

UNLEASHING POWER:
Pathways to Inclusion and Representation
in U.S. AIDS Activist Organisations

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil
in Politics in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the
University of Oxford.

Trinity 2015

Abstract

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98,686 words

The thesis proposes a theory for the development of substantive representation among social movement organisations (SMOs). Substantive representation (SR) is the extent to which political institutions advance the policy interests of their constituents, in particular the most disenfranchised. Despite their noble proclamations, institutions of representative democracy often fail to advance the interests of groups who have been ignored and absent at the proverbial table.

The thesis establishes a causal process to explain the divergence in SR outcomes among informal SMOs, or all-volunteer groups that disavow formal hierarchy in favour of egalitarian modes of decision-making. It utilises a case study of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP), an umbrella organisation dedicated to ending the HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States and worldwide. It explains an anomalous story of SR attainment through the ACT UP Philadelphia chapter, compared to sister groups in New York City and Boston. The analysis draws from 92 semi-structured interviews, 13 months of participant observation, periodical review, and archival databases.

ACT UP Philadelphia translated common SMO intentions of inclusivity into the uncommon rituals of practice. It forged a deliberate pipeline to invest not only in the presence but also the power of disenfranchised people with HIV, people too dark and poor to interest counterpart groups in other cities. Through an analytic retelling of ACT UP's history, the thesis argues that the fulfilment of SR depends on the ability of SMOs to appeal to member self-interest. Critically, SMOs can offer material incentives and nurture feelings of debt and obligation: causal steps to recruitment and sustainability of a heterogeneous membership. In building a crucial if contentious core of dissimilar people and partnerships, SMOs can unleash an oft-unrealised power for collective action and SR, by and for disenfranchised peoples who had thought change to be impossible.

(297 words)

Acknowledgments

Social accountability, resource support, and collective action—these themes hold as true for my journey with this project as they do for the theoretical glue of the thesis. Talk about the importance of resource mobilisation of knowledge, money, and love.

The organisations and people within these pages, and in my life, drive visions of justice that I would have otherwise not known to be possible.

My greatest debt and gratitude go to the many, many folks in ACT UP who have welcomed me with open arms and raw honesty. I moved to Philadelphia for the better half of two years for an intensive education in organising and social movements. I owe my learning to the many members who opened up their homes, organisations, and hearts. I could not have expected the depth of pride, passion, and pain that comes with sharing one's years of activism in the death trenches. Thank you for sharing your hours of tears, laughs, and wisdom. Thank you, most importantly, for all the movement work that you do. I echo the words of fellow members: ACT UP Philadelphia will forever be one of my greatest teachers, and one of the fiercest organisations I will ever know and respect.

This thesis has been under the supervision and care of Desmond King, for whom I am so grateful. He agreed to begin working with me even before I formally began the DPhil—and it is because of his high expectations and encouragement that I have benefitted from a strong framework of support for the research design and execution of the thesis. At Oxford, I am also deeply appreciative toward David Rueda, Ola Onuch, and David Pettinicchio for tough questions about research puzzles and operationalisation. Searching for answers would have been much harder without their insights. Maya Tudor, Ezequiel Gonzalez Ocantos, and Liz Frazer provided so much incisive and motivating feedback with my earlier vivas. Thank you.

Sincere gratitude goes to the Rhodes Trust for funding my graduate education, and Mary Eaton for her never-ending support. The Rothermere American Institute at Oxford, Harvard's Fund for Historical Questions of Justice, and the Greenfield Fellowship at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania also provided invaluable funding.

This project began during my undergraduate years at Harvard. The History of Science department helped with my first baby steps in academic stride: my first adviser, Jeremy Greene; Anouska Bhattacharyya, for her guidance and therapy; and also Allan Brandt, Anne Harrington, Chris Phillips, and Allie Belser.

At the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, I would like to thank the Tammy Gaskell, Sarah Heim, and Lee Arnold for their research and administrative support in the

collections. Also of Philadelphia, Che Gossett, Dan Royles, and Pascal Emmer for broadening and sharing with me the very small world of scholarship on ACT UP Philly. In Boston, thanks to Michelle Romero of the Northeastern University archives, Joe Wright at Harvard Medical School, Tim McCarthy and Ian Lekus of Harvard College, and Libby Bouvier of the History Project. In New York, many students of ACT UP, myself included, have benefitted from Jim Hubbard and Sarah Schulman's ACT UP Oral History Project. Sasanka Jinadasa, Michelle Yang, Marina Molarsky-Beck, Winnifred Murdock, Amber Ivey, and Florence Achega especially assisted with many of the interview transcriptions.

Communities at the intersection of racial justice, health, and political organising motivated so much of the theoretical curiosity behind the thesis. I am grateful for my colleagues at Health Leads Boston, Enhancing Children's HIV Outcomes (ECHO) in Mafikeng, South Africa, the Chinese Progressive Association of San Francisco, the Mayor's Office in Boston, and the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Coalition (SEAMAAC) in Philadelphia. Mentors in these worlds have challenged me to go beyond sprouting words to grow and learn from the earthy plots of organising. Thank you for inspiring in me better activist practice and powerful re-imagination for movement building.

At Oxford, I cannot be more thankful for so many friends with whom I learned and laughed. Sarah St. John, Mary-Dan Johnston, Helen Jack, Brian Kwoba, Anasstassia Baichorova, Shmona Simpson, Aparajita Bharti, Danielle Leonard, Tara Paterson, Max Harris, Stephanie Lin, and Joe Tobias, among many more. Also to appreciate have been my classmates at the Blavatnik School of Government and the Department of Politics and International Relations. Friends in the Campaign for Racial Awareness and Equality (CRAE) taught me about allyship, organising, and the tough delicacies of resource complementarity.

A grudging anxiety brought me to Philly for my first round of fieldwork, and now a grudging sadness comes with my leaving of this beautiful place and its people. Val Sowell, I have learned so much from you about this city, ACT UP, and friendship. Rhiannon Maton, Chris Allison, Breanne Lucy, Jarrett Anderson, and Louisa Putnam, thank you for your companionship in the final stretch of writing. I am grateful to my sociology students at La Salle University for sharpening my own understanding of systemic oppression and root cause analyses.

Many lovely friends trudged through many more less lovely versions of the thesis: Ruodi Duan, Dwayne Fontenette, David Broockman, Ann Cheng, Polina Bartik, Isabel Carey, Raphi Gold, Sandy Placido, Karen Schoenherr, Joe Wright, Joe Tobias, and Zak Katz.

David, I did not ask you to stay up to read through hundreds of pages of my earlier writing in one go, but the theoretical framework of the thesis is so much better for it. Ann, you are one of the most thoughtful and kindest people I will ever know. I have

learned so much from you about identity, pedagogy, and best friendship. Ruodi, because of you, I appreciate even more the small and big possibilities of the world: in words and food, the Asian American experience, the singular power and countless frustrations of organising. That, and making me laugh so incessantly that my stomach always hurts in your presence. Thank you for your meticulous review of the big ideas and gritty sentences in all these pages. Dwayne, you are one of the biggest reasons to be grateful for this research project and the serendipity that comes with such opportunity. I could not have imagined the extent to which one person could challenge me to practice racial sensitivity, interpersonal maturity, and love.

This project challenges the usage of the term altruism. But mom and dad, I do not know how else to describe the extreme sacrifices that you have made for Mike and me. Writing this thesis has been one tremendous opportunity in my life, and one of countless opportunities you have afforded me through undying and unconditional love.

Preface

“People don’t have to care because the citizens who really matter are in no danger...They don’t [watch] the people they love die slowly of neglect and bigotry...so they don’t give a shit.”

- Vito Russo in 1988. Died two years later.

Later sections of the thesis (Chapter 5) speak to the irreplaceable function of personal narrative in rational argument. The backbone of the thesis is a theoretical argument, buttressed by empirical data and rational logic. But a set of personal experiences and emotions gave life to this argument, and any argument. Hence follows this preface, an imparting of personal perspective that informs the study.

I began this project four years ago. It arose out of a fascination with a certain conceptualisation of health inequalities in urban America—as something not at all bodily determined, but rather socially constructed through the amenities of neighbourhood blocks, the legalese of government bureaucrats, and the all-too significant tone of skin colour.

The development of such belief ironically coincided with four years of learning the mechanisms of chemical reactions and the microscopic purview of anatomy that is characteristic of a pre-medical education. But during those same four years, my time outside medicine—in a Boston hospital—affected me profoundly. There, as a volunteer in social work, I saw almost exclusively black and Latina single mothers in the paediatrics clinic. The common conditions of asthma and malnutrition in their children were not due to the lack of doctors and prescriptions. Near-universal health insurance in Massachusetts, for all its success, did little for the waiting time of five to ten years that families would endure before moving into subsidised housing and out of asthma-inducing cockroach nests; or for the rituals of skimping on grocery store runs in the latter half of the month, when the balance on their food stamps cards had run low.

The stories and resilience of these families became my education. Education, at times disappointingly so, is more about questions than answers, autopsies that analyse to death the possibilities of naïve idealism and wonder. Yet, as a former student of medicine, I wanted to seek answers against the morbidity and mortality of hope.

* * *

This desire brought me to the historiography of the AIDS movement, one of the best examples of people without power who demanded life when they were handed death. From people in power, they wrested policy changes that led to expedited drug approval and reversed death sentences. These most famous demonstrations were against concrete

biomedical entities, the splattering of fake blood on the walls of the FDA and storming the NIH by the thousands. But I came to learn that the most unknown struggles targeted the most abstract enemies and achieved the most extraordinary outcomes. A small minority of AIDS activists understood the true vector of HIV as a killer of a vast swath of minorities, that is was a host entity that represented much more than a physical body count of deaths.

Viruses are neither dead nor alive, but they can discriminate. The HIV virus was neither colour nor class-blind in its path of destruction. I found the AIDS epidemic so tragic because of the intersections at which it sat, at the cross-section of whom society called most undesirable because of the drugs in their system, the convictions on their record, or the partners with whom they chose to get in bed.

I was fascinated by these intersections not only for their theoretical intrigue but also their intimate link to my own personhood. For any graduate student, the thesis is a labour of one's self-discovery as an academic. For me, I also came with the intention to work toward my own discovery as a queer person and as a person of colour. I was grasping for meanings of what it meant to hold two identities that my immigrant self, and societal constructs, told me to be so irrevocably incompatible.

I searched for resolution in therapy sessions, in occasional breakdowns and constant shame, and through the lessons in fiction and history. The most insightful histories I found in corporeal form, through my first interviews with ACT UP activists of colour. I met this understanding that internalised oppression also could come with—and be overwhelmed by—a rarer kind of pride, one far less co-opted by constructs of whiteness and far more powerful in the collective power that can only derive from multiple oppressions.

It was in the history of the AIDS movement that I learned of the simultaneous invisibility and power of queer people of colour. White gay activist Vito Russo said in a renowned 1988 speech, "Not enough rich, white, heterosexual men have gotten AIDS for anyone to give a shit." The early years of ACT UP rectified that silent neglect. The AIDS movement has become one of the loudest instances in American memory of breaking the status quo of silence, of toppling top-heavy pyramids of power, of gay white men demanding that their oppressed sexuality and health deserved attention. Almost three decades since Vito's words, the disease has received tomes of books, attracted incredible flows of funding, and expired past its 1980s/1990s peak of "crisis."

But a quarter century later, AIDS is still a crisis. People are still dying. But those people are darker and poorer than their dead counterparts of years past. They are now much further from the forefront of the mainstream American psyche.

When I have gone to ACT UP meetings, I am still greeted by news that one of us has passed once again. Even as scholars talk about the money that AIDS exceptionalism is siphoning off from other diseases, few of us appreciate that that we have not come much

further to addressing the social and political disorders that oppress the very communities that suffer from AIDS.

When I was invited to the U.S. National Conference on AIDS in 2013, I could not see more than Merck and Gilead logos there. Corporate advertisements were plastered in unashamed exposure that this was a party for pharma. Other than my conference presentation, I saw nothing that recognized the rich history of activism that made those drugs possible. Nothing acknowledged the unique cross of oppressions of race, gender, and poverty that defines the AIDS epidemic and AIDS activism for what they are. It is a cross of oppression that my soul has never visited, for my body has never lived on the street or craved heroin or sold itself for money. But as a queer person of colour, I intimately feel AIDS as a disease that has hit two of my communities. This disease has largely been forgotten, not only in its impact but also in the power of resistance that it has unleashed within the intersection of those two communities.

AIDS activism, as the ACT UP story embodies, brought folks together. This is a story that shows how we can harness the very best of the human spirit in the very worst of crisis. It is a story that shows, for people that spent years of their lives scavenging for dirty needles or losing their will to live in prison, that these people can re-energise their souls and plan political actions against the most hegemonic powers in the nation and the world. It is a story that shows—despite the silos of the world that suffocate us in division—that there are groups like ACT UP Philadelphia that have proved to us how we can never forget divisions of oppression but build common ground because of them.

Acronyms

AACO	AIDS Activities Coordinating Office (in Philadelphia)
ACT UP	AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power
ADAP	AIDS Drug Assistance Program
AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
API	Asian Pacific Islander
ASO	AIDS service organisations
BEBASHI	Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues
BLC	Boston Living Center
CD	Civil disobedience
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DR(s)	Descriptive representation (descriptive representatives)
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
Health GAP	Health Global Access Project
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IVDU (IDU)	Intravenous drug user
MSM	Men who have sex with men
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NOW	National Organization of Women
NYC	New York City
NYCAHN	New York City AIDS Housing Network
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
PLOA	People living off AIDS
POC	People of colour
PPT	Political process theory
Project TEACH	Treatment Education Activists Combating HIV
PWA	People with AIDS
PWN	Positive Women's Network
RMT	Resource mobilisation theory
SMO	Social movement organisation
SMT	Social movement theory
SR	Substantive representation
SyR	Symbolic representation
T&D	ACT UP's Treatment & Data Committee
TEACH	See Project TEACH
VOCAL-NY	Voices Of Community Activists & Leaders, New York

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Chapter 0. “Nobody this country has really ever cared about”: introduction¹

0.1 Research puzzle: the neglected centrality of substantive representation

Every week of the past quarter century, Philadelphia members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) have gathered in a dimly lit church basement. The room is tucked away as an inconspicuous annex to the church, like a slighted afterthought from the architect. The deliberations it hosts, however, are anything but slight. ACT UP members sit in a circle of chairs for the Monday night ritual, the group’s general meetings. They digest and deliberate (meaning, often, to yell and argue) through an agenda that takes an advertised three hours, sometimes as many as seven or eight. Always, they begin with a recitation of the organisation’s mantra: “ACT UP is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis.”²

Big ideals, tiny budgets. These days, the body count in the room rarely climbs beyond fifteen. The Philadelphia group struggles to collect back rent for the linoleum-tiled floor on which members sit. Like the other 112 ACT UP chapters that existed throughout history, they have scraped by on an all-volunteer corps and the pocketbook poverty that

¹ Quoted from Melendez, interview.

² Otterbein, “The Warriors: How the Decades-long Fight Against AIDS Made Radicals Out of Activists”; Riek, “ACT UP Philadelphia.”

comes from the organisation's disavowal of government and mainstream foundation funding.

Unlike the vast majority of its ACT UP counterparts, however, the chapter in Philadelphia survived the death knells and premature obituaries that were penned by journalists, activists, and scholars during the heyday of the AIDS epidemic.³ A premature autopsy is easy. One might have cast away all hopes for this group on any number of superficial counts: its shoestring budget, the preponderance of poor black faces, or the lack of any defined roles, staff, or institutional structure.⁴

Put lightly, ACT UP Philadelphia boasts far more than mere survival among its accomplishments. The rag-tag outfit helped secure fifty billion dollars of federal pledges for the global fight against AIDS in 2008. It loaded up buses to shuttle thousands of black and brown bodies to Washington, D.C., these activists protesting for their brothers and sisters across the globe when they themselves may have never before left the local radii of their Philadelphia neighbourhoods. Their yells reached the most hallowed halls of American politics and tore down patent protections in U.S. trade policy. In large part thanks to the work of ACT UP Philadelphia, the cost of AIDS medicine plummeted from more than \$10,000 per patient, per year, to less than \$100. The group scored local wins for the funding of sex worker prevention outreach; it set up one of America's first

³ Shepard, "Moving Politics"; Stockdill, *Activism Against AIDS*; Sullivan, "When Plagues End"; Kaplan, "The Mighty ACT UP Has Fallen: The Philadelphia Story"; "Final Chapters"; Collins, "For Pioneering AIDS Activists"; Chew, "What's Going down with ACT UP?"

⁴ SMO necessities as defined by McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements"; McCarthy and Zald, "The Trend of Social Movements in America"; McCarthy and Zald, "The Enduring Vitality of the Resource Mobilization Theory of Social Movements."

syringe exchanges to prevent intravenous transmission of HIV among drug users; it scored condom boxes in Philadelphia schools and jails; and the list goes on.⁵

For each external accomplishment notched upon its campaign record, ACT UP Philadelphia has struggled through years of internal problems and, at times, failure. This all-volunteer group combats structures of oligarchy and power that replicate the very systems of oppression and inequality that it claims to fight. It constantly grapples with how to recruit and sustain the constituencies it aims to represent in the epidemic, poor blacks and Latinos with HIV. Like any group with limited capacity and big agendas for social change, it quarrels over questions of political priority. How do organizations choose the set of issues to bump up to the top of their to-do list, and then how do they invest the resources to put money and members where their mouth is? Such internal predicaments define the under-studied and oversized questions of micro-process and micro-politics within organisations. These internal mechanisms plant the conditions of possibility for representing the people who are most affected by the issues a movement aims to address.

Objective of the project. These questions motivate the purpose of the study. The thesis proposes a causal framework for the variant outcomes in **substantive representation** among social movement organisations (SMOs). *Substantive representation* (SR) is the demonstrated effort of political institutions to advance the policy interests of their constituents. The thesis defines SR in a more precise set of parameters: the capacity to

⁵ Smith and Siplon, *Drugs into Bodies*; Riek, "ACT UP Philadelphia"; ACT UP Philadelphia, *The Actuplist Archives*. List of campaigns in Appendix B.

decide and invest in campaign issues that most affect their constituents, people who may or may not be members in the SMOs themselves. How and why have some SMOs achieved SR, while the vast majority have not?

In investigating SMOs such as ACT UP Philadelphia and its sister chapters, I measure SR in terms of the breadth and depth of its campaign record as it relates to the most representative issues, a palette of constituent concerns that I elaborate upon in Chapter 1. In this introductory chapter, I explain the overarching argument, case background, and methods to the case study design.

Case context. I explain the divergent trajectories of SR among SMOs through a set of three cases from the American AIDS movement. The Philadelphia chapter is the sole positive example of SR attainment among the big, and now largely extinct, ACT UP family of chapters across the globe. In its choice to campaign for the welfare checks of low-income blacks, beds for homeless people with HIV, and treatment of sub-Saharan Africans without drugs, ACT UP Philadelphia's broad and expansive pursuit of SR issues stands in stark relief to that of ACT UP Boston and New York, negative cases in this thesis. The work of these latter two chapters, unarguably important, also centred on saving lives.⁶ But in truth, the lives and policy interests that they counted were those of

⁶ ACT UP New York's heyday heralded its key victories in the expedited approval of antiretroviral drugs for people with AIDS (PWAs), a biomedical accomplishment that is estimated to have saved six million lives. France, *How to Survive a Plague*.

the gay, white, and largely middle-class men who populated the majority of their memberships, but not the majority of the epidemic post-1987, ACT UP's founding year.⁷

Constituting the empirical backbone of this study, the selected cases capture a wide spectrum of variation in their capacity to develop SR. ACT UP chapters nationwide were tied by common threads of open membership, consensus models of decision-making, and steadfast boycotting of institutionalised funding streams. Together, these features defined their status as grassroots and informal SMOs. The puzzle within these cases, then, lies in the mystery of how shared ideological and structural beginnings forked into such dissimilar outcomes of SR.

ACT UP's chapters have followed the tradition of selective representation that afflicted earlier and contemporary sister movements. The history of AIDS activism in the U.S. is imbued with the rainbow flags and gay liberation rhetoric of majority white struggles. The celebrated narrative is one of white gay men, a group of people with AIDS (PWAs) with the concentrated power and privilege to see that their chief goals—expedited research and development of life-saving drugs—came to fruition.⁸ Marginalised on the fringes were those without the purses or skin colour or rhetoric to make themselves heard.⁹ According to orthodox historiography, the AIDS movement was not a struggle of racial or class justice, even though low-income communities of colour have always borne the brunt of the epidemiological burden. As the next chapter (Section 1.2.1 in particular)

⁷ Epidemiology discussion to follow in Chapter 1.

⁸ Shilts, *And the Band Played On*; Andriote, *Victory Deferred*; Epstein, *Impure Science*.

⁹ Cohen, "Power, Resistance and the Construction of Crisis"; Shepard, "Moving Politics"; Gould, "ACT UP, Racism, and the Question of How To Use History."

will explain, the aggregate history of the AIDS movement has been one of failed SR for the statistical majority of the epidemic.

A common cancer of misrepresentation and exclusion across social movements. SMOs have always been guilty of multiple exclusions, often to the detriment and at times death of their most noble movement goals. Their issue agendas commonly do not reflect the needs and interests of those most disenfranchised.¹⁰ Feminist movements have claimed false universality in their campaigns on birth control or gender wage gaps—concerns most paramount to middle-class white women, not to poor workers or people of colour (POC).¹¹ Leaders in black liberation often sidelined black feminist concerns in the name of male-dominated struggles.¹² Environmentalism, anti-globalisation, and the Occupy movements—some of the most open and radical mobilisations of contemporary America—have too come under fire for their hegemony of race and class.¹³

Many SMOs have festered patterns of selective representation and exclusion in their own trajectories. Their advocacy efforts are often directed by and benefit those who have the most power and resources to mobilise. Like all other political institutions, SMOs are

¹⁰ Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy*.

¹¹ Tong, *Feminist Thought*, 284–289. See Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism”; Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*.

¹² Rousseau, *Black Woman’s Burden*.

¹³ Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring*; Navarro, “In Environmental Push, Looking to Add Diversity”; Fears, “Within Mainstream Environmentalist Groups, Diversity Is Lacking”; Martinez, “Where Was the Color in Seattle?”; Patton, “Why African Americans Aren’t Embracing Occupy Wall Street”; Kazmi, “Why I Am Not Protesting at Occupy”; Lichterman, “Piecing Together Multicultural Community.”

plagued by—and perpetuate—endemic systems of unequal power that privilege the political preferences of some over others.¹⁴

Despite its importance, the explanation for SMO attainment of SR is not at all intuitive or understood, given its rare achievement in practice and common neglect in theoretical literature. SMOs preach the virtues of political inclusion and representation. But as common as this lofty rhetoric are the oligarchical dynamics that arise in said organisations, dynamics that advance only a subset of constituent interests. Herein fit the theoretical ambitions of this thesis: to identify a causal mechanism that overcomes this common oligarchy, drive collective action, and ultimately represent the interests of those at the brunt of social oppression and the margins of the democratic polity.

0.2 Argument

This thesis establishes a mid-range theory for the development of SR in informal SMOs that claim heterogeneous constituencies.

I will trace the following cascade of causal variables (Figure 1). Its steps speak to the process of “unleashing power,” the namesake goal both of the thesis and of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). Power, most generally, refers to the ability to exercise influence. In the context of social movements, participants command “power” if

¹⁴ Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*, 8–9. Indeed, new social movement theory assumes a middle-class core for political participation. Croteau, *Politics and the Class Divide*; Cleveland, “Does the New Middle Class Lead Today’s Social Movements?”; Eder, *The New Politics of Class*.

and when they can affect the interests and behaviour of actors toward a political agenda.¹⁵

A comprehensive discussion follows in the next chapter, but here I very briefly present the framework of variables that form the causal argument. This process only succeeds with the investment of power in the so-called “powerless.” The “powerless” are those furthest alienated from levers of the political apparatus, but most intimately affected by its decisions of neoliberal cuts and neglect. I call these people “descriptive representatives” (DRs) for their unique claim to represent lived experiences at the centre of the social movement. Only with their power and inclusion, political theorists argue, can SMOs form and advance a political agenda faithful to the full diversity of interests in the movement.¹⁶

The following sequence will unfold in the body chapters to reveal the proposed pathway to substantive representation:

- x1. **Personal predispositions to inclusivity**, or the value placed on participants from the most disenfranchised constituencies who are directly affected (“descriptive representatives” [DRs]);
- x2. **Organisational norms of inclusivity**, which spur SMO attempts to recruit and retain said participants, DRs;
- x3. **Physical inclusion**, or the sustained presence of DRs in the SMO;

¹⁵ Lukes, *Power*; Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness*; Dahl, *Who Governs?*.

¹⁶ See, for example, Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Williams, *Voice, Trust, and Memory*.

- x4. **Internal inclusion**, an organisational condition fulfilled when an SMO has established structures to invite and value the contribution and leadership of DRs;
- x5. **Political solidarity**, reflecting the development of a shared group perspective and a moral obligation to the pursuit of SR; and
- Y. **Substantive representation**, the definition of social movement “success” advanced in this dissertation.

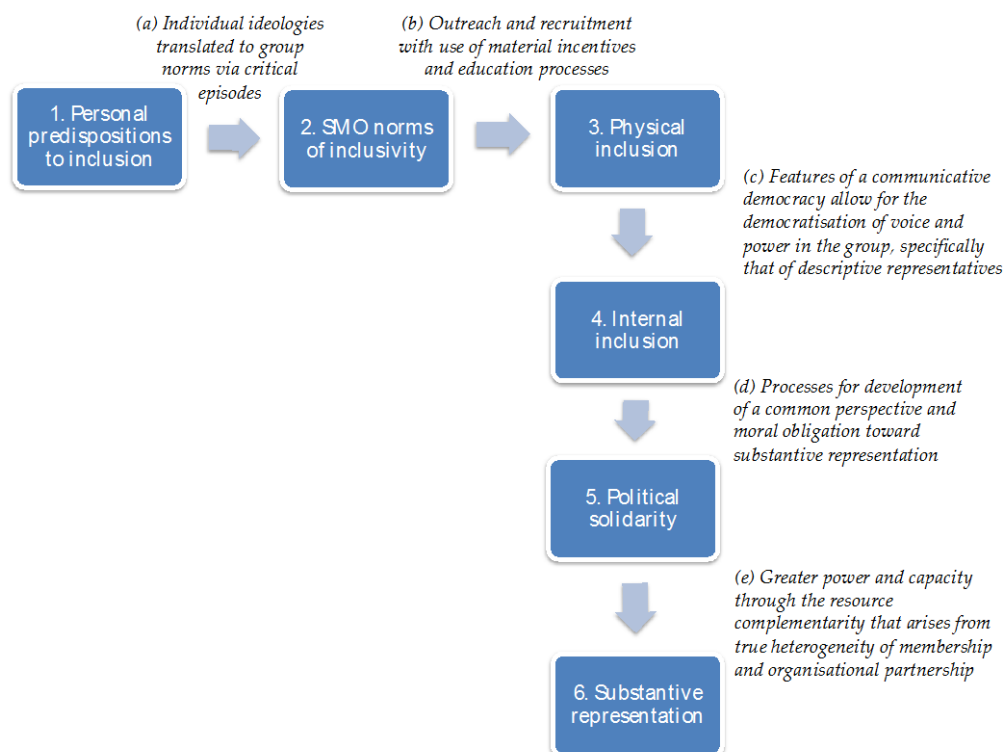


Figure 1. Theoretical mechanism of the thesis.

In this model, the pathway to SR begins at the individual level, with participants who are predisposed to believe in the value of inclusivity. Mediated by the urgency of critical points of crisis, the SMO initiates recruitment processes that attract participation from

the SMO's most disenfranchised constituencies, or DRs (ending in "physical inclusion"). From there, the SMO develops power among these DRs ("internal inclusion") and creates a common environment of intention and obligation toward SR ("political solidarity"). Among activists of wide background and experience, SMOs can derive significant power that comes with resource complementarity. It is the expanded resource set that arrives from heterogeneous cooperation that becomes the driving force for an SMO's attainment of SR. The precise definitions and operationalisation of the causal variables follow in the next chapter.

0.3 Theoretical contribution

0.3.1 Reconceptualising substantive representation

In the very identity of the outcome variable, the central theory to this thesis stakes an ambition to shift the paradigm of SMO success so that it centres on the processes of inclusion, exclusion, and representation within movements. As political scientist Costain notes, many SMOs exist for the express purpose of inclusion and representation of the most disenfranchised constituencies; yet this mission is neglected within the dominant threads of social movement theory (SMT).¹⁷ SMT has treated other metrics such as movement endurance or political consequence as more relevant in the literature.¹⁸ Yet, what is the worth of SMO efficacy or survival if it is not advancing the policy priorities of its most disenfranchised participants?

¹⁷ Costain, "Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion."

¹⁸ Blee, *Democracy in the Making*; Graeber, *Direct Action*.

SR, I argue, constitutes the heartbeat by which to assess the vitality of SMOs for their very reason for existence: the express purpose to fight for the disenfranchised.

Representation is an issue relevant to all SMOs, and one to which very few have achieved dedicated answers. A handful of SMT scholars (notably Mansbridge, Morris, McAdam) recognise that social movements are critical for fighting against structural barriers of political exclusion.¹⁹ Their acknowledgements, however, do not impress the theoretical necessity of a paradigm shift in SMT. Deficit in SMT are studies of micro-politics in organisations that underscore the unique power and function of social movements to reincorporate the politically disenfranchised.²⁰

In the following sections, I illustrate the serious limitations in existing literature and its attempts to explain SR, define and argue for a broader and group-level construction of the concept, and mark the clear theoretical contributions of this theory.

