day to work through her concerns. We concluded on a compromise that Anita felt comfortable with, and what we hoped would not breach ties and future work with the community center. John later outlined this compromise to all involved, which stated the VISTAs and I would develop and deliver a "two-part series with one of the youth groups at the Ashton summer camp" that would "discuss their community and neighborhood, and their personal sense of their role…as young stewards of Brampton's future" (John Walters, Electronic Communication, 7/15/16). The HMBK group did not follow up on the two-part session or community center programming after this communication.

Working with the New Team. Additional work conflicts, as well as job and work expectations created an undertone of conflict throughout the VISTAs first weeks with HMBK. Yet one personal goal I set in the process was establishing a consistent meeting schedule and culture of constant communication, which we eventually maintained.

The first full team meeting was on July 15[45]. Prior to the meeting, I attempted to start a practice of creating collective agendas for team meetings by inviting group members to make changes to a list of agenda items I had started (TB, Electronic Communication, 7/14/16). While both Samuel and Anita went into the document and added agenda items later that day, the team did not use this agenda for the meeting. Instead, John Walters arrived and started with passing out a paper labeled 'Director's Items'. This set the tone of the meeting and others that followed (TB, Meeting Field Notes, 7/15/15).

Samuel (HMBK VISTA), Anita (HMBK VISTA), John (Executive Director, HMBK), and I were the meeting attendees. The points on the director's items included a discussion of a Black Lives Matter forum (that took place on the Friday prior), a conversation on the communication with Ashton community center, and preliminary planning for a second local action summit. I noted here (and in subsequent memos regarding agendas) that John Walters often attempted to begin with a discussion on recent national or local events that involved Black communities or leaders (i.e. the Black Lives Matter forum) (TB, Meeting Field Notes, 7/15/15).

Despite the new agenda items, the lack of clarity around tasks, vision, and organizational identity moved the conversation to many of the original agenda items such as a mission statement and understanding. In particular, Anita wanted clarity

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[45] The full team referred to here would later be known as the Backbone Team/Group. HMBK members adopted the term 'backbone group/team' to refer to those on the team that were dedicating a significant amount of time on the initiative's efforts. The term was derived from the collective impact (Kania & Kramer, 2011) tenant of a 'backbone organization'. During Phase Two, John, Samuel, Anita, Michael, Harry, and I were considered the backbone. Group members shifted in Phase Three, and John, Samuel, Anita, Harry, Linda Bay, and I were considered the backbone team. The initial steering committee from Phase I met once during Phase Two and Phase Three of this project. However, there was never any structure or decision made as to how or if the backbone group would interact, work with, or receive guidance from the initial steering committee.

on the mission and direction of HMBK before the group further engaged outside organizations. As the discussion unfolds, it becomes clear that each group member has their own perspective on what HMBK is and does, and the group fails to reach a consensus on what the purpose and priorities of the organization are.

> Anita (HMBK VISTA): Here's what I don't understand. As an organization, how, what are we providing other organizations? So…we're asking them- let's work together to develop concepts around these milestones, but then when they develop those, how are we supporting them, with their goals, with their plans?

> Samuel (HMBK VISTA): That comes with us seeing what their needs are. We can kinda of decide and go over what expectations we have of them….

> Anita (WBMK VISTA): Right…. So essentially we don't know, as an organization, how we're supporting this initiative. What's our mission?

> Tabitha: So, our biggest support to organizations is tracking progress… Because the goals that we're creating collectively, everyone's already working on them in some way. We're just articulating them from a collective standpoint…

Anita (HMBK VISTA): Right, so it's like a research project? So, before we go interviewing people, how are we collecting the data? How are we tracking it? What research model are we following?

John (Executive Director): Well, before we do that, in the interest of time... My sense was that when we bring everybody together, in October [for the local action summit], this would sort of be their marching orders; that they go out in these milestones and develop these kind of plans...

...

Anita (HMBK VISTA): But that's why I think we need a clearer understanding of what we do before we go and ask people to do things with us...

(Meeting Audio, 7/15/16)

The dialogue revealed clear ambiguity in the HMBK's objectives, how HMBK would relate to other organizations, and how future events would reflect this purpose[46]. While there were new personnel who were now dedicating full-time support to HMBK, the lack of clarity around what HMBK was seemed to impede the group's ability to progress. Moreover, the seeming disjointedness (or lack of a connected plan) around the VISTAs' tasks (i.e. the work with the community center, the work of engaging stakeholders with HMBK) appeared to be impacting their personal advancement in their work, as well as the collective work. This in turn

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[46] The first meeting was also significant in discussing those that would be working on HMBK. Josh Hill was no longer at NWU, and Anita was interested in knowing if HMBK was going to replace him/fill his role. John Walters was hesitant to answer, and replied that he was much more interested in "Samuel and Anita working more as a team than in a hierarchal way" (TB, Meeting Fieldnotes, 7/1516).

challenged a belief that additional full-time personnel would advance HMBK's overall progress.

Identity Issues. The latter summer weeks were filled with a myriad of achievements and setbacks. At the second group meeting, John, Samuel, Anita, and I were joined by supporters from HCSD- Harry Kennedy (Superintendent), Ruth Nicole (Assistant Superintendent), and Sharena Johns (Achievement Initiatives Supervisor; Black female) as well as representatives from Northern Washington University- Richard Olson (NWU Professor and Director of ISCFC; White male) and Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs)[47]. Anita's summarized transcription of the meeting revealed similar themes of uncertainty about the role of the VISTAs, HMBK's mission as an organization, and how HMBK would achieve their mission.

This meeting was the first and last time these nine participants would meet all together for a backbone meeting, and this group and conversation space was peculiar. The majority (6/9) were Black professionals and leaders, many whom were a part of initiatives focused on Black youth and community and who managed significant resources for the institutions they represented (i.e. Sharena, Michael, John). Ruth, Harry, and Richard, were positioned as senior, White, and potentially powerful allies. Yet after a two-hour inconclusive meeting, transcripts, meeting audio, and a reflective memo revealed meeting participants' vocal yet distant commitment to the effort. Richard (NWU Professor and Director of ISCFC) stated

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[47] Michael Johnson's position as a backbone group member was fluid. While he was heavily involved at the beginning of the summer and other points, he slowly disengaged from the group through Phase 2 and was nearly completely disengaged by Phase 3. He continued to receive email communications as a backbone member throughout the summer. His fluidity caused tension between he and Anita (HMBK VISTA) on several occasions.

that he wanted to see the initiative succeed, and "anything [he] could do, let [him]

know" (AJ Meeting Summary & Transcript, 7/22/16). Likewise, Sharena stated that

she was "committed to bringing Black youth to the table", yet questioned if HMBK

would be recreating a space and line of work that already existed (Meeting Audio,

7/22/16). In all, this meeting presented an intellectually and resource-rich cadre of

Black and White leaders who had seemingly different understandings, ideas, and

concerns about HMBK.

After these first two meetings, the backbone team continued with a

consistent weekly meeting date and time. Attendance at these meeting varied, yet

were most often attended by the VISTAs and I. I also set up a consistent Monday

phone call with the VISTAs, during which we'd set our goals and direction for our

workweek. Despite the success of establishing consistent meeting times, questions

about vision, mission, the strategies or framework HMBK would or could use to

accomplish its goals lingered, as well as unanswered questions regarding the role

and work of the two VISTAs. Both Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) and Linda

Bay (Professor, NWU) reflected on HMBK's indeterminate identity during these

early stages-

> Harry Kennedy: I think we have struggled related to conversations around
>
> the milestones in policy, versus what are we going to actually do? (Interview)

Furthermore, Linda Bay questioned the very existence of an HMBK, as necessary

structures weren't in place.

> Linda Bay: There really isn't a HMBK. There's an advisory... The structures
>
> for HMBK needed to address the six milestones don't exist. So it's hard to say

if there's a HMBK... There has to be – in order for an organization to exist - people in different structures of the system. (Interview)

July and early August backbone meetings continued to reveal a circular discussion of what HMBK would dedicate its time to, who and how it would partner with existing organizations, and how HMBK would utilize the time and effort of the AmeriCorps VISTAs. However, by mid August, the team began to come to a consensus on one idea- that in some way, HMBK needed to incorporate the voice of young men of color in the county. Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU) mentioned he was one of the first to advocate for the bringing youth into the initiative, as adults don't always question what's best for them.

Michael Johnson: I think that sometimes we don't always ask how is this best for the youth, and I think that that's where the problem [is]... I think that I have been persistent in pushing youth voice. (Interview)

Michael noted further that Neutral Zone, a teen center in Highland County, received a grant to "support 5-6 community-based organizations across Southeast Washington" to help selected organizations build or expand their youth advisory councils over the course of 14 months through an intensive 2-day residential institute, coaching/site visits, and a one-day reconvening summit. I volunteered to complete the Neutral Zone application and send it out for feedback from the rest of the team. In my reflection, I noted that "I consciously crafted the grant application knowing that we truly didn't have anything built for the youth council " (TB, Reflective Memo, 9/15/16). Although this was seemingly putting the cart before the

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horse, I hoped that the grant would help to motivate and push the group in to solidifying our program and recruiting youth to be a part of our initiative.

This was yet another challenging process. Samuel (HMBK VISTA), Anita (HMBK VISTA), Michael (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU) and I first attempted to create the structure for engaging youth in our August 17th backbone meeting. We'd conceptualize the youth arm of HMBK to incorporate four areas- training and development, brotherhood building, service and service learning, and HMBK/MBK events (AJ, Meeting Minutes, 8/10/16). We also set an initial recruitment strategy, in which we'd target youth ages 14-24, host recruitment events at local district high schools, and gather the support of superintendents and principals. Our goal was to recruit 50 youth across the county (AJ, Meeting Minutes, 8/10/16).

Yet conflict arose when role ambiguity and a discussion of principles guiding the program surfaced. The group had spent an hour crating the vision and recruitment strategy for the youth council. However, Anita suspected much of the recruitment work would fall on her, and she thought it important for Black men and youth to be in the forefront of recruitment given that the initiative was about young men of color.

> Anita (HMBK VISTA): But Michael, you're a [member of historically Black Fraternity]. Do you send [members historically Black sorority] to get young men into [your fraternity]? No you do not. You send [members of the fraternity]. So you need representative looks and faces. I'm a woman! I'm a Black woman! I just want young men with me. (Meeting Audio, 8/17/16)

Anita's concerns were tabled, and Michael then volunteered to bring in a pre-existing group he worked with as the new HMBK Youth Council, as this would eliminate the need for a recruitment plan. While Samuel did not object, Anita was strong against the idea as she was fearful that Michael's group would not "be representative of the county. After an antagonistic dialogue, Michael relayed that Anita and Samuel could "do [their] county thing, and tell [him] how that works out". This infuriated Anita, who walked out and slammed the door. By the end of the conversation, group members were ready to completely abandon the plan, which made others extremely frustrated.

      Phase II Summary. In reviewing the mechanisms at play during this phase, one could see that a lack of clarity around where HMBK was heading, what the organization was created to do, and how the group would accomplish its goals continued to produce friction between Anita, a Black woman now employed to participate in the initiative, and John and Michael, two Black men who were perceived leaders in the initiative. This conflict led to high tension and debates during meetings, Anita's disenchantment with the VISTA position, and her noticeable disengagement. The third Black male backbone member, Samuel, maintained another work commitment during this phase. While he was present at most meetings, Anita did most of the follow-up work and this continued to build tension between him and Anita. HMBK had secured full-time help to aid the initiative in moving forward, and having more hands on deck was alleged to be significant mechanism. Yet the theory of having committed full-time workers was

being undermined by the initiative's nascent status, ambiguous organizational strategy, and conflict among personnel.

Role ambiguity and fluidity also proved to be a mechanism that did not support the collective work and action during this phase. Anita and Michael's clash and the conflict with the community center programming were evidence of this. HMBK did have titles (i.e. executive director) and the VISTA recruitment process required HMBK to create job descriptions for the VISTA positions. However there were no formal or informal, mutually shared roles or responsibilities outlined for John, Michael, and me.

Consequently, there were no mechanisms to ensure Anita and Samuel were oriented and on-boarded to the group work in a coherent way. My contract with the district was a foreshadow and attempt to address this, as it explicitly listed managing the work of the VISTAs. However, both VISTAs were technically still John's employees. Thus, as a Black woman navigating an ambiguous middle space, I first had to understand how John and I would (or could) collaboratively manage the roles and tasks. I never gained full clarity on this, as my June 23rd meeting and memo with John didn't result in any follow-up.

Establishing a consistent meeting schedule was helpful towards creating individual identification with the organization. As John, Anita, Samuel, and I were most often attending backbone meetings, we knew the four of us would be working most on the initiative. However, our individual connection to the work and our

identification with HMBK did not inherently create an organizational identity. We

were still individuals attempting to create and relate at a collective level[48].

I suspect that more consistent meetings *could have* allowed group members

to build better and stronger relationships and formulate trust. Yet this act would

have had to be intentional. I personally found building relationships and trust with

Anita and Samuel to be an important part of working together with them on the

HMBK initiative. This did not eliminate all tensions, even between Anita and me. We

were two Black women working on an agenda for boys and men of color, having

different working styles and experiences, yet we were both passionate about

building Black communities. Given this, touching base on Monday via phone

meetings, during Wednesday backbone meetings, and through out the week on

email and text was a small mechanism that helped me to build rapport with her and

with Samuel. The three of us did not always agree on everything, however we were

often able to find a compromise that would suit all of us.

Yet it was evident that John had less trust and rapport built, particularly with

Anita. Although John was the designated leader of the initiative, there were a

number of meetings during this phase (7/15/16, 8/3/16, 8/10/16 Backbone

meetings) where Anita starkly pushed back on his direction or challenged his

thinking. In a later interview and analyses, this point proves to be significant.

This phase of HMBK proved that additional personnel and more hours

towards the initiative as a primary mechanism was not a sustainable or completely

reliable mechanism for collective action. There were other mechanisms (defining

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[48] I provide more evidence of individual connections to the HMBK work and the group's inability to harness
these connections at a collective level in my response to Research Question 2 (p. 208).

roles and responsibilities for those in the group, providing organizational direction,

building trust and rapport) that were poorly engaged or inconsistently applied by

group members. Yet at this phase of the work, these mechanisms were just as

necessary. Obstacles across race, gender, and those with and without power also

emerged throughout this phase. However not all were willing to intentionally

address them.

Phase III (September 2016 – November 2016)

TOC: If others county partners see what HMBK has done, they'll be inspired to work towards addressing barriers for young men of color.

  A Shifting Backbone Group. The start of a new school year brought about a number of shifts in availability and engagement for members of HMBK backbone group. John Walters (NWU Professor, HMBK Executive Director) was given a quarter release from his teaching commitments at NWU, yet still picked up a demanding teaching schedule. Anita (HMBK VISTA) was also a graduate student and began her coursework during the fall. Samuel (HMBK VISTA) maintained other employment, and this continued to hamper his availability. Michael (Asst. Director of Intra-Government Affairs, NWU) maintained multiple organizational positions and consequently had chosen to focus attention on other projects. Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) attended meetings regularly, but was also constrained by his duties as a superintendent. Linda Bay (Professor, NWU) became more engaged in backbone meetings in late summer, as she "sensed there was conflict between Anita and John Walters" (Linda Bay, Interview). Since that time, she attempted to be a part of meetings via phone. I was also no longer under contract with school district, and had resumed other schooling commitments in addition to working with the group. In all, by early September, the most consistent participants of backbone group were John, Anita, Samuel, Harry, Linda, and I.

  We had developed a meeting routine where John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) would create an agenda, send it out via email the night before the meeting, and the group would meet using this agenda as a conversation guide.

However, the VISTAs would often use agenda items or space in between items to introduce their ideas around how HMBK could be structured, the work the organization should take on, and how it could go about engaging in this work. These ideas were often met with skepticism, or belief that they were "aspirational".

For example, an August 24th meeting agenda item was:

3. Ashton Community Center - Joe Dulin Day – Saturday, August 27, 11am-6pm. Planning and logistics (Meeting artifact, 8/24/16)

HMBK had committed to manning a table at this event to curate a list of community member names and contact information of those that would be interested in engaging in the initiative in some way. Samuel drafted flyers for the table that included language on who and what HMBK was, as well as an advertisement for young men of color to join the (developing) youth council. In this ad, Samuel had a bullet point mentioning that young brothers (participants of the youth council) "would be provided an opportunity to represent Washington in attendance at professional events such as National Congressional Black Caucus, etc." The group had never discussed this idea before.

While Anita (HMBK VISTA) and I were willing to endorse the idea given that we'd commit and hold true to it as a group, Harry (Superintendent, HCSD) suggested more tentative wording such as "maybe", and also endorsed Anita's idea of not being specific about conferences. John, however, framed the idea as "aspirational" and said that a formal proposal and "vetting" process would be necessary in order to move such an idea forward (Meeting Audio, 8/24/16).

Given this reaction to new ideas was not uncommon, I scheduled to meet with John during his office hours in early September to talk about his thoughts around the initiative and backbone group, his concerns, and how he envisioned the backbone and initiative moving forward. I met with John on September 2nd. While I expected this meeting to be uncomfortable and even challenging due to the disruptive groups meetings we'd had. Instead, following some sharing about his role in the department, he even asked for my evaluation of his leadership thus far (Meeting Notes, TB, 9/2/16).

I learned John sensed that the things he felt were important (i.e. policy and advocacy) were not important or worked on by the VISTAs, yet they were technically his employees (Meeting Notes, TB, 9/2/16). I learned that he wanted backbone team members to be engaged at the table of other organizations "just to learn", and "be a strong collaborating partner in the work that [was] already taking place" (Meeting Notes, TB, 9/2/16). Nonetheless, he felt that the most needful work within HMBK at the moment was youth engagement and the development the youth council. I left this meeting feeling hopeful, as we seemingly had found a common vision and strategy to pursue.

Incorporating Youth Voice. HMBK submitted their application to Neutral Zone for the youth council development grant in late August. During the second week in September, the backbone learned that HMBK was selected to be one of six organizations that would partner with Neutral Zone for the grant. While this news was welcomed and celebrated by group members, I knew the award presented

HMBK with a challenge because we as yet had no relevant structure in place to recruit youth or even to say what we were recruiting them to do.