Limited conception in the individual loci of only descriptive representatives.

Alternative hypotheses on the development of SR command only partial analytic purchase in the field of social movement theory (SMT). The existing treatment of DRs fixates on this image of discrete individuals acting for their respective constituencies, as the very semantics of the term “representative” would suggest. Is this not the definition of a representative democracy? I say no.

¹⁹ Mansbridge and Morris, *Oppositional Consciousness*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1982, 23–32.

²⁰ Costain, “Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion.”

For the small sector of political science literature on SR, it has often conflated the conception of a representative democracy with one specific type of institution: a legislative body such as Congress or Parliament. Under this context, political scientists have measured SR as the extent to which representatives support issues that advance the interests of a particular constituency. The most popular measure proxies SR via the voting patterns of literal representatives on issues that they themselves “descriptively” represent (e.g., black representatives representing blacks or women representing women, in the words of one Mansbridge paper).²¹ Under this logic, SR with respect to women would be considered the act of female legislators, the DRs, voting to pass gender equality legislation such as maternity leave policy.²²

These studies assume a problematic and parochial purview of SR. Forget the fact that only a very small minority recognise that questions of DR and SR apply to other political institutions, such as the informal SMOs that form this case study. It is not only a problem of scope, but more so a set of fundamental conceptual issues at fault. Alternative hypotheses often fixate solely on the SR efforts of individual DRs. Existing theory often assumes that DRs are the sole advocates of their given issues. This assumption comes with normative basis; as feminist political theory will argue, for example, women should lead on women’s issues, for women have experiential knowledge of and interest in gender in ways that men simply cannot.²³ The literature does do well in establishing a

²¹ Hero and Tolbert, “Latinos and Substantive Representation in the U.S. House of Representatives”; Lublin, “Racial Redistricting and African American Representation”; Mansbridge, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?”; Vega and Firestone, “The Effects of Gender on Congressional Behavior and the Substantive Representation of Women”; Wängnerud, “Women in Parliaments.”

²² Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, “An Integrated Model of Women’s Representation.”

²³ Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

clear normative and empirical argument that the participation of DRs are indispensable to creating political action for SR.

However, such logic is dangerous because it can lead to essentialist claims, or the simplistic belief that all women will interpret or desire gender equality in the same ways, solely by virtue of their common gender identity. The reality is that one woman cannot speak for the policy preferences of all women; the experiences of women are as different as they are similar. The same precaution is true for any given member of an oppressed group (POC, the poor, etc.) speaking on behalf of the entire group.

More importantly, these existing hypotheses absolve the responsibility of the members in majority and in power who do not stand to benefit from the attainment of SR. They presume that only DRs have the duty, onus, and power to act in ways that are substantially representative. They entirely forget, or exempt, the critical role that allies (e.g., men) possess—but often do not utilise—a capacity to figure as critical actors in such social change work.

In reifying an individualistic premise of political representation, these alternative hypotheses fail to realise the myriad of other group and structural-level factors that may drive SR: the capacity of a group of members working in collective, the internal circumstances unique to each political institution, and external political environment that may frame opportunity or inhibitions to representation.

Need for a theory of SR that expects advocacy of DRs and allies in collective. For

SMOs and other political institutions, I urge a more liberated understanding of SR.

Political science and SMT often fix SR on a narrow and individualistic base; the assumption presumes SR to be squarely within the province of discrete and simple units of single representatives. Such fencing in of parameters absolves responsibility from the political institution as a collective of people.

The group-level notion of SR distributes the burden of responsibility such that it is shared among both DRs and allies, the latter group being those who do not gain directly from achieving the priorities at hand. For example, in relation to gender equality legislation, we would talk in terms of female and male representatives as beneficiaries and allies respectively.

This charge for all members to pursue SR becomes especially crucial in our particular study context. The bounds of this thesis focus on SMOs that claim to represent populations very disenfranchised from the political process. Such DRs may only be present in small numbers (or not at all) in political institutions that claim them as constituents; they are often situated in positions of little political power. The reality of their numerical and political weakness necessitate that the SMOs realise their organisational responsibility, and that of their member allies, to advocate for SR. Other scholars, such as Childs and Crook, advocate for such involvement by allies, and they

also recognise the diversity of actors; however, their analysis, too, fails to move beyond a conception of individual action toward SR.²⁴

A novel theory of SR that emphasises the role and power of organisational agency.

The theory of SR in this thesis, in turn, opens the door of causality to a far expanded notion of agency, one that claims the collective of an organisation and its structures rather isolated nodes of particular individuals. Chapter 2 will describe and push back against a two-pronged camp of “critical mass” and “critical actor” theories; breaking the dichotomy, it argues for a third factor, “critical episodes.” I contend and illustrate that rather than solely individual people as “critical” factors, historical circumstance and external structure carve important drivers for organisations toward SR.

At every step of the chain, I argue for the importance of deliberate choices in institutional design that effect further progress toward SR. SMOs can implement specific structures of recruitment, deliberation, and campaign implementation that ultimately enable a powerful capacity for advancing the interests and needs of their most disenfranchised constituents.

I acknowledge the existence of a small slice of scholarship that does indeed chart course on this theoretical agenda: the explication of *organisational* and not individual mechanisms to accomplish substantive representation. Iris Young’s *Inclusion and Democracy* explicates a framework of “communicative democracy” that this thesis will

²⁴ Childs and Krook, “Analysing Women’s Substantive Representation.”

draw upon and revise in later chapters.²⁵ S. Laurel Weldon delves into an empirical study that theorises the development of inclusivity norms and eventual SR among SMO groups that would fall under the scope of this thesis.²⁶

Yet these two representative streams of literature still fall short in distinct ways; Young's body of work symbolises the craft of political theorists who prescribe normative thought divorced from empirical reality; and Weldon's work is emblematic of literature on social movements that does not furrow deeply enough into the internal dynamics that explain the black box between intermediary variables and the final outcome of SR. As other scholars have noted, there exists a stark poverty of research on *how* to create inclusivity and representation within political organisations—perhaps in itself a testament to the difficulty of achieving such goals in the first place.²⁷

This thesis, in turn, offers a down-and-dirty investigation of the micropolitical evidence necessary to develop a nuanced theory of SR. I segment the causal chain according to a set of steps that are necessary and sufficient only in concert, not in isolated fulfilment. In explication of this theory, I carve out theoretical contribution for a number of age-old and longstanding questions relating to organisational studies and political science. The next two sections develop the extant alternative hypotheses in the literature and outline my corresponding contribution to these subfields.

²⁵ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

²⁶ Weldon, *When Protest Makes Policy*; Weldon, "Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements."

²⁷ Scott, "Beyond Tokenism."

0.3.2 Innovative answers to collective action: why people join and stay in movements

This study invites interplay with the perennial problem of “collective action” as posed by Mancur Olson.²⁸ Some people, whom I call “allies,” do not stand to benefit directly from fulfilment of movement goals.²⁹ Others are “beneficiaries,” or people who would benefit most directly. In our case studies, they are HIV+ people (often poor and of colour) who have a very bodily stake in AIDS activism. I also call this “beneficiary” group “descriptive representatives” (DRs); I use the former term in discussions with stronger relation to self-interest, and the latter term in the context of political representation.

Along this bisection, questions of “why participate in collective action” apply to both groups. Why would individuals choose to invest significant time and energy into SMO participation, often risking arrest or (at times) bodily harm? HIV-negative allies do not stand to directly benefit from AIDS activism. Beneficiaries may be confronting a range of urgent issues from substance abuse to homelessness to abject poverty—concerns that would seem to subsume political participation as secondary. What is the respective impetus of each group to engage in a movement for goals that are often abstractly far-flung in the long-term?

²⁸ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*.

²⁹ Also known as conscience adherents. McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements.”

Here I outline critical contributions of this thesis. Respectively, they tackle two of the most central questions in SMT: why do people join social movement organisations, and why do they continue to participate? In relation to the first, my framework of SMO recruitment advocates for the oft-forgotten role of material incentives as the gateway to participation for DRs. Two, this study re-injects the importance of self-interest in undergirding moral obligation to continuing SMO involvement.

I. Material incentives: the gateway to why (poor) people participate.

The alternative hypothesis: Olson, Wilson and Clark.

I first would like to address alternative hypotheses to collective action. In his canonical account (1965), Olson offers two classes of strategy to solve the collective action problem: either by coercion or selective incentives. The first, coercion, does not apply to all-volunteer grassroots organisations such as ACT UP (or virtually all other SMOs, for that matter). The thesis focuses primarily on the issue of selective incentives, or the figurative and literal payback that individuals receive as a direct result of their contribution to collective action problems. Olson is careful to distinguish selective incentives from public goods. While the latter can be accessed by anyone regardless of participation, the former is *selective* in that only those involved reap the reward or punishment.³⁰

Preceding Olson's work was a paper by Wilson and Clark (1961), renowned for its taxonomy of organisational incentives:

³⁰ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 51.

1. *Material*: in-kind or monetary payments for participation (e.g., a salary)
2. *Solidary*: products of participation or non-participation with other people in the group (e.g., fun, honour, shame)
3. *Purposive*: psychosocial feelings from acting or not acting in accordance to one's morals (e.g., self-satisfaction, fulfilment)³¹

Wilson and Clark matched the typography of selective incentives to different organisational types. Utilitarian organisations such as corporations tended to rely on material rewards as their bread and butter, entities such as social clubs and civic associations on solidary rewards, and social protest groups on purposive incentives. Under this classification, ACT UP would fall squarely into the lattermost category: members are to join for their radical subscription to the tactics and goals of the SMO to end the AIDS crisis. Later scholars of SMT similarly argued that only purposive or solidary incentives were relevant explanations to SMO participation.³²

Material incentives as initial prerequisite to member recruitment and development.

I argue, however, that material incentives are uniquely effective as investments in prospective DRs. This truth is a seeming paradox. For the radical SMOs that emphasise collective action and a passionate boycott from capitalist structure, their most effective

³¹ Clark and Wilson, "Incentive Systems."

³² Friedman and McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism"; Polletta and Jasper, "Collective Identity and Social Movements"; McClendon, "Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics"; Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*.

means of inclusivity originate in an appeal to individual self-interest and material goods.³³

This thesis makes an uncommon case in asserting the importance of material benefits, especially for a radical SMO with a lack of steady resources. The recent turn in SMT toward psychosocial explanations have marginalised more economic discussions of cost and benefit in political mobilisation. Earlier theory has emphasised the importance of resource mobilisation for survival of SMO groups; ironically, however, scholarship is much less likely to acknowledge the parallel truth for SMO participants: individuals with resource deficits also require material sustenance for political participation.

Scholars and activists alike forget that SMOs can only attract a diversity of constituents if they meet the unique needs of each demographic. Only the Philadelphia chapter of all ACT UP groups, for instance, has realised that, in order to enable participation by low-income HIV+ populations, its recruitment strategies must require food and transportation subsidies in its programming.

Critically, my theoretical framework posits that such material incentives in prospective activists become critical investments that, in turn, offer greater possibility for appeal to solidary and purposive incentive. The most effective SMOs couple material incentives with learning and activist development programmes. These recruitment schema thus bestow an appreciation for the learning opportunities, ideological lens, and self-efficacy to drive further SMO participation. Once material incentives get members in the door,

³³ As introduced by Mansbridge et al., "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy"; Mansbridge, *Beyond Self-Interest*.

they report other reasons for continued participation in the group: knowledge exchange and a sharpening of their own power.

II. The self-interest of moral obligation: the bind to continued SMO participation

Chapter 6 explicates the powerful role of moral obligation in the sustenance of SMO participation. It zeroes in on the psychological dynamics of individual conscience as framed by group design. Vital to this calculus of conscience is an unexpected variable, self-interest. Self-interest has long been cast aside in SMT as irrelevant in explanations of movement participation. In contrast, I argue that individuals come to realise the great fulfilment of self-interest that they have gained from the group; and they are thus motivated by a moral obligation of reciprocity to sustain movement participation and re-invest their personal gains back into the SMO.

An entire literature in SMT advances the solidary benefits that maintain activist participation, namely the social benefits of association with progressive groups and the bonds of identity that cement member participation.³⁴ They speak of a strong language of “social accountability.”³⁵

I, in turn, argue that moral obligation places a more powerful hold upon participants. It is not about impressing others; it instead hones in one’s keen sense of duty or

³⁴ Friedman and McAdam, “Collective Identity and Activism”; Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements.”

³⁵ Mansbridge, “Rethinking Representation”; Anderson, “What NGO Accountability Means - and Does Not Mean”; Peruzzotti, “Civil Society, Representation and Accountability.”

responsibility to sustain SMO participation. It derives from several substrata. Some may be considered “altruistic,” reflected by concern and duty to other people who can stand to benefit from SMO goals; others are ideological, such as a commitment to the fairness of procedural decisions made by consensus. But many of the strongest reasons for responsibility derive from a desire to reciprocate for one’s self-gain from the group: people have won lives, salaries, and entire political educations from their time with the SMO. And they speak of a strong rhetoric of guilt, debt, and return as motivation for continued participation in the SMO.

0.3.3 Mobilising difference as asset and not liability: overcoming the iron law of oligarchy

The iron law of oligarchy and its variants: the story of SMO failure

As prescribed by Michels’s iron law of oligarchy and its theoretical progeny in social movement theory (SMT), SMOs are to befall failure in a number of different ways. If an organisation is to continue in existence (SMO maintenance), it is hypothesised to develop oligarchy (Michels’s iron law) and/or bureaucracy (Weber-Michels).³⁶ An organisation may also break down into splinter sects, a consequence predicted by what Mansbridge calls the iron law of involution.³⁷ Involution, scholars say, is more likely

³⁶ Zald and Ash, “Social Movement Organizations.”

³⁷ Mansbridge, “Ideological Purity in the Women’s Movement.”

among a wide diversity of participants with different interests and thus organisational goals.³⁸

The most classic of these prescribed pathways is Michels's iron law of oligarchy. Robert Michels posited that over time, any democratic organisation would inevitably fall to the rule of a small elite.³⁹ His work was inspired by the rise of revolutionary organisations that preached egalitarian ideals—case studies not dissimilar in political orientation from the radical aims of ACT UP.

Of course, a SMO may also die out altogether for a number of other reasons proposed in SMT: for lack of resources (resource mobilisation theory), political opportunities (McAdam's political process theory), or sense of injustice that motivates change (deprivation theory). The iron laws are depicted in the following diagram (Figure 2).

³⁸ The law is also documented in West, *The National Welfare Rights Movement*; Poster, "The Challenges and Promises of Class and Racial Diversity in the Women's Movement"; Freeman, "The Tyranny of Stucturelessness."

³⁹ Michels, *Political Parties*.

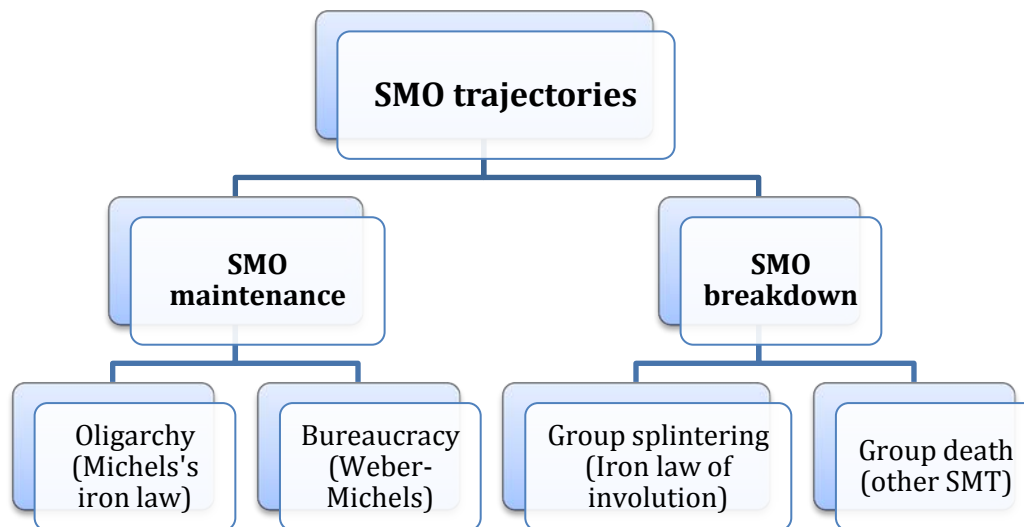


Figure 2. Simplified taxonomy of SMO trajectories as according to “iron laws” of political science and SMT.

Alternative hypotheses to breaking the iron law of oligarchy

A number of studies have attempted to prescribe antidotes to the dooming diagnosis of oligarchy. I present a brief survey of this scholarship by the type of theorised contingency.

First, exogenous factors. Zald and Ash discussed the importance of the external environment and organisational ecology as it can predispose or prevent the formation of oligarchic bureaucracies.⁴⁰ Voss and Sherman describe the influence of an international union as it held its subordinate locals accountable to certain radical goals around organising.⁴¹ Chapter 3 will speak to the importance of “critical episodes” documented by scholars, or exogenous shocks or crises that can spur organisations to sink or swim,

⁴⁰ Zald and Ash, “Social Movement Organizations.” Also Minkoff, “Bending with the Wind.”

⁴¹ Voss and Sherman, “Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy.”

the latter a reconfiguration of goals and structures to meet instrumental goals of SMO maintenance.⁴²

Second, the membership. The demographic and background of SMO members may also predispose inclusivity or the lack thereof, as Chapter 2 will discuss. Lipset et al.'s study of the International Typographical Union shows a surprising egalitarianism within its single case, but its democratic structure is predicated on the high social status of their craft members.⁴³ Clemens (1993) showed that women's groups at the turn of the 20th century subverted the iron law not because they were resource-rich like Lipset's subjects, but rather the opposite. Relatively resource-poor, they did not suffer as much from the logics of economic or political incorporation. Their male counterparts were bound to traditional sources of power or income so that they could feed their families or maintain statutory office.⁴⁴

Third, agential choices. The last cluster of answers focus on the agential choices of an organisation. The vast majority of my theoretical innovation comes in this category. Staggenborg, Strolovitch, and Young describe the importance of decision-making rules and structures set up in organisations to facilitate nurturing environments for DR and then SR.⁴⁵ Clemens speaks to utilising different forms of action (education, service, etc.) that may be borrowed from outside the political sphere in organisational repertoires to

⁴² Han, *How Organizations Develop Activists*; Voss and Sherman, "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy."

⁴³ Lipset, Trow, and Coleman, *Union Democracy*. Similar case with another study: Clemens and Minkoff, "Beyond the Iron Law."

⁴⁴ Clemens, *The People's Lobby*; Clemens, "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change."

⁴⁵ Staggenborg, "The Consequences of Professionalization and Formalization in the Pro-choice Movement"; Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy*; Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

further effective interest group representation.⁴⁶ Osterman's (2006) paper perhaps comes as the closest relative to my theoretical ambitions, as he outlines the importance of cultivating self-efficacy, the culture of contestation, and meaning-making, components of which other scholars have too commented.⁴⁷

Thus lie a wealth of possible answers to averting, or at least mitigating, the iron law of oligarchy. Most of these studies focus on groups that are far more structured and resource-rich than the ACT UP chapters at the centre of this study.⁴⁸ The universe of informal SMOs that comprise this study, I argue, pose unique vulnerabilities to oligarchic tendencies. Despite their flexibility, they suffer from a lack of formal funding streams and problems of resource maintenance. As the Weber-Michels model predicts, the more resource-starved an organisation, the more likely that it will develop a professional elite to seek resources from the political mainstream, and thus abandon its original ideologies for social change.⁴⁹

Theoretical contributions: organisational design and resource complementarity against the iron law of oligarchy

In tackling this particular theory of SR development, I offer two theoretical innovations as anti-iron law routes against oligarchy.

⁴⁶ Clemens, *The People's Lobby*; Clemens, "Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change."

⁴⁷ Osterman, "Overcoming Oligarchy"; Han, *How Organizations Develop Activists*; Weldon, "Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements."

⁴⁸ Rothschild-Whitt, "Conditions Facilitating Participatory-Democratic Organizations*"; Mansbridge, *Beyond Adversary Democracy*.

⁴⁹ Rothschild-Whitt, "The Collectivist Organization," August 1, 1979; Patton, "The AIDS Industry"; Incite!, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*.

First, I argue that the very structure of deliberation in SMOs can engineer a more democratic ground for SMOs (Chapter 5). This line of reasoning derives partially from Young's notion of a "communicative democracy," but I expand her theory to be routinised within the possibilities of institutional structure beyond dyadic relationships. The thesis focuses particularly on the role of organisational agency such that it develops a cultural architecture that formalises informal SMOs, in turn facilitating an environment to allow for greater democratisation of power.

The second arm of mitigating the iron law centres upon a concept that Chapter 7 will introduce on "resource complementarity." It refers to the expanded bounty of resource possibilities that can only arise out of the cooperation of a heterogeneous set of actors, such as with the inclusion of DRs or other organisations in the activist ecology of the SMO. These unique assets of resources may include cultural sensitivity, legitimacy, and greater potential for SMO impact on policy. This growth in capacity for SR—critical for an informal and resource-poor SMO—depends heavily on the ability of DRs to have a say within the group. An SMO that intends and is able to harvest such resource complementarity, thus, can build automatic controls against oligarchy.

The penultimate chapter speaks especially about key relationships in the organisational ecology that allow a resource-poor SMO like ACT UP to draw cash and human flow of resources from more institutionalised allies. This mutual symbiosis, I argue, enables

resource mobilisation without the assumed displacement or moderation of original movement goals for SR.

0.4 Case selection and methods

I divide this discussion into several sections. First, I situate the case, detailing a step-wise logic by which I narrow the bounds of study to a specific set of ACT UP chapters. The second section focuses strictly on the universe of ACT UP chapters in the American AIDS movement, elaborating on the selection logic for three SMO cases. Finally, I explain how this project's research agenda determined the means of data collection and analysis that would afford the greatest analytic purchase to the theory.

0.4.1 Situating the case: a niche set of informal SMOs

For the expansive universe of democratic institutions wedded to representation, this thesis advances a theory specific to a very narrow subset (a case study "unit") within the possible universe of political institutions: informal SMOs, defined by their policy of open membership ("anyone can join") and disavowal of hierarchy in decision-making processes ("everyone has equal say"). I investigate informal SMOs that claim representation of heterogeneous constituencies, including sectors of society that have historically been politically disenfranchised.

This walkthrough begins with the general possible case universe and narrows down to the specific; the following discussion expounds on the explanatory power and limitations of my case study unit (informal SMOs) in studying SR in political institutions. I dedicate the lattermost portion to several notes on generalisability.

The most general case universe: all institutions of representative democracy.

Theoretically, any institution of representative democracy aims to practice SR. Its namesake function is to *represent*: the capacity of the involved *representatives* to speak for and act on behalf of the *represented*. However, although representation forms the bedrock of democratic ideals, it is rarely achieved in practice.

Great diversity of organisational structures exists within this case universe. Common to the study of political study and popular thought are the most formalised institutions of legislative bodies such as U.S. Congress; but also applicable are organisations without elected positions of representation, and even more unstructured groups like ACT UP. The mechanisms of representation can vary widely among dissimilar institutions, as I emphasise later in the mismatch of existing literature in relation to this particular study on informal SMOs.

Explicit vehicles of SR: social movement organisations (SMOs).

Of all institutions of representative democracy, I choose to hone in on social movement organisations (SMOs) for the specific and explicit nature of their objectives. By definition, they are most likely to show the greatest promise of any democratic institution for SR.

SMOs are broad-based mobilisations that intend to secure political rights and access for the most disenfranchised constituencies. These political institutions exist for the explicit purpose of demanding inclusion and influence at the political table for those who have been marginalised, ignored, and absent.⁵⁰

Again, wide variation still exists within this case universe too. There are SMOs with paid staff, bureaucracy, institutionalised funding streams—and those without. Clear implications come with the choice of organisational style, too. SMOs that may be incorporated with official non-profit status, for example, may be beholden by a board of directors, staff hierarchy, or funding obligations that inhibit the development of SR.⁵¹

The most ‘naked’ forms of representative democracy: informal SMOs.

More specifically, I focus on a subset of SMOs that I call collectivist-democratic informal SMOs, or “informal SMOs” for short.⁵² A number of definitional attributes are critical to this case universe. They adopt open membership and decision-making policies: anyone can take part in their grassroots activities, and everyone has equal say in the political agenda. No hierarchy exists, responsibilities and roles are not assigned, and no one is paid. The authority of their decision-making strategy is rooted within open fora for deliberation: they make their decisions from members in open discussions that end in a consensus vote. Everyone must agree for the SMO to take action.

⁵⁰ Costain, “Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion.” Appreciated also in Warren, *Dry Bones Rattling*.

⁵¹ Incite!, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*; Staggenborg, “The Consequences of Professionalization and Formalization in the Pro-choice Movement”; Rosenthal, “Who ‘Owns’ AIDS Service Organizations?”.

⁵² The term originates from Rothschild-Whitt, “The Collectivist Organization,” August 1, 1979.

Their collectivist structure lends great analytic purchase to causal study of SR: it is the practice of democracy in its most unadulterated of forms. These “informal SMOs” are stripped of the institutional clothing of rules and structure such that anyone and everyone can participate and make their voices heard—in theory. There exist no formal routes of authorisation (e.g., voting or elections) or accountability (legal checks and balances) between the represented and the representatives. SR can only arise in these political institutions in the absence of any formal rules. Thus, the role of individual and organisational agency is more crucial in informal SMOs than in any other political institution. These autonomous organisations offer much to the study of SR: SMOs are purer sites of analysis, given that they keep some distance from the political or legal influences that are likely to meddle in the activities of more established institutions.⁵³

Questions of generalisability.

The justification for a niche case universe. Why do I define such a stringent set of criteria for the case universe of informal SMOs? I have delineated a focus on what some scholars might consider the “most likely to succeed” organisations among possible institutions of representative democracy. In the review of the literature, I demonstrated that the causal mechanisms to SR are unclear, little explored, and quite difficult to attain. The threshold must be high, given its low rate of achievement in the historical record of SMOs and other representative democracies.

⁵³ Weldon, *When Protest Makes Policy*, 2.

Even among this “most likely” set of representative democracies, SR is a rarely achieved goal with non-obvious pathways to attainment. Oligarchy, resource deficits, and failures of collective action predominate SMO trajectories. The SMOs among this study’s case universe, too, experience unique vulnerabilities to diverted political goals and misrepresentation. Nonetheless, specific focus on these idealist and informal organisations fulfils the high theoretical ambition of this project. Informal SMOs are unique in the magnitude of the claim that they lay on SR. They preach clear commitment to their most disenfranchised constituencies, and their institutional design (or lack thereof) would suggest that there is little obstruction of channels between the representatives internal and the represented external to the SMO. I hold the conviction that they offer the clearest possible windows into SR development, absent of institutional rules and formal structure.

Geography and issue scope. Up to this point, I have focused exclusively on organisational form and structure as parameters to define the case universe. One may also ask, how generalisable are the theoretical propositions across one, international contexts and two, SMO issues? The thesis focuses on an American social movement with transnational components. But broadly speaking, the causal mechanism does not have strong border or issue restrictions.

The exception on geographic limitations comes in the most U.S.-centric component of the theory: a unique treatment of race as a demarcation of class, privilege, and oppression among movement participants, the AIDS epidemic, and society most broadly. The

bifurcation of blacks (and other POC) versus whites holds especial significance in my geographic loci because of entrenched strongholds of institutionalised racism in American history. In their social construction of race, Americans have developed racialised modes of seeing and acting distinct from other country contexts.⁵⁴

I only highlight two additional parameters on the SMO bounds. The causal framework is most germane to informal SMOs that claim heterogeneous constituencies for SR. The diversity in membership implicates an intersection of issues in their political agenda, such that their chief issues will wrestle with multiple systems of oppression (racism, sexism, classism, etc.). For example, ACT UP declares its mission to “end the AIDS crisis” and thus endeavours to represent all groups that are affected by the AIDS epidemic: gay men of colour, low-income families, female IV drug users, and so on. However, if an SMO only focuses on a scope of issues relevant to a homogenous constituency (e.g., crime reduction in a white suburban neighbourhood), the causal mechanism of the thesis does not apply: for example, criteria of physical inclusion and cross-identity solidarity are not necessary.

This theory also assumes that movement DRs experience high levels of social marginalisation and political disenfranchisement. These barriers to political participation necessitate schemes to mediate the pre-existing and systemic inequalities of power, such as organisational outreach and membership development. Coupled with this premise is the reality that SMOs will experience difficulty in attracting such a heterogeneity of

⁵⁴ Fields and Fields, *Racecraft*.

DRs—by definition, these target populations are disenfranchised. Thus, the initial phases of SMO mobilisation are likely to attract a more homogenous demographic of participants with lower barriers to activism.

0.4.2 Selection logic for ACT UP cases

Having outlined the scope of informal SMOs, I now elaborate on the selection of specific SMO cases. This discussion first explains the portability of study with the AIDS movement, due to its intersection of causes and issues. I argue for the fitting nature of ACT UP specifically as an SMO within that movement, for its multi-city and autonomous structure among chapters. Then the section details the logic for selecting three particular chapters within the ACT UP umbrella, both for reasons of case comparison and historiography.

1. Generalisability from the AIDS movement

Grounding my empirical analysis in the U.S. AIDS movement lends itself to a portability of theory to other social movements and political struggles. Activism in the AIDS epidemic represents a medley of legacies from the sister movements that preceded it. The intersection of AIDS with homosexual intercourse tied it most obviously to gay liberation. But also, it borrowed its subscription to non-violent tactics of direct action from mobilisations such as the civil rights movement; the egalitarian structures of decision-making reflected counterparts in women's rights groups.

Tackling the epidemiological patterning of AIDS in low-income communities of colour, in turn, necessitated the union of a myriad of causes. For a SMO in the AIDS movement to attain SR, then, a group like ACT UP would have to pursue not only health issues but also economic, racial, and sexual justice (explained in Section 1.2.1). The hybridisation of movement identities and political causes, I argue, leads to a type of SR in AIDS activism capable of generalisation.

2. The suitability of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP)

The historical narrative of ACT UP allows a selection of similar background conditions and subsequent divergence: a set of trajectories that facilitate comparison and theoretical development of causal effect.⁵⁵ The thesis calibrates its starting point to the public debut of the flagship (and oldest) ACT UP chapter in 1987 New York, the time frame running until the present day. A strong set of common denominators bond the 70+ ACT UP chapters in their ideological and structural beginnings. All the ACT UP groups crafted their individual manifestos as imitations of the New York progenitor: they committed to direct action as the key tactic for political change, and employed an all-volunteer structure to make consensus-based decisions at the “floor” of Monday night general meetings. Meetings nationwide still begin with the same one-sentence incantation: “ACT UP is a diverse, non-partisan group of individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Mills, *A System of Logic*.

⁵⁶ ACT UP New York, “ACT UP New York City.”

For their common history and succeeding divergence, the ACT UP chapters offer one of the closest approximations imaginable to a researcher's dream in the messy world of SMO trajectories. There are indeed more common and prominent examples of federated SMOs that profess to lay similar claims to their suitability for case study research, as in Reger and Staggenborg's study of the premier feminist federation (NOW, or National Organization of Women).⁵⁷ The set of ACT UP groups, however, are unique in that each chapter enjoyed complete autonomy. In contrast to organisations that adopted an official federated structure, this thesis's case SMOs did not have to answer to the directives of national headquarters. Thus, ACT UP is a particularly fitting historical case for analysis. Its SMOs rose out of the same crisis environment (of AIDS) with similar political methods and commitments; but unlike federated groups, they were then able to diverge on independent paths upon and after conception.

3. Case selection of three chapters according to progression along the causal chain

This divergence, of course, is important for case selection. This thesis conducts a partial case comparison of four SMO trajectories in three cities: ACT UP Philadelphia, ACT UP New York, ACT UP Boston in its first incarnation (1987 – 1994), and ACT UP Boston in its most recent re-emergence (2010 – present). For the purposes of analysis, I bisect the Philadelphia and New York cases into two time periods (1987-1995 and 1995-present). The artificial break in chronology marks a critical episode of crisis in the AIDS movement and, in the case of Philadelphia, a year of critical reconfiguration toward DR recruitment through a DR leadership scheme called Project TEACH (see Chapter 4).

⁵⁷ Reger and Staggenborg, "Grassroots Organizing in a Federated Structure"; McCarthy and Wolfson, "Resource Mobilization by Local Social Movement Organizations."

Thus I will be referring to the 1.0 and 2.0 versions of ACT UP Philadelphia, New York, and Boston.

Here I also justify the small n of this case study. The classic trade-off comes between the *comparability* of individual cases within a given unit and their collective *representativeness* to the external case universe beyond that particular unit. This thesis's use of four cases from a single umbrella of SMOs strongly favours the power of comparability over that of representativeness. Gerring justifies that this preference defines case study research: the sacrifice of grand ambitions of breadth and generalisability in order to achieve consistency of concepts and causal steps among cases.⁵⁸ That said, advocates of case study methods have noted that even single cases can command significant analytic purchase (e.g., the iconic studies of Michels and Lijphart).⁵⁹

Here I employ a unique form of *partial* case comparison: the four cases represent a spectrum of (in)completion at various steps of the causal chain. ACT UP Philadelphia initially suffers from the same issues of exclusion as do its contemporary chapters in the late '80s and early '90s. In the mid-90s, however, it breaks course to become the singular SMO that achieves full progression through the causal mechanism to SR. Philadelphia (2.0) is the sole positive case within the historical universe of ACT UP. It thus merits—

⁵⁸ Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?"

⁵⁹ Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science"; Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?"; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*; Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method"; Michels, *Political Parties*; Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*.

and receives in this thesis—the most extensive depth of analysis to trace the process of causal completion to the dependent variable.⁶⁰

The other three SMO trajectories are negative shadow cases to different extents (Figure 3). As Figure 3 illustrates, New York 1.0/2.0, Boston 1.0, and Boston 2.0 begin and fall off the causal chain at distinct points. They serve as comparative cases when appropriate.

ACT UP New York and the first incarnation of ACT UP Boston, as with the vast majority of ACT UP chapters across the world, fails to develop group-level awareness around the importance of inclusivity. They thus break between step 1 and 2. The other and newer Boston case (branded 2.0) manages to develop group inclusivity, but it lacks the adequate tactic or resources to implement recruitment schema that can lead it to step 3, physical inclusion.

I set up the partial case comparison in accordance with these negative case trajectories. Chapter 2 will discuss all the initial SMO chapters (the 1.0s) of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia in relation to their members' predispositions to inclusivity. Chapter 3 will illustrate how, in response to membership shortfalls, ACT UP Boston 2.0, New York 1.0, and Philadelphia 1.0 achieve varying levels of attainment in developing group norms toward inclusivity. Ultimately, only ACT UP Philadelphia manages to actualise those norms toward the serious investment in recruitment and development of new leaders, namely descriptive representatives. The remaining chapters will only discuss Philadelphia 2.0 in its lone completion to SR.

⁶⁰ Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*.

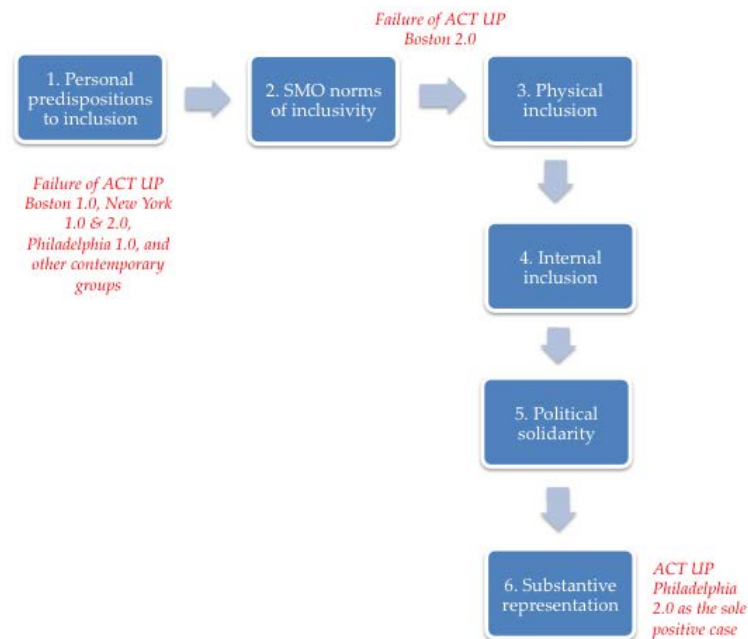


Figure 3. Situating each case at the point at which it falls off the causal chain to SMO SR.

These four cases correspond to the *diverse* method of case selection in Seawright and Gerring's 2008 typology. Collectively, they represent a wide variance of possible outcomes in the theoretical framework of SR.⁶¹

Situating the cases in the ACT UP universe. How did I choose these three chapters from the array of the 113 worldwide? I answer by way of both historical trajectory and comparative politics methodology. In terms of the historical logic, I selected groups that share the most basic potentialities for this study's treatment of SR. That is, I demanded that the ACT UP cases in this thesis must have 1) existed through the mid-1990s and 2) are located in major U.S. urban centres.

⁶¹ Seawright and Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options."

1. As the next chapter will elaborate, my definition of SR focuses not only the biomedical issues of antiretroviral drugs, but also the socioeconomic and psychosocial needs of people with AIDS (PWAs). Early AIDS activism in the U.S. was largely focused on the former, as medical needs of PWAs were the most physically pressing when no treatment existed. For an ACT UP chapter to have breached the non-medical aspects of SR, it must have survived past the mid-1990s era. It was at this pivot point that the FDA approved cocktail drugs and the disease transformed from death sentence to chronic condition. Only with a longer SMO trajectory past the mid-1990s hinge (the 1.0/2.0 divide) would a case have the potential to realise the full dimensions of SR in the AIDS movement.

A “critical episode” in the theory to be introduced in Chapter 3, this time window presents an opportune juncture for comparison among chapters (e.g., the divide between Philadelphia/New York 1.0 and 2.0). During the early to mid-1990s, ACT UP began to show symptoms of movement demobilisation. Key leaders were dying and ranks of membership had been dwindling under looming clouds of pessimism in the years before 1995, when the FDA released antiretroviral drugs that released the final pressure valve that tied many members to the fight.⁶² All ACT UP chapters, Philadelphia included, struggled with not only the mortality of their membership but their very organisational livelihoods. As Chapter 3 demonstrates, this critical episode reveals the

⁶² Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*. De Marco, interview; Acosta, interview.

differential response that drives most chapters to historical oblivion, and Philadelphia to positive outcomes of SR.

2. For reasons of epidemiological distribution, this thesis only focuses on ACT UP cases in major American urban centres. Only large metropolitan sites host high incidence of AIDS cases and the wide diversity of race and class crucial to this study of SR among heterogeneous constituencies. In its epidemiological profile, the U.S. AIDS epidemic found its most affected populations among urban pockets of low-income communities of colour.⁶³ Thus, SR had the most potential for development in these metropolitan areas where socioeconomic issues such as housing, poverty, and substance abuse were most salient.

Of the 113 chapters that acted up in 1991, only eight of them remained seven years later. From east to west, the surviving groups in 1998 were Paris, Rhode Island, Westchester (NY), New York City, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Golden Gate (San Francisco). ACT UP Paris is an international chapter (the sole remainder) that falls outside the domestic bounds of this study; Rhode Island (Providence) has a small population less than 200,000 residents; and Westchester (NY), one of the wealthiest areas in the country, is too socioeconomically homogeneous for study.⁶⁴ Of the remainder, Atlanta and Los Angeles could be contenders as appropriate cases.⁶⁵ The Bay Area ACT

⁶³ Curran et al., "Epidemiology of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States."

⁶⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "American Community Survey"; U.S. Census Bureau Administration and Customer Services, "Census of Population and Housing."

⁶⁵ ACT UP LA did pursue some SR activity, e.g., for prison rights and low-income patient access to HIV services. Oliveira, "ACT UP/Los Angeles Records, 1987-1997."

UPs are shunned as the black sheep of the family, Golden Gate having split off from San Francisco after reports of the latter's AIDS denialism and use of "physical assaults" as protest tactic.⁶⁶

I decided upon Philadelphia and New York for further qualifying reasons. Philadelphia is the sole positive case that satisfied both of the independent variables used in case selection, organisational inclusivity and physical heterogeneity. New York, in turn, is a chapter well known for its tussles with identity and inclusivity.⁶⁷ Both it and Philadelphia in their 1.0 life course boasted strong POC caucuses that suggested potential for SR. I chose cities that were linked by their spatial location. ACT UP New York and Philadelphia, less than a two-hour drive apart, are linked by the line that runs down the Eastern Seaboard. I also add Boston on this geographical anchor. Although it did not enjoy an unbroken trajectory of survival from its founding to the present day, ACT UP Boston's revival in 2010 represents a rebirth and remodelling of DR and SR that prove promising for study.

0.4.3 Methodology and data analysis

The methodological design of this thesis intentionally matches onto theoretical ambitions. To answer perennial questions in political science, I employ a set of data collection and analytic techniques that are more characteristic of anthropology and

⁶⁶ ACT UP Golden Gate, "A Letter to the Community"; Wohlfeiler, Lew, and Wilson, "Enough of ACT UP S.F. Acting Out."

⁶⁷ Gould, "ACT UP, Racism, and the Question of How To Use History"; Juhasz, "Forgetting ACT UP."

sociology toolboxes: the project traces the process-focused mechanics of the causal mechanism of SR.

A “microscopic agential approach.” The causal theory in this thesis focuses on the agency of SMOs in collective choices about their internal structure and external campaigns, a research agenda that Lichbach terms a “microscopic agential approach.”⁶⁸ Studies of organisational agency have long been neglected because of the bias toward macro-political structures in much of SMT, or the focus on external exogenous shocks rather than internal agency of political institutions.⁶⁹ This thesis, in turn, argues that SR is a bottom-up achievement of SMOs. It accounts for the role of greater structural forces such as resource availability and political opportunity, but it ultimately aims to trace the significance of choices and pathways taken by individual actors and groups (agency).

I analyse the empirics of individual experience and perception to draw implicit conclusions on the institutional and cultural structures that frame such subjectivity. This connection of observed micro-data to theorised macro-politics borrows from the tradition of Burawoy’s extended case method.⁷⁰ As other qualitative researchers have described, it is a process of “seeing structure happen...of extract[ing] the general from the unique.”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Lichbach, “Where Have All the Foils Gone’.”

⁶⁹ Clemens and Cook, “Politics and Institutionalism”; Clemens, “Organizational Repertoires and Institutional Change”; Morris, “Reflections on Social Movement Theory”; Lichbach, “Where Have All the Foils Gone’.”

⁷⁰ Burawoy, “The Extended Case Method”; Eliasoph and Lichterman, “We Begin with Our Favorite Theory...’.”

⁷¹ Lichterman, “Seeing Structure Happen.”

Such a theoretical aim, in turn, necessitates a set of methods that break tradition from other scholarship on SR and social movements. This thesis must offer a “thick” description in its case study analysis.⁷² Only such an approach can breach the “black box” and capture mechanisms of SR development on the organisational level. Study of SR demands that research documents not only the product but also the *processes* that give rise to SMO representation, the substantive element that has been glaringly neglected in studies of social movements.⁷³ As the body of the thesis will showcase, some of the most critical components for SR hinge upon intra-group relations such as rituals of greeting or subtle forms of nonverbal communication during SMO meetings.

Participant observation. Collection of these data necessitates a research method that borders on the ethnographic. Between September 2011 and May 2015, I spent thirteen months (3 months in 2012, 3 in 2013, 3 in 2014, 4 in 2015) in the field at New York, Boston, and Philadelphia meetings and demonstrations. I disclosed my researcher status at each of my first meetings with the respective chapters. The bulk of my time was with the positive case of this study, ACT UP Philadelphia.

As a participant observer in Philadelphia, I selectively volunteered for mundane tasks that were important to everyday operations but did not influence the political strategy of the SMO. I pasted together protest signs for demonstrations, often took meeting notes, did Spanish translation at meetings, proofread grants and organisational materials, and

⁷² Geertz, “Thick Description.”

⁷³ Goodwin, Jasper, and Khattri, “Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine”; Graeber, *Direct Action*; Sutherland, “Book Review”; Blee, *Democracy in the Making*.

assisted with recruitment, teach-in, and outreach activities. These contributions helped me better understand the bread-and-butter work of organizing with ACT UP. Propelled by more than a desire to gain a researcher's insight, however, I also felt morally obliged to reciprocate in however small ways for the generous doses of time, access, and learning that the group granted me.

Among the methods employed in the study, the participant observation figured as the most crucial window into SMO reality. The producers and consumers of SMT are guilty of the macro-structural bias in political science and sociology that hones in on political motivation and efficacy and consequence—all with a blinding neglect toward the black box of how it all comes about.⁷⁴ To speak from my own experience, the tendency as a scholar fascinated with social movements is to translate that interest into romanticised notions divorced from the nit and grit. Without a first-hand understanding of process, it can be easy to fall into flirtation with a manicured notion of grassroots democracy, especially given the admirable reputation of groups like ACT UP Philadelphia.

Until I began attending ACT UP meetings, I counted guilty among the students of social movements allured by the combed-over narrative of historical account and appealing elegance of theory. But during my time as an ACT UP member, I learned that there was often far less method than madness in deliberative democracy. People shouted, interrupted each other, and dived off on tangents. An hour might pass and the ongoing argument would still be caught in deadlock. Sometimes, instead of documenting

⁷⁴ Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*; Morris, "Reflections on Social Movement Theory."

decisions made or action steps outlined, my field notes would only sport the scribbblings of one member getting very angry, another talking at length about her life in shelter, and three others more occupied with the virtual worlds of their cell phone screens. My task, then, is to translate the seeming empirical disorganisation into theoretical tenet that leads SMOs to SR.

Interviews. Participant observation only forms one arm of many in the primary source collection. I read, coded, and analysed 92 interviews; for those that I recorded, the transcripts range from 20-100+ pages in length. Of those, I conducted 66 semi-structured interviews with 60 unique individuals. This count only includes interviews in the most formal sense; I had countless other conversations with activists about their SMO participation (e.g., during demonstrations, before and after meetings). Interviews were conducted one-to-one, each ranging from 45 minutes to over 4 hours in duration. The vast majority of the interviewees are ACT UP members, but also included in the sample are pertinent actors in civil society organisations and the state. I designed an interview guide with elicitive questions that roughly corresponded to the intermediary variables of interest in the causal mechanism (see Appendix A). Interviews were not anonymous, and respondents granted me consent to use their real names in the thesis. I do, however, employ pseudonyms for ACT UP members whom I cite in data only from participant observation and not interviews.

In terms of sampling among possible respondents, I prioritised contacts and interviews with ACT UP members who were HIV-positive, POC, or otherwise directly affected by

the social inequalities relevant to the AIDS epidemic (DRs). This priority in sampling is a deliberate effort in representation: in spirit with the themes of the thesis, I aim especially to bring forth the voices of those historically disenfranchised and thus silenced. That said, some analyses in the thesis disproportionately feature some interviewees over others. This bias arises out of a desire to highlight the pertinent personal narratives or thoughts of particular respondents as they articulate causal themes.

My interview recruitment was most aggressive with ACT UP Philadelphia, given its status as the positive case. I attempted to establish interviews with all ACT UP Philadelphia members, past and present, who are alive and have remained in the metropolitan area; I also conducted interviews by phone and Skype for those more remote. I supplemented my own interviews with those in existing historical record. Most notable of these was Sarah Schulman and Jim Hubbard's ACT UP Oral History Project, an extensive archive of video interviews with New York City chapter members.⁷⁵ I coded all their available interviews featuring POC, with supplemental analysis of the most prominent white-identified members in the group (in total, 21 interviews). Also available was a small repository of five ACT UP Philadelphia interviews through other oral history projects.⁷⁶

I acknowledge the significant limitations of such contemporary research methods.

Historians speak of "presentist bias," or the tendency to interpret past history through

⁷⁵ Schulman and Hubbard, "ACT UP Oral History Project."

⁷⁶ Royles, "African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project." Bell, interview.

modern-day lenses and values.⁷⁷ Both methods are fraught with subjectivity. Foremost is my own lens as a participant observer and an interviewer and an interpreter. I recognise the constructivist nature of interviewing, the fact that a story is reborn with each retelling; each historical actor is bound to recount, omit, and reconstruct narrative.⁷⁸ In comparing my interview transcripts with those of other ACT UP oral historians, I found that the more seasoned activists would give, at times, a rehearsed answer that would remain markedly consistent in diction and tone across interviews. In quoting respondents, I made slight edits to their words for readability, but aimed to preserve the authentic patterns of speech in such passages. Hence, there still remain em dashes to mark pauses, as well as stutter or filler words such as “um,” “like,” and “you know.”⁷⁹

These limitations are not to negate the explanatory power of such accounts in the aggregate. Again, the individual stories lead us back to an elucidation of process. In the words of feminist scholar Joan Scott, historical method does not “rest its claim to legitimacy on the authority of experience,” but rather on its efforts to explicate the “historical *processes* that, through discourse, position subjects and produce their experiences.”⁸⁰ Each individual presents a unique set of subjectivities and heterogeneous beliefs. It is from these distinct belief systems and viewpoints that I can come to describe a pervading SMO culture around inclusivity and solidarity.

⁷⁷ Hunt, “Against Presentism.”

⁷⁸ Gamson, “Goffman’s Legacy to Political Sociology”; Feldner and Meisenbach, “SaveDisney.com and Activist Challenges”; Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora*.

⁷⁹ As such issues are discussed in Oliver, Serovich, and Mason, “Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription.”

⁸⁰ Scott, “The Evidence of Experience.”

I mobilised an array of mixed methods to mobilise triangulating evidence. I analysed my interview transcripts and field notes, crosschecking facts across sources and coding the data according to a nested hierarchy of categories. Respective sections of my interview guide correspond to this study's explanatory variables, and my codebook similarly derives from these key themes (see Appendix A). Through this codebook, I compared data from a diverse set of respondents and my own participant observations to draw the conclusions that form the empirical basis of this thesis. I also triangulate the experiences of my respondents through other primary sources: print and online archives, local periodicals, organisational literature, and epidemiological data (detailed in Appendix C).

Process tracing. From these sources, I assembled a rough sequence of historical events that inform the order of the resultant parts in the proposed causal mechanism. These organisational narratives present punctuated historical trajectories for each ACT UP chapter, consisting of episodic moments such as a key protest or change in leadership.

Here I must mention a key criticism of this approach, characterised by the building of theory from such “analytic narratives.” Critics warn that the final theoretical model is susceptible to “curve-fitting,” or a greater loyalty to the peculiarities of a specific case than a general theory itself.⁸¹ I retort that the mixed methods research design, in combination with the comparative case study approach, allowed me to sift the systematic from non-systematic components of ACT UP narrative.

⁸¹ Bates et al., *The Analytical Narrative Project*.

I employed what Beach and Pedersen (2013) term the theory-building variant of process tracing to analyse my empirical data and construct my causal mechanism.⁸² I started in part with an inductive process. Because there exist no theoretical mechanisms for SR, I first began with an initial phase of data collection. From prior historical research on AIDS activism, I entered my first rounds of fieldwork with a Y-centric approach; that is, I collected evidence to seek causal clues to the final outcome of SR that contemporary activists and scholars had identified as exceptional.

The inductive approach was critical: my earliest assumptions were debunked in the field, many of them centred on an idealistic notion of SR. I stress that the theory-building variant of process tracing was a constant and iterative process between the field and the literature, or an “interactive processing” in one scholar’s terms.⁸³ With a crude historical narrative from my research, I compared the ACT UP cases to existing predictions and models in the scholarship. The combination of received theory and empirical data—each insufficient on its own, but powerful in conjunction—allowed for the construction of a robust causal mechanism. The theory chapter outlines the empirical markers that I sought as evidence for each causal variable in the project.

0.5 Thesis outline

⁸² Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*. I choose theory building given the absence of existing explanations for SR in informal SMOs. Bennett and George, *Process Tracing in Case Study Research*; George and McKeown, “Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making”; Mahoney, “Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis”; Mahoney, “Strategies of Causal Inference in small-N Analysis.”

⁸³ McKeown, “Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview.”

Chapter 1 is the dedicated theory chapter in the thesis, and will elaborate on the theoretical process for SR within informal SMOs. It outlines the conceptual and empirical parameters of SR in this study, and it offers conceptual definitions for each of the key steps in the causal mechanism. Chapter 2 discusses the precursors to inclusivity that exist among SMO participants. It outlines the challenges that SMOs face in achieving SR and DR, but also analyses the systematic and non-systematic predispositions to inclusivity that exist within the case SMOs.

Chapter 3 demonstrates how individual predispositions to inclusivity translate to inclusive practice by the SMO as a whole, mediated and spurred by critical episodes or crises in membership deficit. Chapter 4 illustrates the process by which such inclusivity norms on the group level are implemented into practice. It proposes a causal pathway for recruitment of DRs, or participants who reflect the most disenfranchised sectors of the SMO constituency. I advance the importance of material goods, learning, and empowerment as a sequential chain of selective incentives, not only for entry but also sustained participation in an SMO.

Chapter 5 outlines institutional strategies of SMOs to foster political voice and internal inclusion among DRs in the SMO. I engage and expand upon political theorist Iris Young's theoretic of communicative democracy to prove the practical possibility of mitigating power differentials within SMOs—a key step to subverting Michels's iron law of oligarchy.

Chapter 6 presents a pathway by which heterogeneous members of an SMO develop common interest and intention for SR, a set of criteria that constitute what I term “political solidarity.” I draw upon the devices of communicative democracy set forth in Chapter 5 to explore the cementing of group perspective by deliberation; and then the second portion of the chapter re-injects the importance of learning, self-interest, and self-efficacy in establishing substrata for “moral obligation” to sustained SMO participation.

Chapter 7 completes the final progression in the SMO theory of SR, from intention for SR to its actual implementation. It argues that through the heterogeneity of membership and organisational partners, an SMO gains access to an expanded set of internal and external resources for political mobilisation and SR. Chapter 8 offers qualifications on the overall model through a case study of an SMO campaign, showing the simultaneous failures that can accompany but not preclude SR attainment. Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, discusses the potential and limitations to this SMO theory of SR, both within the bounded population of informal SMOs and more generally among all political institutions.

Chapter 1. A theory of substantive representation in social movement organisations

This chapter serves as a detailed elaboration on the causal mechanism advanced in this thesis, the theory of substantive representation (SR) in social movement organisations (SMOs). The first section focuses on the dependent variable of SR. It situates the importance of SR in relation to other forms of political representation, and it offers a concept analysis and index of measurement for SR. Staking a claim in social movement theory (SMT) and the U.S. AIDS movement contest, I argue that SR constitutes the most crucial metric of SMO success in this study.

The second section provides a framework of operationalisation for each of the five causal variables, and a preview of the steps that drive the causal cascade toward SR. I then illustrate the possible range of gradients of SR that characterise SMO trajectories. The chapter concludes with several qualifications on the generalisability of this theory of SR.

1.1 Substantive representation (SR): the dependent variable

Here I discuss the theoretical importance and definition of substantive representation (SR); a concept analysis of the variable; and the index that this thesis employs in evaluation of the case studies.

1.1.1 Theoretical discussion of SR

The centrality of SR as the output of representative democracy. Central to any institution of representative democracy is its namesake function of representation: the capacity of the involved *representatives* to speak for and act on behalf of the *represented*. This thesis focuses on one particular form of representation, SR (SR). SR constitutes the demonstrated efforts of political institutions to pursue activities that advance the policy interests of the represented.

Among the four types of representation, SR is the highest-order and least-often achieved goal of social movement organisations (SMOs). I draw from a canonical taxonomy of political representation according to Pitkin's 1967 *The Concept of Representation* (Table 1).

Table 1. Definition and operationalisation of Pitkin's (1967) four forms of representation in this study.¹

	Conceptual definition	Operationalisation
1. Symbolic representation (SyR)	The means by which representatives "stand for" the represented in an ideological manner	The rhetoric in the SMO's mission statement and other published or internal materials; the extent to which its stated purpose reflects commitment to the heterogeneity of constituencies in the movement

¹ Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation*. Pitkin also speaks of formalistic representation but it is not applicable to informal SMOs as in the thesis.

	Conceptual definition	Operationalisation
2. Descriptive representation (DR)	The mirroring of the full diversity of represented constituencies in experience, identity, or perspective	The physical inclusion of representatives in the SMO that resemble the <i>most disenfranchised</i> constituents across lines of race, class, and other forms of identity; these constituents are <i>directly affected</i> by the SMO issues at hand.
3. Substantive representation (SR)	SMO activities that advance policy interests of the represented	The implementation of proposed actions (e.g., demos or campaigns) that advance the interests of the most oppressed

Furthering Pitkin's theory, I propose that her forms of political representation stack into a funnelled hierarchy: an SMO may fulfil the conditions for some types of political representation but not others (Table 1). Symbolic and descriptive representation (SyR, DR) are two critical precursors in the pathway to SR. SyR is the stated commitment of SMOs to an ends of political inclusion. DR is the physical inclusion of the most oppressed groups, those who are directly impacted by the political issues central to the SMO (e.g., low-income POC living with HIV, in the case of ACT UP). Their perspective contributes toward the ultimate ends of SR.



Figure 4. The funnelled hierarchy of Pitkin's forms of political representation, ending in substantive representation (SR).

SR is the highest-order and most demanding form of representation, as its position in the funnel diagram illustrates (Figure 4). In contrast, almost all SMOs will fulfil the first and broadest criterion of *symbolic representation* (*SyR*), or the rhetoric and intention to represent the interests of their constituencies. Many SMO mission statements proclaim deep commitment to the empowerment and political inclusion of disenfranchised populations. Such rhetoric reflects the very purpose of social movements as broad-based movements to incorporate the excluded.² The bible of the American AIDS movement offers a prime example: the Denver Principles of 1983 called for people with AIDS to be the paramount voice in the movement, especially those at the intersections of racism and sexism and classism.³

² Costain, "Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion."

³ Advisory committee of the People with AIDS, "The Denver Principles."

Of the groups that claim a mission of political inclusion (SyR), only a limited proportion will translate that ideology into practice. Some SMOs will implement practices of recruitment to attract and sustain participation from *DRs*, or members of the demographic groups that are most impacted by the given social issue at hand. For instance, a feminist group striving for true diversity in its constituency will recruit women who are often excluded from mainstream feminist movements (women of colour, the disabled, low-income, and so on). Just a fraction of those groups that actively work to attain *descriptive representation* (DR) will achieve it.