Hence, the development of the youth council started as a challenge and continued to be a challenge in the months to come. Given that I was no longer under contact with the district, Anita (HMBK VISTA), Samuel (HMBK VISTA), and I did not continue with our check-in Monday meetings/phone calls, and weekly Wednesday backbone meetings became the only consistent point of contact we maintained. Although the weekly meeting agendas always maintained an agenda item for "Youth Driven Space Updates", there was not time at the meeting to actually develop the curriculum for the youth council trainings or plan for recruiting and solidifying youth participants. Consequently, most of the needed work was done independently, then later brought to the group.

This work model proved to be problematic, as it exacerbated existing tensions among team members, and also created new issues. The preparation for the 1st Youth Council meeting and orientation provided a clear example of this. The grant from Neutral Zone sponsored an overnight retreat for the youth council leaders and youth participants of the six organizations receiving the grant. Given that this retreat was planned for the second weekend in October, the backbone group decided it had to work with organizational and personal contacts to find and invite young men of color to participate in a Young Brothers (the HMBK youth council) introduction and orientation day prior to the retreat. In an electronic communication to backbone members and other leaders, Anita (HMBK VISTA) attempted to engage in a recruitment effort, but her effort was stifled by a response

from John.

Greeting HMBK Team and Extended Partners,

Please review the attached letter and share with persons you may know who may have youth interested in joining the newly forming Highland County My Brother's Keeper Youth Council - to be known as Young Brothers. The online interest form link is here... Please contact me if you have any questions. (Anita Jackson, Electronic Communication, 9/26/16)

....

Greetings all:

Let me ask that you not send either the letter or the attached form as yet. There is more vetting needed. I will send a note shortly that will clarify my request, and provide more detailed observations... (John Walters, Electronic Communication, 9/26/16)

In addition to hampered recruitment efforts, Samuel (HMBK VISTA) and Anita (HMBK VISTA) also began to get wires crossed, as lack of communication between the two caused ambiguity in the roles they would each play in solidifying the upcoming youth council information session. As Samuel (HMBK VISTA) had not heard from Anita regarding a room reservation, he attempted to reserve a room on his own. However, the room he requested maintained a meeting fee, and the unpaid cost triggered an electronic communication from an NWU administrator.

The communication from the administrator frustrated Anita (HMBK VISTA), and showed a discrepancy in role assumption, as she emphasized she was formally charged with budget coordinating.

Hello,

I was working on room reservations prior to my departure…There are much

costs ($400) associated with the McKenny room…Since we do not have a

budget for these costs, we cannot complete the contract…Also, as budget

coordinator, I too was blindsided the details of this that I was already

navigating. I think there are some overlap of duties and lack of

communication that is causing a huge disturbance in our workflow.

Our free room will be on the ground floor of the Wilson Library. (Anita

Jackson, Email Communication, 9/27/26)

In spite of disagreements, Samuel and Anita (HMBK VISTAs) continued to plan for

the event. John (Executive Director, HMBK) agreed to sponsor food costs for the

event, as the youth council had no funding. The VISTAs anticipated 30-40 meeting

attendees (Samuel Davis, Electronic Communication, 9/30/16).

On the day of orientation, six young Black men attended and expressed

interest in the council. Richard Olson (NWU Professor and Director of ISCFC) and

Bobby McQueen (Local business owner, Brampton; Black male) also attended to

support. Three of the young men that expressed interest in the group that day

attended the Neutral Zone retreat later the next weekend. Four other young men

were later recruited to participate and attend the retreat.

Yet the challenges on the front end of developing the Young Brothers youth

council remained throughout the year and course of the Neutral Zone grant. Samuel

(HMBK VISTA) and Anita (HMBK VISTA) led the council and met with the Young

Brothers on Saturdays twice each month. Youth attendance was often spotty (as

many of them had many other commitments and jobs), and meetings seemed to lack

engaging activities[49].

Funding also continued to be a challenge. While the VISTAs wanted to

provide food at meetings and take the youth on outings, the backbone or the council

hadn't acquired funds to do so. Other resources such as dedicated time and the

ability to draw community capital to support the council also waned. Both Harry

Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD), and John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK)

later reflected on the challenges of establishing the youth leadership council work in

their interviews with me.

> Harry Kennedy: We are not at scale. So we haven't been able to recruit and
>
> sustain enough young men for a youth council to really produce the impact
>
> that we want, but I think it's the right kind of conversation. (Interview)

Likewise, John was disappointed that the work had not gotten off the ground as he

anticipated.

> John: We also have the issue of our youth leadership cohort that hasn't quite
>
> come together in the way that I would like to have seen it come together by
>
> this time, and again – but I think we can get these things done. (John Walters,
>
> interview)

Yet establishing the council and the push of the Neutral Zone grant inevitably give

HMBK a greater sense of purpose. Later, I also discovered in interviews with other

backbone and steering committee members that many saw the creation of the youth

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[49] While I did not coordinate meetings for the Young Brothers, I often stopped by their Saturday morning meetings to develop a relationship with the young men in the program and to support Samuel and Anita in their efforts. My statements about the meetings are connected to my experience attending them.

council and receiving the Neutral Zone grant as one of HMBK's successes.

Towards Local Action Summit II. While the backbone group spent much of the month of September working towards acquiring the youth council grant and establishing the council, the group also began talks of executing a second local action summit. HMBK had completed 3 of the 4 steps associated with the national guide in becoming an MBK community. Yet the initiative still lacked identity, purpose, and mission[50]. As the fourth step (launching a plan of action, next steps, and timetable for review) spoke many of these issues, HMBK was still an entity that lacked a concrete plan and vision.

The idea of hosting another local action summit was first presented as an agenda item at the August 10th backbone meeting. In addition to circulating a meeting agenda, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) also circulated a Mission Goals, Structure, and Summit, Vision document. This document laid out a mission statement, Year One Goal, Year Two Goals, Structure, and Operations for HMBK. While I assumed John Walters crafted this document to help the group overcome the challenge of lack of clarity, the items on the document were never discussed prior to its creation, nor were they discussed at the 8/10/16 meeting to which were brought.

Nonetheless, this document did define John Walters' (Executive Director, HMBK) goals for the prospective local action summit II-

Highland County My Brother's Keeper Local Action Summit II

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[50] Again, the steps to becoming an MBK community as outlined by the "MBK community challenge for action" 2014) include 1) Accepting the President's Challenge; (2) Convening a local action community summit; (3) Conducting a policy review and for recommendations for action; and (4) Launching a plan of action, next steps, and a timetable for review.

- Project date- Monday, November 14, 2016, 8:30am – 12:30, NWU

  Student Center Ballroom

- Goals

  1) Provide update to the county on the progress to date in launching

     the MBK collaborative in Highland County;

  2) Increase awareness of the state and nation MBK mission and on

     plans to sustain the MBK initiative following the Obama

     Presidency

  3) Launch the Milestone Working Groups and enlist the involvement

     of new stakeholders: charge, composition, leadership

  4) Introduce feature Youth Council

  5) Discuss Programming for the year

  6) Identify policy imperatives for 2016-2017

(JW, Artifact, 8/10/16)

We revisited discussion and planning for the summit in September. Given

that a second or annual summit was not a part of the national guidelines, the

backbone group was completely on its own as to creating a plan for its purpose and

its execution. Despite John Walters' written goals, group members questioned and

considered what the summit (and particularly the proposed milestone breakout

sessions) would actually entail. During meetings these questions largely went

unanswered, and the group did not turn to John Walter's artifact to help answer

them.

Furthermore, Samuel and Anita (HMBK VISTAs) would be required to joggle

two large tasks- planning and implementation for the youth council and planning and implementation of the summit. In our September 14th meeting, I addressed the workload and focus issue for Anita and Samuel, and also put forward a vision for what the summit could look like.

I suggest that we use the local action summit space to create goals around each other milestones, "giving folks some idea of where we want to head… whatever the measure is…and allowing them to figure out how we're going to get there based on their commitment to those goals" (Meeting Audio, 9/14/16). I noted that this would give "space to do what they're already doing", "but give them somewhere to go", and place the onus on the community by putting it "in their hands" (Meeting Audio, 9/14/16).

Anita agreed, and stated that this was how it was suppose to be "if it's collective action" (Meeting Audio, 9/14/16). Samuel also agreed that this strategy could work, and suggested we organize the goals around the milestones, and give each milestone breakout group a vision to work towards. As Samuel, Anita, and I played around with the idea, John Walters presented a hesitation-

> Now, I would hesitate to present the folks with a vision... These are folks who go to work everyday advancing these milestones, so they're already doing this. I think we just need to let the milestone advisory groups figure this one out… [and] let the praxis work, and it will get there… (Meeting Audio, 9/14/16).

This meeting dialogue was significant in a couple ways. First, it highlighted Anita, Samuel, and my attempt to fully understand the purpose and vision of a large

meeting that would likely attract key community stakeholders. Secondly, the

meeting culture we set often did not allot time for group members to grapple with

ideas, and come to a collective decision about what action should be taken.

Furthermore, it also demonstrated how such ideas were often obstructed and

significant questions (such as what the summit would actually entail) were largely

left unanswered.

The front end of the summit program soon overshadowed the challenge of

vision and purpose for the summit and milestone breakout groups. By the

November 2nd backbone meeting, Samuel (HMBK VISTA) presented a run of

program for the summit, which he'd gathered from conversations with John Walters

(HMBK, Executive Director). The program included a heavy front-end with greetings

and presentations on the current landscape of Highland County (an hour and a half),

yet less time for milestone discussion groups (only 45 minutes) where the core

work of (i.e. problem identification, goal and vision creation) would supposedly be

done (see Image A).

TIME	ACTIVITY	PRESENTER/FACILITATOR
8:00am	Youth Arrive Refreshments	Youth Check-in & Greeting Activity
8:30am	Introduction & Greetings	HMBK Executive Director Dr. Walters
8:35am	Words of Welcome	Congresswoman Beth Moore
8:45	Words of Welcome	Derrick Bell, Director of MBK, State of Washington
8:55	HMBK Year One Overview	HMBK Executive Director- John Walters

9:05	Vista Experience	Anita Jackson						
9:15	Young Brothers Introduction	Samuel Davis – Who are the Young Brothers? (7 minutes) Young Brothers Spoken Word – poems						
9:30	The Policy and Equity Landscape	Health- Highland County Public Health Department (Confirmed) Education and Equity- HCSD (confirmed) Housing and Economic Equity- Highland County Office of Community and Economic Development (confirmed) Youth Workforce Develop and Criminal Justice (TBD)						
10:05	Milestone Group Explanation							
10:15	Milestone Advisory Groups (breakout)	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	Resources and Budget Development	Policy Analysis and Advocacy
11:10	Reconvene							

Image A. Meeting Artifact, 11/2/16

In addition, John Walters presented a document that stated what milestone advisory groups would be doing. His vision included reviewing work that was being done around each milestone, creating action steps, and setting a follow-up meeting to solidify this action plan.

Operation of the Milestone Advisory Groups, et al.

Charge:

- Review briefly the milestone in question, and collaborative work undertaken in pursuance of the milestones;

- Identify feasible and workable action steps that will expand upon or

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complement activity underway and that will help Highland County

move toward a comprehensive plan for addressing the milestone in

question

- Discuss the plan to meet over the next six months to solidify a next

step action plan

(Meeting Artifact, 11/2/16)

In noticing that the there wasn't much structure in the back-end of the

program or thought to how the groups would accomplish the charge presented, I

questioned who would be facilitating the milestone conversations, if there would be

data to inform the conversations, what protocol facilitators would use, the take-

away expectations for groups/facilitators, and how the backbone group was

planning to use the information and artifacts from the group conversations. Most of

these questions were left unanswered. Yet after attending prior MBK summits with

no data and facilitators with poor skills, I knew not answering these questions could

hinder the success of the summit.

Following the meeting, I worked with Anita (HMBK VISTA) to enhance the

back end of the program. I worked with K-12 program leaders within HCSD to

gather data for the first four milestone conversations. Anita agreed to work on

gathering data for the last two milestones. Ultimately, we created data sheets for

each milestone that would be given to every person that attended the milestone

discussion (see Image B). Anita (HMBK VISTA) and I had a phone conference on

11/4/16 to come up with a protocol that facilitators could use to guide their

milestone discussions (see Image C). We later circulated these to the backbone

group for feedback and comments. I recommended a list of seasoned facilitators for the milestone conversations, conferred with the VISTAs, and Samuel sent invitations to ask if they would be willing to participate. After receiving confirmation, we secured 8 facilitators- 3 Black males, 1 Black woman, 3 White women, and an Asian-American woman. All in all, invitations, data, and the protocol were given to facilitators two days before the summit.

MBK Milestone Two:
**Ensuring all children read at grade level by 3rd grade**

Salient Issues
- District PreK-3 literacy
- Attendance
- In-home literacy
- District and State retention policies
- Social networks of support (barbershops)

Target Population
- African American young men in elementary school
- Caregivers/parents of school-aged boys
- School leaders – Boards of Education
- Barbershop owners

Departments/Systems Involved
- Education – Schools and Districts
- Library system
- Barbershops
- Health and Human Services

Spring 2016 English Language Arts
3rd Grade African American Boys

Proficient 21%
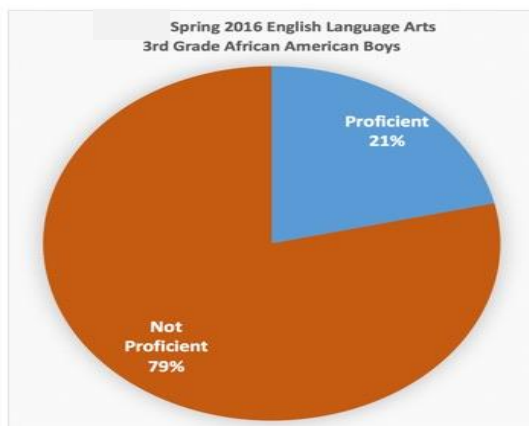
Not Proficient 79%

Looking at the districts with the majority of our African American students:

337 African American Boys in 3rd Grade

72 Proficient
265 Not Proficient

182 Students score in the lowest category (would be a mandatory retention if the law had gone into effect last year)

Image B. Example Data Sheet from Milestone 2 for Local Action Summit II

Milestone Group Facilitator's Protocol

Time Frame	Activity	Questions to Ask

10 minutes	Review the Landscape	• Milestone Data Review
		  a. Each milestone table has 2-3 data points that the group should review
		  b. What is this data telling us?
		  c. What does this mean for young men of color in our county?
		• Reviewing Our Experiences with this milestone
		  a. What (brief) stories and examples do we have that touches this milestone topic and young men of color in our county?
		  b. How are these experiences reflected in/by the data points?

15 minutes	Root Cause Analysis	• What's working?
		  ○ What do we need to see success in this milestone area?
		• What's not working?
		  ○ You can draw from experience and the data you used above for the two questions above
		  ○ We are also providing a is list of different projects and initiatives have attempted to address change for youth and young men of color within the county this past year. You can refer your group to this list as well.
		• Why is this happening to our young men?
		  ○ You can also use a fishbone to graphically plot the responses of 'why is this happening'

10 minutes	Summarize the Discussion of the Problems	• How do we feel about this list of root causes? • What additional information do we need to fully understand this problem? • Who else is working on this issue? • Which root cause is the most powerful and feasible to address at this time?
10 minutes	Brainstorming Possible Strategies	• How can we address these root causes? • What examples can we learn from? • How will these actions specifically help young me of color in our county? • What assets and resources can we leverage?
10 minutes	Next Steps / Taking Action	• Brainstorm what can be done within the next 3-6 months • What will we do to initiate some of these strategies? • Who will commit to carrying out these action steps and continue the conversation? ○ Each table will be provided with Commitment Cards for table members to fill out and give back to facilitator.
55 Minutes Total		

Image C. Protocol for Millstone Facilitators for Local Action Summit II

Summit II Results. By the day of the summit, 153 people were registered for the event via Event Brite (online event planning tool). On the day of the event, 80 people registered during the first part of the program. Modifications were made at the beginning of the program, as Congresswoman Beth Moore could only mingle prior to the event (8am – 8:20am), and was unable to do the welcome address. The 10-minute HMBK Year One overview lasted a half hour, which tightened the time and space for the presenters that follow. Given that the summit was being held the morning on a school day, only one young man from the Young Brother's Youth

Council was able to attend in the morning, and preferred not to present by himself[51].

By the milestone breakout group sessions, attendees were noticeably weary from

sitting through two hours of presentations.

During the milestone breakout groups I was busy working between breakout

sessions to check-in with facilitators. After the sessions and summit, the facilitators

for the first 4 milestones commented to me about the time constraint they faced

during the session, and how the actual group make-up for each milestone made it

difficult for the group leaders to follow the protocol. Instead, most simply had a

discussion around the milestone topic.

In a recap meeting regarding the summit, meeting notes captured overall

attendance and individual millstone group attendance. We learned that overall, 88

people attended the summit (not including backbone members). Yet there was a

drop in attendance for the milestone breakout groups, as each breakout group

averaged around 8 attendees (Anita Jackson, Meeting Notes, 12/30/17).

Some interviewees retrospectively commented on their experience at or

planning for local action summit II during their interviews. Linda Bay (HMBK

Backbone Team Member & Professor, NWU) had occasionally been involved in

planning for the summit, and was concerned about the structure people would be

presented with at the summit, and if this structure would "enable them, require of

them, insist on their contribution" (Interview).

Sean Worth (Director, Washington at Work) participated in the summit as a

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[51] At the end of the summit program that day (during the reconvening), 3 other Young Brothers members (all who were in college) were in attendance. John Walters gave them a few minutes during the end to present. One Young Brother presented a poem he created during a session with Samuel, Anita, a Neutral Zone leader, and I. Another young brother presented original rap lyrics from his recent album.

speaker and milestone group facilitator. He found out he was speaking the day before, and assumed it would be to a small subgroup of the participants. Yet after Jay Johnson (Director of Community Engagement, Highland County Sheriff's Office) sent an email about a PowerPoint, he realized he needed to use an existing slideshow, as there was no time to specialize his presentation to the needs of a MBK crowd (Sean Worth, Interview).

Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU) also mentioned the summit in his interview. When I asked him how much progress HMBK had made towards its goals, he stated "Very little", and referenced attendance at the summit as proof of this. Moreover, he believed the work that was highlighted during the summit could not be attributed to the work of HMBK.