Of that fraction of SMOs, in turn, an even smaller handful will reach this final outcome of *SR*. Success in physical presence of *DRs* does not necessarily lead to *SR*, or the advancement of heterogeneous interests that rises from a diversity of constituencies. To translate *DR* to *SR*, SMOs must overcome the challenges outlined in the introduction, such as Michels's iron law of oligarchy and Olson's problem of collective action. *SR* requires, among many criteria, the democratisation of power and the concerted consensus of political will. Only then are the most disenfranchised voices developed, heard, and taken into account in pursuit of *SR*.

What this sequential funnel argues, then, is that very few groups succeed at what they originally were founded to do: to create and host broad-based mobilisations for the interests and needs of those who cannot access traditional power apparatus of politics.

This is the definition of substantive representation (SR): to pursue activities that advance the policy interests of all constituents, including those of the most oppressed.⁴

It is unclear, however, how the radical idealism of SyR and the involvement of descriptive representatives (DR) translate to actionable campaigns (SR) by SMOs. This missing mechanism is the chief question of interest in this project, the ending goal that constitutes my theory's dependent or outcome variable.

1.1.2 SR: a concept analysis in the SMO context

How, then, do we measure such SR? The following two sections invest significant explanation of SR in recognition of its complexity of definition and operationalisation. This thesis treats SR to be the *successful implementation* of campaigns that aim to advance the stated or revealed interest of the constituencies most affected by the issue that the SMO aims to address. I do not tie any normative judgment to the choice of the words "success" and "successful"; they only serve to designate the actualisation of a desired end goal, in this case campaign implementation.

To operationalise SR, I illustrate the steps that lead to successful implementation in the ACT UP context (Figure 5). Note that the arrows identify a process of steps within an SMO campaign. They neither claim to designate causality nor linearity.

⁴⁴ Reflected in Costain, "Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion."

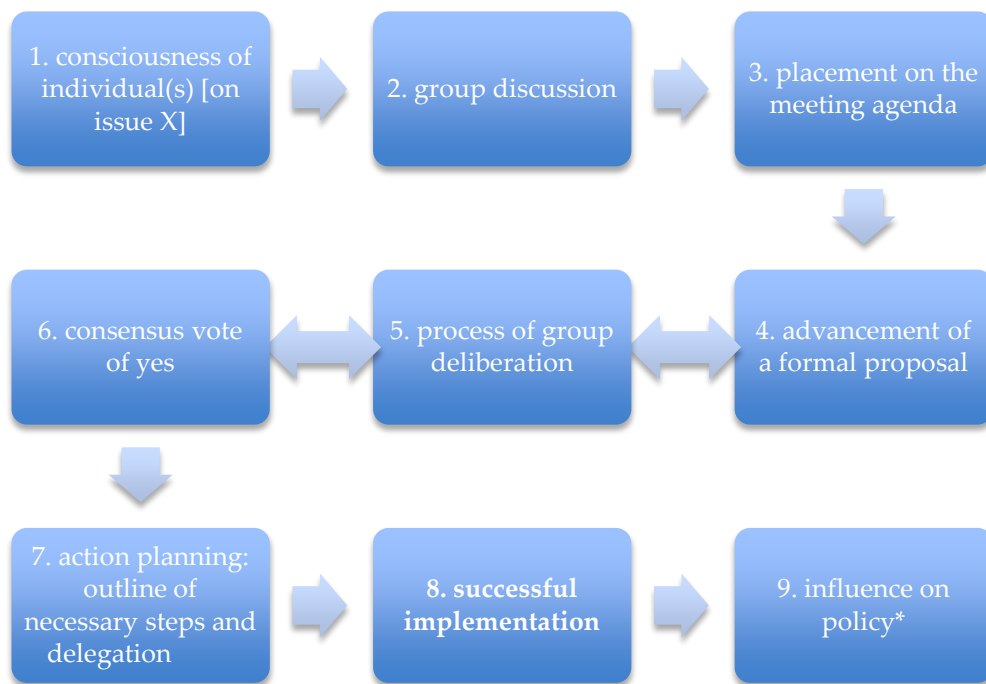


Figure 5. Steps required in ACT UP for an intended campaign or action issue X to be successful to the point of implementation.

For an SMO to successfully implement an action to address issue X, the following sequence of steps is required. One step does not necessarily guarantee progression to the next.

Step 1: Issue Consciousness. At least some individual(s) must know of and perceive the given issue as important. This consciousness may come proactively (e.g., as a preventative measure before crisis) or as a reactive response.

Step 2: Group discussion. The Monday night meetings serve as the site of official deliberation and decision-making in ACT UP. That said, members commonly

pre-empt discussion of more controversial issues with closer friends in the group prior to the formal meetings.⁵

Step 3-6: Issue placement on agenda, advancement of proposal, group deliberation, and consensus vote. Steps 3-6, on the other hand, almost always occur on the “floor,” or general body, of the Monday night meeting. At the start of each meeting, members have the opportunity to add to the agenda. The issue is discussed; if it is deemed to be important enough to merit action, members will advance a proposal to the floor for consideration. The double-headed arrows among steps 3-5 signify the reiterative nature of deliberation needed for consensus. Oftentimes, the group deliberates for hours, sometimes even days or weeks over multiple meetings, before a formal proposal is put forward on the floor; and the group will often modify the proposal before approval with a unanimous thumbs-up.

Step 7: Planning. Following the consensus vote is the planning process. If the proposal is to put forward an action, for example, ACT UP delegates the work among various committees that may be in charge of outreach to partner groups, signs and props, press, buses, speakers, or budgeting.

Step 8: Implementation. The preparations bring us to the day of the planned event or campaign, during which plans are finally implemented.

⁵ Kozeniewski, interview; Shabazz-El, interview; Zellman, interview.

Most importantly, let me explain the * mark in Figure 5 referring to step number 9: The threshold of SR is met with the fulfilment of step 8, successful implementation, not at step 9 (influence of policy). The complete execution of a campaign, then, is sufficient to qualify as SR. For example, if the group intended to blockade a meeting at the office of a political target, they must have arrived at their target site with full intention of doing so, even if it were not successful. According to some ACT UP members, successful implementation often is a process that requires 90 days or more of advance preparation.⁶

The translation of implemented action into influenced policy is a tentative link that lies more out of the SMO's direct control than does the progression through the preceding steps. This last step, the efficacy of SMO action on achieving policy consequences, is much more studied in the literature than are the upstream steps required for the implementation of SR action.⁷ This study thus recognises the importance of step 9, but *it maintains the theory's focus on steps 1-8.*

I offer several other disclaimers on this presentation of a sequential progression:

- The process to reach SR on any given issue may stall or terminate at any given point: the discussion may not turn into a proposal, the proposal may be blocked by as few as one opposing vote, or plans could fall apart the day before a demonstration. Successful implementation of campaigns is difficult

⁶ El-Shabazz, interview.

⁷ Costain, "Social Movements as Mechanisms for Political Inclusion."

to achieve for any SMO, let alone an all-volunteer group with many ideas and goals but many fewer hours and dollars.

- This current discussion treats the analytic unit of SR at the level of the individual campaign or issue. I will expand my definition of SR to the SMO level in the following section.
- The presentation of any diagram or outline of steps is dangerous in and of itself: it suggests linearity within a set of necessary steps. In any such progression or theoretical mechanism, they may portray a condensed packing of sequential links that can hide the tenuous and messy pathways of the causal phenomena in question.

1.2 Substantive representation in the U.S. AIDS epidemic: an index

I construct an index to score the levels of SR among the case SMOs in the thesis.

Following the above concept analysis in Section 1.1.2, a SMO is considered to fulfil SR if it shows demonstrated intent and success to execute campaigns in a diversity of key issue areas.

1.2.1 Justification of SR bounds and issues in AIDS

Within the context of the American AIDS movement, the thesis measures SR as the breadth and depth of implemented campaign issues by SMOs. Before I dive into the numerical mechanics of the index itself, this section will first explain the choice of issue areas that qualify under my particular calculation of SR. The thesis focuses on SR issues that pertain to the interests and needs of marginalised subgroups within the demographic of people with HIV and AIDS, namely low-income POC.

This particular SR agenda corrects a serious disjuncture between the perception and reality of affected populations in the AIDS movement. I can best illustrate this contradiction in the following comparison of the received narrative in AIDS historiography and the longitudinal statistics of HIV epidemiology. A reader familiar with the AIDS crisis in the early 1980s might recall from media reports a different spectrum of SR issues, such as homosexual sex, drugs, and haemophilia. Yet the thesis treats its temporal period as 1987 and beyond, the life of the case SMOs of ACT UP. By 1987, the epidemiology showed that the most affected constituencies of the issue were as heterosexual as homosexual, mostly POC, and often low-income.

The stock character in AIDS historiography: the white, gay male. Tomes of bestselling books and Hollywood-nominated movies memorialise a singular story of the AIDS epidemic and its response. The virus reared its deadly head first among five young men in Los Angeles, all deemed “active homosexuals” by the media and CDC reports in

1981.⁸ That same year, the world's first HIV/AIDS service organisation, the Gay Men's Health Crisis, began in the New York home of Larry Kramer when he and his five gay male friends decided to pass around a hat and start a hotline. Six years later, in 1987, another group that Larry founded — ACT UP New York — announced itself to the world with a march on Wall Street to protest the profit profiteering of AIDS drug manufacturers.⁹

The rest is history: a history of white gay men who overcame insurmountable odds of homophobia, political apathy, and public ignorance; the story of ordinary, if sometimes moneyed, underdogs who expedited access and slashed drug prices for millions of people dying from a tragic disease. Parading among the iconographic works are Randy Shilts's *And the Band Played On*, the HBO drama it inspired in 1993, another 1993 movie starring Tom Hanks (*Philadelphia*), a 2012 documentary *How to Survive a Plague*, and countless other accounts. This refrain has casted the same characters and resonated verses of the same saga.¹⁰ Under this dominant narrative, SR in the AIDS movement comprises the dedicated efforts toward tackling HIV as a biomedical target, to be addressed through political pressure to push out pharmaceuticals from people and places of power.

⁸ Centers for Disease Control, "First Report of AIDS."

⁹ ACT UP New York, "ACT UP New York City."

¹⁰ Grimes, "Randy Shilts, Author, Dies at 42; One of First to Write About AIDS - New York Times"; *ibid.*; Burkett, *The Gravest Show on Earth*; Bennett and George, *Process Tracing in Case Study Research*; Jackson, "PLOAs: The Newest Opportunistic Infection"; France, *How to Survive a Plague*; Demme, *Philadelphia*; Epstein, *Impure Science*.

The epidemiology: people of colour, women, the poor. Hard numbers tell a very different story of AIDS representation than do the perceptions etched onto the American psyche by media and scholarly frames. For far longer than many of us realise, the epidemic has long ravaged communities poorer, blacker, and, at times, heterosexual. By ACT UP New York's founding in 1987, blacks and Hispanics accounted for a respective 24 and 14 percent of all AIDS cases, even though they only represented 12 and 7 percent of the U.S. population.¹¹ By 1987 and for every year since, HIV has become as much a heterosexual disease as it has one of male-to-male sexual contact, and POC have constituted the majority of new HIV infections (Figure 6).¹² Appendix D shows similar graphs to document the change in new HIV infections over time by gender and transmission category.

¹¹ Bakeman et al., "The Incidence of AIDS Among Blacks and Hispanics."

¹² Moore, "Epidemiology of HIV Infection in the United States."

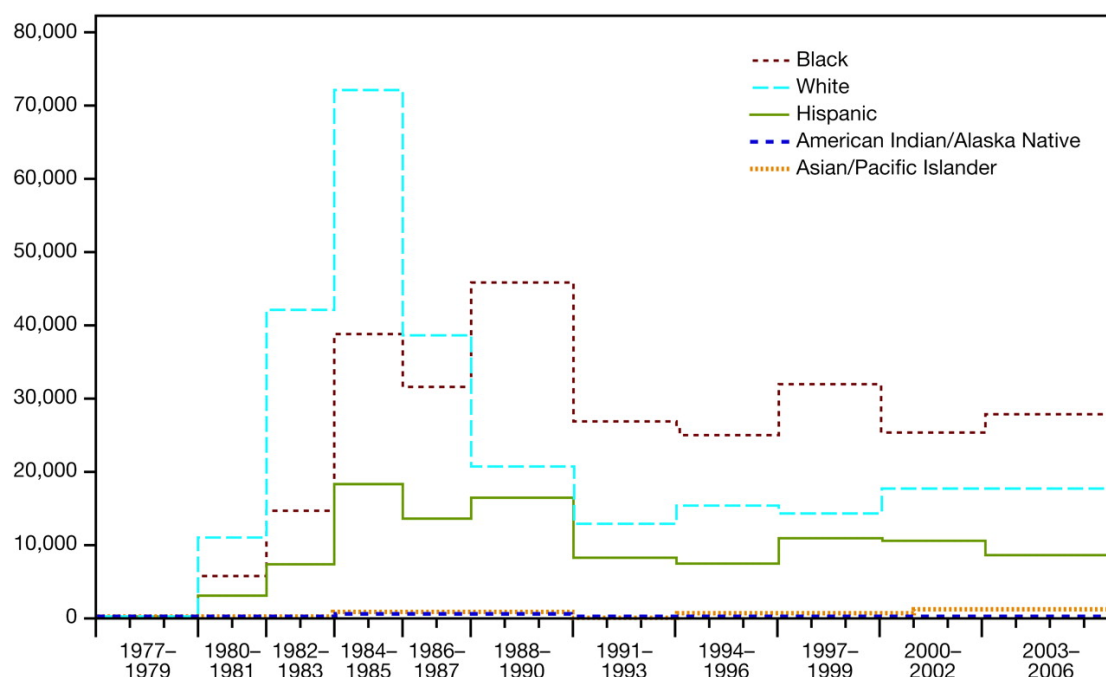


Figure 6. Estimated number of new HIV infections by race, 1997-2006. Estimates are based on a modelling method specific to HIV epidemiology (the extended back calculation) based on case surveillance data.

One can also consider the racial disparity in HIV not by infections of new people, but by the death of old AIDS patients. Mortality rates paint an even more glaring picture of the inherent socioeconomic and racial inequities in HIV infection. Culled from a review of two decades' worth of U.S. death certificates, the graph below shows white death rates trailing much lower than those of blacks and Latinos, and almost imperceptible after 1997 (Figure 7).¹³ The FDA had approved the first lifesaving antiretroviral therapies in late 1995, and by 1997 death rates dipped across the board, but with great racial disparities. With new drug access, black mortality fell at a rate 58 percent less than that of whites.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control, "HIV Mortality (through 2010)."

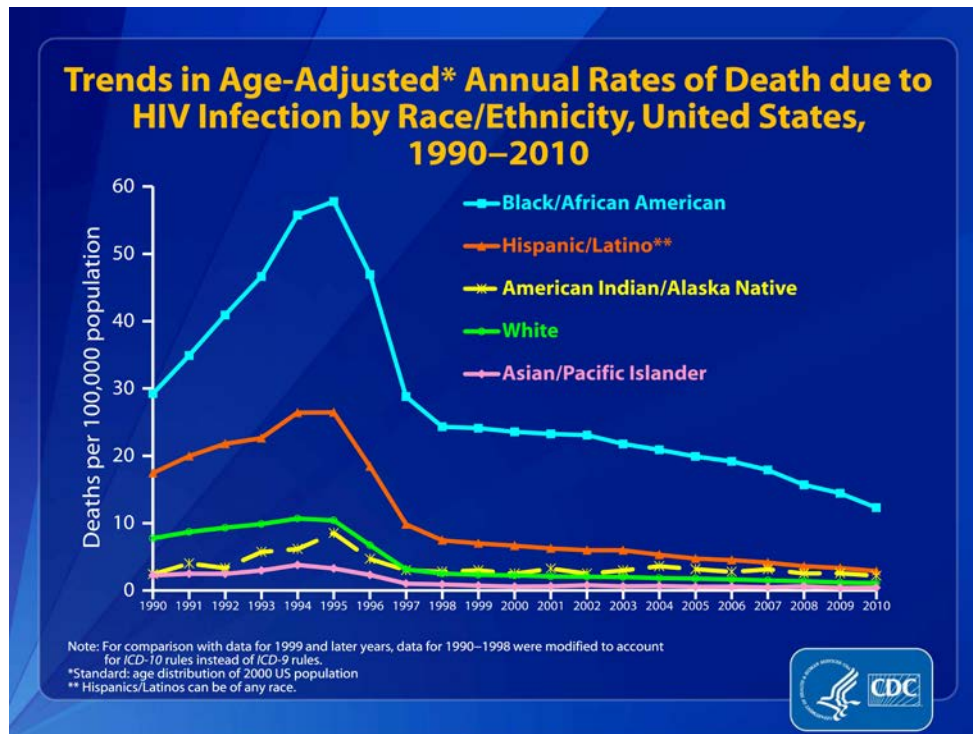


Figure 7. Death rates from HIV and AIDS in the United States, 1990-2010. Obtained from the Centers for Disease Control's slide series on mortality data.

Relating the epidemiology to substantive representation. The numbers back a statistical case for SR. The thesis establishes SR in the AIDS movement as a focus on issues of racial and socioeconomic justice that disproportionately impact low-income POC. This choice of definition does not imply any normative comment that SMO activity by and for the popularly conceived group of people with AIDS—white, middle-class gay men—is any less important or valid.

It is by multiple conceptions of democracy that the thesis chooses to locate SR issues in ACT UP within the interests and needs of low-income POC. They make up the majority of new HIV infections and deaths from AIDS, a claim that evokes the majoritarian claim

to democracy.¹⁴ Moreover, a deliberative view of democracy as espoused by Iris Young and others would reveal that issues such as shelter for homeless people with AIDS, the prevention of HIV transmission among needle-sharers, and general economic justice issues indeed fall under the remit of AIDS activist organisations.

ACT UP is an institution of deliberative democracy, a consensus-based SMO that believes the process of discussion gives room and rise to certain political preferences of its constituency that would not be reflected otherwise.¹⁵ Later sections testify best to the instrumental value of deliberation as a means to give rise to the full spectrum of issues that affect the most politically disenfranchised. In particular, Chapter 2 explains members' views on issue inclusivity and Chapter 5 introduces the institutional rules that lay a foundation for DR voice.

For now, I want to emphasise that oral history and scholarly accounts within the movement testify that ACT UP chapters across the world, as a population of SMOs fighting HIV/AIDS, have always referred to social justice issues of POC and the poor in its political analysis. The extent to which they act on said issues indeed varies—the very research puzzle that undergirds the thesis—but as ACT UP Philadelphia member David Acosta proclaimed, the movement understood its issues to be far more than drug access,

¹⁴ Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy*; Blaug and Schwarzmantel, *Democracy*.

¹⁵ Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*. Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy*.

that it was to be inclusive of tackling “governmental indifference...discrimination, stigma, [and] lack of access to services.”¹⁶

1.2.2 Methodology for calculation

I consider two dimensions of SR breadth and depth: 1) the first measures an SMO’s penetration into a set of five AIDS-specific issue areas, and 2) the second reflects the percentage of SMO campaigns that qualify as one of these five issues. SMOs can score up to 5 points in each dimension; thus, total scores range from 0-10 inclusive. An SMO is considered to be substantively representative if it achieves a minimum threshold score of *8 out of 10*.

For the first dimension, I consider five areas of SR in the U.S. AIDS movement. In each area, the SMO scores a “1” for successful implementation of a campaign on the respective issue, “0” otherwise. Scores in the five issue areas are tallied.

- i. Transmission of HIV among intravenous drug use users
- ii. Transmission of HIV among people of colour (POC) or low-income peoples
- iii. Housing for people with AIDS (PWAs)
- iv. Systems of social welfare for low-income people
- v. Preventative programmes and drugs for HIV/AIDS in the Global South

¹⁶ e.g., Acosta, interview; Thomas, interview; Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP’s Fight Against AIDS*.

With respect to any given issue, an SMO has achieved SR if and only if it successfully implements political campaigns in advancement of said issue.

The second dimension relates to the percentage of major campaigns by the SMO that would constitute as SR. An SMO earns 5 points if 80-100 percent of its implemented campaigns qualify under the above issue areas, 4 for 60-80 percent, and so on.

The five issue areas to this project's treatment of SR. The thesis focuses on five key issue areas that reflect the breadth of SR in the AIDS movement. These categories arise out of interview data with PWAs and AIDS activists, corroborated with epidemiological data on HIV. Together, they address both the *prevention* of future HIV transmission and the *treatment* of current AIDS cases, either in the biomedical or socioeconomic sense (Figure 8).

The focus of each issue lies in population sectors that are politically underrepresented and demographically overrepresented in the AIDS epidemic: low-income people, POC, and intravenous drug users. These demographics also imply the inclusion of important subgroups such as incarcerated populations and people with mental health issues.

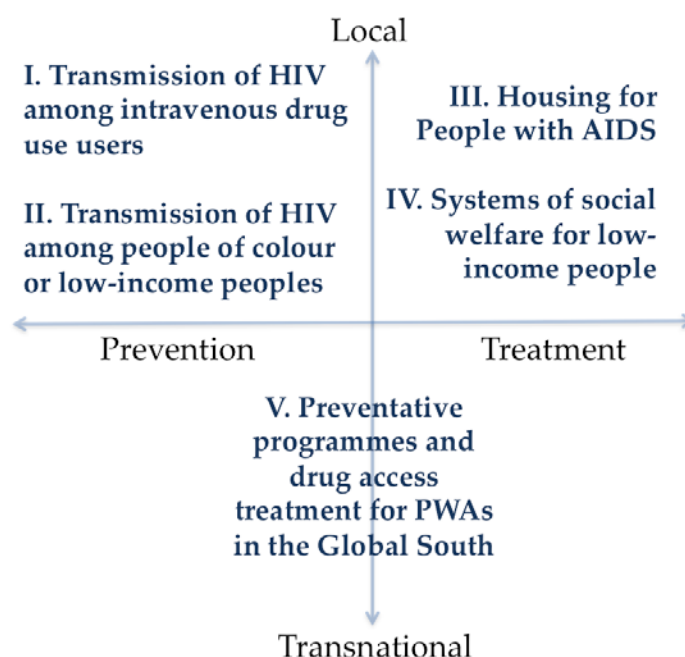


Figure 8. The five key issue areas considered in the definition of SR in the thesis for HIV/AIDS SMOs.

Exclusion of other issue areas. In respect to this breadth of SR issues, it is also critical to explain the rationale for *exclusion* of other significant issues. I do not include work that advocates for biomedical advances relating to treatment or prevention of HIV/AIDS. Of course, such work is needed for the epidemic. However, I focus expressly on marginalised issues that are specific to select disenfranchised populations and do not enjoy the political clout nor economic motivations of research, medical, or pharmaceutical communities. They form the SR foci of ACT UP.

I explicitly exclude LGBT issues, a demarcation that attacks the popular conflation of same-sex identity with the goals of the AIDS movement. Struggles for LGBT equality, while undoubtedly important, reflect the overrepresentation of certain interests in the AIDS epidemic. Largely white, male, and gay, these most powerful interests have subsumed the socioeconomic and health concerns of less privileged groups that are more minority, female, and diverse in sexual orientation. In interview data, issues of sexual orientation do not constitute the most pressing needs of DRs in the AIDS epidemic. Thus, they are not a criterion of the treatment of SR in the thesis.

Notes on the methodology

The two dimensions of the index consider 1) the breadth across issues of SR, and 2) the extent to which SR is the central concern of its major campaigns. Together, these two halves of the index evaluate the presence of campaigns in a variety of SR issue areas but also the degree to which such SR campaigns constitute the total sum of activities of the SMO.

This index of SR employs Wittgenstein's family resemblance approach of concept analysis.¹⁷ That is, there is no definitive issue or set of issues that constitute SR; rather, various combinations (or "families") of policy issues can qualify an SMO under this index to fulfil SR. This treatment of the index is distinct from the operationalisation of SR itself, in which one definitional attribute, the evidenced implementation of campaigns, is necessary and sufficient to be considered SR.

¹⁷ Goertz, *Social Science Concepts*; Collier and Mahon, "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited."

The scoring of SR takes into consideration the cumulative history of a SMO's activity. An SMO need only display one instance of campaign implementation for SR in any given issue area. One might object to such cumulative measurement as a shallow reflection of SR. However, this index considers the absence or presence of implementation in a diversity of issue areas to be most important, not the particular frequency or nature of SMO campaigning.

Alternative but inferior metrics. I did evaluate metrics other than campaign implementation for the measurement of SR. Alternatives, however, command far less analytic purchase and practical feasibility in the informal SMO context of this project. For example, it is not possible to measure the proportion of staff resources that are dedicated to particular issue areas. My case study SMOs have not delineated clear divisions of labour that would be apparent in more hierarchal or formal organisations. One could instead measure the proportion of the budget that an SMO allocates to issues of SR. However, financial records would be unreliable, even if they existed and were accessible. Issues vary widely in the range of resource investment required for campaigning. Thus, budgetary figures would reflect inherent resource differences by issue more so than they would differences in SMO priorities.

My definition, thus, is the most proximate measure of SR in SMO activity as it reflects demonstrated intention and effort to advance the interests of the most disenfranchised constituencies.

1.2.3 Case scores on the SR index

The table below presents scoring for each of the four case SMOs on 1) each of the five issues of SR campaign implementation and 2) the percentage of campaigns dedicated to such SR (Table 2). Appendix B details the backstory to the scoring: it lists the major campaigns in each ACT UP chapter's history and classifies the campaigns according to the five SR areas. Many of the non-SR campaigns focus on biomedical issues of access and treatment for PWAs as well as anti-homophobia work; these issues correlate with the interests of the predominant constituency of power and numbers in the movement, gay white men.

The table illustrates that ACT UP Philadelphia 2.0 is the only chapter that fulfils the threshold score of SR (a 10 of 10). The New York group scores as well as Philadelphia on the first dimension, as this flagship chapter of ACT UP boasts a fruitful history of campaigns. The group protested against the City's homelessness policy, won condom access for HIV prevention in public schools, and secured the release of HIV-positive Haitian refugees from Guantanamo Bay. New York's slate of SR campaigns appears remarkable in isolation. Contextualised within its overall SMO history, however, the group's record is less impressive: issue campaigns for low-income peoples of colour are few and far between its fixation on strict treatment issues, especially New York 1.0.¹⁸

¹⁸ ACT UP New York, "ACT UP New York City."

Boston 1.0 and 2.0 present an interesting contrast on SR achievement, too. The original chapter in Boston focused almost exclusively on issues of drugs and treatment.¹⁹ ACT UP Boston's revival in 2012 saw greater concern and activity toward SR, but the new chapter suffered from a lack of resources, membership, and strategy to execute such intention into action. The remainder of the thesis explains the divergence in SR among these four chapters and other informal SMOs.

Table 2. Index scores of substantive representation for the four case SMO trajectories in the thesis.

	PHILLY 1.0 (1988- 1994)	NYC 1.0 (1987- 1994)	BOSTON 1.0 (1987- 1996)	PHILLY 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	NYC 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	BOSTON 2.0 (2012- 2014)
i. Transmission of HIV among intravenous drug use users	1	1	1	1	1	-
ii. Transmission of HIV among people of colour or low-income peoples	1	1	1	1	-	-
iii. Housing for People with AIDS (PWAs)	1	1	-	1	-	1
iv. Systems of social welfare for low-income people	-	-	-	1	1	-
v. Preventative programmes and drugs for HIV/AIDS in the Global South	-	1	-	1	1	1
Number of SR campaigns	5	8	1	17	9	2

¹⁹ Reynolds and Clutterbuck, "The Raymond Schmidt and Stephen Skuce AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP / Boston) Collection."

	PHILLY 1.0 (1988- 1994)	NYC 1.0 (1987- 1994)	BOSTON 1.0 (1987- 1996)	PHILLY 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	NYC 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	BOSTON 2.0 (2012- 2014)
Total number of campaigns	9	37	15	19	16	3
Percentage of all major campaigns dedicated to issues i-v (1=0-20%, 2=20-40%, etc.)	3 (55.6 percent)	2 (21.6 percent)	1 (6.7 percent)	5 (89.4 percent)	3 (56.2 percent)	4 (66.7 percent)
TOTAL SCORE (of 10)	6	6	2	10	6	6

My final point on the SR scores: I breathe a note of caution regarding the very epistemological dangers of this manner of evaluation. The quantifiable ease of comparability betrays a deceptive sense of simple rigour and objectivity. Index measures are necessarily subjective. In the painting of the empirical background that informs these numbers, I endeavour to illustrate that ACT UP Boston and New York (1.0 and 2.0) achieve significant campaigns for SR, even if they do “fall off” the causal chain early due to incompleteness of the earlier causal steps (refer to Appendix B for a list of such campaigns). Similarly, Philadelphia is far from a perfect case of SR; Chapter 8 is solely dedicated to such discussion.

Despite the universal limitations among index measures, I still maintain that this crude dissection buys analytic purchase. With this operationalisation of the outcome variable comes the possibility and execution of a systematic review of SR for the comparative case study of the thesis.

1.3 The SMO theory of representation: a walkthrough

Below follows detailed explanation of each causal variable in this thesis and its SMO theory of representation (refer back to Figure 1). For each variable, I offer a conceptual definition and outline the empirical markers for operationalisation.²⁰ I also discuss each variable's place in the causal cascade and their proposed causal links to other variables in the sequence. To explain later are the related literatures and my specific theoretical contributions at each step. In the final section of this chapter, I note alternative pathways of SMO failure and success in SR.

x1. Personal predispositions to inclusivity [Chapter 2]

Inclusivity is the normative value that an individual may (or may not) place on the inclusion of diverse peoples and ideas in any given social space. Inclusion, on the other hand, is the end state of inclusivity in practice, or the physical welcoming of heterogeneous peoples.