> "...I've been away from the table for some time...but based on the summit [local action summit II], I didn't see any numbers. The project that got the light [at the summit] was our Second Grade Reading initiative that me and you worked on together, and that did not come out of the MBK."
>
> (Michael Johnson, Interview)

The last email in my data collection for this project included a communication from John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) to the backbone team relaying his thanks for their towards the summit-

> Greetings, all:
>
> Just a note to say thank you to everyone for Monday's Local Action Summit II. I think that the our gathering, coming on a day when many other related events were happening on campus and in the region, was productive. It met

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our expectations in a way that will allow us to recalibrate as we enter this

last month of the year and ready ourselves for 2017.

I was particularly glad to see the turnout among our youth and young

professionals-in-training.

Asante sana--thank you--to everyone.

(John Walters, Electronic Communication, 11/18/16)

Phase III Summary. This final phase of research brought several smaller

mechanisms into the HMBK routine: a consistent meeting schedule and agenda-

setting routine. John Walters had established a routine in which he as a leader

crafted an agenda that was sent out the night before a meeting. Others could pass on

additional items to him, yet often, new items would simply be introduced in actual

meetings, but not pursued. This mechanism created a form of structure for the

group, yet the consistent distance (physically and communicatively) between group

members pushed back on the potential efficiency the routine agenda setting.

Yet two larger mechanisms were also presented and developed and intended

to add purpose to the HMBK work. These included the development of the youth

council and the convening of Local Action Summit II. Both mechanisms became a

core aspect of the initiative, as (1) all group members believed youth of color

needed to have a voice and space within HMBK, and (2) national and local

leadership maintained a theory of attaining commitment through and from

convening community members.

However this theory and the development of the council was challenged in

number of ways. First, as I disclosed in my reflection, I was aware HMBK did not have structures built to support the youth council, and hoped the grant would help to direct a strategy for developing this structure. However, the group's disjointed communication and working style hampered recruiting effort. Moreover, the low number of young men of color who attended the first meeting seemed to not only reflect stunted recruitment efforts, but also a disinterest in the idea of a youth council for young men of color among youth. As low number continued through the council meetings that followed, there was less hope that a youth council could potentially be a powerful mechanism for HMBK.

Secondly, convening Local Action Summit II entailed its own challenges as well. While Anita and I spent a great deal of time creating protocols and data sheets, John Walters spent time and energy securing the participation of institutional leaders within the county (i.e. elected officials, directors within education, health, housing, workforce development, etc.). These actions helped HMBK to accomplish the summit goals of increasing awareness about the initiative and updating attendees about the initiative's progress (Artifact, 8/10/16). However, summit II failed to enlist the involvement and commitment of men of color within the community/county. While several men of color who held more prominent positions within local organizations attended the summit, there were few men of color who simply represented the community, and the population that would experience or be impacted by the milestone areas and goals. Hence, summit II resulted in low(er) attendance than summit I, and little (if any) commitment from attendees to participate in future work.

In all, phase III of the research proved that convening and displaying the work HMBK had done to date did not inspire county partners to join the effort in addressing barriers for young men of color. As many of HMBK's mechanisms and efforts were challenged by a myriad of contextual features, lack of structure, and inability to capture authentic community voice, it became harder for HMBK to substantiate its progress, and consequently inspire further collaborative work.

Research Question 2

How does collective commitment contribute to the success (or lack of success) of

the collective action pursued by HMBK?

a. What are the ways in which HMBK does/does not connect to

individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies; and what are the

conditions and mechanisms through which those individual

commitments are fostered, detracted from, or sustained towards

the collective level?

b. How are race and power represented and negotiated in the collective

space, particularly in the process of achieving collective action and

commitment?

I believe there is enough evidence from the events documented during my

year with HMBK to conclude that the HMBK was unsuccessful in reaching a level of

collective commitment that would support significant collective action. Again, I'm

adopting Gardner, et al.'s (2011) definition of collective commitment, which states

that collective commitment is "a shared mindset and shared psychological state

among a delineated collective of individuals regarding their employer, typified by

feelings of loyalty and a desire to invest mental and physical energy in helping the

organization achieve its goals" (p. 318)[52].

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[52] While HMBK only served as an employer for the two VISTAs that worked on the initiative, this definition still presents an insightful perspective as to the connection between the individual and collective levels of commitment, and commitment as it's directed towards collective action.

As I'm conceptualizing individual commitments to be the values, beliefs, passions, and personal ideologies that individuals use to orient their personal pursuits and decisions, here I use interview data to first consider how HMBK struggled to connect to these individual commitments. I then use interview data to examine the conditions (or, environmental factors) that were not developed as a means to foster and sustain a collective level of commitment. I show how the lack of attending to these environmental factors also led to a breach between commitment and collective action. In addition, I illuminate how race and power were represented and negotiated the process of HMBK's attempt to achieve collective action. I present a more critical analysis of this process in Chapter 5.

What values, beliefs, passions, and ideologies drew participants to the table?

Black Members of HMBK Backbone Group. Prior to assessing the collective level, I believe it's imperative to first understand the values, beliefs, passions, and ideologies that led individuals to participating in HMBK as a leader, VISTA, backbone group member, or steering committee member. One the most prevailing ideologies and values that impelled individuals and particularly the leaders and backbone group was an intentional personal and professional history of working within/on behalf of Black communities.

As a lawyer by profession, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) was driven by a political consciousness of advancing the Black community. During our interview he recalled having conversations at the age of eight or nine in which the community was "talking about the things that the black community would need to

do in order to counter efforts by the sort of White political structure to avoid our having our first black mayor in Cincinnati" (John Walters, Interview). His bond with other Black male professional organizations also led him to be a part of HMBK. He had participated in the development of the Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati, an organization that "involves African-American men, professional men, who are somewhat at significant point in their careers" (John Walters, Interview). This history developing organization that attended to the professional needs of Black men contributed to his desire to be involved in HMBK.

Working with and for Black communities/ young men of color was also a passion and value for Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU), Anita Jackson (HMBK VISTA), Linda Bay (Professor, NWU), and Josh Hill (Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, NWU), all whom had been a part of the backbone group or HMBK leadership[53]. These participants had studied and worked with Black communities in different ways, and it was evident participating in HMBK was an extension on this value and commitment.

Specifically, Michael Johnson (Assistant Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU) saw "the need for a solution, or several solutions, to kind of support young men of color". Given that he had a master's in social work and community organizing, he saw the "community piece" of HMBK as a place where he wanted "to roll up [his] sleeves" and "engage" (Interview). Similarly, Anita Jackson (HMBK VISTA) identified as a sociologist, and had a bachelor's degree is in community

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[53] Samuel Davis (HMBK VISTA) was the only backbone group member that did not mention a passion or value for Black community work or engagement. I identified him as a Black male in the project based on his reference to being a Black man in many of my other interactions. In addition, Samuel is member of a historically Black fraternity, and was the youngest member of the team.

studies. She was initially attracted to HMBK because she felt it was "African American initiative", and thought "it would be great to work professionally with other African Americans to solve problems in the African American community" (Interview).

Prior to becoming a faculty member at NWU, Linda Bay was a school principal, and intentionally chose to work in "high-poverty communities". She noted this was her personal choice, as she "knew nobody with [her] education was gonna influence or come to the projects and work with kids of color, because all [her] contemporaries… had different aspirations" (Interview). Josh Hill's (Director of Diversity and Community Engagement, NWU) work was also deeply rooted in the concept of community as well. He stated that "[his] knowledge and passion in infusing very Afro-centric views of community" within his work helped him to see many connections to the collective action model HMBK was aiming to build (Interview).

In probing further, I was able to understand Michael (Asst. Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU) and John's (Executive Director, HMBK) race, gender, and position led them to feel conscientious of their influence in relation to other men of color. Although Michael and John were about a generation a part, both were Black men who considered themselves to have some influence in their professional setting, and perceived that this positionality came with responsibility.

"So, in this particular county…there are very few organizations or agencies where there are people of color in places of power to effect change…Because they're especially limited spaces where men of color have leadership roles,

and can make an impact…And so I kind of feel that, as a result of me being a

black male who has some influence and some experience in this community,

it's up to individuals like myself…" (Michael Johnson, Interview)

Likewise, John believed he, as a Black male leader, had to leverage the influence he

had towards the betterment of fellow Black men.

"There's a reason that I'm in this space, you know, geographic space, social

space, and it's not just here to have a good time and say hello…I gotta be

accountable for all that I've been blessed with to be able to do, and that's

where a sense of ownership, I think, flows for me." (John Walters, Interview)

White Members of HMBK Backbone and Steering Committee. Some

participants, backbone and steering committee members that were not Black also

had a strong passion for working communities of color (although not always Black

communities in particular). Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) explained that

the social justice lens that he used in his professional work was shaped by his youth

experiences and being a part of a multi-racial faith-based organization. Yet as a

"White male that [felt] passionately about HMBK work", he valued the HMBK

workspace because it brings "people who have a common commitment to that

conversation to be able to move the agenda forward" (Harry Kennedy, Interview).

Amanda Saul (Director, Highland Early Start Collaborative) had been a

consistent participant of the steering committee, and Ruth Nicole (Asst.

Superintendent, HCSD) and Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and

Community Partnerships, HCSD) had both participated in backbone meetings and

played important roles in facilitating both local action summits. As three White

women who had been deeply involved at particular points in the initiative, I wanted to learn what individual commitments were drawing them to participate. I learned that their commitment to HMBK was driven by their professional dedication, and also racial equity for some. In particular, Amanda's background as a social worker with a focus in community organizing led her to specifically consider children of color and the consequences of not ensuring inequitable opportunities.

> "...I sort of have now come to this part of my career thinking about how critical it is that we focus on young children, and particularly young children of color, because we've not given them the opportunities to be successful in school, and that just starts this whole downward spiral." (Amanda Saul, Interview)

Meghan's professional work also led her to similar spaces. In particular, it led her to considering how community could be leveraged to work across sectors.

> "....I worked part time here and part time on the high school reform project. But I really began to develop this kind of conceptualization around how do we work with courts, how do we work with community mental health, how do we work with our youth nonprofits? Our neighborhood associations, our faith based leaders. What's a framework for that?" (Meghan Andrews, Interview)

Ruth's passions and values that led her to being a part of the HMBK conversation were more personal. While her professional skill drew her to working on systematic problems (such as inequity), her point of reference was own experience in seeing inequity unfold.

"I chose the profession because of my experience growing up in a very educated well-to-do family, for a portion of my life, and then moving to a community with an Indian reservation that was very, very, very, very poor…And so, when I went to college and realized that what I was coming to college with, and all my Native American friends- from this really low-income community… how the system disadvantaged us- it wasn't because we weren't hard workers [or] we weren't smart [or] because we didn't have great perspective and supportive families. It was a system thing." (Ruth Nicole, Interview)

Other Personal Commitments and Perspectives. In addition to the aforementioned commitments, interview participants also spoke to other personal commitments that led to their participation in HMBK. Linda Bay mentioned that working within HMBK initiative was "the right thing to do" (Interview). Jay Johnson recognized there were few spaces where positive and productive national attention was given to young men of color, and he was grateful for President Obama's idea of creating "a vehicle or mechanism to talk about young black boys" (Interview). Juan Ruiz also noted his commitment to the progress of the next generations, he like Jay Johnson, was appreciative of a "calling for action in an area for which we owe young people" (Interview).

Summary. In sum, participants at the HMBK table were individually committed to ideas and passions around community. Black participants were drawn to the table by their commitment to working with and for Black communities and initiatives, having a political consciousness around advancing the Black community,

and feelings of ownership and responsibility in being a Black man or color. Some of the more consistent White participants also alluded to being dedicated to concepts of community. Yet this was not always a distinct commitment to Black communities (i.e. often social justice or equity as opposed to Black community initiatives). Moreover, some of the White participants were guided by professional desires to work with individuals who were committed to addressing social issues. This was different (and later shows to be significant) than other Black participants who were intentional in working with other Black individuals to build and help Black communities.

Why was HMBK unable to connect to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies?

There were many similarities in the individual commitments drawing individuals to participate and work within the HMBK initiative, and many of those commitments pertained to working for the advancement of people of color. Yet HMBK was unable to connect and foster these individual commitments towards a collective and sustainable level. Here I use the three critical environmental indicators for collective commitment in early-staged collective action to evaluate why the collaborative was unable to achieve collective commitment, and the role commitment played in its inability to reach many of its desired outcomes.

Vision

No Clear Outcomes or Goals. One reason HMBK was unable to foster collective commitment towards collective action was because the outcomes or goals that the group was aiming towards were unclear and lofty. From a definitional perspective, collective commitment is a commitment directed towards outcomes and goals[54]. At the national level, the MBK Community Challenge put forward 6 milestones which communities could focus efforts towards and use as outcome goals[55]. Interviews revealed that most individuals that had been involved in the initiative were aware that these 6 milestones existed. In fact, when asked, "From

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[54] Again, I'm using Gardner et al.'s (2011) definition of collective commitment, which states that collective commitment is "a shared mindset and shared psychological state among a delineated collective of individuals regarding their employer typified by feelings of loyalty and a desire to invest mental and physical energy in helping the *organization achieve its goals*" [emphasis added] (p. 318).

[55] Again, the six national MBK milestone are (1) Entering School Ready to Learn; (2) Reading at Grade Level by Third Grade; (3) Graduating from High School Ready for College and Career; (4) Completing Postsecondary Education or Training; (5) Entering the Workforce; (6) Reducing Violence and Providing Second Chances (Force, 2014).

your perspective, what are the outcomes HMBK hopes to achieve?", 26 of 30 interviewees made some reference to the six milestones as the outcome(s) HMBK was hoping to achieve. Hence, it was evident that most knew the general aims of the local initiative (HMBK) were reflective of the national agenda.

In addition, empirical evidence from the historical cases I've studied show that vision is a critical environmental factor that contributes and sustains collective commitment. Having a clear idea of what the initiative is about, why it exists, and what the group is attempting to do to reach its desired outcomes not only enables individuals to connect and see their personal ideas and values as part of a greater concept, but also keeps the collective group inspired and impassioned about the change they are attempting to accomplish.

As mentioned, HMBK brought together passionate people who were interested in working with and for Black communities and young men of color, dedicated to concepts of community, and committed to addressing social issues Furthermore, those working within HMBK saw the initiative as "the right thing to do" (Linda Bay, Interview), saw "the urgency in helping to support young men of color" (Michael Johnson, Interview), and were grateful for President Obama's idea of creating "a vehicle or mechanism to talk about young black boys" and "calling for action in an area for which we owe young people" (Jay Johnson, Interview; Juan Ruiz, Interview). Despite similar individual values, beliefs, and passions, HMBK could not connect their individual commitments into collective commitment that would allow for collective action. During my interviews, I asked each interviewee,

"Does HMBK have a clear collective vision?" Of the 30 interviewees, 29 responded "No".

Specific responses to questions around outcomes, goals, and vision support this claim as well. Interestingly, key leaders within the backbone group commented on how the initiative lacked well-defined outcomes. When asked what outcomes HMBK hoped to achieve, Linda Bay (Professor, NWU) relayed that although she knew of the six milestones, she was unsure if "that's what we [HMBK] need[ed] to achieve (Interview). Likewise, Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) pointed to the illusive nature of the milestones and that the group hadn't adopted them.

> Harry Kennedy: ...Entering kindergarten ready [Milestone 1], what does that
> mean? So I think there are some touch points that we could identify but I
> don't know that they have been formally adopted yet. (Interview)

This lack of well-defined outcomes and ambiguity as to what the initiative was attempting to do to make progress on the milestones turned out to be a reason for Aaron Bailey's (County Sheriff) sparse participation in HMBK despite being a HMBK Co-Chair[56]. Although he acknowledged being a supporter of the initiative, HMBK's inability to create clarity around the vision prevented him from connecting and committing to the group.

> Aaron Bailey: So I am amazed, not only in this effort, but in efforts all up and
> down line, we always talk about certain things, but we never really define the
> outcome...And I think that you can only achieve things by identifying that

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[56] Sheriff Andrew Bailey was appointed Co-Chair of HMBK along with State Representative Ryan Connor when HMBK officially accepted the challenge to become an MBK Community on August 15, 2015 (see Accepting the Challenge, p.). Yet he was not an active member of steering committee or backbone group. In my interview with Jay Johnson (Director of Community Engagement, Highland County Sheriff's Office), Jay mentioned that the sheriff had asked him to be more involved in the HMBK as a representative from the sheriff's office.

first, and then working your way back…This is a frustration for me…because

I can get behind this 100 percent… I just don't want to just be another one of

those things that sounds good that we can say we do, then there are no

changes in outcomes. (Interview)

Lack of Strategy. In the narrative of phase two, I give an example of how the

lack of clarity around goals and outcomes for HMBK was reflected in the questions

and frustrations posed by the VISTAs. In one particular meeting, Anita (HMBK

VISTA) asks for a "…clearer understanding of what we do before we go and ask

people to do things with us" (Meeting Audio, 7/15/16). She would often pose this

question, or ask what the group was doing and how it was actually planning to

accomplish certain tasks. Samuel Davis (HMBK VISTA) also suggested that the group

lacked a more comprehensive plan, and wished the national MBK directors had

provided local communities with this.

> Samuel Davis: I think they [the national MBK entity] should've been provided
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> with something to kind of go forward with? …I know they have the four or
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> five steps [the four steps to becoming an MBK Community]. I feel like those
>
> steps kind of just solidify the existence…(Interview)

> The data also presented an emerging trend of each individual having their

own personal strategy and/or vision for HMBK. Hence, the vision for HMBK was not

clear or collective due to the fact that everyone had their own idea in mind of how

the collective was suppose to go about making change for young men of color, and

the vast majority of these ideas did not overlap. During my interviews, I asked

interviewees, *"If you were given the task of working with a collective group of people to make change for young men of color, what would you do? What strategies would you use?"* 19 respondents (the majority of those interviewed) responded that they weren't sure of what they'd do or the strategies that they'd use. 8 others responded with idiosyncratic ideas and strategies, including ideas around mentorship, engaging with parents and families, and empowering the community/young men of color to demand things for themselves.

Competing Visions and Strategies/Vision for Space Isn't Inclusive. In tandem to the belief that there was no clear and collective vision, there was also a strong belief that similar to the concept of having multiple strategies, HMBK contained too many individual visions, and the group's inability to select or synthesize these visions resulted in there not being a vision. John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) was aware that there could have been multiple visions around HMBK's existence and desired outcomes, as well as multiple strategies on how to accomplish these visions. While he did not see this as a significant barrier, he did see that competing visions frustrated the process of creating organizational structure.

> John Walters: …I think we sometimes have a bit of competing visions – and never anything wrong with that, but between whether or not we need to be able to show some immediate wins to do what we need to do versus more attention to organizational structure, that [creating organizational structure] could be sometimes like watching paint dry on a wall… (Interview)

In contrast, Anita Jackson (HMBK VISTA) believed having multiple visions, and furthermore, having multiple visionaries, was a significant problem within in the collective. The fusion of such issues proved to be a challenge for her.

> Anita Jackson: …The grand vision of our org isn't clear, and there's a lot of visionaries, but not a lot of strategic persons…When it comes to backbone, we need more strategy; we need more breakdown of what that vision looks like… (Interview)

When I probed further and asked if her vision for HMBK was similar or dissimilar to other in the group, she indicated that her vision was "similar to other people in the group, except for the main person that it needs to be similar with", and this led her to believe that there were "some hierarchal structural challenges that need to be addressed." (Anita Jackson, Interview)

Similarly, Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) considered leadership and the current structure as a limitation towards solidifying and pursuing a common vision. Harry often championed for creating a space that incorporated the visions and conceptualization of all group members, not just leaders'. Yet given that executive leadership of HMBK set the agenda, what HMBK pursued or left undecided was concluded at that level.

> Harry Kennedy: What I feel like in our current role is that we [HMBK] have a lid on what we can do. We can't really push because we have a structure that designates one person as the lead and everything else has to fall in line with that. …That's uncomfortable for me because I'm a doer. (Interview)

Individuals seeing themselves as part of realizing the vision. As interviews revealed that most believed that HMBK lacked vision, I proceeded to ask interviewees to elaborate on their responses as well as look for empirical evidence as to why individuals might see the vision as unclear or perhaps non-existent. I found a number of interesting trends. One trend was how and if they saw themselves as part of the vision. These ideas often fell along gender and racial lines. Hence, if individuals couldn't see their gender or race as playing a part in HMBK's existence, it was unlikely that they believed the group had a clear and collective vision.

Gendered Perspectives on Vision. In my interview with Anita, we talked about how not having organizational structure, framework, and vision (i.e. how the group would work together and with community partners) impacted HMBK's ability to progress on particular things. While the backbone had visited the ideas of possibilities for an organizational structure in our early meetings (i.e. exploring the collective impact model, attempting to solidify an appointed steering committee, etc.), however there was never any follow up on these conversations.

Anita and I presumed there was more we could contribute to the organizational, structural, and overall progress of HMBK, yet we both seemed to realize the true limitations of our contributions. We both seemed conscious that the initiative was about young men of color, and as women we were still being challenged on how to support the work especially given the lack of structure. During our interview time, Anita also commented on how I was often the woman who did not push back. This led us to talking about my learning to "work around"

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leadership and lack of structure within HMBK, and how it was also a challenge for me to work within especially as a woman.

> Tabitha: …I think I realized that, especially as one of few women at the table, if the leadership doesn't embrace [an idea], and you're not in a position to change that, you have to learn how to work around some things until you are in a position to do that.

> Anita Jackson: Yeah – and that's something I'm learning, is that workaround, actually. And that's why I said, it's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission…. We are not just coming at you with things that we just pull it out of the side our neck, you know, we're well-researched, we've been trained to do this. I've got all this information, and I present something that's coming from a place of passion, of care, you know. (Interview)

Amanda Saul (Director, Highland Early Start Collaborative), Ruth Nicole (Asst. Superintendent, HCSD), and Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, HCSD) were women who had also been involved in steering committee meetings, backbone meetings, and all aided in facilitating milestone breakout groups at the second local action summit. They had been less involved than Anita, Linda Bay, and I (all Black women), yet were consistently at the table when invited to participate. In my interview with each of them, I learned that they each had chosen to remain 'a step behind' those that were highly involved as they were uncertain of what role they should play within the group. Moreover, I perceived that as White women, they were attempting to navigate their

participation and engagement without wanting to overstep presumed gender and racial boundaries.

> Amanda Saul: ...I want to be sensitive as a white woman that I am committed and that I'm willing and anxious to be involved, but it's not ownership in that – it's not for me to say, 'This is the direction that things should go,' or Why don't we do it this way?' (Interview)

In one instance, Meghan decided to diverge from the facilitator's protocol during the summit, as she was conscious of how her race and gender might have hindered connections between the men of color that were in her group.

> Meaghan Andrews: I was charged with facilitating that group [Milestone 3 breakout group at the Local Action Summit II] and I had very specific deliverables of what I was supposed to accomplish...I intentionally did not do that because I felt this group was using the dialogue to build community and relationship across institution and across space with a group of predominantly African American males who had not ever come together before. And I didn't feel it was my place as the white, female facilitator to make the judgment call that that was more important than honoring their connectivity and their voices. (Interview)

In the case with Ruth, she was conscientious of the power her voice carried in comparison to men of color, and accounted for this in her engagement and participation-

Ruth Nicole: ...I am sometimes cautious, as a white woman taking on a

perceived mantle of something for black men. Like, I don't wanna speak for a

Black man, because my voice is the one that has power, right? I'd rather find

a way to create a space for that black man to have his voice heard directly. So

I am conscious of that, but I don't, like, exclude myself because of that, if that

makes sense. I just am careful, maybe, not to talk [laughs], but to make space

for someone else to talk, or something. (Interview)

Racial Boundaries and Political Correctness. As HMBK struggled to foster an

environment that formed and sustained collective commitment, part of this

challenge was explained by racial boundaries and "political correctness" that

hindered individuals within the group from seeing themselves as part of realizing

that vision. Just as women within the group attempted to understand how they

could contribute as women within an initiative for young men of color, there were

also questions among male participants within the initiative as to how race could or

should create a boundary as for who could be involved. The group had never

endeavored to dissect or address this boundary collectively.

I asked Jay Johnson (Director of Community Engagement, Highland County

Sheriff's Office), a steering committee member, about race and its bearing on his

participation in HMBK. He mentioned that others saw him (being a Black male) as a

critical part of the conversation.

Jay Johnson: I want to say no, race hasn't [played a role how he had engaged],

but I think yes. In that I had several people come to me and say, "Jay, you

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need to be at MBK meetings." I've had several women say it. I've had several

white individuals say it. And this was before I was actually coming to the

meetings. When I asked them why, they, I think, put a lot into it should be

black men as a core piece of this conversation around black boys.

As mentioned before, Michael Johnson (Asst. Director Of Intra-Governmental Affairs,

NWU), John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK), and Josh Hill (Director of Diversity

and Community Engagement, NWU) had all alluded feeling responsible for engaging

in HMBK as Black men, and having some influence within a sizable institution.

Nonetheless, Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) brought to light a racial

barrier that highlighted people's desire to be politically correct. Just as Michael,

John, Josh, and Jay were being positioned (whether by others or by themselves) in

the work of HMBK because they were Black men and the initiative was for men of

color, Harry questioned who was endorsed to be a part the HMBK effort, and how

race seemed to play as a boundary for political correctness.

Harry Kennedy: Here is my wonder... does the group believe that this is work

that has to be done by African American leaders for African American young

boys.... Because no one wants to undermine the potential for this to work.

The problem is that I think that there are concerns about who can say what

to whom and worries about offending people in the process. (Interview).

Concluding Thoughts. In sum, interviews revealed that while people were

familiar with the 6 Millstones identified by the national MBK effort, those working

and connected to HMBK were still unclear of what outcomes HMBK was targeting.

Even leaders and those in the backbone group that consistently sat at the table were

unsure of which strategies HMBK was using to tackle the larger milestone outcomes.

Not having defined outcomes and goals was a poignant breakdown for HMBK, as it

also pointed to an inability to identify strategies towards tackling the larger

Milestone goals, and also served as a barrier for participation for others that were

less active in the effort. Not seeing oneself as part of realizing HMBK's goals

(whether because of gender or race) also served as an obstruction in developing a

collective vision.

Hence, while the mission and cause of HMBK may have aligned with

individuals' personal values, beliefs, and ideologies, not having a clear vision

impeded on individuals' ability (and for some their desire) to work within the

collective group. All in all, not only did environmental factors restrict HMBK from

attaining collective commitment, ascertaining collective commitment via definition

was also unfeasible as the group showed there was no clearly defined outcome or

goal to commit to.

Trust

My analysis of the historical cases as well as reflection on the HMBK effort

led me to identify trust as critical factor towards developing collective commitment.

Individuals' feeling of security in the group/overall initiative, and the belief that

they can work openly and honestly within the group space has significant bearing

on a group's ability to connect to individual values, beliefs, and commitments

towards collective commitment.

I spoke to Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and Community

Partnerships, HCSD) about the idea of trust in collective spaces during her

interview. As having developed an expertise in community partnerships and organizing, she acknowledged that trust was one of the strongest factors in creating community and collective spaces[57].

> Meghan Andrews: So one of the things that I learned and if you look at some of the community organizing literature and this came true in our work was relational trust. So it really wasn't about money, it wasn't about resources. In the end, kind of one of the single most, the strongest factors were relational trust... (Interview)

Moreover, Meghan agreed with me in that MBK hadn't developed trust within the collective space. She also saw race and power impeding the group's development of trust and its progression as a collective.

> Meghan Andrews: ...When I look at the MBK work, there isn't deep relational trust...I see this as playing nice in the sandbox a little bit right now but developing norms where we can call each other out on issues of race and positional power so that we can move the work forward. (Meghan Andrews, Interview)

> Meghan wasn't the only interviewee that explicitly mentioned a lack of trust within the HMBK group. In my interview with State Representative Ryan Connnor (Black male), the issue of trust reemerged. Whereas he and Congresswoman Beth Moore had appointed John Walters as the executive director of HMBK, he had been drawn to the initiative given his personal educational experience. While he valued

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[57] Meghan studied community-based school reform efforts for her doctorate degree, and her position at HCSD has driven her to be a part and also lead community-based initiatives that necessitate collective commitment and collective action. As she had been a part of the early stages of planning for HMBK and facilitated a milestone conversation during Local Action Summit II, it was affirming to hear her thoughts regarding the lack of trust within the HMBK group space.

the diversity of ideas that came from partnerships and collective initiatives such as HMBK, he also recognized that there were drawbacks to these spaces as well. One such drawback was the underdevelopment of trust that ironically was necessary for this type of work to move forward. Hence, when I pushed him to decide on whether HMBK had become a space where opinions were valued and people were open to listening and grappling with different perspectives, he responded, "No". He elaborated-

> Representative Connor: So you've gotta have that trust level, and you've gotta have... each person valuing each person that's there and where they come from. And then, out of that, I think will come a trust... If you don't have that element, then people [are] gonna turn each other off... (Interview)

> Meghan and Representative Connor's references to developing trust within spaces to where people are acknowledged, valued, and are able to have difficult conversations reflected a concern and theme across the meeting audio. Anita and Samuel (HMBK VISTAs) had spent much of their first weeks introducing new ideas to the backbone group on how HMBK might structure and organize itself, how it could engage its stakeholders, and how the initiative could add value within the context of Highland County. However, patterns within meetings pointed their (VISTAs) being unheard, and plausibly devalued. Of the 13 backbone meetings I recorded, 9 provide examples in which she or Samuel proposed ideas, and these ideas were either dismissed overtly or never taken up post meeting.

As I had concerns about how the VISTAs felt about being (or not being heard), as well as their thoughts on consequences for voicing their opinions, I made

a point to speak to them about this during their interviews. I learned that Samuel (HMBK VISTA) saw reporting out as a responsibility all group members had, and he felt heard in this way. Yet he was more concerned about listening.

> Samuel Davis: So [in meetings] you kind of share your updates. But, I think I also try to listen a lot, and I try to understand why people suggest how they want to do things or try to understand what they're trying to convey. I think sometimes people can say things, and they may not come out exactly how they think them. So, you've kind of got to really listen to kind of get to the core of what people are trying to say. (Interview)

Samuel believed his engagement in the group was highly characterized by sharing out and making a strong effort to listen to others and understand their concerns even if they weren't always presented in the finest way. Given my work with Samuel, I agreed with his self-assessment, as I often saw Samuel as the team member who was more willing to listen and hear out others' concerns in order to foster a more harmonizing group space.

Anita (HMBK VISTA) felt differently, given she was less concerned about listening and more concerned about being heard. As a self-identified strong, Black woman, she acknowledged that she was more engaged when she was heard, but felt silenced at times and wondered why this was the case. Even when she and Samuel worked collectively to problem-solve and develop things they both believed HMBK needed, she believed their answers were dismissed, leading her to perceive that the group was "half-stepping".

Anita Jackson: I like to engage when I'm being heard, and I disengage when I'm being shut down. And so, as a visionary, I get all these great ideas, and kind of we're put in a position to drive this thing, but we're not given all the tools we need to drive, you know? ...So, I saw a lot needed to be done...and my colleague, Samuel [HMBK VISTA], he was the same way...And so now we've got, like, this tag team, and that happened for, like, the first three weeks and [we're] solving problems left and right.

So then, we presented [to the group at backbone meetings], like, you know, those problems being solved, and they were, like, "No, those aren't the answers"...But all these problems need to be solved in order for us to do this right; otherwise, we're kind of half-stepping...(Interview)

Anita also spoke on how gender, particularly being a woman, intersected with her feelings of not being heard and acknowledged. Although she admitted that she didn't "hold back very well" and "let it be known" when things bothered her, she believed her womanhood, particularly in a space for and being steered by men, led to her being silenced.

Anita Jackson: And so, partly, I feel like part boils down to me being a woman in the space, and trying to fight for that – even though I wanna create that opportunity for males to be this head of the table, you know, as their place may be, biblically, I don't diminish the role of a female being in that space doing exactly the same thing. But sometimes I start, and I look, like, "Why am

I being squashed, at this moment? Why am I being silenced? Why am I not

being heard? (Interview)

Anita mentions a number of factors that illuminate how the HMBK

environment did not foster a sense of trust amongst group members. In particular,

she highlights that the group often was not open to grappling with her thoughts and

concerns regarding the initiative. Moreover, her experience as a thinker and woman

in a space where she was consistently silenced alluded to distrust that others would

even be open to her ideas and thoughts.

Group lacks confidence in leadership and vision of the initiative. Harry

was aware that the VISTAs would often share their insights, and their thoughts

weren't always met with the group's willingness to listen and grapple with their

ideas. He mentioned this as a concern during his interview as well.

> Harry Kennedy: Of the small group [backbone]…we get PowerPoints that are
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> thrown up that the VISTAS create that either does or doesn't get any traction,
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> there is one person who ultimately gets to decide yes or no [John Walters].
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> So that's our structure… (Interview)

Harry's comments showed a concern for how others on the team (i.e. the VISTAs)

were not being heard or acknowledged, as well as a concern about leadership and

structure for the initiative. Linda Bay (Professor, NWU), who was also a backbone

group member and frequently participated in meetings via phone, also noted

apprehension about the leadership for the initiative. As the initiative was about men

of color, she'd trusted that men of color would have created the structures needed to

move the work forward. Yet after she perceived that the initiative was missing

structure and that there was mistrust between group members, she increased engagement in HMBK although she truly was not looking to be involved.

> Linda Bay: ...I was really hoping that the men who were involved in the work would have created the structure and get the thing going. I would not have intervened at all had I not sensed that there was conflict between Anita and John.... I don't wanna be involved, one, because I just fundamentally think it needs to be led by men, and because African-American women historically carry the burden...(Interview)

Furthermore, as lack of progress and inaction became the norm, some began to develop more mistrust, as they did not understand why their contributions were not being reflected in some show of progress. Michael Johnson (Asst. Director of Intra-Government Relations, NWU) suggested a similar idea during my interview with him. When I asked him what he had learned about working in the group, he relayed that his challenge was having many other obligation besides HMBK and trusting "that our vision as a team [would] be carried forward", only to find that this rarely the case (Michael Johnson, Interview). Consequently, he found that the group was "spending hours of time talking about a plan, and then only to meet again and to see that that plan didn't come to fruition..." (Michael Johnson, Interview).

Concluding Thoughts. Feelings about not being received or acknowledged, lack of confidence regarding the leadership and structure of the initiative, feeling silenced- all contributed to mistrust among group members. This in turn made it challenging to establish the relational trust that both Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, HCSD) and Representative Connor

stated was missing. Consequently, finding evidence of trust within the HMBK was difficult to do. As trust is a critical environmental factor for developing collective commitment, empirical data reveals that lack of trust within the group made collective commitment hard to attain.

Space to Learn

I define space to learn (STL) as the time and capacity [resources, human capital] for the group to grow (individually and collectively) in knowledge and understanding of the problem, context, barriers, self, and each other. STL encompasses the meaning individuals attribute to the collective space, as relationships and interactions contribute to individuals' development of personal and group identity. STL allows for the individuals and the group to learn through doing, make missteps without harsh consequences, and come to informed and consensus-based decisions. In all, STL includes the social and cultural norms developed within the collective space, meaning individuals attribute to the collective space, and the cultural and social knowledge surrounding the work of the initiative (Walker, 2012).

Lack of Support for Personal and Collective Growth. Undoubtedly, the majority of interviewees mentioned that the primary value of collective spaces such as HMBK was the opportunity it gave them to learn from others and gain perspective from a diverse group of people. As Juan Ruiz (Professor & Director of NWU Brotherhood Initiative, NWU) explained, those involved in collective action spaces were "…called upon to participate because they have some expertise in their

area that is helpful to learn or see or to hear", and individuals then leverage what they learn, see, and feel towards a collective effort (Interview).

Accordingly, Samuel (HMBK VISTA) noted that spaces like HMBK needed to strategically include people who would bring a variety of perspectives and experiences to the table. He believed HMBK was doing this, as he stated the HMBK group space allowed him to learn, grow, and change as a person.

"It's helping me develop and me grow because I learn from you, and this is kind of the environment that we are in, we all learn from each other…I hope that's happening to everyone, that they're all learning so that we can be better…" (Samuel Davis, Interview).