Inclusivity is a population-level variable. That is, I assert that some individuals are more predisposed than others to value inclusivity within social or political groups. In that sense, inclusivity is like adult shoe size and hair colour; there exists a spectrum of potential values along an axis that an individual may adopt. Inclusivity is like adult shoe size in that there is a gradient in which some individuals may be more inclusive than

²⁰ Goertz, *Social Science Concepts*; Collier and Mahon, "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited"; Mahoney, "After KKV."

others; but like hair colour, the spectrum of various possibilities are not easily quantified. However, it differs from both attributes in that inclusivity is dynamic over time and across circumstance. Individuals may become more predisposed to inclusivity because of certain lived experiences.

Chapter 2 argues that alone or in combination, two criteria correlate to predispositions to inclusivity. The first relates to one's experience in oppression, or membership in an identity group such as women or POC that has historically held subordinate positions of power relative to other groups. The second, the "community" factor, derives from one's experience in a past community that has practiced inclusivity. By virtue of modelling, if an individual has been part of a past SMO culture that has valued inclusivity, s/he is more likely, though not definitively, able to understand and hold that same belief as well.²¹

The first criterion, the "oppression" factor, is perhaps the more controversial determinant of inclusivity. The logic: systems of power are most visible to those who lack it. As Young describes it, systems of privilege and oppression are such that "the situation of the relatively disadvantaged [is kept] out of sight."²² In turn, systems such as sexism are much harder to ignore when one herself is a recipient of such discrimination. A woman is much more likely than a man to understand sexism due to her own experiences of marginalisation. It is an acquired consciousness, I argue. The heightened

²¹ Dovi, for instance, argues against the essentialist claim that "any woman, black, or Latino will do." Dovi, "Preferable Descriptive Representatives."

²² Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 208.

sensitivity to power and difference, in turn, predisposes oneself to be able to recognise more readily marginalisation across other axes of identity such as race or class.²³

I do not contend, however, that all oppressed peoples are predisposed to inclusivity.²⁴

Only a small fraction of any population possesses proclivities toward inclusivity; natural variations among people cannot be explained by social position, past community, or past experiences in oppression. But the inclusion of oppressed peoples is critical for this very reason. If assets of consciousness are rare, their presence becomes yet more important in facilitating the inclusion of other oppressed peoples with distinct but parallel experiences of socio-political exclusion.

The oppression and community factors lend themselves to clear operationalisation and observable empirical markers. Chapter 2 evaluates the membership of the case SMOs according to these criteria: how many members are persons of colour, women, low-income, or otherwise subject to societal forces of oppression? In interviews, I ask people of their backgrounds prior to SMO participation. In recounting their life stories, do respondents report experiences in past social movements or other communities that conferred values of inclusivity?

This theory of causality starts on the level of the individual. This beginning point may seem contradictory with this theory's ambitions to explain group-level processes of

²³ Similarly argued in Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"; Wildman and David, "Language and Silence." Cited most famously in relation to racial consciousness and white privilege in McIntosh, "White Privilege."

²⁴ As noted in Dovi, "Preferable Descriptive Representatives."

representation. It appears counterintuitive to defying the scholarship's current focus on individual DRs in parliaments in favour of examining attributes within groups. But this variable of the personal is indeed a necessary point of departure. A group is composed, of course, of individuals who bring certain interests, opinions, and perspectives to form a collective organisation.

x2. Organisational norms of inclusivity [Chapters 3-4]

The causal step from x1 to x2 asks how personal predispositions translate to an organisational-level priority of inclusivity. A common question in the literature of causality is the progression from one variable to the next: is it one of threshold or degree?²⁵ That is, does a group become inclusive at the organisational level when there exists a "critical mass" of people who are deemed to have predispositions to inclusion, or when there are several "critical actors" that champion such inclusion?²⁶

Neither, I contend. Chapter 3 argues that this dichotomy focuses too exclusively on the agency of the individual actors, and neglects the external circumstances that impel such practices of inclusivity. I advocate for an understanding of norm development and its translation into action through what I term "critical episodes."²⁷ I argue that the telling catalyst comes in historical crises in SMO trajectories. The agential actions of internal actors are important; and external circumstances of urgency ultimately propel ideological talk to become true action on inclusivity.

²⁵ e.g., Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*, 46–47.

²⁶ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Childs and Krook, "Analysing Women's Substantive Representation."

²⁷ Capoccia and Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures."

Critical episodes or crises, in turn, are revealing moments for measuring group-level norms. They represent instances that soak the organisational milieu with feelings of urgency and the reality of limited resources. Such an emotional environment, scholars have argued, can constrict the purview of SMO participations to a more furrowed and narrow consideration of their own self-interest.²⁸ Thus critical episodes can both expose and accelerate SMO trajectories to act on (or abandon) their supposed ideologies of inclusivity.

Chapter 3 tracks organisational norms of inclusivity by identifying a particular slice of crisis common to the case SMO trajectories. In this time section, I mine for empirical markers of inclusivity through the following questions:

- Is inclusivity translated into action? That is, does the group pursue recruitment and retention of DRs, the most disenfranchised constituents?
- How do members describe and demonstrate their commitment for recruitment?
 - Is it only the lip service of rhetoric (symbolic representation) that does not translate into resource allocation for inclusivity efforts?
 - Or, is it true inclusion? Such groups will invest significant time, thought, and resources into recruitment efforts.

²⁸ Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*; Goodwin and Jasper, *Rethinking Social Movements*; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, *Passionate Politics*.

x3. Physical inclusion of descriptive representatives [Chapter 4]

Through recruitment and investment targeted toward the most disenfranchised constituents, SMOs may attain *physical inclusion*: the sustained presence of DRs in internal membership.

In empirical measurement, I identify physical inclusion through the existence of a pipeline of recruitment and investment specifically targeted at DRs. Note that this operationalisation rests on the *process* rather than the *end state* of physical inclusion.

Recruitment is the critical focus here. Securing steady DR participation is important to all informal SMOs. Open membership policies imply a loose sieve for entry but also exit from the group. High turnover rates abound in all-volunteer groups absent of formal mechanisms of authorisation or accountability. Thus, an SMO cannot sustain physical inclusion unless it has developed a reliable, ongoing process to develop its membership force.

How, then, does an SMO ensure the flow of entry and sustained participation of DRs?

This process represents the critical link between group norms of inclusivity (x2) and physical inclusion (x3). As Chapter 4 argues, SMOs must employ material incentives to meet the needs of and attract the interest of descriptive representatives. Only with the offer of such material resources can SMOs sustain DR participation. Also critically important are education schemes that invest in the self-efficacy of DRs. Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one's participation is needed and crucial to the success of the SMO and its associated political goals.

The empirical translation of this theory is straightforward. For physical inclusion, I pinpoint the initial net of material incentives: the offer of food, transportation subsidies, and other accommodations for participants. SMOs must also demonstrate clear and longstanding leadership pipelines in the form of education and training programmes for DRs, further linked to interview data from DR participants who demonstrate their conviction in political knowledge and self-efficacy.

Race and descriptive representation. I must define one last bifurcation: who are allies, and who are descriptive representatives? *I classify allies as white members, and DRs or beneficiaries as members of colour.* I employ race as the proxy for political disenfranchisement within the AIDS epidemic.²⁹

Race is indeed a crude measure; but I contend that it is the best possible measure because of its political significance and practical value in this study context. The epidemiology of HIV status has always been highly racialised (see Section 1.2.1).³⁰ In the American AIDS epidemic, race is also highly conflated with class.³¹ Its ease as a heuristic of difference activates universal and psychological tendencies to include and exclude in any group of humans, SMOs included.

²⁹ I ask questions of race and ethnicity to my interviewees; but for members at large, I do recognise that the racial identity that I assign group members may differ from that of their own self-identification. The error of my racial assignment, however, is important in itself because it is likely to reflect the physical perceptions of other members and society at large.

³⁰ Curran et al., "Epidemiology of HIV Infection and AIDS in the United States"; Bakeman et al., "The Incidence of AIDS Among Blacks and Hispanics"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV Among African Americans"; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "HIV Among Latinos."

³¹ Curtis and Patrick, "Race and Survival Time with AIDS"; Diaz et al., "Socioeconomic Differences Among People with AIDS."

I realise that this definition may appear to be a crass charge into the camp of identity politics. A critic could argue that one axis of identity cannot possibly begin to capture the complexity of social or political difference. I wholeheartedly agree: no one marker can suffice to distinguish between allies and beneficiaries, or those who are DRs and those who are not. Serostatus (e.g., HIV-positive or HIV-negative) would qualify as the most natural and most accurate measure possible, given that the movement in question is that of AIDS. However, it is an impossible measure of heterogeneity in the research context, given the sensitivity and confidentiality of serostatus; many ACT UP members do not openly disclose their HIV condition.

The heuristic of race commands tremendous analytic purchase in the context of the U.S. at large and the AIDS movement specifically. Race has served one of the most potent indicators of American social marginalisation and political disenfranchisement.³² Several ACT UP members, black and white, contend that racial justice forms the backbone of the AIDS movement.³³ Paralleling American history, the narrative imagery and history of AIDS activism reflects the potency of race. Whites have held the clout and power to assert change in the heyday of the movement, as gay middle to upper-class men; POC have borne most of the epidemiological burden.³⁴

³² Novkov, "Rethinking Race in American Politics"; King and Smith, "Racial Orders in American Political Development"; Lowndes, Novkov, and Warren, "Race and American Political Development"; Lieberman, "Weak State, Strong Policy." King and Smith, *Still a House Divided*; Carr, "Colorblind" Racism; Bonilla-Silva, *Racism Without Racists*.

³³ e.g., Scoppettuolo, Interview.

³⁴ Shilts, *And the Band Played On*; Epstein, *Impure Science*; Andriote, *Victory Deferred*; Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*.

Race is incredibly visual. The physical ease with which it demarcates difference—this very characteristic of race is at the root of its political significance and its pragmatic utility in this study. More so than other demarcations such as sexual identity or class, skin colour represents an immediate means to form assumptions and pre-determine difference.³⁵ Human nature associates like with like. In an SMO context, race is the easy marker to signify who is and who is not sitting in a room or marching in a protest. Race is a primary means that we employ to pass judgement, determine approachability, and choose friends among others. Race has always been imbued in otherness; racial difference has long obstructed solidarity across identity lines.³⁶

Literature in American political development has argued for the analytic purchase of racial politics on the dynamics within social movements and political institutions.³⁷ Such exhortations are lost to the deaf ears of mainstream political science, which tends to limit the analytic scope of race to individual attitudes and political preferences.³⁸

x4. Internal inclusion [Chapter 5]

Physical inclusion guarantees the presence of DRs and their bodies in the room. *Internal inclusion* is a higher-order condition that demands the political power of DRs: their voices must be heard, and they express and internalise their interests within the

³⁵ Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 5.

³⁶ Ibid., 25; Ostrander, “Gender and Race in a Pro-feminist, Progressive, Mixed-gender, Mixed-race Organization”; Scott, “Beyond Tokenism”; Poster, “The Challenges and Promises of Class and Racial Diversity in the Women’s Movement.”

³⁷ e.g., Frymer, *Black and Blue*; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1999; Frymer, “Race’s Reality: The NAACP Confronts Racism and Inequality in the Labor Movement, 1940 - 65”; Lowndes, Novkov, and Warren, “Race and American Political Development.”

³⁸ As argued by Lowndes, Novkov, and Warren, “Race and American Political Development,” 13.

collective goals of the group. Attainment of internal inclusion directly counters the supposedly “iron law” of oligarchy.

For the causal step from physical to internal inclusion, I draw upon a theoretical construct from Iris Young’s *Inclusion and Democracy*, what she calls a “communicative democracy.”³⁹ I look to features of institutional design that signal an invitation and valuing of DRs for their distinct input and perspective on the direction of the SMO. A communicative democracy opens up deliberative spaces, such that they anchor upon the non-rational forms of contribution that are undervalued in traditional processes of decision-making.

Chapter 5 looks to three features of SMO design that signify, open up, and develop the power of descriptive representatives as truly inclusive members in the group’s internal dynamics. They are rituals of *greeting*, or the act of recognition of each member in the group; *rhetoric*, the encouraged display of emotion and non-rational components that accompany speech and language; and *narrative*, the sharing of personal experience. In conjunction, evidence of these three tools frame a group dynamic that respects and depends on the contribution of DRs in the SMO.

³⁹ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

x5. Political solidarity [Chapter 6]

This thesis treats political solidarity as two key components: perspective, or shared political orientation, and obligation, or moral impetus, for SR.

1. The formation of a *common perspective* among the membership toward a common definition of SR; AND
2. The development of feelings of *mutual need and obligation*, in which members believe that their own participation and that of others is necessary for the accomplishment of SMO goals.

These two components have separate empirical criteria for measurement. For the purposes of the case study on ACT UP, the attainment of common perspective toward SR is clear: it is the consensus vote of “all yes” among all members on the floor at a Monday night meeting. The process to attainment, in contrast, requires more careful participant observation. I track the use and effect of non-rational devices of argument (e.g., angry speech, personal narrative, and other forms of rhetoric). These same devices of communicative democracy characterise internal inclusion (x4); but I look specifically to their effect in forming common perspective: that is, clear avenues in which contentious deliberation enables a heterogeneous set of voices to hear one another and develop final consensus. In Chapter 6, I employ reflection from interview data to buttress the role that deliberation has upon common perspective.

In relation to moral obligation, interview data reveals clear links between feelings of gained self-interest and one's own moral obligation. I look toward specific codes that relate to *rhetoric of responsibility*. Recurrent tropes such as debt, guilt, and self-efficacy form the substrata with which individuals rationalise either their continued participation in the SMO or feelings of regret after leaving.

y. Substantive representation [Chapter 7]

Political solidarity secures a clear orientation and moral will (the *ideological intention*) toward SR. The final latchkey missing to the mechanism's outcome variable, in turn, is the *practical mobilisation* of resources that rounds out an SMO's capacity to engineer and execute campaigns toward SR. For a grassroots, all-volunteer group such as ACT UP, how does an SMO mobilise the physical capacity necessary to pursue work that furthers the interests of the most politically disenfranchised? By the definition of disenfranchisement, such work receives little support from the public mainstream or political establishment. SR, in turn, requires significant investment of resources to pursue successful implementation of proposals and actions.

The activation of "resource complementarity" completes the missing causal step between political solidarity and SR. Resource complementarity refers to the combination of distinct sets of resources from two or more dissimilar partners in alliance.⁴⁰ Resource

⁴⁰ Harrison et al., "Resource Complementarity in Business Combinations."

complementarity reflects an expanded possibility set of SMO resources, one that arises from the assets that are afforded by a heterogeneous membership and diverse organisational relationships.

How does resource complementarity manifest in practice? It comes in two flavours: “organisational complementarity” among partner and external organisations, and “member complementarity” among its internal base. Organisational complementarity can be clearly observed in the balance books and resource flow (information, people, and/or money) between the SMO in question and related state or service partners.

Member complementarity is more difficult to trace. It requires close participant observation, interview data, and historical examination. For example, ACT UP members reflect on the power rooted in the simple phenotypic differences of its multiracial base: white people gain easier access to spaces such as government planning groups; low-income POC offer resources of legitimacy through their role as spokespeople and the attention they capture from the media in their mass mobilisation. Important, too, is the distinct perspective that their differential social locations afford. I look toward the concrete instances in which the cultural sensitivity of DRs or the political knowledge of educated allies contributes toward the strategy and tactic of SMO activities.

Alternative outcomes in the causal model

With any theoretical model, one must illustrate the pathways of failure as well as those of success. Each of the causal elements in this SMO theory of representation is necessary but not sufficient conditions for SR. This model maps a probabilistic sequence: the presence of one causal element facilitates but does not guarantee the development of the next variable. The discussion thus far has dedicated lengthy description of possible success toward SR development. Now I walk through the alternative possibilities of failure that can arise at any step of the SMO model, as outlined in red below (Figure 9).

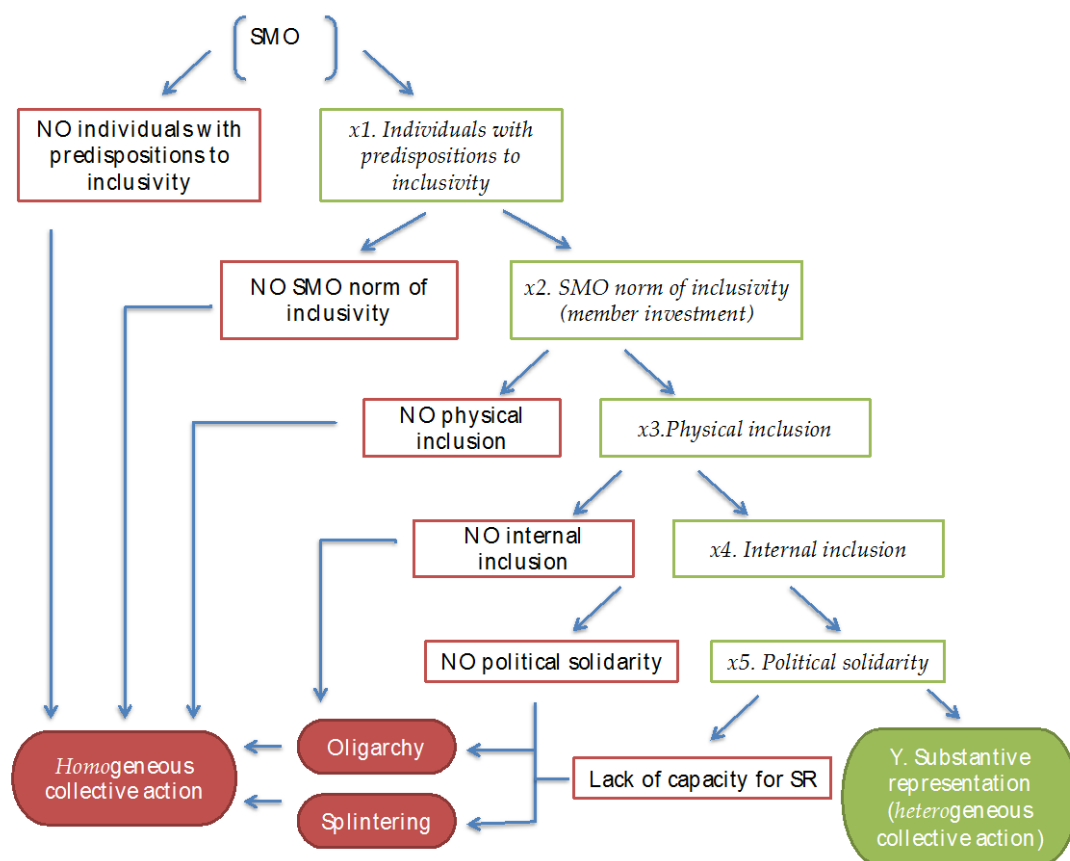


Figure 9. Diagram of possible outcomes in the SMO theory of representation. Green boxes represent success, red boxes failure. The squares are intermediary outcomes, and ovals are final outcomes.

I acknowledge that this illustration may seem simplistic. It depicts a binary set of outcomes for each junction of the causal chain, either success or failure. As such, this analytic approach necessarily departs from the ontological traditions exemplified by King, Keohane, and Verba (KKV, 1994).⁴¹ For instance, the involvement of inductive approaches in my process tracing method was critical for developing theory that is informed not only by scholarship but also by empirical observation. While KKV advances a frequentist argument that variables should be able to adopt a range of values, I rely on Bayesian logic. Given the small n of this study, this project does not possess the degrees of freedom necessary to quantify causal effect. Rather, it observes the presence or absence of certain variables that are likely to effect or not effect a causal step.⁴²

x1. The vast majority of SMOs will fulfil the first $x1$, a number of individuals with predispositions to inclusivity. For those that do not, they will engage in collective action by and for a *homogenous* set of movement participants, if any collective action at all.

x2. If the individuals predisposed to inclusivity do not translate such predisposition to an organisational norm, the organisation may engage in half-hearted recruitment, or no recruitment at all. Such an SMO approach will not lead to a sustainable level of diverse membership, again leading back to a homogenous form of collective action.

⁴¹ King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*.

⁴² Beach and Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods*, 46–47; Mahoney, “After KKV.”

x3. If the SMO does pursue recruitment but does not invest in material incentives, education, or other empowerment initiatives, it is not likely to sustain participation from DRs. Again, homogeneous collective action results.

x4. Groups that achieve physical inclusion have succeeded in welcoming DRs in their membership, but such physical inclusion does not necessitate internal inclusion. For those groups with DRs that do not feel empowered to participate fully in decision-making processes, several outcomes are possible:

- 1) An oligarchy develops among the most powerful members, DRs remain in the SMO in inferior positions of power (Michels's iron law of oligarchy, to be discussed in the next section); or
- 2) The group undergoes conflict and breakup that may lead to splintering of the SMO into factions or independent groups (the iron law of involution).

In both scenarios, homogenous collective action again results.

x5 to Y. Those groups who do develop political solidarity must also build the capacity necessary to pursue action that is substantially representative (SR). For those that fail to do so, their good intention is not matched by good results: they do not engage in collective action, or they too are subject to the pressures of SMO oligarchy and splintering common to the other groups.

Final notes on the framework

The order of the outlined causal variables is not necessarily fixed or linear; the dashed arrows in the diagram illustrate alternative relationships among variables. I acknowledge that endogeneity bias is unavoidable in this series of causal explanations. Positive feedback loops may exist between SR and variables 2-4; an SMO that represents the needs of the most affected constituencies is likely to develop further norms of inclusivity and attract a greater heterogeneity of members. A similarly looped relationship exists between the value of inclusivity in an organisation and its development of physical inclusion. Such reinforcing loops strengthen the magnitude of this theory's causal relationships. However, this endogeneity also complicates the translation of theory into empirical measurement. I mitigate endogeneity bias by illustrating that the primary chain of causality (indicated by the sequence of solid arrows) occurs in a chronological sequence within my case SMOs.⁴³ This explication will show the development of SR as a direct result of causal variables 1-5.

⁴³ As advised in Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

Chapter 2. “Solidarity among outsiders and deviants”: norms of inclusivity among SMO participants

2.1 Introduction

To open this chapter, I delineate the unique scope of the theoretical question undergirding the first variable (x1) in this thesis’s SMO theory of SR development. I adopt this starting point as an exogenous variable; that is, the individual predispositions of SMO members precede their participation in the group and any influence exerted by the organisation. I endeavour to explain how individuals and SMOs develop values of group diversity and inclusion. Why do some people and organisations place especial value on the involvement of descriptive representatives (DRs), or those people who are most affected by a given social issue?

Comparison to other lines of SMT inquiry. I must distinguish between my first line of inquiry on “individual predispositions” and that of other social movement theory (SMT). Scholars of SMT will often ask, “Why do people participate in social movements?”¹ Or for those that recognise and wonder about questions of self-interest, “Why do some people participate in social movements when they do not seek to directly benefit from

¹ Klandermans and Oegema, “Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers”; Klandermans and Staggenborg, *Methods of Social Movement Research*; Morris, “Reflections on Social Movement Theory.”

the fulfilment of their goals?"² The latter group refers to participants who are called conscience adherents or allies.³ The second question demands a more exacting answer than the first (e.g., allies form only a subset of all SMO participants). In turn, this chapter concerns itself with yet an even more particular—and peculiar—cross-section of participants: those who enter SMOs with the strong belief that such groups must work toward representing a wide demographic of constituencies. Figure 10 below situates this chapter's critical research question in relation to more common (and broader) inquiries in the social movement literature.

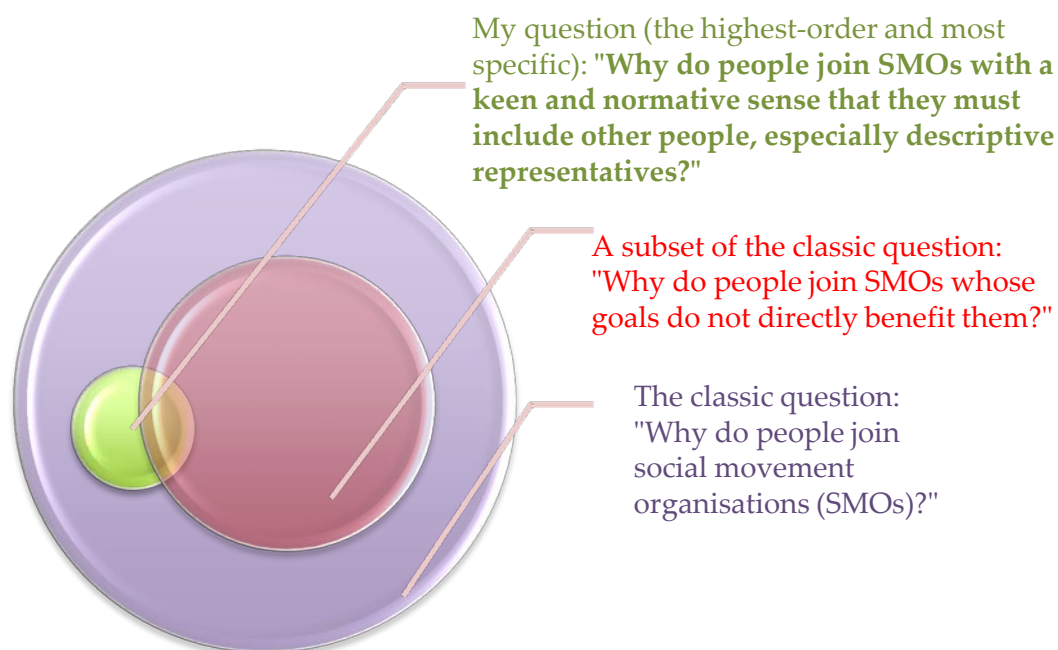


Figure 10. Illustration of the scope of the key research question of this chapter in relation to those of other common inquiries in SMT. The sizes of the circles represent the respective size of scope of each theoretical question (and correspondingly, their frequency in the literature).

² e.g., McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements"; Warren, *Fire in the Heart*; Krejci, "Allies, Activists, and Advocates."

³ McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements."

As the empirical analysis will demonstrate, such value convictions are far less common than the desire for participation that defines the first two questions. Uncommon too is the elective focus of scholars upon this underlooked variable, despite its great import. The aforementioned questions concerning general motivations for the SMO participation of allies are certainly significant. Yet only with the initial predispositions of inclusivity can an SMO begin to build the ideological and practical infrastructure to attracting DR, the form of representation that ultimately drives a political agenda with integrity to SR.

The necessity of x1 within the mechanism. In order to have a complete causal cascade in the theorising of SR, I must begin with fundamental questions further upstream than those that already exist in the literature. For the set of scholars that do analyse DR within political science, the empiricists often take DR as a given. A large handful of these academics will analyse the effect of DR on SR, often in elected legislative bodies and less frequently in civil society spaces such as social movements.⁴ When many of these studies speak of female legislators in Congress or other DRs in informal political groups, they fail to inquire as to how those DRs secured positions at the bargaining table in the first place.⁵

⁴ Mansbridge, "Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?"; Lublin, "Racial Redistricting and African American Representation"; AIDS Action Committee, "Heroes in Action: Gary Bailey, M.S.W, Social Worker and Educator"; Vega and Firestone, "The Effects of Gender on Congressional Behavior and the Substantive Representation of Women"; Wängnerud, "Women in Parliaments"; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, "An Integrated Model of Women's Representation"; Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Guo and Musso, "Representation in Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations"; Swindell, "Issue Representation in Neighborhood Organizations."

⁵ Some notable exceptions: Weldon, *When Protest Makes Policy*; Strolovitch, *Affirmative Advocacy*; Osterman, "Overcoming Oligarchy."

Those who do attempt to nab DR at the root of its development are often political theorists, but even the most notable accounts notch their starting points at the group and not the individual level.⁶ Such explanations hold some theoretical traction; but they neglect to recognise that SMOs, as any entity of social or political organisation, are composed of individuals. And the sets of values and beliefs that each participant brings to the SMO as an exogenous variable is critical for understanding how group-wide norms develop.

I will be the first to say that the theoretical commitment to begin with the individual is not an easy or straightforward task. “The degree to which individuals value inclusivity” does not lend itself to clear operationalisation. Operationalisation of such a concept would necessitate empirical pinpoints that gather clear evidence of one’s true value convictions. How much does one value the diversity and the breadth of DR within the group? Or on an even more fundamental level, is s/he even aware that DR can be a goal to be considered in the first place? A researcher such as myself would have to ask respondents post-facto to recall their precise value sets at time point zero when they joined the SMO. This method is necessarily rife with the distortion of subjectivity. Some individuals may preach to the goal of “diversity” without any true commitment to its attainment in practice. Or even for those who are paying more than lip service, members would be hard-pressed to recall the exact nature of their “inclusivity belief” upon their entry point at the SMO. Such remembering is vulnerable to the blurry distance of time and memory in relation to fuzzy ideological concepts.

⁶ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Weldon, “Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements.”

As such, let me distinguish that this concept in question is *not* the x1 in the theoretical model. Carefully, I have chosen to study *predispositions* to inclusivity, rather than the exact “degree to which individuals value inclusivity” at the point at which they join the SMO. The former serves as a distal proxy for the latter; my election of the predisposition concept enables a more measured theorising—and empirical alignment—that addresses some if not all of the concerns just raised. It is a probabilistic parameter: that is, I will identify certain correlates that make it more likely for an individual to develop beliefs of inclusivity. I thus abandon any pretence of determinate or exacting ability to measure “inclusivity belief.” This concept of “inclusivity predisposition” suffices in analytic purchase and evades the more gnarly issues of operationalisation.

Chapter roadmap. This chapter is organised into two key body sections. The first posits two experiential factors (community and oppression) to be the principal roots of normative convictions in inclusivity among individuals. I then apply this theoretical framework to this study’s case of ACT UP chapters; the second section investigates the backgrounds and identities of the SMO membership, with especial attention to how they are influenced and framed by the urban milieu of each city chapter.

2.2 A theory on individual values of inclusivity

This section presents a theoretical framework to explain the routes by which individuals develop values of inclusivity. It proposes two root precursors that predispose people to place normative importance on inclusion and diversity. To be clear about my terminology, *inclusivity* refers to the value that one may place on the *inclusion* of diverse peoples in a social space. Inclusivity is the value; inclusion is the descriptive state or outcome that arises from the ideology of inclusivity being put into group practice. Inclusion is the sustained participation and taking of power by DRs. Again, this theory is especially concerned about the inclusivity and inclusion of people from demographics that are historically most disenfranchised and disempowered.

Central to this theory is the proposition that inclusivity is a population-level variable. That is, as a population-level variable, inclusivity is likely to be present in some people more so than others. Below I identify criteria, which if fulfilled in isolation or in concert, lend people to become more likely to hold strong value convictions around inclusivity. Stated in an unwieldy fashion, these correlative factors are predispositions to inclusivity. For the ease of later discussion, I name the first the “oppression factor” and the second the “community factor”:

1. Experiences of oppression by virtue of one’s social location on the cartography of identity; that is, a belonging to historically disempowered and subordinate groups such as women, POC, and disabled people.

2. A belonging to communities that have placed high value premiums upon and modelled practices of open, diverse membership. I refer to “communities” in the broadest sense; for example, they may be defined by familial, geographic, political, educational, social, or religious spaces and identities.

Below I discuss each factor in turn, largely from a theoretical plane but with empirical detail for clearer elaboration.

2.2.1 The oppression factor: oppression begets awareness

I argue that people who are subject to one type of oppression are more likely to realise the reality and importance of other forms of oppression. Let me outline this logic. This recognition is akin to an experiential empathy of sorts. A white woman, for example, never can fully know what it feels to be a victim of racism. But by virtue of her experience of sexism, her capacity to feel and imagine such oppressive feelings is likely to be greater than that of a white man who has not experienced any form of systemic discrimination. This empathy, in turn, *predisposes* members of oppressed groups to understand that there exist forms of experiential knowledge that are inaccessible from their social location (e.g., a white woman realises that with her perspective, she will never know racism in the way a person of colour would). Some of these people may come to understand that despite its inaccessibility, however, such knowledge is nonetheless important as a guiding asset for SMOs to possess such lenses of anti-oppression. These people, for example, would maintain that an anti-racist SMO, for

example, must practice inclusivity to attract the perspective of POC for their movement work.

I interrupt this theoretical discussion with an empirical quote that illustrates the above logic. An African American member of ACT UP Philadelphia, Jose de Marco speaks: “I don’t know what it’s like to be white and privileged, just like the people that are privileged have no idea what it’s like to be a person of color living with HIV. So those are things we try to work on and work through as a group.” Jose’s words speak to this very inaccessibility of other social locations to people who do not share them (they “have no idea what it’s like to be a person of color...”); and he also speaks to the practical attempts of one inclusive group in trying to bridge those inevitable gaps in understanding.

Before I elaborate further, let us pause for definitions of some key terms that emerge repeatedly through the thesis. *Oppression* refers to the dominance of some social groups over others (e.g., men over women in sexism, heterosexual over queer in heterosexism).⁷ I often use the term a “system of oppression” to emphasise the structural aspects of such dominance. One may throw out sexist or racist remarks that are oppressive; but oppression is best understood as a system much greater than the colloquial association with discriminatory actions or words. Systems of oppression selectively privilege greater

⁷ Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”; Sidanius and Pratto, *Social Dominance*; Abberley, “The Concept of Oppression and the Development of a Social Theory of Disability.”

access to opportunities for some and not for others; for example, sexism operates to limit the professional opportunities of women and, in effect, advance those of men.

I also speak of *power*, or the capacity to influence others; it is a relational notion referring to the dominance of some over the subjugation or oppression of others.⁸ Oppression limits the power of the subjugated, granting that power instead to dominant groups. The prevailing purpose of SMOs is to empower (or grant power to) groups that have historically been victims of systemic oppression so that they can realise their own political voice and interests. The last term common in this chapter, *social location*, refers to the intersecting set of identities that one may possess in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, and other axes that map onto an individual certain group-level experiences of power and oppression.

Systems of power are most visible to those who lack it.⁹ I can best explain this theoretical point in relation to a particular system of power: say, the institution of sexism. Women are most likely to note oppressive practices that may escape the notice of men (e.g., the ways in which female abilities are underestimated in the school or workplace). They are more sensitive to the manifestations of sexism: by virtue of their identity, they must confront the reality of oppression in their lived day-to-day experience. As much as they may attempt to do so, men will never understand what it feels like to be catcalled or objectified in ways that women often are. Women hold unique credence to the perspective that arises out of their identity and its associated experiences.

⁸ Heldke and O'Connor, *Oppression, Privilege, and Resistance*; Johnson, *Privilege, Power, and Difference*.

⁹ Young, "Five Faces of Oppression."

If we take this example of sexism further, women thus have a heightened sensitivity to the dynamics of power and difference. This sensitivity is specific to the one common system of sexism that they share in experience, but it may also generalise such that they may be more able than their male counterparts to believe in and identify the operation of other systems of oppression (e.g., heterosexism, racism, or classism).

In sum are two key points:

- 1) Women share a set of experiences intimately tied to their identity, and many women will realise that fact grants them a unique kind of experiential perspective and knowledge; and
- 2) Women are more likely to recognise and understand the existence (if not the exact experiences) of other systems of oppression.

Taking these two points in conjunction, we can come to a third and fourth conclusion.

- 3) Some women will realise that other social groups hold parallel and also unique experiences of oppression, and these groups possess respective reservoirs of experiential knowledge that are only unique to them.
- 4) As some women become conscious of these other forms and sets of knowledge, a smaller proportion of these women will value the inclusion of these other oppressed groups for their especial perspective. They realise that these oppressed groups bring in assets to any social group that they may join.

The fourth conclusion in the SMO context refers exactly to a valuing of inclusivity: that is, a strong belief in the normative importance of DRs within an SMO. As follows from beginning to end in this chain of reasoning, women are more likely than men to develop this value of inclusivity; they are, in other words, *predisposed* to inclusivity. One could generalise these assertions to any oppressed group. Hence is my assertion that membership in oppressed groups correlates with a predisposition to inclusivity.

2.2.2 The community factor: modelling thoughts and practices of inclusivity

The above section notes that not all women will necessarily develop values of inclusivity by accord of their own experiences of sexism. Such consciousness is not the only route to valuing inclusivity, of course. How do other women (or men) develop convictions toward the importance of diversity? The answer comes from the ensuing discussion of the “community factor.” It too relies on the exposure or contact with certain experiences that predispose one toward inclusivity: deep engagement with certain individuals or groups within communities that communicate the normative value of DR. I elaborate on the community factor via theoretical terms first and empirical example second.

Theoretical justification. Let us follow the preceding analysis through the lens of gender. (Other axes of identity are equally valid; I am only keeping consistency with the tradition of related political theory on this topic by way of feminist scholarship.) Not all women will come to the series of deductions (numbered 1-4 in the above section of 2.2.1) that lead them to conclude the importance of diverse perspectives that arise from other

experiences of oppression. But some of these women may become engaged in feminist SMOs, which often bear signature commitments to egalitarian procedures of decision-making, aversion to hierarchy, and with the third wave of feminism, a greater consciousness of whom they do and do not include in their mobilisation.¹⁰

Other people may become interested in movements as allies rather than direct beneficiaries. In this movement work, they may learn from the ideological commitments of their respective SMOs, or from the vocalised experiences of other members who may or may not share common locations in social identity; and from this broadening of perspective, they may become cognisant of and value the inclusion of these other axes of oppression.

I have just stated that past involvement in social movements, either as a beneficiary or ally, may predispose an individual to values of inclusivity. From there arises an even more fundamental question: what motivates people to join SMOs that may practice inclusivity and attract a diverse membership? The answer, at least in part, derives from a generalised understanding of community beyond that of a social movement community (the “community factor”). As my empirical data demonstrates, it may be a faith-based community (e.g., several ACT UP members cited the guiding principles of their Quaker faith); an educational institution that speaks to the importance of diversity (e.g., a number of ACT UP Philadelphia members graduated from Temple University’s social

¹⁰ Freeman, “Crises and Conflicts in Social Movement Organizations”; Freeman, *The Politics of Women’s Liberation*; Hebert, “Taking ‘Difference’ Seriously”; Sirianni, *Learning Pluralism*; Green, Fullilove, and Fullilove, “Stories of Spiritual Awakening.”

work programme); or a family that shared sensitivities to oppression and resistance in relation to other axes of identity (e.g., ACT UP New York member Joan Gibbs had a black mother who defended her gay male co-workers).¹¹

Regardless of their specific size or nature, communities play a common role in modelling a specific kind of value in ideology or practice.¹² These communities socialise their members not by the force of obligation, but by forces of influence that predispose members to develop certain principles around inclusivity.

Empirical illustration. All the ACT UP cases (Boston, Philadelphia, and New York) elicited stories of the “community factor” in developing values of inclusivity.¹³ Here I highlight one telling instance from Philadelphia to illustrate this point of modelling via belonging to certain communities. Val Sowell speaks explicitly of the ways in which she was keenly aware of racial diversity and its importance at the time when she decided to join ACT UP Philadelphia. Val is a white HIV-negative woman, someone who wears her identity of gender-nonconformity through her facial beard.

Val tells me that she first became involved in HIV/AIDS issues because “fighting AIDS...that was what queers did.” Her initial motivations for becoming involved in AIDS work (before her time in ACT UP), then, fit the pattern of people getting involved in movement work: she joined because AIDS work fit an axis of her own identities,

¹¹ Forbes, interview; Marsico, interview; Davids, interview; Benitez, interview; Gibbs, interview.

¹² As inspired by Bandura, *Psychological Modeling*.

¹³ e.g., Scoppettuolo, interview (Boston); Wilson, interview (Boston); King, interview (New York).

notably that of queer sexuality. In 2000, Val joined the non-profit organisation Philadelphia FIGHT to engage in administrative and educational work on HIV/AIDS.

Five years later, she had developed “wanderlust and wanted to get some traveling out of the way.” Val recounts the time that she spent away from Philadelphia, remembering in particular the formative episode that a workshop within her radio community in Massachusetts had upon her:

I helped build a radio station in Florence Massachusetts...Prometheus Radio Project, which travels around helping low power FM stations get off of the ground...

I was at this fund raising in Florence, and one of the days – there was sort of like a suite of workshops that you could take, and one of the days was an all day training that was an entire racism training. And so I decided to take that for that day.

And one of the things that we were asked to identify was like – you know it was people from everywhere, but we were asked to identify like – “What are the – what were the groups doing antiracist work? Where is the leadership of people of color in your community?”

At that time, Val had heard of but had never got involved with ACT UP Philadelphia.

But at that time, she clearly thought about the value of inclusivity across racial lines, thanks to a specific educational experience within a community. This particular workshop, she says, inspired her to think about building diversity across lines of race, an axis of identity and oppression that she did not herself experience:

And for me the answer was obviously ACT UP Philly. You know – like that’s – it’s like – a thing that I care about, where people of color’s leadership is taken seriously...That was like part of my motivation...help people living with HIV

and AIDS, as well as people of color, really like come into their own power...in the AIDS activist movement.¹⁴

Val directly cites the experience of the racism training within her radio community as the causal link to her joining ACT UP Philadelphia. She realised the normative necessity of participating in a movement with the explicit intention of anti-racist inclusivity and empowerment for one specific group of oppressed people, namely POC. To her, “the answer [to such a call] was obviously ACT UP Philly.” This patent and incontrovertible link is a telling illustration of the community factor in developing individual convictions of inclusivity.

2.3 ACT UP’s alignment to the theory of individual predispositions to inclusivity

This section translates the above theory to the empirics of ACT UP cases. We must tread on careful ground when selecting an appropriate variable for empirical measurement.

Under an ideal concept analysis, I would define a precise set of empirical manifestations that would be testifying evidence to an “individual’s normative belief in inclusivity.”¹⁵

Again, this metric is the ideal but infeasible variable: the extent to which an individual values inclusivity at the point of time that they enter an SMO. This variable is both exogenous and normatively based, two characteristics that both evade precise measurement. With this operationalisation enters a slew of issues: how can an individual

¹⁴ Sowell, interview.

¹⁵ As prescribed by Mahoney, “After KKV”; Geertz, “Thick Description.”

recall their ideological beliefs at a specific point in the past? Or even if they could remember, identification of normative values is a tricky empirical endeavour: what is an appropriate spectrum of inclusivity by which individuals can place themselves?

Clear but rare empirical examples of individual beliefs in inclusivity. I admit that there are indeed some empirical examples that provide clear evidence of one's belief in inclusivity, but they are too few and far between for any systematic investigation of the membership. The aforementioned instance of Val's immersion into an anti-racist community is one such example. It is a fitting anecdote of an exogenous influence (the modelling community) that synchronises perfectly with Val's eventual entry into ACT UP Philadelphia, for it is because of this experience that she decided to join the SMO. Her story is an ideal and clear example within her own personal membership narrative within the SMO, but such examples do not always exist in member histories.

The SMT literature may also suggest other empirical signs for strong individual norms of inclusivity. In a well-known piece in activist circles on anti-racism and anti-sexism, a white male writer named Chris Crass outlines certain guidelines for "white guys who are working for social change." For an individual to be inclusive, he argues, s/he must possess a pervasive self-consciousness of his or her social location to others. First on Crass's list is to take stock of the demographics of a room (How many women? How many POC?), a tally some ACT UP members have admitted to doing at each Monday night meeting. Also included is a greater awareness of how much "room" one is to take up (e.g., speaking time and frequency), how one might develop other leaders, or support

people who may be oppressed (e.g., he emphasises that “those most negatively impacted by systems of oppression have and will play leading roles in the struggle for collective liberation”).¹⁶

Thus the focus on predispositions. For these impossibilities of empirical measurement, I defer to a more manageable variable: the individual *predispositions* to inclusivity. This alternative proxy commands far greater analytic purchase. By our prior conceptual definitions, it offers a population-level survey of the SMO membership to estimate a probabilistic metric of inclusivity. That is, we will survey the SMO to see how their members may have been exposed to the “oppression” or “community” factors of inclusivity. This assessment can thereby estimate a certain proportion of the group that is predisposed to value inclusivity.

Let us now match up the empirical realities of the ACT UP membership to the theoretical suppositions advanced in the first section of this chapter. To do so, I engage in an individual, group, and structural analysis that this theory of predispositions demands. Below follows a mapping of ACT UP members’ social identities and communities of origin. I then move from this individual-level segmentation to investigate the less visible—and arguably more influential—structural factors that mould the experiences of members.

¹⁶ Crass, “Tools for White Guys Who Are Working for Social Change.”

A note on case comparison: I begin by speaking of ACT UP more in terms of a general entity rather than as distinct chapters, as the discussion focuses on the initial commonalities among chapters. The latter sections will begin to distinguish the chapters' divergence in historical pathways through a discussion of the structural contexts of each city and the development of unique group norms in each SMO.

2.3.1 Common demographics and blindness to oppression

To explore the predispositions to inclusivity within ACT UP, it would be helpful to segment the demographic makeup of its initial membership. Only one such census exists in historical record. If we were to travel back to the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center in 1989 New York, we would have run into PhD student and ACT UP activist Gilbert Elbaz distributing just such a survey. His questionnaire of 450 people (with a 92% response rate) is the only surviving document of the group's demographic composition. Elbaz reported that the group was mostly gay (99%), white (91%), and male (80%) between the ages of 26 and 35 (68%). All but 5 percent had completed at least some college education. Of the members who had disclosed their serostatus, 30 percent were HIV-positive.¹⁷

From interview and historical account, these New York-specific statistics are fairly representative of those in other chapters—and unrepresentative of the diversity of the AIDS epidemic at large. The size of New York City's chapter was remarkable. The

¹⁷ Elbaz, "The Sociology of AIDS Activism, the Case of ACT UP/New York, 1987-1992. (Volumes I and II)."

meeting hall sometimes hosted an overflow of a thousand people or more, whereas Philadelphia, Boston, and other chapters hovered around 50-70 at their peak.¹⁸ The demographic was similar everywhere, however: gay white men populated the majority of AIDS activist demographics across the country.¹⁹ ACT UP Philadelphia and Boston members remember similarly of their group compositions.²⁰ Such dominant homogeneity is not surprising in the context of the historical origins of many ACT UP chapters, rooted in the initial founding and leadership by white, middle-class gay men.²¹

The initial demographic of ACT UP did not promise terribly much in terms of the development of inclusivity via the oppression factor. Recall the prior theory of the oppression factor: oppressed groups are predisposed to value inclusivity. In the counterfactual, social groups that have enjoyed a social location of power are more likely to be blind to oppressive systems and the avenues to address them. The gay white men of ACT UP shared the common experience of sexual disenfranchisement, but lacked diversity in terms of other forms of oppression across class, race, gender, and other lines. From the theory of predispositions and the oppression factor, thus, such a homogeneity of gay white men may be blind to other systems of oppression and their connection to AIDS.

¹⁸ Schmidt, interview; Marsico, interview.

¹⁹ Grimes, "Randy Shilts, Author, Dies at 42; One of First to Write About AIDS - New York Times"; Epstein, *Impure Science*; Jennings and Andersen, "The Importance of Social and Political Context."

²⁰ De Marco, interview; Acosta, interview; Schmidt, interview.

²¹ Boubion, "AIDS Activist David Chickadel"; ACT UP New York, "ACT UP New York City."

Three former ACT UP members articulate this theoretical truth through the specific context of the New York City group, specifically its early years in the late '80s and early '90s. Their words, however, can apply to all ACT UP chapters, as all their memberships drew predominantly from the gay, white, and male demographic. Note how all of these members of colour speak in terms of this idea of “seeing” or “not seeing” by virtue of their social location. Jose Fidelino, a member of the Latino caucus, recounts:

There were so many people, like, who had just, you know, gone to college, wanted to do something charitable, like, were really middle-of-the-road on their politics in other areas, you know, and – **didn't see the connections** and – just wanted to save lives [via treatment activism]. And- and I think that that's a problem.²²

Charles King, a white ACT UP member who went on to found one of the biggest housing organisations for people with HIV, speaks similarly:

ACT UP, at its core, was gay men and their allies fighting for their lives. I think there were more conscious and politicized people within ACT UP who saw the relationship to poverty and classism and racism, where I think the core of ACT UP **saw homophobia, and that was all they saw, and they never saw the other connection.**

I think I've alluded to its greatest failure, and that is that ACT UP never really understood the deep, intricate link between homophobia and social and economic injustice writ large. It was all too often about us, our loss of privilege as gay white men, and how we could find ourselves back into that circle of power, and never realizing that where AIDS had forced us, in terms of the margin, was where the epidemic was and it still is, and it's there because of oppression that we really don't want as a society to address.²³

Kendall Thomas, a black gay professor at Columbia, speaks of the “blindness,” the “occluding” of a vision of oppression that was characteristic of most of ACT UP's white members:

²² Fidelino, interview.

²³ King, interview.

So that gay identity became the site for a lot of other struggles over, for example, what might be called the racial transparency that seemed to **blind** a lot of gay, white men – in ACT UP, especially – to their racial privilege...It was amazing to me, frankly, how naive a lot of the white gay men, especially in ACT UP, were about power ...

His words testify to how “racial privilege” renders his fellow white members blind to structures of oppression; they lack a lived experience that has obliged them to confront and realise racism and sexism. Kendall continues, speaking of the stock ACT UP identity: white, gay, male, and an associated entitlement of “the world belong[ing] to them”:

But, there were any number of people – again, gay white men – who had been raised, before they knew they were gay, to this notion that they were where they were because of merit – that the world belonged to them. That the way things were, was, basically, the way things ought to be. And then, they have the shock of being marked as queer and of being subjected to a politics of abjection, because people were dying. So, people who had been able to live their lives in the closet as gay men were being outed by the fact that their bodies were giving out on them. **And that sense of not being willing to acknowledge their investment in the structures of social and economic and gender and racial power – even though that very same structure was killing them – was one of the most painful things in the world for me to watch, because these were smart people.**

From this homogeneity of identity, Kendall’s words explain a common ignorance among many ACT UP members to the reality of oppressions: “the structures of economic and gender and racial power” that was “killing” people in the AIDS epidemic. In spite of their homosexuality, the dominant identities of most members (whiteness and maleness) precluded their experiential living of oppression. Thus most of ACT UP did not realise

inclusivity and its importance in SMOs.²⁴ I conclude this passage with these sentences from Kendall:

But, this willful refusal to recognize that their investment in this world was also killing them, because it was **occluding a vision** of the only kind of politics that would be adequate to the crisis we were facing. That willful refusal, to this day, is, for me, one of the most powerful examples of the strength of white supremacy as an ideology and as an institution – the way it can make white people, effectively, commit suicide, in its name, and not even see it as such.²⁵

Kendall's words communicate an extremely important kind of racial consciousness. He impresses a valuing of inclusivity that becomes a key precursor to SR among SMOs. It becomes critical, as ACT UP Philadelphia demonstrates and ACT UP New York does not, that the AIDS movement recognises in a root cause analysis that the ultimate culprit to the epidemic lies within socioeconomic, racial, sexual injustices. This consciousness departs from the oppression factor—oppression that so much of the predominant membership, steeped in white and male privilege, could not (or from Kendall's perspective, chose "wilfully" not) to realise.

2.3.2 Community feeders into ACT UP

Despite their homogeneity of identity, all ACT UP chapters did attract veterans from other movements. Many had experienced intimate losses in their life due to AIDS. A number of them also came because they saw the organisation stand for not only the people but also the values that they held dear: social justice, egalitarian organising, and

²⁴ Corroborated in Flagg, "Was Blind, but Now I See"; Young, "Five Faces of Oppression."

²⁵ Thomas, interview.

direct action.²⁶ They brought involvement from movements such as anti-war or civil rights or feminism. This wisdom, acquired through experience, held seeds of potential inclusivity via the “community factor” in my above theory.

David Acosta speaks to the diverse backgrounds in activism that many ACT UP members brought to the Philadelphia group. He emphasised the melding of a brain trust within the ACT UP Philadelphia chapter. The group brought together people who had “ties to...individuals and voices and leaders” in other social movement communities. David’s remarks speak directly to the predispositions to inclusivity that existed among veteran activists who came to ACT UP by ways of the feminist, civil rights, gay liberation, or other movements.²⁷ ACT UP Boston and New York activists, too, speak extensively of their past experience as labour organisers, fighters against racism, and members of social justice movements.²⁸ Social movement “spillover” featured as a prominent asset of all ACT UP groups; that is, as with many SMOs and activist struggles, the AIDS movement benefited from the influence of previous social movements as inspiration or direct contribution to its set of “ideas, tactics, style, participants, and organisations.”²⁹

²⁶ e.g., Tucker, interview; Jeavons, interview.

²⁷ e.g., Acosta, interview; Davids, interview.

²⁸ e.g., King, interview; Scoppettuolo, interview.

²⁹ Meyer and Whittier, “Social Movement Spillover.”

2.3.3 Structural analysis: the urban framing of individual predispositions

From a theoretical perspective, a structural analysis is as important if not more so than individual surveys. Ultimately, the greater macro-forces that situate a city and its inhabitants will frame the frequency of oppression or community factors that predispose individuals to inclusivity. As political scientists have noted, there exists an “intellectual poverty” implicit to the single actor model for collective action, for it neglects the larger societal and political frameworks in which individuals are embedded.³⁰ This discussion, with its focus on the exogenous variable of city context, aims to outline the macro-environmental factors that influence how individuals may become more aware of different axes of difference and realise the worth of diverse inclusion in their SMO work.

A large part of this structural analysis aims to distinguish the non-systematic from the systematic factors that may affect an individual’s predispositions of inclusivity. The prior framework of oppression and community factors is theoretically generalisable across the general population and any hypothetical case (e.g., systematic). Here, I begin to distinguish the extents to which each chapter commanded predispositions to inclusivity. This analysis focuses on the non-systemic factors within urban milieu of Philadelphia as a basis of comparison to Boston and New York. It illustrates that the Philadelphia chapter carried a unique potentiality to attract and carve a different population of ACT UP members than did the other two chapters.

³⁰ Giugni and Passy, *Political Altruism?*.

ACT UP Philadelphia's exceptionalism: its membership at the margins. Before diving into the particulars of the structural analysis, I invite the remarks of two men in ACT UP Philadelphia, one a black beneficiary and the other a white ally. John Bell, a black PWA and ultimately one of the most renowned members of ACT UP Philadelphia, speaks of the motley set of individuals in the SMO:

As an African American, decorated Vietnam veteran, African American in America, I[m] always having problems with America, and I didn't know that these young people [other ACT UP members] had a problem with America too, and trying to express themselves because they weren't accepted by the moral majority. So, what better people to be my teachers, than the people that are already having problems with America?

He arrives at this epiphany that "these young people had a problem with America too."

Unlike John, these "young people" were often HIV-negative and white. But John realised that despite their differences, they had too experienced forms of oppression.

One of these "young people," Paul Davis self-describes his own appearance as a "femmy old punk rocker." Paul reflects very similar sentiments:

There's a solidarity amongst outsiders and deviants. Queer people have been murdered and experience oppression from very early in life, and different stripes of outsiders can still recognize each other. In ACT UP, we find common cause fairly quickly.

John posits, as does the thesis, that this beginning difference in exogenous variable critically distinguishes Philadelphia from its sister chapters in other cities. The people who joined in Philadelphia brought with them a disproportionate set of experiences with oppression and community that led them to subsequent predispositions to inclusivity. Although it shared the initial whiteness that defined the membership of other ACT UP

chapters, Philadelphia's composition was qualified by a social marginality less common to New York and Boston.³¹

John continues to speak of Philadelphia:

This is the first time this [a multiracial alliance] is happening, like other ACT UPs had failed across the country, because the merge wasn't able to take place as the merge in Philadelphia. There was a merge of race, African Americans and whites in Philadelphia that took place, that allowed it to be successful, where at others [ACT UP chapters] across the country, there's no Project TEACH brought up, no medium, where the concern was shown by these gay white people that they were concerned about HIV-positive people [of color and low-income people], period.³²

John asserts here that Philadelphia boasts a distinctive composition of membership, not only in terms of the "merge of race" but also its ideological consideration and inclusion of other groups. That is, Philadelphia has been a home for members who have indeed shown the "concern" that other gay white people "at other [chapters] across the country" failed to do so in relation to the disenfranchised DR populations in the AIDS epidemic.

The following urban analysis argues that this hallmark of the Philadelphia group stems, at least in part, from unique factors native to the city itself. I transition to the urban analysis of Philadelphia and its structural associations that may shape the predispositions to inclusivity among its residents. Among these structural factors, I identify two crucial characteristics of its economic and racial landscape. Philadelphia invites a greater diversity of people and groups by virtue of 1) the relatively low economic demands that it exacts on its inhabitants, especially for a metropolis of its size;

³¹ Schulman and Hubbard, "ACT UP Oral History Project"; Epstein, *Impure Science*; Strub, *Body Counts*.

³² Bell, interview.

and 2) a black radical tradition rooted in its substantial African American population that bestows power to multiracial movement work.

Lower economic thresholds for resource mobilisation. Under the strong strand of SMT that preached the titular importance of “resource mobilisation,” McCarthy and Zald argued that SMOs often must prioritise their economic survival to the detriment of their political endeavour and goals of social change.³³ Their bureaucratisation thesis, also known as the Weber-Michels model, dictated that SMOs must often betray their original ideology and grassroots base in favour of resource mobilisation and an oligarchic structure of leadership/membership.³⁴ What I would like to impress, however, even if the ACT UP Philly bank account often consisted of sparse coffers, the depressed economy of the city allowed for lesser efforts for fundraising and greater diversity among a less wealthy activist base.

ACT UP Philadelphia never swam in the pools of money that buttressed ACT UP New York. Its internal funds came from the few dollars that each member might put in the collection hat that circled the room at the beginning of the meeting. A club night or fundraiser might bring in a couple hundred more, but not the hundreds of thousands that ACT UP New York events netted for its balance books.³⁵ ACT UP’s Philly chapter did not benefit from the wallets (and even, at times, donated life insurance dividends) of

³³ McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements.”

³⁴ Zald and Ash, “Social Movement Organizations”; Piven and Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements*; Freeman, “Crises and Conflicts in Social Movement Organizations.”

³⁵ Andriote, *Victory Deferred*, 329; Strub, *Body Counts*.

gay Wall Street bankers and closeted Ivy League graduate consultants that buttressed the ranks of the New York membership.