Yet this experience of personal growth through learning from one another was not happening for everyone. In contrast, Anita's (HMBK VISTA) experience within HMBK did not lead to personal growth. Instead, it led her to feel that the collective space was not a place where she would be allowed to take risks, another important aspect of STL. Rather, Anita felt that while she had risked sharing her new ideas, she was often met with a harsh consequence of being "dismissed" and told not to "do it that way" (Interview).

Data from meeting audio point to reoccurring instances in which risks were taken and met with harsh consequences. A classic example occurred during the 8/10/16 backbone meeting. At the prior backbone meeting (8/3/16; attended by John, the VISTAs, and I), there were several polemic moments between John and Anita, and the meeting had lasted 5 hours. In my check-in meeting with the VISTAs the following Monday, Anita mentioned using some of the next full backbone

meeting time to create working agreements as a response to the conflict. I agreed

that that could be a productive way for us to work together and encouraged her to

bring the idea to our next meeting on Wednesday.

At the next meeting, Anita takes the risk in leading a discussion about

potential working arrangements our group could agree on in response to the events

of the prior meeting. John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK), Samuel Davis

(HMBK VISTA), Anita Jackson (HMBK VISTA), Michael Johnson (Asst. Director Of

Intra-Governmental Affairs, NWU), Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) and

Richard Olson (Professor and Director of the Institute for the Study of Children,

Families, and Communities, NWU), and I were in attendance. The discussion around

potential working agreements proceeded for nearly 15 minutes. Anita spent time

attempting to justify the idea and need for creating working agreements given that

"HMBK was learning community" and group members were "learning how to do this

together". She also gave the group examples of agreements the HMBK group could

take on collectively, and writes these ideas on the board.

Anita then attempts to engage Michael in the conversation, but Michael

challenges the premise and practice of creating working agreements.

Anita: Michael, do you have any working agreements to add?

Michael. No… I just have a question. Is this a best practice, or where is this

coming from? I've never seen, or had working agreements. So I just want to

know what it's grounded in.

Anita: Oh, this is grounded in developing a professional learning community. And so, given that there's a lot of developments that we'll be doing as an organization, that we're learning as we're producing them, coming up with a list on how we'd like to work together so that we don't step on each other's toes, hurt each other's feelings, uh, have a 5 hour meeting, (background laughter), things like that... (Meeting Audio, 8/10/16)

Whereas the discussion had been already been difficult and group members were disengaging, Michael's comments ignited further skepticism, as other group members began to challenge the idea as well. After several minutes, John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) stifles the conversation and signals the group to move forward with other affairs.

John Walters: Let me say also, I do understand the model that's being developed here. I've always been of the view that if ...everybody is respectful or everybody else, the meeting will run, and that these things will fall in place. And if they don't fall into place, then someone...from the leadership perspective... will have that handled... But I do understand. (Meeting Audio, 8/10/16)

Anita's attempt to set up working agreements reflected multiple aspects of the SPTL concept, including (1) an attempt to reflect and productively recalibrate with the group after having learned from her experience in the meeting the week before; (2) an attempt to learn through doing and the process of development; and (3) an attempt to take a risk and learn. Yet of these attempts were met with

challenge, questioning of the validity of the idea, and ultimately the harsh consequence of dismissal.

Consequently, the group never formally created working agreements, and began to establish a social norm for the consequences of taking risks within the collective space, and attempts to grow and learn collectively. Moreover, Michael and John's attempts to move the conversation forward without a clear cut decision on if the group would truly take up working agreements intersected with other power and gender dynamics, as both were Black men with more positional power than Anita (a Black woman). It also seemed that their attempt to move on without definitively creating working agreements was also an attempt to maintain order in the meeting given Harry and Richard's attendance[58].

Peculiar Dynamics between Power, Race, and STL. Administratively, John Walters was given the task and role of Executive Director for HMBK. This role predictably gave him authority to lead and set the agenda, have influence in determining the players at the table, and even make decisions on behalf of the group. Nonetheless, achieving developed and sustained collective commitment within collective action initiatives requires a space where individuals are willing to learn from group members despite potential power differentials, and leadership supports and encourages deeper knowledge of the social problem promotes a wanting to learn through the process, and these two aspects are critical to STL.

Both Ruth Nicole (Asst. Superintendent, HCSD) and Meghan Andrews (Executive Director of School and Community Partnerships, HCSD) inadvertently

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[58] Harry and Richard (both White men) were not always able to attend meetings. However, when they did, the group dynamic seemed to encourage more efficiency and productivity. I speak more on this in a latter section.

mentioned and supported this concept during my interview with them. Ruth believed that collective spaces required leaders to make space for reflection and shared power, and this was often hard to do.

> Ruth Nicole: And sometimes that's the hardest work, because it's all this reflective inside work, and, "How do I have to grow as a leader, to create space for other people to step into these positions? Can I give up my power a little bit, to make space for a different voice to have it?" (Interview)

Likewise, Meghan contended that those with "positional power have to use their privilege to create the space" for conversation and learning (Interview).

Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) was one with such positional power. As Harry had been on both the steering committee and the backbone committee, his position (primary leader of his organization) and race (White) allotted him significant influence within the group, and he acknowledged that "what [he brought] to the table is positional power, authority, and ability to talk about how [HMBK could] address resources" (Interview). Yet Harry also mentioned that he was "…working very hard to keep [his positional power] in check and not just impose what I think is the right solution", as he believed co-creation and learning with others were important to the group's development (Interview).

Learning about and with others was a characteristic that many of the White participants deferred to within the HMBK space. Of the 7 white participants I interviewed, 4 mentioned working in the background and/or being cautious in effort to learn from others, and how and where they could contribute within the initiative, as they acknowledged the position of power their race attributed to them.

This was less the case for Black participants, and particularly Black leaders holding power within the initiative.

In fact, it was not uncommon for the Black leaders to seek validation from White members and participants, or defer to the thoughts and opinions of White political leaders. John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) repeatedly referred to wanting "to hear what the congresswoman [had] to say" (referring to Congresswoman Beth Moore) or acceding to Harry Kennedy's (Superintendent, HCSD) suggestions in meetings (Meeting Audio, 7/15/16). Of the 13 recorded backbone meetings, Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) and Richard Olson (Professor & Director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families, and Communities, NWU) participated in five meetings. At each of these meetings, Samuel and Anita (HMBK VISTAs) explicitly ask or signal for presentation time to discuss ideas or things they have been working on. In one particular meeting (8/3/16), Richard joined John Walters, Samuel, Anita, and I during the latter portion of our backbone meeting. The group had met, discussed, and debated for 4 hours prior to Richard's arrival. Yet once Richard arrived, Anita asked for time to present her ideas on possible infrastructural designs for HMBK. While she presented for an additional 30 minutes, there was no further discussions of her proposed ideas. These instances reflected a developed and reinforced social norm in which HMBK leaders were willing to learn from those with positional power, yet struggled to support and encourage their own learning and others' knowledge, as well as the growth of those without power. Moreover, Samuel and Anita's (HMBK VISTAs) actions of wanting to

present and display their work to those with positional power demonstrated a learned social pattern.

Concluding Thoughts. Space to learn presents nascent groups with a measure of how the group grows (individually and collectively), attributes meaning to the collective space, and develops social and cultural norms. As the data suggests, HMBK struggled with creating a space in which individuals were encouraged to take risks, supported in personal and collective growth through learning, and were willing to learn from group members despite potential power differentials. The data revealed how leadership didn't aid in creating a learning space, but also how race and power were critical contributors as to how less or more powerful individuals experienced the social and cultural norms the group soon developed and enacted.

In all, developing and sustain collective commitment without a strong space to learn was a difficult task. While the two VISTAs differed on their perspectives of WBMK being a space to learn, the constant discouragement towards taking risks and sharing ideas, lack of genuine listening between those with and without power, and a racially driven practice of seeking validation cultivated a space that was not inclined to learning and growth. This is turn presented a barrier towards achieving collective commitment, and ultimately achieving collection action.

Chapter V. Critical Race Theory Analysis

The historical cases and HMBK case illustrate what it takes to develop collective commitment towards collective action in spaces that desire social change. While I will detail and explore more general conclusions across all cases in Chapter 6, here, I illuminate another social dynamic that further complicates the narrative of developing of collective commitment- race.

Pawson and Tilley (2004) argue that "social circumstances" determine the extent of transformation that can/will be made by a program (p. 4). The authors acknowledge that in using a realist approach, researchers aim to unpack and understand the individual capacities, participant relationships, economic conditions, organizational position, as well as infrastructures and systems that make for the layers of social reality in which any program is situated (Pawson, 2013; Pawson & Tilley, 2004).

To this end, race (particularly how race was negotiated in the process of seeking collective commitment and action) was a social factor that became increasingly important to this study. I initially suspected race would be a potential factor in exchanges between key stakeholders in collective spaces. Subsequently, one of my criteria for selecting the historical cases focused on race, and one interview question for my empirical case highlighted race.

Yet I did not anticipate that racial dynamics and the peculiar ways in which stakeholders would negotiate race and power would play a crucial role in how participants and leaders approached change-making work and the outcomes they experienced. Hence, after coding for race and looking for convergent and divergent themes across and between racial groups in relation to my research sub question, I recognized I needed to apply a more critical lens to my analysis. Racial dynamics revealed to be a significant part of interactions and partnership formation in both the historical and empirical cases, and there were nuances in the ways in which race was negotiated within these spaces. Moreover, after having been immersed in the field and witnessing these racial dynamics first-hand, I found it necessary to center an analysis of race and racial dynamics using a framework that could appropriately name a root cause for discrepancies in what and how collective action was pursued.

Thus, I turn to critical race theory (CRT), and use CRT here to challenge the narratives of these cases. I do this by highlighting details and raising questions that build from the tenets of CRT, including a premise of the prevalence of race and the continued existence of racism. I focus in particular on the racial negotiation strategy of White interest-convergence, and a potential belief that using White interest-convergence as strategy could help the collective make progress on the outcomes they desired to achieve. Whereas White interest-convergence can be read in all cases, it did not yield the outcomes (particularly the long-term outcomes) leaders and participants believed it would.

I also illuminate another mechanism that was only present in cases that were more successful in developing collective commitment (both grassroots cases). These

cases created spaces that privileged the voice, needs, and desires of communities of color, and this strategy seemed to have made a difference in the outcomes these cases exhibited.

The Premise of Critical Race Theory. CRT proves to be the most appropriate theoretical framework to use in an analysis of the dynamics of race in these cases as it offers a multidimensional view of the ways that race produces multiple forms of social oppression (Alemán & Alemán, 2010; Howard, 2008; Matsuda, 1991; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Briscoe and Khalifa (2015) summarize the premise of CRT, contending that as racialized groups within the US were enslaved and oppressed, "complexes of ideologies, discourses, practices, and policies were developed to justify and maintain their oppression" (p. 741). Hence, CRT was first developed in the legal field as the work of legal scholars who were attempting to "develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law…" (Matsuda, 1991, p. 1331). Since then, CRT has been taken up by scholars in various fields, all whom assert that "racism is and has been an integral feature of American life, law, and culture, and any attempt to eradicate racial inequities has to be centered on the socio-historical legacy of racism" (Howard, 2008, p. 963). Moreover, CRT recognizes that "racism is often well disguised in the rhetoric of shared 'normative' values and 'neutral' social scientific and educational principles and practices", and as such challenges both conservative and liberal ideologies that normalize the persistence of White supremacy (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 27).

Given this premise, in what other ways can one understand how race, racial dynamics, and power were negotiated in these cases? Moreover, as I have focused

this study on the development of collective commitment, what key tools and strategies seem to be present as individuals attempt to navigate racial dynamics in effort to develop collective commitment and ultimately achieve their desired outcomes? How do these strategies contribute to a more complete understanding of achieving collective action and commitment? To help explore these questions, I turn to CRT's theory of White interest convergence.

The Theory of White Interest Convergence. Bell (1980), a legal scholar and founder of critical race theory first presented the theory of White interest convergence as "a critical way of understanding the dynamics of racism and social policy at key points, especially where a landmark event appears to have advanced the cause of race equality" (Gillborn, 2013, p. 135). Consequently, as a case may appear to have made a significant victory for the social, political, and economic advancement of people of color, Bell (1980) argues that this advancement was not attained without being converged with White interests, as White policymakers and power holders saw it in their best interests to accommodate these victories in order to preserve their power and White hegemony. To this end, he claims, "the interests of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of Whites" (Bell, 1980, p. 523).

His most popular example and argument to support this theory is Brown v. Board (1956), the quintessential educational equity decision that ruled the separation of Black and White children towards alleged equal schools unconstitutional. Although Brown v. Board (1954) is hailed as a critical victory in dismantling educational barriers faced by Black children, Bell (1980) contends that

one must not just consider the altruistic, moral, and empathetic reasoning of Whites

concerned with equality, but consider "whites in policymaking positions able to see

the economic and political advances at home and abroad that would follow

abandonment of segregation" (p. 524). Furthermore, Taylor (1998) suggests that

the theory interest convergence is most likely to be contested by liberal Whites who

support goals of racial equity, but may quickly retract when "Black progress exacts

or imposes a personal cost to their potion of power and privilege" (p. 1).

Yet Bell's (1980) case around Brown v. Board (1954) presents White interest

convergence as an analytical tool, as he demonstrated how larger economic and

socio-political interest of White elites arguably played into the court's decision.

Other CRT scholars have followed suit and employed the theory as "a model of

explanatory power", using it to frame, contextualize, and analyze (Taylor, 2000, p.

552).

For example, scholars such as David Stovall (2016) use interest convergence

to contextualize and explain education reform in Chicago. He illuminates that

although the city's education reforms have been publicized as creating positive

change among schools within Black and Brown neighborhoods within the city, real

results provide evidence of White interest convergence, particularly pointing to the

advancement for Chicago's predominately White political elite, and further

marginalization of Chicago's communities of color. In higher education, Aguirre Jr

(2010) presents a CRT counter narrative to explain how diversity can used to serve

White interests. Although diversity is often touted as a concept and practice that

enriches and sustains students and faculty of color, Aguirre shows how instead,

White faculty within academia can privilege themselves in discourses regarding diversity.

Yet Alemán and Alemán (2010) suggests that in addition to being an explanatory tool, White interest-convergence has also been used as a strategic tool. Although the authors note that Civil Rights and Chicano/a activists and leaders documented deliberate attempts to bring about social change by allying with White elite long before Bell's conceptualization of interest-convergence (i.e. Williams (2013) and García (2002)), they contend that several contemporary scholars have argued for "producing social change by deliberately aligning the social justice interests of communities of color with those of Whites" (Alemán & Alemán, 2010, p. 6).

The use of interest-convergence as a tool undoubtedly supports the contention that "in order to convince the majoritarian community to ally with historically marginalized communities on a social issue, White interests must get served, leaving out implications of race and racism or the discomfort of a discussion of White privilege" (Alemán & Alemán, 2010, p. 17; Bell, 1980)[59]. This concept presents a challenging thought, and means to question the five cases I examine within this dissertation.

I contend that at some level, all five cases I studied reflect the tactical use of White interest-convergence as a means to achieve outcomes set by the collective group. This notion is especially compelling given that four of the five cases I

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[59] It is important to note that Bell's (1980) original concept does not envision interest-convergence as "a rational and balanced negotiation between minoritized groups and White power holders, where change is achieved through the mere force of reason and logic" (Gillborn, 2013, p. 135). This view has been pressed by more contemporary scholars (Cashin, 2005; Ramirez, 2004).

presented were led and organized by people of color, and suggests that leaders of color believed White interest-convergence had to be employed in order for the initiative to make progress on their respective goals. Nevertheless, the cases also provide evidence that employing White interest-convergence as a generative strategy was insufficient and unsustainable in many ways.

To demonstrate this idea, the following section provides insight as to how the tactic of White interest-convergence played out at the macro-level across all five cases, particularly as an advancing strategy in garnering individual and organizational commitments. However, in some way, collectives all had to contend with the consequences of interest-convergence that Bell (1980) illuminates. Furthermore, long-term results of using this strategy illuminates some form of fragmentation, and it is these breakdowns that reasserted and maintained existing systemic inequities. In addition, I state my misgivings that remain for further research as to what this suggests given Bell's (1980) and Aleman & Aleman's (2010) argument, and consider implications for the interconnections among collective commitment, collective action, and race[60].

I also recognize that the data from the HMBK case (which allowed a more micro analysis) show that employment of White interest-convergence was confounded by a myriad of other matters. These complications not only challenge the extent to which White interest convergence can be considered an intentional strategy, but also encourage one to consider the complex intersectionalities of race,

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[60] I have specifically chosen to use misgivings to challenge the narratives of the historic cases as I recognize that the mezzo-level data for each case lends to inclusive conclusions, and the individual-level data to verify the intent and rationalization behind use of the strategies and tactics I reference is unavailable.

gender, and power. To this end, I discuss how issues such as gender, power, and other racial dynamics problematized the conscious, subconscious, or unconscious use of this tool.

Lastly, despite interest-convergence being evident in every case, my earlier findings demonstrate that the grassroots cases were more successful in developing collective commitment, and this collective commitment was employed towards achieving collective action. Hence, their efforts appeared more sustainable. I point to an additional racial negotiation strategy that highlighted race and racism, and appeared to make a difference in the outcomes of the grassroots cases.

Reflection On the Cases

Project Quest. In the case of Project Quest, Black and Brown community leaders and members first organized to understand how job displacement was impacting economically disadvantaged communities of color within San Antonio. They also researched San Antonio's economic trends, including previous and existing local job training efforts. As I noted: As local leaders' findings showed the city's loss of low-skilled jobs was being accompanied by new high-waged jobs that required high-skill, regional leaders organized meetings with leading economists whose data corroborated their findings on the shift of industry and job availability within the city (Rademacher et al., 2001; Warren, 1998). Project Quest leaders then used this economic data and appeal to initiate and attract predominately White business elite to the conversation of creating a new job-training program.

Hence, the predominately minority community organization leaders (COPS &

Metro Alliance) sought to make an appeal for a jobs training program to San Antonio's predominately White business community on the grounds of its potential economic benefits to predominately White businesses. Campbell (1994) notes that business leaders were reluctant to agree to the program, yet after the Black and Brown COPS and Metro Alliance leaders "had done their homework on job training", "earned a place at the table", and proved the program could also serve the interest White business leaders and organizations, the business sector supported the idea and committed jobs to Quest graduates[61] (p. 19).