What is critical to realise, however, that ACT UP Philadelphia did not need to float on high economic waters. Cost of living in Philadelphia was low — and still relatively low, especially compared to other metropolises on the Eastern seaboard. The city's metaphorical waters of wealth had run dry by the late '80s: home to disappearing industrial plants, the city lost almost three-quarters of its manufacturing jobs between 1955 and 1990.³⁶ The economic collapse could be evidenced in the physical infrastructure of the buildings. An early ACT UP member, Mike Marsico, recalls peering out from the house balcony at a gay party in West Philly: the neighbouring roofs reminded him of pictures of London after the World War II bombings.³⁷

The cheap (or non-existent) rent meant that the city has always supported a greater fringe of young artists, activists, and bohemian types. People could afford to work odd jobs or find a part-time gig at a coffee shop to finance their living expenses. Over the years, the city's low cost of living has supported ACT UP Philadelphia's resistance of professionalisation to an extent impossible for other chapters.

The group houses became crucial hubs in the ACT UP social networks, as many activists have occupied shared residence in a four-block slice in West Philadelphia.³⁸ Former drug

³⁶ Adams, *Philadelphia*; Stull and Madden, *Post-industrial Philadelphia*.

³⁷ Marsico, interview.

³⁸ Abadie, *The Professional Guinea Pig*, 33–34.

addicts lived alongside university-educated anarchists in close quarters that often hosted activist conversation and trainings and parties. One of the prominent group houses was christened with the name “Not Squat” to differentiate that the residents were, in fact, paying rent. Rent for rent in a group house was as low as \$100 per month as late as in the mid-1990s.³⁹ That cost of living contrasted sharply with contemporary rates in New York, where a one-bedroom in Manhattan commanded an average of \$1,550 in 1993.⁴⁰

The low cost of living enabled what ACT UP Philadelphia members refer to as “the deal.” In an effort to attract more young fighters against AIDS, the group offered a set of incentives to new members. The reported package varies depending on the marketing activist, but the following items are always included: a free pack of gum, a room in a group house, a bike pawned from somewhere or another, and six one-on-one dates with an activist of one’s choice. “The deal” represents the opportunity that the economic environment of Philadelphia provided for generosity within the ACT UP chapter.⁴¹

Strong black presence and radical tradition. Of the epicentres in the American AIDS epidemic, Philadelphia is unique in its racial makeup. Other cities such as Boston and New York boast significant immigrant populations and host a diversity of multi-ethnic enclaves of Haitians, Latinos, and West Indians. In contrast, Philadelphia became the host of the greatest number of African Americans from the South to the Northeast during the Great Migration of the 20th century, leading the city newspaper to brand

³⁹ Subways, interview.

⁴⁰ Rothstein, “New York Apartment Rents Moving Up.”

⁴¹ Sowell, interview; Flynn, interview.

Philly to be “almost Deep South in its racial composition.”⁴² The table below shows Census data anchored to the height of the AIDS epidemic and around ACT UP’s founding (1990). Philadelphia was 39.9 percent black then; blacks now form a plurality of Philadelphia today. In contrast, African Americans made up only about a quarter of the population in New York and Boston (Table 3).

Table 3. 1990 Census Population Totals by Race. “Other race” refers to Asian and Pacific Islander; American Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut; and other.⁴³

	Total population	White, not of Hispanic origin	Black	Hispanic origin (of any race)	Other race
<i>Boston</i>	574,283	59.0%	25.6%	10.8%	11.6%
<i>New York City</i>	7,322,564	43.2%	28.7%	24.4%	19.0%
<i>Philadelphia</i>	1,585,577	52.1%	39.9%	5.6%	6.6%

The African American Philadelphia has boasted not only strength in numbers, but also in its history for black activism. The city was an abolitionist hub in the 19th century.⁴⁴ It was host to the National Conference on Black Power in 1968; two years later, eight thousand members of the Black Panther Party gathered at Philadelphia’s Temple University for a “Revolutionary People’s Convention” to redraft a more progressive U.S. Constitution.⁴⁵ The historical neglect of African American health in the city, too, fuelled a multi-ethnic battle in its AIDS activism.⁴⁶ Particularly notable incidents of police brutality against POC also led to collective anger and organising in the black

⁴² Sapatkin, “Philadelphia ACTUP Chapter Going Strong”; Gibson and Jung, “Historical Census Statistics.”

⁴³ Gibson and Jung, “Historical Census Statistics.”

⁴⁴ Nash, *Forging Freedom*; Sapatkin, “Philadelphia ACTUP Chapter Going Strong.” DeLancey, “Vaccinating Freedom”; Jones and Richard, “A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People.”

⁴⁵ Stone, “3rd National Conference on Black Power Set for Philadelphia, August 29th”; Vile, *Encyclopedia of Constitutional Amendments, Proposed Amendments, and Amending Issues, 1789-2002*; Demme, *Philadelphia*; Nelson, *Body and Soul*.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Sapatkin, “Philadelphia ACTUP Chapter Going Strong.”

community.⁴⁷ Accompanied by the strength of Quaker and working class struggle in the city, Philadelphia has always served as a hub for egalitarian activism.

In contrast, ACT UP members described a very different dynamic of power in other cities. Take, for instance, Boston and one white member's reflection: "We have a white power structure in Boston...that ferments racism and perpetuates it."⁴⁸ Racism in the city was ferociously visible during a string of protests against bussing plans for the desegregation of Boston Public Schools in the 1970s. Both whites and blacks were victims of rock throwing, assaults, and stabbings.⁴⁹ Such tensions have given Boston the reputation of the "most racist city in the country" among many African Americans, a label that was repeatedly reflected in my interviews with local AIDS activists.⁵⁰ Without prompting, they told me that "Boston is one of the most segregated cities," that it "was and continues to be...a very funny animal in terms of segregation," and that "after bussing, [it] was polarized around race for lots of reasons" distinct from those of other metropolises.⁵¹

2.3.4 The interplay of structure and agency: Philadelphia's beginnings

Having drawn some broad strokes in Philadelphia's urban environment, I return briefly to a closer analysis of this particular group's initial membership in its 1.0 rendition. The chapter emphasised earlier that common denominators gave birth to ACT UP chapters

⁴⁷ Black Panthers Party, "Flyers on Police Brutality."

⁴⁸ Scoppettuolo, interview.

⁴⁹ Formisano, *Boston Against Busing*, 124.

⁵⁰ Potier, "Has Boston Shed Its Racist Reputation?".

⁵¹ Amaro, interview; Bailey, interview.

nationwide, parallel nuclei of white gay men embittered and enraged by AIDS coming to activism. Here I argue that ACT UP Philadelphia, while also boasting its share of such a demographic, did enjoy a membership that had staked a stronger commitment to values of inclusivity and social justice by virtue of the community factor.

It is impossible, I admit, to delineate the precise degrees of relative influence that urban structure versus individual agency factor into the group's eventual success in norms and practices of DR recruitment, as will follow in Chapter 4. The size of the Philly group, much smaller than that of New York (think double rather than triple and quadruple digits in meeting attendance), implicates an importance to every single member and their background story as it can influence group dynamics. The n is not large enough for any frequentist causal claims. I can, however, provide emblematic evidence toward greater themes that hint at initial difference among the SMO cases of the study. This analysis focuses on Philadelphia 1.0, and the next chapter will discuss primarily New York 1.0 and Boston 1.0.

First, I make clear that gay white men of relative privilege populate ACT UP Philadelphia in its early years. In fact, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* credits the SMO's founding in 1987 to two such men named Bill and David, an insurance claims adjuster and an X-ray technician who both would die of AIDS just months later.⁵² But as part of the political fringe that appears more mainstream in Philadelphia's world of gays and

⁵² St. George, "R.W. Randall; Founded Aids Support Group"; Boubion, "AIDS Activist David Chickadel."

queers, they come with different backgrounds than do the “buff gym bunnies...and middle-class suburbanites” of the self-described New York membership.⁵³

I noted earlier that members came to ACT UP not only because of AIDS, but also because of their allegiance to certain communities breeding the values for which the movement fought. This motivation holds true perhaps particularly so for Philadelphia’s members. I asked Scott Tucker, a leader in the SMO’s early years, why he got involved. A white gay man with HIV, he replied, “Well, I’m a socialist.”⁵⁴

Every time Albo Jeavons tells his story of getting involved with ACT UP, he cries. A white HIV-negative artist in Philadelphia, he came to the group because it symbolised a powerful and living practice of his political values. “A very important meeting in my life,” he recounts of his first ACT UP gathering. “Part of what got me excited as an anarchist [who had practiced for 10 years]” was ACT UP’s “use of consensus...Oh that’s freaky [in a good way].” Albo was “immediately enthralled” that all these folks practiced principles of deliberative democracy, that “they were brought together in this world by no association with traditional anarchists.” Albo’s claims of enthusiasm are not just talk, either. He recruited his friends from West Philly who have no connection to gays or AIDS to join; he freely floated eighty copies of his house keys so that ACT UP members could use his home as their working office, until his place got robbed; and to this day, he hosts a fundraiser for ACT UP called “Philly Jacks” where men pay to do as the party name suggests: masturbate together.

⁵³ Strub, *Body Counts*, 203.

⁵⁴ Tucker, interview.

Albo's actions boast an extraordinary dedication and practice of values, but not at a level too unusual for ACT UP. The group did demonstrate its own organisational agency toward upholding an open and inclusive environment, at least in form. Take, for instance, the summer of 1989. ACT UP Philly was deciding whether consensus was worth it. Sometimes discussions would run without end until a person with HIV would shout, "There's no time for all this—I'm dying here!" One meeting, a group of "all white men dressed up" decided that they were fed up with the deliberation. They changed the meeting layout so that the chairs all faced the front, like a schoolroom, with a board and facilitator at front. Mark Marsico, another queer white man, remembers an ensuing scene of fighting reminiscent of kindergarten tug-of-war: members started pulling tables back and forth in protest. ACT UP settled the debate with, unsurprisingly, a vote: the group officially decided to run all meetings by consensus. The losers stormed out, but not before leaving leaflets "dooming [ACT UP] to failure because [of] mush-minded lefties."⁵⁵

All this actualisation of romantic values—radical democracy, deliberative consensus—is not to say that ACT UP in its early years did not have its share of problems. I close with a quotation from one low-income black PWA, a statement that testifies to the common struggles of all ACT UP chapters or any SMO attempting to attract a heterogeneous constituency of race, class, and education levels. This particular member recounts the

⁵⁵ Marsico, interview.

“patronising, condescending” way in which white activists would dominate the meeting:

I can't do it with them, because it seems to me, from the people I've met, that *they don't get the poor black thing*. They are white people who come from a little bit of money who come from rich mommies and daddies. Ain't never seen the inside of a ghetto. You have to listen to how they dialogue with me and how they dialogue with each other. When they talk to us they talk to us in a patronizing, condescending way...*They treat us in really simplistic terms, like we don't understand anything past a two syllable word.*⁵⁶

Chapter 4 and 5 will tackle these concerns of inequality of access and understanding in political participation.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter demarcated the conceptual ground for individual predispositions to inclusivity. It presented the two-pronged framework of oppression and community factors in relation to the individual x1 variable, contextualised within the group and urban environments in which ACT UP members lived. This theory testifies to the importance of contact and exposure to role models (individuals, communities, or experiences) that carve formative opportunity for the inclusivity of others.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 118-119. Emphasis added.

Implicit in this theoretical framework is the complementary roles of both DRs and allies in the eventual development of inclusivity norms among SMOs (x2). The theory of predispositions makes room for—and necessitates—the involvement of both parties: the oppression factor is a route open largely to DRs, whereas the community factor can plant seeds of inclusivity among both DRs and allies. I emphasise that beneficiaries and allies ultimately work in concert to feed group norms of inclusivity. This assertion contrasts strongly with the alternative hypotheses in the existing literature of group norm development and eventual SR, which largely presume the exclusive role of DRs (e.g., women politicians in pro-female legislation) and exempt any responsibility of allies.⁵⁷

With this novel theoretical framework in mind, we realise striking similarities among the historical narrative of ACT UP chapters. The birth of the SMOs from the white, gay male community leads to a general deficit in the “oppression factor.” Many of them, however, have been inspired by the “community factor” in shaping personal predispositions to inclusivity; and most chapters had a general understanding that identity dimensions were indeed important, as the outgrowth of POC caucuses in city chapters as small as Columbus indicated.⁵⁸

I indicate, too a set of urban circumstances that differentially shaped members’ predispositions to inclusivity. The analysis spoke of two factors in particular, the low thresholds to economic mobilisation and the history of radical activism as facilitated by Philadelphia’s large African American population. I prefaced these urban circumstances

⁵⁷ Childs and Krook, “Analysing Women’s Substantive Representation.”

⁵⁸ ACT UP Columbus, “New Members Packet.”

as non-systematic and exogenous to the overall casual mechanism of the thesis. Yet at the same time, I maintain that such environmental factors do speak to greater conversations in the scholarship around how the population demographics, political economy, and societal norms of a city can frame its capacity as fertile or fallow ground for political mobilisation.⁵⁹ Showcasing the political motivations of men such as Scott, Albo, and Mark, the final section exemplifies the predispositions of inclusivity that Philadelphia queer communities held toward facilitating future steps toward SR for that city's ACT UP chapter.

The small sample size of this thesis limits any theoretical pretence to systematise such factors of urban ecology within the mechanism. Here I only paint these urban portraits, if not as definitive causal variables, then as background frames for the micro-decisions and potentialities of political organisations such as ACT UP. The degree to which they foray into the foreground as direct intervention is a frequentist claim that I cannot make. However, I wish to keep such background factors in mind as the next chapter explores internal agency—not external structure—as the divergent fork to transform individual inclusivity into group norm, or to stagnate such intention as only that, intention.

⁵⁹ The emphasis on external structures of opportunity is reminiscent of political process theory, as with McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1999.

Chapter 3. “Why our group is so white”: translation of individual inclusivity to group norm

3.1 Introduction

This chapter pieces together the causal step from x_1 to x_2 within the overall mechanism to SR, or the pathway by which individual predispositions and values translate to group norms of inclusivity.

Positioning in the theoretical pathway and literature. The previous discussion in Chapter 2 discussed the individual predispositions to inclusivity that is present among some members at the point of their entry into an SMO. Chapter 4, in turn, will illustrate how these beliefs in inclusivity manifest into demonstrated practice, namely through the targeted recruitment of descriptive representatives (DRs). What is missing in between these two steps is the link between individual values and group action. This causal pathway is the sandwiched black box between the exogenous and individual-level variable x_1 and the development of a group-wide norm into inclusivity (x_2).

I call the x_1 to x_2 step a “black box” because of its theoretical neglect and the empirical murkiness of proving this causal step. Our discussion will explicate many of the methodological difficulties in developing a clear causal pathway for group norms.

The concept of “group norms of inclusivity” (x2) has received very little attention in SMT, either because of outright omission or improper operationalisation. In the few papers that do address group norms of inclusivity, scholars often conflate the *ex ante development* of group norms with its post hoc *practice*. For example, Laurel Weldon’s research on global movements against gender violence cites recruitment efforts to attract DR. She calls this process the “development of group norms of inclusivity.” However, such empirical evidence of recruitment is only the end product—not process—of group ideology put into actualised practice. A belief in inclusivity must precede the recruitment schema Weldon cites, but it is unclear how beliefs develop.¹ Similarly, Deborah Piatelli’s work proposes models of “inclusion” for SMOs, but she does not specify what motivates action toward outward recruitment and inclusivity.² Other works posit deliberate changes in organisational structure or leadership that lead to empowerment of DRs, a task that Chapter 5 and 6 set out to complete.³ Rothschild-Whitt’s 1976 paper is perhaps the canonical study in this niche field, claiming some external and internal conditions to the development of democratic organisations.⁴ But still, the question of *how* individual norms spur group-level norms, and under what conditions, is sparsely tackled and unsatisfactorily theorised.

¹ Weldon, “Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements,” 60–61.

² Piatelli, “Stories of Inclusion?”

³ Rothschild-Whitt, “Conditions Facilitating Participatory-Democratic Organizations*”; Ostrander, “Gender and Race in a Pro-feminist, Progressive, Mixed-gender, Mixed-race Organization”; Scott, “Beyond Tokenism”; Osterman, “Overcoming Oligarchy.”

⁴ Rothschild-Whitt, “Conditions Facilitating Participatory-Democratic Organizations*.”

The historiographical puzzle. In the ACT UP narrative, the question of group norm development is critically important but also curiously unanswered. The empirical cases during their initial years (the 1.0 designation) demonstrate extremely similar commonalities in individual membership and struggles for inclusivity, each of them projecting fatal outcomes of organisational demobilisation. But through the critical episode of the mid-1990s, Philadelphia develops group norms for inclusivity and recruitment that lead its trajectory to swerve in wild divergence away from the others.

Recall the summative points of the prior section: each city hosted structural differences that influenced its potential pools of ACT UP membership. Despite the distinctions in urban contexts, however, ACT UP chapters nationwide still shared broad common denominators in the late '80s and early '90s. All groups populated memberships from a white, gay, and male dominance of identity, as well as the spillover of social movement experience that bled into the activist backgrounds of the AIDS movement. Put into theoretical terms, ACT UP members generally lacked the "oppression factor" because of their stock identities of socioeconomic race and class. Influenced by past movement participation, however, some did bring values of inclusivity due to the "community factor" facet of my predisposition theory.

Possible alternative explanations. Some scholars have noted that Pitkin's forms of political representation can sometime explain differences in group norm development.⁵ Common logic might tell us as much. For example, for a racial justice organisation: in

⁵ Feldman, "The Development and Enforcement of Group Norms."

relation to symbolic representation (SyR), inclusive anti-racist rhetoric may lead to inclusive norms; with descriptive representation (DR), more POC in a group may lead to greater inclusivity across axes of race (the “critical mass” theory, to be explained shortly); and if a group is tackling issues of racial justice (SR), it may develop greater consciousness and inclusivity on race.

But on these counts, too, the chapters look strikingly similar. They share common mission statements of ending the AIDS crisis through direct action (SyR); they struggle with similar deficits of diversity in their membership (DR); and their primary focus in campaign actions, at least in the early years, laid strictly within the biomedical parameters of HIV as a biomedical condition rather than as a product of societal oppressions (SR). Thus Pitkin’s taxonomy of political representation offers no further theoretical utility in explaining this empirical puzzle.

Section argument and roadmap. Despite these common denominators, we see in the next chapter that Philadelphia becomes unique: it pursues far more aggressive schema of recruitment, thus actualising practice of its group inclusivity norms. How and why does Philadelphia fulfil this x2 criterion when Boston and New York do not?

I identify the critical impetus: *crises* of “diversity deficit” led the group to realise and activate its norms of inclusivity. Note here that it is not strictly ideological but rather practical concerns that act as the most crucial push factors to develop group-level norms of inclusivity. Only the Philadelphia group reaches a collective epiphany to galvanise

action toward sustained significant investment in recruitment practices for DRs. As the later sections will trace, New York and Boston fail to meet the ideological or practical criteria for successful recruitment.

3.2 Existing gaps in the explanation of group norms

Here is a survey the existing literature on group norm development. In this review I reveal the parochial nature of these theoretical parameters. They often maintain agency within the exclusive province of DRs, and assume that the transformation of group norms is rooted in solely ideological concerns. This setup calls for an alternative, more effective approach to determining causality. I propose a causal step that breaches these narrow bounds to realise the roles of both 1) non-DRs (e.g., allies) and 2) practical concerns in driving the development of organisational norms.

Existing hypotheses on norm development. Some scholars have tackled the question of how individual opinions and beliefs translate into group-level norms. Their propositions do not directly relate to the development of inclusivity, but I illustrate potential for extrapolation nonetheless. A crude division would bisect this literature into two camps of theories. The first argues for a “critical mass” of members within the group who can be active or passive proponents for a given belief (e.g., inclusivity), such that there is a group-level shift or adoption of that belief as a norm. Critical mass depends on a

“threshold” or a “tipping point,” or a requisite percentage of supporters in a group needed to adopt such collective belief.⁶

The second camp argues for “critical actors” rather than a critical mass. That is, several particularly vocal and influential champions (“critical actors”) put forward their opinions or beliefs that then effectively become those of the group.⁷ This group of scholars disagrees with the disarming simplicity of critical mass theory, arguing that it is not mere numerical force but some (undefined) causal mechanisms that lead a group to political representation.⁸

Matchup to ACT UP empirics. How much analytic purchase do the critical mass and actor theories command in the ACT UP narrative? Both New York and Philadelphia’s histories contradict their hypotheses. By the sheer difference in size of their urban centres, the New York City chapter possesses far more people of colour (POC) as members and leaders than does Philadelphia. Critical mass theory would suppose that New York would achieve the threshold of critical mass, or at least more so than Philadelphia and Boston could in the absence of leaders of colour in their early memberships. Critical actor theory could say the same, as a number of members of colour in ACT UP New York speak to their consciousness and activities toward group inclusivity. Yet ACT UP New York is most famous for its blindness to oppression and

⁶ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Dahlerup, “From a Small to a Large Minority.”

⁷ Childs and Krook, “Analysing Women’s Substantive Representation.”

⁸ Ibid.; Weldon, “Beyond Bodies”; Weldon, *When Protest Makes Policy*; Yoder, “Rethinking Tokenism”; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, “An Integrated Model of Women’s Representation.”

the importance of inclusivity within its SMO operations: scholarly examinations on the “racism” of the group are a quick testament to its problematic reputation.⁹

The ACT UP Philadelphia story, in contrast, demonstrates that existing theory has fixated on the wrong actors and motives in their causal mechanisms. Its members speak to the crucial leadership of white allies and not DRs of colour in championing inclusivity. This empirical evidence directly contradicts the common assumption that only DRs drive changes in group norms.¹⁰

A comparative analysis of ACT UP New York and Philadelphia provides a telling realisation of the unique cachet of persuasion that white allies possess in convincing a majority white organisation of their group’s fixation on whiteness. In interviews, POC in ACT UP New York reported that their issues were not taken seriously, and were often marginalised when they tried to champion issues of racial justice: “I felt a sense of isolation, if we took unpopular stands,” one Latino member remembers.¹¹ Philadelphia, in contrast, had a number of white allies who fostered mainstream acceptance of marginalised issues and work for oppressed constituencies. Chris Bartlett, a white gay man and ACT UP member, cited the inspiration of several white members in his education of AIDS activism in Philadelphia’s early years: “Anna Forbes was not that much about older than I am but she's felt like she knew more than I did, so I looked up to her and Scott Tucker...So I was educated that we were to care about everything, not

⁹ Gould, “ACT UP, Racism, and the Question of How To Use History”; Juhasz, “Forgetting ACT UP.”

¹⁰ e.g., as assumed in Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*.

¹¹ Fidelino, interview.

just AIDS.¹² Anna and Scott taught Chris to focus not on one issue or one demographic, but on many issues and peoples.

3.3 Critical episodes and crisis: the unveiling and activation of group norms

This section offers a theoretical pathway for the explanation of group norm development and action. Neglected in the dichotomy of “critical mass” and “critical actor,” critical episodes provide fertile ground to 1) expose clear empirical evidence on the presence or absence of group norms, and 2) activate such norms into manifested practice, should they be present.¹³ I elaborate upon the small circle of SMT scholarship that attests to the importance of junctures as exogenous shocks for organisational change, dedicating particular attention to the theoretical ambition of the thesis to elicit causal clues toward group inclusivity.¹⁴

I depart the abstract plane of postulation to argue for the causal role of critical episodes through the empirical lens of one particular historical moment. In the comparative case of ACT UP chapters, critical episodes command far more analytic purchase in exposing—and ultimately activating—group norms than do the theories of critical mass, critical actors, or political representation. This section will study one particular critical

¹² Bartlett, interview.

¹³ Adapted from the existing concept of “critical junctures” in analyses of path dependency. Capoccia and Kelemen, “The Study of Critical Junctures.”

¹⁴ Voss and Sherman, “Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy”; Han, *How Organizations Develop Activists*.

episode common to all ACT UP chapters: a time of crisis that I term the “diversity deficit” among HIV/AIDS groups.

3.3.1 Theoretical contribution

In arguing for the role of “causal episodes,” this section establishes a greater substrate of causality for norm development. It breaches existing parameters of the theoretical purview beyond the afore-mentioned dichotomy of “critical mass” and “critical actor.” Beyond the agency of individual actors or a critical mass, the structural circumstances of particular historical instances reveal and propel paradigm shifts in group norms and practice.

I note that the central argument shares parallels with McAdam’s renowned political process theory (PPT) in SMT. The introduction offered a brief explanation of the theory: PPT argues that shifts in the macro-structural environment of social movements can galvanise and propel political mobilisation.¹⁵ Reflecting PPT, this discussion of critical episodes argues for the interaction of organisational agency with the importance of structural circumstance in shaping the trajectory of SMOs.

This analysis of “critical episodes” tackles the causal question lingering inside the black box between x2 to x3. That is, how group norms of inclusivity (x2) translate into the practice of inclusivity, or the practice otherwise known as successful recruitment?

¹⁵ McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1982; McAdam, *Freedom Summer*.

Success here is measured by the retention and leadership development of targeted DRs.

With that success, SMOs arrive at physical inclusion (x3). I argue that critical episodes are a significant explanatory variable in their ability to accelerate this causal process.

Critical episodes act as a “tipping point” to oblige SMOs into sink-or-swim circumstances. These historic junctures of crisis yield great analytic purchase: they both serve as a litmus test to reveal group norms and as a fiery spark for to activate group norms (if they exist) from ideological belief into implemented practice.¹⁶

This focus upon historical snapshots derives from Feldman’s insistence in organisational studies that “critical events in the group’s history” can often be the clearest precipitants for the development of group norms.¹⁷ The group may not so much have spelled out an overarching ideology as much as it learns that it depends on that diversity and inclusivity for survival.

With this theoretical backbone now defined, I turn to flesh out this causal proposition of critical episodes through empirical illustration: an analysis of a common juncture, the diversity deficit among ACT UP chapters and their divergent implications. This analysis will span the remainder of this chapter to focus on the ideological differences of inclusivity norms; and it will continue in the next chapter (Chapter 3) to analyse the actual mechanics and lynchpins of recruitment.

¹⁶ Similar arguments in Kerbo, “Movements of ‘Crisis’ and Movements of ‘Affluence’ A Critique of Deprivation and Resource Mobilization Theories.”

¹⁷ Feldman, “The Development and Enforcement of Group Norms.”

3.3.2 Common crisis: influx of drugs and outflow of members

I turn to outline the historical circumstances that precipitated and defined this crisis of diversity deficit. It was a particular historical moment in the early 1990s, a time that the ACT UP historiography identifies as most pivotal to the movement's survival—or death—in the midst of declining membership numbers.¹⁸ At this point, all groups suffered incredibly similar exogenous challenges in the AIDS movement. Across the board, ACT UP chapters had to come to terms with the practical severity of what I call “diversity deficit,” or the failure of the SMO to invest and outreach toward prospective DR members from the most affected communities. Philadelphia's white members respond and reconfigure the group toward greater efforts of inclusivity, whereas analogous counterparts in New York and Boston's chapters fail to do so. This divergence in organisational action explains the ultimate differences by which parallel trains in organisational development fork toward very differential fates in group norm development.

Table 4. Parallel tracks of struggle for ACT UP chapters (1.0) in the early '90s.
A non-exhaustive list of factors during this critical episode.

EXOGENOUS FACTORS	INTERNAL SYMPTOMS OF MOVEMENT DEMOBILISATION
○ The mortality of the epidemic: death of movement participants from AIDS ○ President Clinton's election that lessens the urgency of activism, as many believe the end of the Republican reign would spell action on AIDS and homophobia	○ Increasing rates and viciousness of in-fighting within the membership, especially along lines of identity politics such as race, class, and gender ○ An emotional milieu that becomes increasingly pessimistic toward social change, characterised by desperation and inefficacy

¹⁸ e.g., Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*.

EXOGENOUS FACTORS	INTERNAL SYMPTOMS OF MOVEMENT DEMOBILISATION
○ A “media fatigue” that finds the direct action tactics of ACT UP less amusing and increasingly tiresome, especially in New York ○ Release of lifesaving antiretrovirals that dramatically improve the prognosis of people with AIDS ○ With the advent of drugs, the accompanying public perception that HIV/AIDS in the Global North is more or less “over” ○ The high barriers to political participation among the most affected populations, such as the poor and people of colour (Section 3.3.3)	○ Extreme feelings of fatigue from years of fighting, contributing too to a radical fall in membership numbers ○ Bureaucratisation of ACT UP participants to gain greater access into traditional channels of power, leading to goal displacement

This attrition of membership worldwide threatened the vitality of all ACT UPs in the early and mid-1990s, Philadelphia included.¹⁹ Why the fall in numbers? Popular argument claims that ACT UP failed because of its wild success. That is, the fault lay with one of the crowning achievements of the AIDS movement: the advent of life-saving antiretrovirals that transformed AIDS from a death sentence to a chronic life disease. The new AIDS treatments wedged a fork in what became vastly divergent fates for PWAs in the United States. Those with financial resources, largely white gay men, managed to develop drug adherence regimes, recover their wills, and return to life as usual. PWAs without access to money saw AIDS continue to exacerbate their existing issues of food insecurity, housing, and socioeconomic problems.

¹⁹ Stockdill, “ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power)”; “Final Chapters.”

Suppression of HIV viral loads, in other words, did not come with the suppression of other forms of bodily violence: the oppressions of black and brown poor bodies that still suffered at the intersections of racism and poverty. Yet more privileged and whiter individuals, already burnt out from the movement, no longer interpreted the AIDS epidemic as a personal crisis. For them, the pressure valve had burst, and escaping with them was the exodus of wild anger and urgency and passion that had driven the movement in the early years.