It is plausible that COPS and Metro Alliance leaders would not have received the support of the business community and their commitment to providing jobs for Project Quest graduates had COPS and Metro Alliance leaders not strategically use interest-convergence to appeal to the economic concerns of predominately White business leaders. Yet there was undoubtedly a mismatch in values and beliefs of participating partners, given White business elites were engaged because of the economic appeal, and communities of color supported the project because they believed it would provide the holistic support and approach to training they desired.

In the long run, utilizing interest-convergence tactics did not prove to be a successful strategy and foundation for partnership, as program funding and support was cut back within the first three years of the project. Yet Bell (1980) predicts this

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[61] Campbell (1994) also interestingly notes a historical dissent between predominately minority COPS and Metro Alliance and Tony Frost (White local banker who was the first business leader to support Project Quest) and Charles Cheever (another White local banker), as COPS had protested a city economic venture in 1970 that would have put off higher-waged jobs. Yet Cheever is quoted saying he later "got to know some of the people in COPS and Metro Alliance, and saw that they were intelligent, sincere people who had a conscientious agenda and could work with the business community" (Campbell, 1994, p. 18). Frost is quoted saying he thought COPS and Metro Alliance "started out with a radical approach", but later believed "the project hey were supporting were reasonable and responsible" (Campbell, 1994, p. 19).

turn of event as a consequence to interest-convergence. He contends that valiant victories won through White interest-convergence present "uncertain and short-lived" impact, and in the long run, "may further protect the racial status quo" (Bell, 1980). Consequently, the long-term outcomes of challenges in programmatic funding and program downsizing bring to question if Quest leaders' utilization of White interest-convergence as a strategy truly rendered the outcome they hoped to achieve (Gillborn, 2013, p. 134).

Padres y Jóvenes Unidos (PJU). In the final segment within PJU's North High School campaign, the grassroots organizers called together a coalition of predominately Latino/a and Chicano/a cross-sector leaders throughout Denver whom they believed were allies "in the larger struggle around the Chicano and civil rights movements", and "understood that brown people were being systematically underserved" (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 133; Warren et al., 2012, p. 11). This coalition (the Coalition to Save North) called for the redesign of North High School, and self-contained coalition meetings were used to craft the group's vision for what a resigned North High would look like.

Yet each account of the North High Campaign explicitly discusses the partnership PJU/the Coalition to Save North solidified with Denver Public Schools superintendent, Michael Bennet, during this phase of the campaign. Bennet, a White male, ultimately held the power to formally call for the redesign of North High School. The DPS education reform agenda during this time included the redesign of a number of DPS schools, and in the prior year Bennet's administration had closed Manual High school as part of a year long redesign effort (Shirley, 2016). Manual's

achievement data deemed it a chronically low-performing school, and the school student population was predominately Black and Latino/a. As the school was closed without community input, "students and parents denounced Bennet as a racist at raucous school and community meetings" (Shirley, 2016, p. 54; Warren & Mapp, 2011).

Despite the historical precedent which hinted that Bennet needed PJU's social and political capital to pursue DPS' larger agenda for redesign, Warren and Mapp (2011) depict PJU's solidified partnership with Bennet as "mutually beneficial" (p. 122). Given this depiction and the mere undertaking of strengthening ties with a White administration to secure the outcome the coalition was aiming for, it is evident that PJU used white convergence as a strategic tool to ensure Bennet's commitment to redesign of North High School.

At an aerial view, it may seem that aligning with Bennet, a White power-holder, and his reform agenda for redesign consequently helped the Latino/a-based organizing group accomplish their goal of achieving redesign for North High School. Yet as one considers Bell's (1980) argument on white interest-convergence's ephemeral impact, we observe that this exact consequence was reflected in this initiative's long term outcomes, as the seemingly large victory of redesign of North was quickly cut back by student under enrollment, a school culture reflecting mistrust and disdain post redesign, and fallen achievement scores.

PUSH/Excel. The PUSH/Excel case begins with Jesse Jackson's grassroots crusade across the nation, assembling rallies, making appearances in stadiums, high schools, and conferences with the financial support of foundations and dedicated

staff from Operation PUSH. As a Black leader, Jackson's message was directed to

Black youth, urging them to "strive toward solid, middle-class virtues", and avoid

the "'diversionary' evils of alcohol, drugs, and lack of discipline that prevent black

people from keeping pressure for change on white society" (Cole, 1977, p. 378).

Yet the case presents an interesting unfolding of the use of interest-

convergence, *as Jackson was approached* by predominately White organizations (the

Department of Health, Education and Welfare [HEW] and the National Institution

for Education [NIE]), and given the opportunity to converge his agenda with theirs.

Yet Jackson's mere acceptance of support from HEW and NIE, and aligning

PUSH/Excel with a performance evaluation as a condition for support of his agenda

demonstrated a convergence of interests between the two agendas. To this end,

newspaper editorials were first to identify the HEW and NIE funding as "good

news/bad news", as it potentially represented "the federalization of Jesse Jackson",

and the propensity for a more "bureaucratic" and "orthodox" program (Farrar &

House, 1983, p. 32).

Perhaps the greatest irony of this case, however, lies in the placement of race

and racism within the PUSH/Excel movement and later program. Jackson's message

was undoubtedly directed towards Black youth, Black parents, and the Black

community at large. Moreover, Jackson was a trusted figure in both Black and White

communities, and had access to both. Yet Jackson's trust within the Black

community exonerated his hard-hitting message to Black people, which pushed for

an individual response to oppression through a commitment to excellence. Jesse

Jackson's message coincided with conservative Whites, and the message

decentralized racism, although he, as a Black man, was the face of the movement- an approach that yet again highlighted his use of interest convergence. White organizations, systems, and leaders recognized they would confront harsh backlash for disseminating the same message Jackson was marketing[62]. However, as Jackson's message aligned with traditional, White American, "Calvinist" values, both Jackson's interests in program expansion and the interest of White American value holders were aligned and served to increase PUSH/Excel's funding and expansion (House, 1988).

Yet secondary sources speculate how Jackson's crusade and collective action would have impacted Black youth and communities differently had Jackson continued the movement without aligning to White interest and funding stipulations (Farrar & House, 1983; House, 1988). Moreover, it is hard to imagine that Jackson would have received similar commitment and funding from HEW and NIE had he turned the conversation / message to focus on the funding structures and resource disparities that Black students experienced in the urban schools he toured and gave speeches in. Furthermore, given that the majority of local PUSH/Excel programs collapsed within the first five years, the long-term outcomes of PUSH/Excel associate with Bell's (1980) contention regarding successes attained through the use of White interest-convergence.

Promise Neighborhoods. The case of Promise Neighborhoods presents a

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[62] Cole (1977) explicitly speaks to the trust Jackson sustained with the Black community as a Black man and civil rights survivor, as well the harsh reality of what this trust and racial identify afforded him. He writes, "At the heart of Jackson's apparent effectiveness as an educational change agent, in addition to the carte blanche he derives from his color (what White could get away with telling Black girls that they have "fully developed bottoms and half-developed brains"?), are his magic in the pulpit and his credentials as a 'survivor' of the 1960's civil rights movement" (Cole, 1977, pp. 379-380).

policy that tactfully engages interest-convergence strategies. Former President

Obama, a Black president, introduced the concept of Promise Neighborhoods during

his 2008 campaign for the presidency as key to remedying interconnections

between generational poverty and educational achievement. Modeled after the

Harlem Children's Zone (a neighborhood-based education model that serves

predominately serves Black and Latino/a families and students; HCZ), Promise

Neighborhoods would use cradle-to-career strategies that coordinate cross-sectorial

support across health, social, educational entities "to provide children and families

with comprehensive, coordinated support to improve results and reverse the cycle

of generational poverty" (Comey, 2013; McAfee & Torre, 2015, p. 37)[63].

Yet, from the onset of the proposal for the policy, one had only to look at the

language used to recognize that race (and all the more, racism) had been

decentralized, despite the fact that the model it attempted to replicate

predominately served (and still serves) people of color, and Promise Neighborhoods

(given the program guidelines) would likely do the same.

Whereas the policy leaves out implications of race and racism and avoids the

discomfort of confronting the systematic and institutionalized devices that

contribute/d to the formation and continued marginalization of poor communities

of color, it centralizes schools, a conversation of poverty, and neoliberal values such

as competition and rigorous evaluation (or assessment). Moreover, Promise

Neighborhood stipulated that committed funding from a predominately White and

conservative legislature would only be granted to applicants that adopted the US

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[63] Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academies student demographics have historically reflected a 90%< of
students of color (http://schools.nyc.gov/SchoolPortals/05/M284/AboutUs/Statistics/default.htm).

Department of Education's Government Performance and Results Act indicators (GPRA), indictors that have been critiqued for the alignment with White, corporate and neoliberal-driven educational reform agenda (Person, 2011). Consequently, there is indication that White interest-convergence was strategically used to engage federal funding and passage in the legislature as the program sought to benefit poor communities of color.

Yet it is difficult to believe that Promise Neighborhoods policy architects would have received committed federal funds had they not supported and perpetuated an education reform agenda that fundamentally tied to the economic self-interests of White political and capitalist elites. Moreover, additional funding for Promise Neighborhood planning or implementation grants have not been allocated since 2014, and critics have projected that "it is not likely that [Promise Neighborhoods] will make progress or expand in the future, essentially making it a failed agenda" (Person, 2011, p. 34). This predicted "failed agenda" and maintenance of the status quo in turn parallels the predicted long-term outcomes and consequences of interest-convergence Bell (1980) proposes.

HMBK and Complications to the Employment of an Interest-Convergence Strategy

The case of HMBK provides an intriguing complication to the contention of White interest-convergence across all five cases. Given that Highland County residents and elected officials were more liberal and progressive, there was a general endorsement for HMBK and support of the belief that young men of color

faced many barriers to opportunity. Hence, the conversation around HMBK was not about 'if' something should be done; instead, the pertinent question was 'how' HMBK would get done.

Here, I explain the complexity of HMBK case, as the mezzo-level data illuminates the ways in which White interest-convergence was used by Black leaders and participants to move the initiative forward. Yet similar to the historic cases, using White interest-convergence as a strategy within HMBK proved insufficient and problematic. I point to additional empirical evidence that shows how other complexities and intersectionalities hindered the group and ultimately disabled HMBK from developing collective commitment towards collective action.

White Interest-Convergence in HMBK. At the national level, My Brother's Keeper (MBK) illustrates an interesting application and conceptualization of interest-convergence. The initiative clearly centers race, was initiated by a Black president, and the national call specifically challenges local communities to address barriers of opportunity for young men of color. This fusion was unprecedented, as men of color had never received an executive spotlight explicitly intended to attract diverse forms of capital towards preemptive educational and economic measures. While this attraction was embedded in the potential work of MBK communities, the initiative was nonetheless unfunded, which caused local communities to look for and depend on external resources.

Although Highland County My Brother's Keeper (HMBK) was initiated in a resource-rich and notably progressive county, it is critical to note that much of the county's resources are housed in businesses and predominately White universities

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and colleges (PWIs). Hence, in a pursuit for resources and support (financial, institutional, etc.), it was likely that the local initiative would have attracted powerful (and often White) partners to the table.

Yet the use of interest-convergence as a tactic and practice unfolds at the individual and group levels of HMBK. Whereas leadership maintained a theory that bringing powerful (and often White) individuals and institutions to the table would create the space for change for young men of color within the county, there was no clear vision of what could/should be done to advance young men of color that was set or articulated by men of color that lived in the county and would be most impacted by the milestone goals. Consequently, it became ordinary for predominately Black leadership to foreground the insight and interests of White legislators, institutional leaders, and power holders.

It is important to note that White legislators originally initiated and endorsed HMBK. As I noted, "Congresswoman Beth Moore appointed two African-American men, Washington State Representative Ryan Connor and Highland County Sheriff Aaron Bailey as overseers [of HMBK]…and by August 15th…the three elected officials appointed an executive director [John Walters]".

Relatedly, Washington State Representative Seth Rutters (White male) had also begun conversations about beginning a local MBK initiative in an adjacent town within the county. Congresswoman Beth Moore sequestered the overlap, as it was clear both offices were "having independent conversations with different people on this particular topic in parallel" (State Representative Rutters, Interview).

Yet the nudge and influence of legislative endorsement remained linked to

HMBK, as Black leaders and participants gave considerable attention to the interests of White legislators, power holders, and institutional leaders. As I noted, "It was not uncommon for the Black leaders to seek validation from white members and participants, or defer to the thoughts and opinions of White political leaders. John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK) repeatedly referred to wanting 'to hear what the congresswoman [had] to say' (referring to Congresswoman Beth Moore) or acceding to Harry Kennedy's (Superintendent, HCSD) suggestions in meetings" (Meeting Audio, 7/15/16). Consequently, interest-convergence became a developed cultural norm, as Anita and Samuel also began to ask or signal for additional presentation time to discuss ideas or things they had been working on explicitly in meetings when Harry Kennedy (Superintendent, HCSD) and Richard Olson (Professor & Director of the Institute for the Study of Children, Families, and Communities, NWU) were in attendance.

   The Consequences and Complications of White Interest Convergence in HMBK Space. It is important to note that HMBK leaders and participants could have been unaware of how their actions could be contributing to maintaining White power structures. As such, it is not unlikely that Black HMBK leadership could have been working to converge its interests (i.e. improving outcomes for young men of color) with the interests of the White (particularly male) committee members unconsciously. Nonetheless, the consequences and problematic results of privileging White interests as a tool (i.e. "resistance to...strategies that focus centrally on the elimination of racism; ...acceptance of incremental gains; ...the framing of responsibility for inequity solely on the individual rather than institutional or

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systemic racism that exists") were definitely evident (Alemán & Alemán, 2010, p. 15).

Yet there were other ways race intersected with other matters that lent to conflicts and tension within the group space, and ultimately impeded on development of collective commitment. While these dynamics are unable to be evidenced in the historical case, the micro-level data from the HMBK case specifically enables me to identify and illuminate these dynamics[64]. To this end, it is important to understand how these intersectionalities complicated the HMBK space and also worked against collective progress.

One such complication was gender dynamics, and the attenuation of relationships between Black male and female team members. While both Black and White women that were a part of the initiative spoke of "remaining a step behind", or, being cautious in their involvement with the HMBK as they understood it was an initiative regarding young men, issues of power and paternalism led Black female backbone team members feeling silenced and alienated although they could contribute more. During her interview, Anita repeatedly mentioned that she was "well-researched and trained" and approached her work with HMBK "from a space of passion" (Anita Jackson, Interview). Nonetheless, our conversation also pointed to her feeling "silenced" as a woman within the space although she knew and wanted "to contribute more" (Anita Jackson, Interview). As a Black female in the group, I understood Anita's comments, as I had learned I had "to work around some things" "as one of few women at the table" (Tabitha Bentley, in Interview with Anita

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[64] It is highly possible that many of these same issues were indeed present in the historical cases, however, data limitations prohibit me from identifying and illuminating potentially similar dynamics.

Jackson). Hence, the practice of allowing male voices to dominate over others and the resulting strained relationships between male and female group members undoubtedly impeded on the group's ability to garner collective commitment.

I noted this dynamic in my personal experience within HMBK as well. I worked as an intermediary between the executive director, community partners, and the HMBK VISTAs, and while all participants were generally friendly and respectful during interactions, I often saw that my ideas and voice within the group did not carry much weight. Consequently, strategies such as learning "to work around some things" and finding when "to let some things be until [I had] the capacity to change [it]" were strategies I personally used throughout time within HMBK (Tabitha Bentley, in Interview with Anita Jackson). For me, this experience was reminiscent of the historic positioning of Black women within change-making movements and initiatives, in which we often bear much of the burden of the work, but are not acknowledged as compeers (and more daringly, leaders) within these spaces. Hence, my own experience complicates a simple explanation of White interest-convergence being used as a tool within HMBK.

Another complication and intersection that impeded the group's ability to develop collective commitment and progress were issues of racial authorization. Harry Kennedy mentions this matter during his interview, as he wondered if "this is work that has to be done by African-American leaders for African-American young boys" (Interview). During her interview, Ruth Nicole (Asst. Superintendent, HCSD) relayed a similar precaution-

I am sometimes cautious, as a white woman taking on a perceived mantle of

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something for black men. Like, I don't wanna speak for a Black man, because

my voice is the one that has power, right? I'd rather find a way to create a

space for that black man to have his voice heard directly. (Ruth Nicole,

Interview)

This sentiment was common among White participants. Of my 7 interviews with

White participants, 6 relayed some type of wonder, caution, and deference to

participating in HMBK given that they were White, and were unsure of how they

could (or were expected) to contribute to an initiative for and about young men of

color. Consequently, White participants were looking to Black participants and

leadership to clarify what was to be done within the initiative, and who would be a

part of completing the action.

Yet Black leaders and participants (unconsciously or not) were consistently

attempting to converge their interests with White power holders and leaders. As I

noted:

It was not uncommon for the Black leaders [within HMBK] to seek validation

from White members and participants, or defer to the thoughts and opinions

of White political leaders. . John Walters (Executive Director, HMBK)

repeatedly referred to wanting "to hear what the congresswoman [had] to

say" (referring to Congresswoman Beth Moore) or acceding to Harry

Kennedy's (Superintendent, HCSD) suggestions in meetings (Meeting Audio,

7/15/16).

Moreover, instances in which Anita and Samuel (both Black participants with less

positional power) explicitly asked for presentation time to discuss ideas or things

they have been working on when Richard Olson and Harry Kennedy (both White males with high positional power) were present at meetings reflected a developed and reinforced social norm in which Black participants were willing to acknowledge and learn from White participants with positional power, yet struggled to support and learn from fellow Black participants with less positional power[65]. The implications of this racial dynamic included extremely perplexing environments, which ultimately led to standstills in HMBK's progress and acquisition of individual commitments towards the collective level.

In all, the case of HMBK complicates the narrative of interest-convergence in many ways. While Black leaders appeared to be using interest-convergence as strategic tool to acquire resources and maintain the support of White leaders and power-holders, White participants consistently relayed a hesitancy around their involvement as they were unsure of how they could (or were expected) to contribute an initiative for and about young men of color. Issues of White interest-convergence and racial authorization were further complicated by the practice of allowing male voices to dominate over others and strained relationship between Black male and female participants. These complications point to the complex ways in which race intersected with other matters (i.e. gender and power), how these intersectionalities contributed to conflicts and tension that got in the way of developing collective commitment, and similar to the historical cases- why interest-convergence strategies were insufficient.

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[65] The narrative on p. 174 and my analysis on page 227 provide clear examples in which Black leaders (often Black male leaders) silenced and/or struggled to support and learn from other Black participants (often Black females). These actions were starkly contrasted against instances where Black leaders showed deference to White leaders with higher positional power.

Summary of Interest Convergence Application and More Successful Strategies

Having reflected on each case and illuminated the different ways in which White interest-convergence was used as a tool across these cases, the pertinent question of "why" lingers. Why would individuals or communities of color use interest-convergence as a strategy to facilitate collective commitment and perceive it as a viable tool to achieve their desired outcomes? Secondly, why, in the majority of cases, did this strategy prove insufficient to connecting to individuals' values, beliefs, and ideologies- the crucial foundation for developing collective commitment? And lastly, why did the grassroots cases prove to be more sustainable despite the employment of a White interest-convergence strategy?

Paradoxically, the conceptualization of how and why individuals and communities of color within these cases may have chosen to use white interest convergence as a strategic tool holds many similarities to the rationale for why groups might use cross-sector partnerships to address large social problems. Proponents of using cross-sector partnerships to address social challenges purport that "...multiple sectors of a democratic society...must collaborate to deal effectively and humanely with [social] challenges", and "social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from isolated intervention of individual organizations"(Bryson et al., 2006, p. 44; Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 38).

Likewise, proponents of using interest-convergence as a tactic acknowledge "it is increasingly unlikely that a single racial group can succeed independently in pursuing a progressive policy agenda", and as such see interest-convergence and coalition politics as a pathway to addressing social challenges such as racial

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inequality (Cashin, 2005, p. 256). Hence, Black and Brown individuals and

collectives within these historical cases likely assumed social change could only be

attained if other racial groups, particularly Whites, were also supporting their

agenda.

Yet this pursuit is problematic in a number of ways. First, in all cases, it

misaligns individuals' values and beliefs, particularly pertaining to the importance

and acknowledgement of race and racism. Whereas PJU and Project Quest leaders

engaged their communities with a very conscious understanding of how policies,

structures, and the economic environment that was impacting their Black and

Brown communities, their appeals to White constituencies were not also based in

these same beliefs, values, and ideologies. Instead, Project Quest leaders aligned

with the predominately White business community's interest around economic

growth, and PJU aligned with Superintendent Michael Brown's larger plan for

redesign across several district schools. This mismatch in values caused a

considerable breach as to how individual commitments were garnered, how racial

interests were served, and how conversations of race and racism were driven back

leading to the maintenance of an inequitable system. Nevertheless, there was an

opportunity for communities of color to bring their experiences and issues of race

forward, and I later speak to how this seemingly contributed to comparatively

greater success.

Although PUSH/Excel foregrounded race, the program's alignment with

White power-holders did not allow for a conversation of racism, and how the

individual responsibilities of Black families and students alone were not going to

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change institutional problems. Likewise, policymakers for Promise Neighborhoods circumvent race and racism, yet the policy attends to neoliberal values rather than the values of the people of color that are most impacted by the policy. Hence, again the misalignment of individual values and commitments and the failure to push social change without foregrounding race and racism again led to the maintenance of an inequitable system. Additionally, HMBK Black group leaders and participants often attempted to align towards the ideas and needs of white institutional leaders and power-holders, rather than the men of color that lived in the county and would be most impacted by the milestone goals.

Consequently, all cases point to Aleman and Aleman's (2010) assertion that "claiming this approach [interest-convergence as a political strategy] as the primary strategy for social change negatively affects social justice goals" (Alemán & Alemán, 2010, p. 3). Specifically, using White interest-convergence as a strategy generates a space where it was difficult to affirm, validate, and privilege the voices and experiences of people of color in an authentic way. Moreover, it more often decentralized the role of race and racism in the larger and direct contexts of the social issues each initiative was aiming to change.

Yet the two more successful cases within this study point to a use of additional strategies that did privilege the voice, needs, and desires of communities of color, and consequently appeared to make a critical difference in the collective commitment that was garnered and collective action they accomplished.

For PJU, this tool was political education. Political education explicitly allowed the Latino/a organization group to discuss matters such as race and racism,

discuss root causes of these topics, examine the impacts that "structural inequities and power structure", and connect knowledge of a historic struggle to everyday lives of youth and adults with hopes of inspiring them to act (Warren & Mapp, 2011, p. 108; 133).

Likewise, Project Quest used the principles and tools of relational organizing, particularly organizing with rooted community leaders and conducting house meetings. Given that of the dislocated workers were economically disadvantaged Black and Latino/a workers, COPS and Metro Alliance leaders (whom most often were also people of color) led house meetings as a means to reconnect and build relationships with their neighbors, provide an opportunity for these communities of color to discuss "common difficulties (such as layoffs and low wages)", as well as a space to "process their private pain...[and] realize others in their neighborhood share[d] it..." (Campbell, 1994, p. 13). Subsequently, house meetings were spaces where the voices, experiences, and ideas of economically displaced communities of color were affirmed, validated, and privileged. These experiences were foregrounded and explicitly used to shape the principles for the Project Quest program. Furthermore, house meetings also provided a means to develop collective commitment, which Project Quest leaders undoubtedly employed when protests, rallies, and the influence of community numbers were needed to push their collective agenda.

Summary. Whereas Bell (1980) presents the theory of interest-convergence as an analytical tool, I demonstrate how White interest-convergence can also be used as a strategy. Although this strategy can be traced throughout each case, the

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outcomes each group experienced vary considerably. The critical analysis I present

holds the greatest challenge for leaders of color in change-making spaces, as the

cases reflected a potential belief among Black and Brown conveners and organizers

that assumed social change could only be attained if other racial groups, particularly

Whites, were also supporting their agenda. Nonetheless, this belief proved to be

problematic and insufficient, as each collective had to contend with the

consequences of interest-convergence in some way. The grassroots cases, however,

illuminate other intentional strategies that foregrounded race, racism, and the

experiences of the people of color, with opportunity for them to meet together to

explore their own interests. In Chapter 6, I continue this dialogue and discuss

implications for the use of White interest-convergence in cross-sector work that has

focused influence and impact within communities of color.

Chapter VI. Discussion

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the connections between collective commitment and collective action, how both reflect the successes (or lack of success) in addressing large social problems, and how race and power is negotiated in the process of realizing collective commitment and action. Here, I discuss findings and insights derived from analysis of both the realist synthesis of historical cases and my empirical work with Highland County's My Brother's Keeper[66]. In Chapter 2 I presented a theoretical grounding distinguishing between the power-origin and dynamics of the cases I investigated (grassroots and grass-high). Here I represent, first, the set of findings with respect to these designations. I then draw conclusions from the evidence presented in Chapter 5, where I used critical race theory to illuminate how race and power was negotiated in the process of achieving (or failing to achieve) collective commitment and collective action. I then provide insights on the implications of these findings.

Key Assertions

Based on my cross-case analyses of commitment in grassroots and grass-high

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[66] I also want to emphasize that this dissertation builds on the premise that the people involved see value in working collectively. So, collective commitment without collective engagement lies outside the scope and premise of this work.

cases that use multi-sector collaborations to pursue collective action as well as my CRT analysis, I draw the following conclusions:

- ✓ <u>Grassroots initiatives I studied were more successful in developing collective commitment than the grass-high initiatives.</u>

The cases of Project Quest and Padres y Jóvenes Unidos (PJU) clearly demonstrate stronger examples of the development of collective commitment. In particular, leaders and participants within these cases did a better job of connecting individual values/beliefs and focusing them towards a collective goal/level. This was accomplished through powerful contextual features, mechanisms, and the development of an environment that fostered collective commitment. One recurrent contextual feature was a strong affiliation and connection to Black and Brown campaigns for civil and human rights. While Project Quest was imagined, researched, and brought to fruition by long-standing organizing groups that were formed and led by people of color, PJU considered their collective action to be a continuation of the Chicano movement and struggle. PJU even created a second multi-sector coalition that was predominately Latino/a at the end of its campaign, and individuals who were on this coalition all understood that Latino/a students were systematically underserved. As such, both cases drew heavily from the passion and deep emotion of the Black and Brown communities that had experienced or were experiencing the problem, and directed this energy and their commitment towards collective action.

Both PJU and Project Quest also used powerful mechanisms to connect to individual values and beliefs, and harness individual commitment to a collective

level. PJU used political education and training, which highlighted the ways in which inequity functioned within systems, which leaders then connected to the events and issues parents and youth were facing on a daily basis. Project Quest engaged in relational organizing, using strategies such as house meetings, to build relationships for the purposes of collective action. These relationships connected and fostered the values and beliefs of those involved in organizing and partnering, and aided in developing a sustained level of collective commitment that was used to realize the implementation of Project Quest.

Moreover, PJU and Project Quest were also more successful in fostering an environment that could sustain collective action as measured through vision, trust, and space to learn. Both groups created a space that was open to the collective's growth in understanding of the problem, and groups engaged in high levels of listening, acknowledgement, and sharing towards the development of trust. While Project Quest and PJU differed in how they envisioned their ultimate outcome, both collectives created an environment in which those in the group saw themselves as part of realizing a vision, and genuinely incorporated the feedback of those involved.

Given these conditions, Project Quest and PJU were able to successfully develop collective commitment, and this commitment contributed towards achieving collective action. Furthermore, their efforts proved more sustainable, as both collectives remained committed through the implementation and realization of their desired outcomes.

✓ <u>Grass-high initiatives attracted powerful people to the table, and (when</u>

<u>funded) accomplish the outcome of implementing/creating a new program[67].</u>

<u>However, these initiatives were less able to create sustainable programs.</u>

PUSH/Excel and Promise Neighborhoods both began programming with funding from government entities (Congress funded Promise Neighborhoods, and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and National Institution for Education funded the PUSH/Excel initiative). Hence, having more funding (in comparison to the grassroots cases I examined) enabled individuals within both initiatives to have substantial resources at the start of their journey. This in turn allowed them to quickly accomplish the outcome of achieving program implementation.

Both these cases and the HMBK case exemplified the utilization of powerful people to convey messages, garner partnerships, and build collectives around these initiatives. For PUSH/Excel, this person was Jesses Jackson. For Promise Neighborhoods, these powerful individuals were executives of local business, agency administrators, and elected officials. In the case of HMBK, state and local legislators as well as local agency leaders were drawn to the initiative during its early stages. While the outcomes for all three were defined in some way (i.e. milestones, a stakeholder evaluation, Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators) all three cases struggled to make progress towards these defined outcomes, whether that was due to having no clear strategy on how to do so, or not having the community capacity to strive towards the outcomes.

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[67] I use the word "program" broadly. While Promise Neighborhoods and HMBK did not aim to create or start new programs, I associate the creation and gathering of a new collaborative to support even existing programs as a new "program".

All three initiatives also reflected a failure to effectively engage or build in the voices of those at the neighborhood level. Although Promise Neighborhoods were required to involve community in the plan-making process and HMBK hosted the required local action summits to engage community voice, neither case nor PUSH/Excel found continuous ways to include local community-based perspectives into the initiative. Nonetheless, both initiatives included language such as 'neighborhoods' and 'community' within their titles, as to signal they were spaces that were grounded in the perspectives and desires of the people they aimed to impact. Lack of connection to individuals at the local level undoubtedly influenced sustainability as well as the ability to attain and foster individual commitments.

Yet given that financial resources were already provided for PUSH/Excel and Promise Neighborhoods, and those that had power to approve implementation were included in the decision-making, neither case needed the individual commitments and ultimately collective commitment of those at the local level to initiate their ideas. This dynamic made it harder for the grass-high initiatives I studied to connect to individual values and beliefs, which in turn could have fostered greater collective commitment.

In addition, grass-high cases were less able to foster trusting, vision-oriented, and robust spaces to learn. I found that all three cases struggled to develop trust across multiple levels of the initiative. There was a consistent deficit orientation used with schools and communities that were geographically included in Promise Neighborhood, despite the fact that some communities had a history of community engagement and commitment and were not acknowledged or listened to

during initiation or implementation (Horsford & Sampson, 2014). Likewise, organizational members of PUSH/Excel and HMBK were not heard and acknowledged, nor met with group willingness to listen and grapple with their ideas.

Vision operated in divergent ways across the grass-high cases. Promise Neighborhoods had very clear outcome and goals, PUSH/Excel struggled to create outcomes that reflected Jesse Jackson's approach to educational reform, and HMBK struggled to find and designate goals and outcomes that would help them address the larger MBK milestones. Nonetheless, I deemed each path unproductive: as the research revealed some Promise Neighborhoods did not have the capacity to do what was necessary to attain goals/outcomes, PUSH/Excel's stakeholder evaluation foreseeably did not match what was being done within the movement turned program, and the vast majority of HMBK interviewees relayed that the initiative had no clear vision. These issues made it harder to create an environment that nurtured and sustained collective commitment.

Similarly, these cases did not appear to be strong spaces to learn. Initial external funding for PUSH/Excel and Promise Neighborhoods impelled both programs to quickly prove their impact, disallowing for mistakes, risks, or learning through doing. HMBK showed that while those at the table said they valued diversity in perspectives, there was little evidence of leadership or group members creating or encouraging each other to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from both successes and failures. Lack of space to learn consequently hindered an environment in which collective commitment could be developed.

While the collective commitment in these cases did not determine if these initiatives were implemented or not, it is no coincidence that given the lack of developed collective commitment, all three initiatives were demonstrably less sustainable than the grassroots cases that were examined. The majority of local PUSH/Excel programs dissolved within five years, Congress has not reissued additional Promise Neighborhood grants, and HMBK remained unsure of the initiative's future security. Hence, these grass-high initiatives were not able to create sustainable programs.

✓ <u>While all initiatives sought to impact people and communities of color (implicitly or explicitly), leaders, conveners, and policymakers within the cases sought to substantiate the commitments of White partners by tactfully converging the interests of the initiative with the interests of White power holders. Yet using interest convergence as a tactic did not guarantee successful outcomes, nor did it account for other micro-level intersectionalities that could have been at work.</u>

In the previous chapter I used evidence from the five cases to show interest-convergence had been used as a tactic in every case. I contended that leaders, conveners, and policymakers across these cases used White interest-convergence as a strategy to garner the commitments of White power holders, as they seemingly believed the partnerships and initiatives they worked within needed the support and commitment of those White individuals with power to successfully achieve their

goals. Nevertheless, employing White interest-convergence as a tactic did not guarantee successful outcomes.

Moreover, the application of this tactic did not come without consequences. In the grass-high Promise Neighborhood case, using interest convergence meant decentralizing race although Promise Neighborhoods more often encompassed communities in which Black and Brown people were the majority. Moreover the conversation of systematic and institutionalized racism was silenced, and was substituted for a lens of "intergenerational poverty" that ignored the institutional contributions to the function of intergenerational poverty. PUSH/Excel illustrated the contentions with converging White interest and a poignant message to Black communities to individually respond to oppression through a commitment to excellence. Although Jackson was Black and the leader of the initiative, his message and approach decentralized racism. Within HMBK leadership maintained that bringing powerful (and often White) individuals and institutions into conversation would create the space for change for young men of color within the county. Yet the use of interest convergence exhibited an acceptance of the incremental gain of having a space and conversation about young men of color, with little strategy and intent to address the systemic barriers that race and racism sustain. While all three grass-high cases presented evidence of using interest convergence as a tool, all three were unsuccessful in fostering collective commitment, as well as creating sustainable programs.

Leaders and participants in both grassroots cases similarly used interest convergence as a strategy to substantiate the commitments of White partners.

However, these cases were more successful in garnering collective commitment towards collective action, as well as attaining the outcomes they sought to make progress on. To this end, I illuminated how other racial negotiation tactics (such as political education and house meetings) served as additional mechanisms these groups used to strategically address and challenge systematic injustices. As such, these mechanisms seemed to fuel the successes of these change-making initiatives rather than the use of interest-convergence.

Implications

In using theoretical perspectives from public management, human resources in education, and social theory and innovation to analyze my cases, I conclude that collective commitment was dynamically connected to individual commitment, as more individual commitment heightened collective commitment, and vice versa. While collective commitment was not necessary for collective action in these cases, they demonstrated that more collective commitment is better for sustainability and contributes to fostering individual values and beliefs; which generates individual commitment, and dynamically builds collective commitment.

Theoretically, Robertson and Tang (1995) acknowledge this very notion. Yet they assert that the quality and success of collective action often mirrors the quality and success of the collective commitment. Project Quest and PJU indeed demonstrated that strong collective commitment could reflect the quality and success of the action pursued by collaborative groups. In contrast, PUSH/Excel had the consensus of various sectors to partner and work together. This was enough to

spur the development of local programs, yet the initiative never developed strong

collective commitment, and did not make concrete progress to outcomes they cared

about, such as youth delinquency, Black youth achievement, and building Black

families. Likewise, HMBK and local Promise Neighborhoods struggled to foster trust,

strategically implement a vision, be spaces to learn, and this was reflected in the

challenges they encountered as they pursued collective action.

This then presents interesting implications for the use of the word

'community', as the cases here demonstrated that having 'community' within an

initiative name does not automatically make the initiative communal, or collectively

committed to outcomes that impact communities. Warren and Mapp (2011) define

community as "a group of interconnected people who share a common history, a set

of values, and a sense of belonging, [or] in short- a culture and identity" (p. 20). The

grassroots cases I examine had a strong connection between these definitional

aspects of community (i.e. connecting to individual values, developing rich

environments that share a common history and/or set of values) and the

development of collective commitment (e.g. trust, in which group members shared

feelings and insights with the group believing one would be heard and

acknowledged). The grass-high cases often included words that signaled community

(i.e. 'neighborhoods', My Brother's Keeper 'Community' Challenge), yet were

unsuccessful in developing collective commitment, and subsequently a strong

connection between definitional aspects of community.

Smyth (2009) confirms and discusses how the term 'community' has been

attached to government initiatives, yet argues that using or having the name

'community' does not make certain that the initiative is truly for or about the 'community' it claims to be for. To this end, he critiques that "the language game [of bottom-up yet state-funded programs] is one of invoking wholesome-sounding words like 'community' to convey the outward appearance of being 'caring, responsive, and progressive'" (Smyth, 2009, p. 11). Consequently, if collective action initiatives seek to engage, attend to, and aspire to be a 'community', the cases within this study demonstrate that 'community' becomes authentic and genuine when leaders attended to critical factors such as trust, vision, and becoming a space to learn. Hence, developing environmental factors that foster collective commitment (trust, vision, space to learn) are critical to community building.

My first set of findings, then, assert that although the grass-high cases I studied were more likely to attract powerful people, financial capital, and accomplish the collective goal of achieving program implementation, the grassroots initiatives were more successful in developing collective commitment and sustainable initiatives. Yet a CRT analysis and perspective challenges the authenticity of individual and collective commitments in collective spaces, as the ways in which race and racial dynamics are negotiated appeared to be critical towards making progress on the groups' collective action objectives.

Every case I examined provided evidence of strategically using White interest-convergence to attain individual and collective commitment, yet every case was not successful in achieving its desired outcomes. Hence, although White interest-convergence as a strategy proved to be insufficient as a tactic to successfully achieve desired outcomes, it appeared that leaders, conveners, and

policymakers believed it was necessary for achieving collective commitment and collective action. Nevertheless, the two grassroots cases utilized other strategies that instead privileged the voice, needs, and desires of communities of color, and this consequently appeared to make a noteworthy difference in the collective commitment that was garnered and collective action they accomplished.

To this end, my role as a participant-researcher within the HMBK case leads me to believe that even if men of color within the community who could have been impacted by the initiative were driving the vision and work for the group, white interest-convergence would still be perceived as a strategy and tactic to attain resources. This in turn warrants a similar question to what Alemán and Alemán (2010) raise- do the interests of people of color always have to converge with White interests?

I do not purport that the cases and contentions I present here suggest dismantling or discontinuing grass-high initiatives such as PUSH/Excel and MBK, nor the abandonment of the use of white interest-convergence as strategy[68]. Grass-high initiatives shine a light on areas and issues that more than likely would go unexposed had it not been for the light shown by these projects. However, the

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[68] Here, I believe it's important to mention a potential theory and consequence that I will not explore further in this piece, but plan to revisit in subsequent work. In the intersection of law and race, Delgado (1996) examines the idea of contradiction-closing cases. This concept refers to cases (or policies) "provide the solution when the gap grows too large between, on one hand, the liberal rhetoric of equal opportunity and, on the other hand, the reality of racism" (p.80). Hence, these verdicts and policies appear to remove inequalities, but no long-term progressive impact is realized nor is the reality of inequality changed. Delgado implies that these cases can serve as a means to prevent further reform, as they "allow business as usual to go on even more smoothly than before, and because now we can point to the exceptional case and say, 'See, our system is really fair and just. See what we just did for minorities and the poor'" (Delgado, 1999, p. 445; in Gillborn, 2013, p. 136). As the majority of the grass-high cases I studied can be attributed as unsuccessful since they did not truly deliver on the outcomes they posed, it is possible that could serve as contradictory-closing cases, and as such, hindrances to further reform efforts. While the implications I suggest by no means call for abandoning efforts that attempt to rectify inequality, I think it is important to acknowledge that such an implication is not novel, and has been discussed by critical race theorists.

evidence does challenge conveners, organizers, and critically conscious policymakers alike to think about the consequences of the use of strategies such as White interest-convergence. This is particularly crucial as critical scholars caution that within alleged 'victories' won through interest-convergence, "apparent gains are quickly cut back" and in the long-run these victories may "further protect the racial status quo" (Gillborn, 2013, p. 134). This concept also has the greatest ramifications for leaders of color in change-making spaces, as they must navigate the clear tensions, drawbacks, and consequences of interest-convergence, realize how much further our society has to change in order to achieve racial equity, and not be tempted to be complacent with incremental gains.

As I started this dissertation with a keen eye towards understanding the potential impact of cross-sector partnerships aimed to address large social problems, I recognized that theorists, scholars, and collective impact practitioners appraise cross-sector partnerships as social processes that can deliver change and social innovation by operating as bridges across sector boundaries. As such, they are (as Seitanidi (2008) articulates) processes which involve "reframing the 'rules of the market game'" and questioning fundamental assumptions that underlie established organizational forms (p. 2).

Yet, can cross-sector partnerships that fail to acknowledge the prevalence and ever presence of race and racism truly serve as bridges or reframe the rules of a market game that is seemingly played into by White and people of color alike? Or, if cross-sector partnerships truly are spaces that can reframe the rules of the market game, are leaders, reformers, and organizers of color and presumed progressive

White allies questioning and contesting enough? Moreover, where are the spaces within these initiatives in which the voices, experiences, and desires of people of color are not only haphazardly considered, but affirmed, validated, privileged, and explicitly used to drive the change being pursued? Based on the findings of this study, I urge those within multi-sector partnerships to reflectively look at individual and collective commitments made within the partnership, consider the tools that are being used to negotiate race and racial dynamics within the collective group and community at large, and challenge their cross-sector collectives to consider whose interests are truly being served in reforms that ostensibly aim to achieve greater equity.

Appendices

Appendix A
List of sectors, organizations, and institutions represented in HMBK
Steering Committee

- Washington Congressional House Office (54th district)

- Highland County Sheriff's Office

- Highland County School District

- Highland County Department of Human Services

- The City of Brampton

- Brampton Public Schools

- Mentor4Youth (after-school enrichment program)

- Northern Washington University

- University of Washington

- Washington at Work (local workforce development association)

- Local business owners

Appendix B
Interview Protocol

Context of Work

    Understanding of responsibility, collective action, and infrastructural
    context:

        1. Is there a need for an MBK initiative (nationally, and locally)?
        Why?

        2. Whose responsibility is it to ensure that boys and men of color
        have access to full opportunities (educational, economic, second
        chance)?

        3. In your opinion, what role does HMBK play locally?

        4. From your perspective, what are the outcomes HMBK hopes to
        achieve?

    Personal connection to the work (individual):

        1. Can you tell a little about your professional background and work
        (education, current job, etc.) and how this leads you to engaging in
        this type of cross-sector work?

        2. Plainly, what do you value about a space like this that allows you
        and others to collectively work on addressing barriers to
        opportunity for young men of color?

        3. What do you see as your contribution to HMBK?

        4. Have you worked on other initiatives that aim to support young
        men of color? Did any of those involve other partners?

Core Committee Questions
Formation of HMBK

    1. Tell me about how you became involved with HMBK.

        a. Timeline (accepting the challenge, community summit as stepping
        stones)

        b. What role were you asked to play in being a part of the initiative?
        (designated role from partner, institution, etc.). Why did you say
        yes to participating?

        c. How does (interviewee's organization) fit into HMBK?

    2. (Showing the MBK Building Place Based Initiatives Document)

a. Did you review this document at some point? To your knowledge, how was it used? Was it helpful?

b. Does it seem relevant? How?

3. Why have you chosen to engage and participate in the ways you have?

a. Do you know how to engage and participate in this initiative?

b. Why do you think others engaged/participated in they ways they have?

c. Has your engagement, or the engagement of others changed over time? If so, how?

4. How has your race and gender impacted your choices on when and how you participate in the initiative?

5. Was there a time when you noticed differences in power playing a role in the group's dynamics?

6. From what you recall, what was the vision of HMBK in its early stages?

a. Does HMBK have a clear vision as to where the initiative is heading now?

b. If yes, what is it? What strategies is the group using to reach this vision?

c. If no, what seems to be unclear?

7. If you were given the task of working with a collective group of people to make change for young men of color, what would you do this? What strategies would you use?

8. How much ownership do you feel in being a part of this initiative?

a. Is this important to have?

b. Why or why not?

Mechanisms at Work

1. Walk me through the things HMBK has done to accomplish its goals. What are things the initiative has done well? Or, what specific actions have enabled the HMBK to move toward change for young men of color within the county?

2. What are things the initiative hasn't done well? Or, what specific actions have prevented HMBK from making change for young men of color within the county?

3. What resources, institutions, and/or people have been integral to the successes of HMBK?

4. What resources, institutions, and/or people have been less helpful to the work HMBK has done?

Progress towards Outcomes

1. Are the MBK milestones reflective of the change that is needed for young men of color in Highland County?
    a. Do you believe we're measuring the right outcomes?
2. Do you believe the youth council / grant is a step in the right direction for HMBK? How does this lead us to the group's outcome goals?
3. In your opinion, how much progress has HMBK made towards these outcomes? Are the collective decisions leading us towards progress on these milestones?

General:
1. Is there anything else you'd like to share?
2. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C
Table F. HMBK Timeline of Events

Phase	Month	Event	Date	Key Notes From Event
1	Aug-15	Formal Acceptance of the My Brother's Keeper Community Challenge	8/15/15	
1	Oct-15	Local Action Summit I	Monday, 10/12/2015	(This was a launch of the HMBK community. Most remember it being a very impactful event. I was not there, but have artifacts from the event.)
1	Nov-15	Debrief of HMBK Local Action Summit I	unknown	(The artifact has key summary information from the summit. It shows the game changers, quick wins, and potential long-term ideas from the over 200 people that attended the summit.)
1	Nov-15	Steering Committee Meeting	Wednesday, 11/11/2015	(This was a follow up meeting from the Local Action Summit. I was not a part of the group yet, so I'm not sure exactly who was there. However, I do have a copy of the meeting agenda. Yet the agenda lacks clarity. There's a call to create a local action team and a steering committee, as well as discussion on MBK playbook steps.)

1	Dec-15	Washington MBK Summit	Wednesday, 12/2/2015	This convening was for starting MBK communities and was hosted by One Love Global. It was an all day event in Liberty and included youth participation.
1	Dec-15	Steering Committee Meeting	Monday, 12/14/2015	Steering committee talked about the policy document the group was putting together.
1	Jan-16	Submitted HMBK Policy Review	Friday, 1/15/2016	John Walter crafted the front end of this document. Linda Bay took the lead on crafting the work around the milestones. John Walters asked me to contribute/configure the data that came from the county sheriff's office. Lots of effort to put together, yet did not really fuel any of the work ahead.
1	Jan-16	MLK Celebration, My Brother's Keeper Session	Monday, 1/17/2016	Panel discussion including HMBK steering committee members Amanda Saul, Tabitha Bentley, John Walters, and Rep. Connors. Program also included table discussions around milestones
1	Mar-16	Steering Committee Meeting	Friday, 3/18/2016	Tabitha was asked to speak on her dissertation project. Josh Hill discusses potential of HMBK acquiring two VISTA workers.
1	Apr-16	First Round VISTA Interviews	Friday, 4/29/2016	We interviewed two candidates. Samuel Davis was clearly the choice between the two, and he showed potential for growth and love for learning.
1	May-16	Second Round VISTA Interviews	Wednesday, 5/4/2016	Anita Jackson interviewed as only candidate for the budget and development position. John Walters then submitted recommendations to WCSC re: employment for she and Samuel.

2	Jun-16	Meeting with JW	Thursday, 6/23/2016	John Walters and I talk about direction for HMBK prior to VISTAs coming in. I attempt to get scope for the work they'd be doing. It ends w/John asking for bullet point on what I'm thinking. Yet I never received a response to this piece.
2	Jun-16	Ali in All of Lunch (Points of Light Conference, Union City, WA)	Monday, 6/27/2016	The Luncheon was a part of the conference Anita and Samuel attended to help prepare them for the VISTA tenures. Tabitha attended with Michael Johnson and a group of young men of color. National figures also attended. Learned that Congresswoman Moore was on the task force for MBK
2	Jul-16	Meeting w/ Convenient Community Initiative	Friday, 7/1/2016	TB attempting to reconnect with stakeholders. Bobby McQueen attended the MLK day, and send email to connect which Tabitha never responded to. Wanted to see how Bobby could connect to larger HMBK work
2	Jul-16	Check in with Anita	Thursday, 7/6/2015	Decided on time; noted hesitancy towards direct service work
2	Jul-16	VISTA Check-in	Wednesday, 7/8/16	TB attempts to set up consistent meetings (Fri w/whole team, Monday check-ins). Samuel talks about how the VISTAs will be allocating their time. Tabitha sees a danger in having only Friday meetings, so sets Monday conference call and then Wed in person meeting in the evenings. Anita is also considering the idea of a curriculum challenge

2	Jul-16	Monday Meeting w/VISTAs	Monday, 7/11/16	Phone call during Samuel lunch hour. John sent out summary afterwards.
2	Jul-16	Meeting with Samuel	Wednesday, 7/13/2016	Given that Samuel and Anita's conflicting schedules, I met separately with Samuel to talk about local action planning and ideas about incorporating stakeholders into our work
2	Jul-16	Meeting with Washington at Work	Thursday, 7/14/2016	TB and Sean Worth discuss connection between HMBK and Washington at Works youth employment program
	Jul-16	Backbone Meeting	Friday, 7/15/2016	1st Friday Backbone Meeting. Prior to, discussion about creating social media space and presence for MBK. TB tried to set tone for inclusive agenda setting. However, John passed out his agenda at beginning of meeting, setting the tone.
2	Jul-16	Meeting with WACY	Monday, 7/18/16	Invited Anita to meeting with WACY to talk about collective impact, as WACY leader was trained in collect impact strategies.
2	Jul-16	Meeting with YCS	Wednesday, 7/20/2016	TB and YCS representatives discuss connection between HMBK and YCS youth employment program
2	Jul-16	Unity Town Hall Meeting	Thursday, 7/21/2016	This event was advertised as an MBK sponsored event. Yet MBK did not do anything much to help organize or sponsor. Primarily a panel of legislators and community organizers, and the sheriff

2	Jul-16	Backbone Meeting	Friday, 7/22/2016	2nd Backbone Meeting held at ISD. First meeting with Richard Olson. This was considered the Host Orientation Site Meeting.
2	Jul-16	Monday Meeting w/VISTAs	Monday, 7/25/16	VISTAs became agitated as many of their ideas were being shut down
2	Aug-16	Monday Meeting w/VISTAs	Monday, 8/1/2016	Tabitha notes that Samuel continues offline conversations with John, but this information isn't relayed to the group. Anita and Tabitha would later learn out about changes through Samuel
2	Aug-16	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 8/3/16	The longest backbone meeting on record. This meeting lasted 5 hours at NWU.
2	Aug-16	Monday Meeting w/VISTAs	Monday, 8/8/16	Tabitha leads a weekly check-in with the VISTAs. Samuel concluded that he needed to scale down on some things. Anita concluded that she needed a mission and vision, as she needed direction on what to get done first.
2	Aug-16	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 8/10/16	The most significant part of this meeting was Anita's attempt to set up a working agreement. The team went along with the idea of five minutes, and then John and Michael nullified the idea.
2	August 2016	Monday Meeting w/VISTAs	Monday, 8/15/16	During this check-in meeting we focused on tasks for Joe Dulin Day (community fair) and also started preliminary talks about the youth arm/work of HMBK
2	Aug-16	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 8/17/16	John was unable to attend, so Tabitha led this meeting. Group spent the majority of the time planning a recruitment strategy for the young brothers. Michael comes

				in halfway through the meeting and he and Anita get into an altercation.
2	**Aug-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 8/24/16	There is still a lack of understanding of how HMBK will go about the work it intends to do. Important concepts explored during this meeting include deviation from collective impact, making the space a learning community, and how to engage youth as active participants in the
3	**Sep-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 9/7/16	During this meeting we spent a good amount of time talking about MBK at the state level. There were 13 MBK communities in Washington at the time, and Derrick Bell was trying to understand how to connect them and have them be resources to each other
3	**Sep-16**	Steering / Core Group Committee Meeting	Monday, 9/12/16	First meeting with many 'HMBK originators' since March. This was their first introduction to the VISTAs and update on the youth council work. Mostly spent time informing those at the time what the backbone group was doing/had done over the past few months
3	**Sep-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 9/14/16	During this meeting we touched on organization for the milestone groups and the summit. We never reached an agreement or conclusion on this during this meeting.
3	**Sep-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 9/21/16	We spent most of the meeting time talking about the youth council work. We had not recruited many young men at this point, and the orientation and overnight session

3				with Neutral Zone was in a couple weeks. We attempt to strategize how we'd sign on more young men for the council.
3	**Sep-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 9/28/16	Received boilerplate organizational language from John. The meeting was very tense, as the VISTA had not been getting along well given a number of miscommunications in planning roles for the new youth council.
3	**Oct-16**	Young Brother's First Meeting and Orientation	Saturday, 10/1/16	I attended the orientation to help Anita and Samuel out in whatever way I could. In total, five young men came for the orientation. We were expecting and hoping for 30-40.
3	**Oct-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 10/5/16	General meeting
3	**Oct-16**	Neutral Zone's Youth Engagement Institute w/Young Brothers	Saturday, 10/8/16- Sunday, 10/9/16	Overnight trip with youth council to camp ground in Jackson, WA
3	**Oct-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 10/12/16	During this meeting we discussed the MBK state youth summit being hosted in Union City later in the month. We also began to discuss details re: Local Action Summit II
3	**Oct-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 10/19/16	Continuation of planning for Local Action Summit II. Anita and Samuel also bring forward concerns re: youth council
3	**Oct-16**	Washington MBK Youth Summit [Hip Hop and Robots]	Saturday, 10/22/2016	5 backbone members attend full day program in Union City
3	**Oct-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 10/26/16	Tabitha and Anita discuss plan to put together protocol for milestone group facilitators. Samuel gets instructions for creating an internal program for the event.
3	**Nov-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 11/2/16	Samuel presents updated Time/Activity/Presenter worksheet

				for Local Action Summit II. This worksheet focuses on front end of program. John Walters presents a document that stated what milestone advisory groups would be doing during breakout time.
3	**Nov-16**	Backbone Meeting	Wednesday, 11/9/16	Final meeting before summit. Tabitha presents Milestone Advisory Group Overview, Milestone and Facilitator's Protocol that she and Anita created. Group finalizes run of show.
3	**Nov-16**	Local Action Summit II	Monday, 11/14/16	88 people attended the summit (not including backbone members). Attendance for the milestone breakout groups 8 attendees/group.

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