Such a popular argument about drugs holds its truths, but other culprits lurk too in the shadows. All ACT UP chapters suffered from declining membership years before the FDA approved lifesaving drugs, as members died and others burnt out from an exhausting milieu of endless action. Mainstream criticisms and pessimistic narratives cut the vitality of the movement.²⁰ Table 4 lists several other factors.

Low numbers pushed chapters to precipice of death by the mid-1990s, and for the vast majority of these groups, the falloffs in membership led to falls into the oblivion of non-existence. Only eight out of the 113 ACT UP chapters in history survived this crisis, and all but one of the survivor eight (Philadelphia) emerged as only a pathetic shadow of what they used to be.²¹ As ACT UP scholar Gould writes, “By 1995, ACT UP was unquestionably a reduced and less effective presence than it had been in the late 1980s and early 1990s.”²²

²⁰ Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*.

²¹ Halcli, “AIDS, Anger, and Activism”; “Final Chapters.”

²² Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*.

Philadelphia's status during this crisis was emblematic of the general ACT UP story. The incidence of AIDS cases in Philadelphia had doubled in just one year, from 1992 to 1993.²³ During this time, membership numbers dwindled the most.²⁴ In contrast to the former attendance average of 70-80 people, there were less than ten members in 1996 who came to each Monday night meeting: the majority were women, the vast majority were gay, and perhaps one or two people were of colour.²⁵

The analogous—but much more dramatic—decline of ACT UP New York is far better documented in the historiography of the AIDS movement.²⁶ Take a time-lapse of the cavernous halls that packed upwards of a thousand members during the New York City chapter's heyday. With each successive Monday, fewer gays came to huddle outside the building, trying to catch sight of the meeting (or cute guys) inside; then the lobby hall lost its overflow, and soon the site of Monday night meetings gave way to standing room, and then later also empty chairs to sit. ACT UP no longer needed its volunteer sound technicians and crowd controllers.

All the groups suffered from the narrow base of largely white gay men from which they drew their membership. Such homogeneity reflected only a small slice of the potential movement, especially as the epidemic was becoming increasingly entrenched in low-

²³ Collins, "AIDS Is Up Dramatically In City Philadelphia Cases Have Doubled In Just 1 Year."

²⁴ Davids, "History of AIDS Activism: Part 2."

²⁵ De Marco, interview; Acosta, interview; Davids, interview.

²⁶ Kaplan, "The Mighty ACT UP Has Fallen: The Philadelphia Story"; Reynolds and Clutterbuck, "The Raymond Schmidt and Stephen Skuce AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP / Boston) Collection"; Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*; Shepard, "Moving Politics"; "Final Chapters."

income communities of colour. The crisis of membership arose out of a deficit of diversity.

3.3.3 Attempts at recruitment: similar actions, different motivations

Of note is the common denominator at play in this story of diversity deficit: almost all ACT UP chapters pursued greater attempts at recruitment in response. This empirical reality testifies to the universal realisation among the ACT UP groups: that they were relatively homogeneous, and that they had to conduct further outreach to communities for a broader reach toward DRs.

Most ACT UP chapters held good intentions to be inclusive and recruit poor members of colour into their membership, but with disappointing levels of success. A small committee within ACT UP New York “spent a lot of time discussing how to get more people of color involved, but never really quite got there.” Lei Chou, an Asian American member of the group, remembered:

People of color are everywhere in New York, so it’s kind of, like, where do you start, and how do you get them to come to a room full of white, gay people and have them participate? It just doesn’t quite jive. We didn’t really do too good on that front.

ACT UP Philadelphia, too, realised in the early ‘90s that it was organising actions that would affect “large numbers of POC,” and they wanted to include such DRs in the SMO. But Jose de Marco, a HIV-positive Latino leader of ACT UP, commented that such recruitment “was really difficult, because we couldn’t get a lot of people of colour with

free hours—[who] had AIDS to talk about AIDS—to help the decisions we made as a group.”²⁷

Chapter 4 will dive deep into the historical factors that led ACT UP Philadelphia to an ultimately successful set of recruitment schema. ACT UP New York and Boston, on the other hand, share strikingly similar instances of attempted but failed recruitment. The New York group realised that the Gay and Lesbian Community Center in the city’s West Village was not the most culturally sensitive place to hold AIDS activist meetings, especially for those still in the closet. They publicised for and held a number of meetings in churches around Harlem—100 blocks uptown in north Manhattan—in hopes of attracting a different set of activists. New member turnout: zero.

ACT UP Boston (1.0) tells a similarly story. Ray Schmidt, one of the group’s gay white co-founders, remembered that within the first few months of the chapter’s creation, they held a year’s worth of meetings at Roxbury Community College to try for “more accessible” political participation. Roxbury is Boston’s equivalent of Harlem in both the population density and rich history of black communities. Ray resigned himself to the good intention of the act: “It didn’t work, but we tried.”²⁸

Similar attempts, dissimilar subtexts. The three parallel tracks of the case ACT UP chapters show similar origins in diversity deficit as well as common struggles for

²⁷ De Marco, interview.

²⁸ Schmidt, interview.

recruitment. Yet an empirical analysis that stops at the pure level of observed action would fail to catch the wide divergence in ideological subtext that underscores each of their attempts at outreach.

Through a sample of participant statements, I provide a quick and admittedly partial illustration of the variant norms of group inclusivity, as evidenced by the chapters' assignation of blame and responsibility. POC in all ACT UP chapters spoke to the normative importance of recruitment and diversity. But ultimately, the words of well-respected white allies carried the most power: they defined organisational attitudes toward racial inclusivity, or the lack thereof.

Philadelphia. Julie Davids was a white HIV-negative ally within ACT UP Philadelphia, an ally being someone who did not stand to benefit directly from the movement. She co-founded a recruitment pipeline for low-income people with HIV, the lynchpin to the group's success in successive physical heterogeneity. To ACT UP Philadelphia's diversity deficit, she sums up the response of the group: "We're going to stop our activities. We're going to step back and find out why our group is so white, and why we need to act responsibly to deal with this."²⁹

Julie's statement places the burden of responsibility on the group itself. It is ACT UP's obligation, she notes, to "out why our group is so white." Julie invokes the very notion of "act[ing] responsibly." Her words resonate with other writings by white allies and

²⁹ Davids, interview.

black DRs alike about the necessity of including a diversity of people and leaders in their membership.³⁰ Philadelphia members often speak of restrictive barriers such as the intersection of homophobia, poverty, and institutionalised racism as the systemic challenges to inclusivity of membership.³¹

Boston and New York. The ACT UP Boston and New York responses can hardly be more different. Of the original ACT UP Boston chapter, gay white member David Hamburger reflects on their group's general attitude toward inclusivity:

I'm trying to think it's – the politics didn't come up identity politics so much because – we were so focused on – specific things...We didn't so much – partially because it was mostly white people, and partially because – the issues were – life and death for this, you know what I mean?³²

Note the subtext of David's language. Perhaps subconsciously, he has equated that only the issues of "white people" – notably, the strict biomedical foci of research and treatment – were the only issues of "life and death." Racial dimensions of oppression are entirely excluded from his analysis of urgency and *purpose* within the movement. It was, in David's view, not the responsibility of ACT UP Boston to attract or work on issues that affected communities of colour.

The New York rhetoric I present is similar in sentiment but far more explicit. Take the words of one of the most well respected and eulogised members of the group: Vito

³⁰ ACT UP Philadelphia, "A Synopsis of the ACT UP National Housing Takeover Campaign"; Hayes, "Roy Hayes's Recommendations to ACT UP Philadelphia."

³¹ Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness*; Cohen, "Power, Resistance and the Construction of Crisis"; Robertson, *Not in My Family*; Foster, *Is There a Balm in Black America?*; Diaz, *Latino Gay Men and HIV*; Amaro, "Considerations for Prevention of HIV Infection Among Hispanic Women."

³² Hamburger, interview.

Russo, a gay white man who died of AIDS complications in 1990. He offers his assessment of membership deficits during the early years of ACT UP:

When somebody stands up in an ACT UP meeting and says, “Why don’t we have more blacks here?” my response is more often than not, “*Yes, racism exists, but that’s not the problem here.* The problem here is that why aren’t these people at this meeting? I can pick up the newspaper and see where 13th Street is and get my fat ass on the subway and come down here. So can you. *Why aren’t you here?*”³³

“Why aren’t you [“these people” of colour] here?” Let us dissect the subtext of Vito’s frustration, keeping in mind the prominence of this particular figure within ACT UP. (He is the only activist to have his writing included in every orientation packet for new SMO members, to this day).³⁴ Just in voicing such thoughts, he indicates that he and other ACT UP members do care about capturing the diversity of the epidemic. But Vito kicks the possibility of structural barriers aside (“yes, racism exists, but that’s not the problem here”) and attributes political participation to an exclusive matter of individual choice (“get[ting] my fat ass on the subway”).

Implicit in his comments is the recognition that indeed, attracting a greater diversity of members is important—for ACT UP New York, Philadelphia, and the vast majority of chapters across the world. Most AIDS activists realised that the epidemic represented an interlocking of multiple oppressions that demanded a diversity of movement participants. Vito’s comments are certainly more extreme in passion and vehemence than those of most of his colleagues in ACT UP New York. They are, however, far from caricature: Vito’s sentiments are reflected among the wider membership of the group, as

³³ Russo, Vito. Interview by Nancy Stoller. October 2, 1989. Cited in Stoller, Nancy E. *Lessons from the Damned: Queers, Whores, and Junkies Respond to AIDS*. New York: Routledge, 1998, 132. Emphasis added.

³⁴ ACT UP New York, “ACT UP New York City.”

other members corroborate.³⁵ One member, Robert Vasquez-Pacheco, recalled the typical reaction when race would come up: “Everyone would just sort of like go into that stunned—‘Don’t call me racist, don’t call me racist.’ ”³⁶ There was a constant re-appropriation of blame. It was not “my fault,” it was not “my problem,” it was “their problem.”

Taken collectively, these representative statements indeed demonstrate a wide variety of takes on the allocation of representation in SMO struggles for inclusivity. While ACT UP Philadelphia spoke to the responsibility of the organisation to introspect its own faults in attracting diversity, Russo casts aside the onus and lodges it on the absent constituencies themselves. As later historical narrative in this thesis will demonstrate, this contrast in mentalities carries significant implications for how the two groups do or do not pursue activities toward inclusivity. Only for Philadelphia was the shrinking and homogeneous membership a critical push factor in developing internal diversity.

3.4 Divergence in inclusivity

The above discussion only represents a precursory sampling of the difference in group norms of inclusivity in ACT UP chapters. I now investigate deeper causal factors that led to failure among ACT UP New York and Boston in their pursuit of greater diversity and recruitment.

³⁵ e.g., Thomas, interview; Chou, interview; Fidelino, interview.

³⁶ Vasquez-Pacheco, interview.

Why did recruitment fail? This question is critical, as brief ACT UP New York member and renowned AIDS activist Jennifer Flynn claims. Jennifer pinpoints the diversity deficit as the critical fork in time that revealed the differential “intents” and “investment” of ACT UP chapters toward inclusivity. She speaks of the burnout and subsequent failure of recruitment in ACT UP New York that ultimately debilitated for the group, while Philadelphia saw a growing membership:

A lot of stuff had been won and people had invested, you know, 10 years of their lives going...to two or three [ACT UP] meetings a week...Whether it's conforming to the, like hetero-normative society, or whatever...people started, like, partnering and – having jobs where they had...success and putting focus in that...going on and living their lives [without ACT UP]...

What I would say is that ACT UP never invested enough in – or at some point before I was involved – they stopped outreaching to new, to other people. And that, actually, is the big difference between ACT UP New York and ACT UP Philadelphia. **ACT UP Philadelphia had a very specific outreach plan to increase their membership and, you know, continue to grow. And ACT UP New York – for whatever reason, like, just did not follow through with that. I mean, I think that there was intention.**³⁷

The task of this chapter is to suss out the theoretical components of the unknown “whatever reason” that Jennifer alludes to but does not identify in the concluding sentence of this passage. She cites recruitment to be the critical lynchpin between the divergent paths of ACT UP Philadelphia and New York, but the “why” remains unanswered.

³⁷ Flynn, interview.

I first investigate why ACT UP New York and Boston “just did not follow through” on their intentions to outreach for their membership, as Jennifer asks. This section will detail attempts toward recruitment; more importantly, it dedicates significant analysis of the SMOs’ attitudes toward inclusivity (a measure of x2) that can explain some of the failure of the organisations to invest significant resources in their outreach programmes.

The scorecard of ACT UP cases. In Bayesian (binary) fashion, the following table scores each of these cases on the early steps of the causal mechanism:

Table 5. Matrix describing the in(completion) of the ACT UP chapters at early steps of the causal mechanism.

ACT UP chapter	Group norms of inclusivity (x2)	Recruitment (x2 to x3)		Physical inclusion (x3)
		<i>Attempted</i>	<i>Successful</i>	
BOSTON (1.0)	✗	✗	✗	✗
BOSTON (2.0)	✓	✓	✗	✗
NEW YORK 1.0	✗	✓	✗	✗
PHILADELPHIA 1.0 → 2.0	✓	✓	✓	✓

The subsequent discussion will engage in a deep analysis of the above check marks and X’s, with a focus on Boston 2.0 and New York City. ACT UP Philadelphia follows through on the mechanism entirely, for reasons and theory to tackle in Chapter 4. ACT UP Boston 1.0, in complete contrast, fulfils none of the above causal criteria, disqualifying the case from this analysis entirely.

The second incarnation of ACT UP Boston fulfils the inclusivity criterion (x2), attempts to recruit, but fails to reach any significant diversity (x3). I argue, with later illustration

of its history, that its recruitment strategy was lacking in both resources and tactic. ACT UP New York is the opposite: the group is not inclusive, yet it has physical heterogeneity. This combination of attributes is curious and unexpected: it breaks the linear assumption of the causal step from x2 to x3. How?

Here I investigate the back-story behind attitudes toward inclusivity and recruitment, highlighted through the interview data of several individuals in each case SMO. These individuals held positions of influence and respect in the SMOs, even in the formally egalitarian structure of ACT UP that eschewed any branding of “leaders.” Some members indeed held more power than others, and their word connoted both reflection of and influence on their respective groups in relation to norms of inclusivity.

The discussion focuses most heavily on ACT UP New York, for it offers an interesting case by virtue of the sheer size of its hosting metropolis. At over 7 million people—and almost sixty percent of them POC—New York City in the 1990 Census counted over 4 million POC, a number greater than twice the entire population of Philadelphia, and more than seven times that of Boston at the time.³⁸ Yet, unlike its Boston or Philadelphia counterparts, the New York chapter did not meet any group norms of inclusivity.

³⁸ Gibson and Jung, “Historical Census Statistics.”

3.4.1 The fatal lack of group inclusivity: New York

This lack of true group inclusivity was fatal. Even with significant organised entities of POC within the group—and attempted trysts at recruitment—ACT UP New York failed to sustain any significant mainstream leadership of DRs within the group. Its narrative merits a deeper look. Here I trace the ulterior motives behind its recruitment. This analysis draws upon, in large part, the social marginalisation of members of colour and their associated issues: a manifest disregard that represents empirical markers against any true inclusivity within the SMO.

a. ACT UP New York thought it was “inclusive”

The physical presence of POC indicated superficially that ACT UP New York cared about inclusivity. I illustrate the efforts that the committees of POC advanced toward greater racial inclusivity and recruitment. I then follow this historical fact with the sobering reality that the group at large still did not accept a wider purview of the movement; it did not care to invest in greater participation by DRs.

In ACT UP New York, there were black, Latino, and Asian ACT UP activists. There were not many in the early years, and certainly a smaller proportion of POC in ACT UP New York (9 percent) than in the U.S. epidemic at large (38 percent).³⁹ Still, many of these POC became some of the organisation’s most prominent leaders, bringing a racial and class sensitivity to the organisation. During the early years, the ACT UP chapters in New

³⁹ Elbaz, “The Sociology of AIDS Activism, the Case of ACT UP/New York, 1987-1992. (Volumes I and II)” ; Bakeman et al., “The Incidence of AIDS Among Blacks and Hispanics.”

York (and Philadelphia and most other locations, actually) had a Majority Action Committee, known as a People of Color Committee elsewhere. The former name was coined in opposition to the mainstream denotation of blacks and Latinos as ethnic minorities, and to the fact that communities of colour formed the majority populations of the epidemic.⁴⁰

If anything, the New York chapter showed considerable promise in the early years for its activism on behalf of POC, SR dimensions often forgotten in the historiography. Its Latino Committee raised enough money to fly a number of its activists to Puerto Rico, starting a fledgling chapter on the island. The Spanish Communications Committee and the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus took it upon themselves to translate all materials into other languages (Appendix B for more information).⁴¹

Defence of ACT UP New York's inclusivity. To be fair, most but not all attempts at recruitment and outreach to communities of colour were not only via the specific committees. For the general homogeneity of the white gay majority—not only of identity but also perspective and political priority—there were ACT UP New York members who maintained that they did indeed espouse inclusivity.

Eric Sawyer, a white gay man and long-time ACT UP New York member, has long been involved in racial and socioeconomic justice initiatives within the AIDS movement. He is a respected leader who holds this (somewhat defensive) position of the SMO:

⁴⁰ Kendall, interview.

⁴¹ Agosto, interview; Chou, interview; Vélez, interview.

I think a lot of the divide racially was more – you know people of color feeling excluded – than – you know White people in ACT UP excluding or wanting to exclude – people of color. You know I don't think we were always sensitive to their issues...that are more – prevalent to Black and Brown people than White people, but – I think we – at least I tried to be – tried to be inclusive.

After making this statement, Eric does show some self-consciousness in saying that “it’s a white boy’s perception.” In the interview, I then immediately pressed him to explain why he believes ACT UP New York did indeed “try to be inclusive,” despite common belief. His answer comes back to the theme of recruitment:

Why do I think the way I think?...You know – there were lots of, you know, times when we tried to hold, you know, either committee meetings, or ACT UP meetings in general in other communities, and – we never got more members from those communities to attend them than when we had them in the [Gay and Lesbian Community] Center.⁴²

And indeed, ACT UP New York did attempt to improve the representation of its membership through such initiatives: the unsuccessful and temporary relocation of meetings to Harlem, or the attempt of the POC caucuses to do similar work. The next section delves into the uglier underbelly that motivated such initiatives, not out of genuine inclusivity but of ulterior motives.

b. True drivers of recruitment: “white guilt” and fear

I argue that these attempts at recruitment were largely superficial, that they did not reflect true development of group norms around inclusivity. Some ACT UP New York members speak candidly to the more posturing motives at play. Andy Vélez bemoaned

⁴² Sawyer, interview.

the “perversity of political correctness that was running amuck in ACT UP.”⁴³ Among the group, people had a guarded caution about being perceived as racist or sexist.⁴⁴ Andy recalled instances when the Latino Caucus received funding “because the floor would have been afraid, out of all that political correctness, to say no.”

Andy’s comments reveal the ultimate motivations behind ACT UP’s seeming attempt at broadening participation to more members from disenfranchised and darker-skinned communities. The driving force, I argue, was not an ideological commitment to inclusivity. Rather, ACT UP New York’s recruitment testifies more to a practical fear of breaking unwritten codes and norms of social convention, as Andy’s comments about “the perversity of political correctness” would suggest. These attempts at recruitment were “tokenising”: the intention to achieve a modicum of representation so that the group could defend itself against potential accusations of racial discrimination and homogeneity.⁴⁵

In this vein, ACT UP’s attitudes toward its socioeconomic and racial justice committees were telling. According to Charles King, “disdain” characterised the attitude of ACT UP at large toward committees such as Majority Action and Housing (the latter committee, as the name would suggest, for provision of living options for low-income PWAs). Majority Action “had much more clout than Housing...[because] they [Majority Action,

⁴³ Vélez, interview with author.

⁴⁴ Vasquez-Pacheco, interview; Sawyer, interview; King, interview.

⁴⁵ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Yoder, “Rethinking Tokenism”; Scott, “Beyond Tokenism.”

the POC committee] always had the white guilt factor.”⁴⁶ This comment of “white guilt” reveals, again, the desire of ACT UP New York to assuage any feeling of shame around the exclusivity of its membership and the absence of DR members from communities of colour.

c. Caucus status as the canary in the mine: the cancer of division and disunity in ACT UP

The social hierarchy of the internal caucuses in ACT UP New York, as King alludes to, symbolises ACT UP chapter’s general disregard—or abject opposition—to greater issues of inclusivity. In ACT UP New York, a social and political order marginalised these small caucuses and their political agendas. Thus SR issues became compartmentalised and divorced from the general priorities of the entire group.

These groups, again, were small in numbers, but big in intention and—at times—action. Individuals could start a caucus at any time, and they often did so to represent issues that they felt like did not receive enough attention from the group at large. Caucuses would meet once or twice a week for discussions, action planning, and the formation of proposals, for which they would then seek to secure funding or other support from the floor at the Monday night meeting.

One such caucus, the Majority Action Committee, was an assembly of POC formed in solidarity to “represent the other side of the epidemic [in contrast to the majority white

⁴⁶ King, interview.

membership].” They tried to poster and recruit more POC, rather unsuccessfully.⁴⁷ The Committee was at most thirty people at its height, at a time when there were over a thousand members in ACT UP New York at large.⁴⁸

The Latino Caucus was half the size of Majority Action: 12 to 15 people, but mighty in its remembered productivity. The Caucus staged its own actions, set up an ACT UP chapter in Puerto Rico, and conducted ACT UP’s first teach-ins in all five of New York City’s boroughs.⁴⁹ Housing, in turn, developed into one of the pioneering forces in the nation for the living safety, accommodation, and treatment adherence of homeless people with HIV.⁵⁰

Despite of, or because of their success, these groups experienced the same forces of oppression within the SMO as they did in greater society. Caucus work did not permeate into a general understanding for the group and its political priorities. Charles King describes the majority core that was concerned with the pure biomedical questions of drugs and treatment, the most germane needs for white, more privileged PWAs:

ACT UP had its own fascinating politics. You had the Peter Staleys [a white, Ivy-League educated stockbroker and ACT UP member] of the world, who came from places of tremendous privilege, and AIDS had outed them and taken away their privilege. And for them it was all about drugs into bodies, and that was the chant, “Drugs into bodies,” or the slogan...

⁴⁷ Chou, interview.

⁴⁸ Fidelino, interview.

⁴⁹ Vélez, interview; Agosto, interview.

⁵⁰ Elbaz, “The Sociology of AIDS Activism, the Case of ACT UP/New York, 1987-1992. (Volumes I and II).”

There was sort of no real appreciation by probably a minority, but a powerful minority within ACT UP, of the socioeconomic factors that were really drivers of the epidemic.⁵¹

Apathy, or, as King calls it, “no real appreciation” of the socioeconomic and racial factors was typical of ACT UP’s white majority. At times, outright negativity imbued the two-way relationships between the white majority ACT UP at large and the various committees. The distrust and splintering shot both ways, as Andy remembers. In the Latino Caucus, he recounted “a bitterness loose in the Caucus...It was not unlike them to refer to very angrily and bitterly to ACT UP as a whole as those ‘Gringos’ [a word in Spanish, often derogatory, to refer to white people].”⁵²

The identity politics were social, too. Ming-Yuen S. Ma, a member of the API (Asian Pacific Islander) Caucus in ACT UP, remembers that there were very few white men in his social circle from the SMO, that there were “the [white] boys and the – everybody else.” The exceptions, he noted, were either the politically progressive white folks, or the white men who fetishised POC (“one or two rice queens,” as Ming-Yuen described the preferential taste of some white gay men for Asians).⁵³ Ming-Yuen developed a relationship with one of the progressive white men: Rod Sorge, a co-founder of ACT UP New York’s initiative for IV drug users. Neither was that relationship immune to the racial tensions in the group. It ended over a “fight about race, about what happened in ACT UP.” Ma says resolutely, “That broke us up.”

⁵¹ King, interview.

⁵² Vélez, interview.

⁵³ Ma, interview.

Jose Fidelino, a Majority Action Committee member, recalls one member who decided to ditch his existing affiliation with the POC group so that he could do public speaking with the majority white outreach and communications committee. “I thought it was pretty obvious that it’s because he would rather be popular,” Jose reflects. As another member described his membership in the Majority Action Committee, “In ACT UP...there were like the A-list people and the B-list people. We were like the D-list people.”⁵⁴ The committees more inclusive of SR issues were written off the floor and social map of the SMO at large. One could not ask for clearer empirical markers than these instances of manifested marginalisation and subjugation of (caucuses of) POC by a white majority.

Altogether, these empirical data demonstrate an unfortunate theoretical truth. ACT UP New York represents the many SMOs in history that have pursued recruitment, but recruitment in itself does not guarantee (and often fails to reflect) a deep commitment to inclusivity. Rather, as members admit in their reflections, such outreach in ACT UP New York has more accurately flagged signals for white guilt and fears around political correctness. As the hierarchy of its internal committees demonstrated, the group at large did not care for—and at times, outwardly opposed—the expanded purview and inclusion of racially diverse representatives and issues.

⁵⁴ Fidelino, interview.

3.4.2 The failure to follow-through on ideology: Boston

Boston presents as a negative case of successful recruitment in another sense. I examine the trajectory of the group that I term “ACT UP Boston 2.0.” Unlike ACT UP New York and its earlier Boston predecessor, this “2.0” revival carried strong intentions for inclusivity. It attempted recruitment schemes from communities of colour; but due to a lack of resources and investment, it failed to sustain any significant participation from DRs.

With the contemporary energy of the Occupy movement and celebrations nationwide for ACT UP’s 25th birthday, a few ACT UP veterans re-incarnated a chapter in Boston in 2012—its first life had fizzled out in 1994. It is a small and ragtag group of 5-15 members; they have never held down an official meeting spot, instead jumping around from gay bars to cafes, getting kicked out when the owners decide that they are taking up too much space and not bringing in enough business with their long Monday night meetings. But one resource that ACT UP Boston 2.0 does have is the asset of hindsight knowledge. They know why ACT UP chapters died the first time around, and what needs to be done this time: members maintain that a mission of racial justice is key to their survival, that they must develop and practice a norm of inclusivity.⁵⁵

Who are the Boston 2.0ers? Some of them came back from the old guard of Boston 1.0, but a plurality are university or medical school students, young people who did not live

⁵⁵ Scoppettuolo, interview; Wilson, interview; Sue, interview.

through the heyday of AIDS in its most early years. Other members are social movement veterans, queers, and other POC.

Their convictions for inclusivity, especially along lines of race, are more than clear.

Johannes Wilson is one such member, a half-Filipino queer activist who divorced himself from white gay movements for their blindness toward race. He reflects, “I think one of the things that could really boost our ranks, help people draw connections is by talking much more specifically about race all the time, making ACT UP a racial justice organization primarily.”⁵⁶ And as Johannes says later in the interview, ACT UP Boston succeeds at least in their rhetoric, or symbolic representation. “We talk about it all the time,” he says in reference to racial consciousness.

Gerry Scoppettuolo, a former Marxist and union organizer, is a much older white man. He specifically evokes the asset of experiential knowledge that a more diverse group would bring into the chapter:

We would benefit by having people of color in the group – be more assertive and directive....We reach out to, link up with, work up with, people of color...My hope is – is to throw my influence behind outreach to – the whole idea of calling it outreach to the black community is even offensive you know –

It’s just that – anything like ACT UP – will never succeed – unless – racism is overturned.⁵⁷

Of all the 98 interviews that informed this thesis, Gerry and Johannes employ some of the strongest anti-racist and inclusivity language of anyone. Yet Boston 2.0, remarkable

⁵⁶ Wilson, interview.

⁵⁷ Scoppettuolo, interview.

for these ideological commitments, is unremarkable among ACT UP groups in its replication of the same failures of recruitment. Kim Sue, an Asian American MD/PhD student at Harvard, described her ACT UP outreach efforts:

It is great to get people to go [to actions], and then you are left with the idea that you have all these phone numbers and contacts – and no one wants to come to meetings...We'd call and have a little like town hall and debrief like what happened ...no one would show up.⁵⁸

Other members, too, expressed their frustrations about no-shows and the failure of their recruitment strategy.⁵⁹ Their words reflect the missing pieces of their outreach schema of DRs, those from the most oppressed of social locations. Johannes provided a particularly astute analysis. He speaks of one particular host institution for DRs, the Boston Living Center (BLC) for low-income PWAs. It was at the BLC that ACT UP Boston was revived in 2012:

We have gone to BLC dinners and lunches and flyers there for every single event that we've done, but people don't show up, and I don't know what it's going to take.

And Morgan [a coordinator at the BLC] said that like her feeling is that people don't, people who are oppressed to an extent don't feel that they deserve better so they are willing to sort of like, just like roll with the punches and just when funding cuts happen, that's what they expect...

I don't want to say that that's the truth, because I don't want to put such a pessimistic frame on it. I just don't know if we've found the right way to like mobilize people because there are people who need to be at the meetings.

I draw attention to one part of this passage, when Johannes relates Morgan's hypothesis that the lack of political participation comes from the defeatism of poverty, oppression, and HIV-positive status: "people who are oppressed to [such] an extent don't feel that

⁵⁸ Sue, interview.

⁵⁹ Wilson, interview; Scoppettuolo, interview; participant observation.

they deserve better.” These potential DRs lack, in other words, a belief in their own *self-efficacy*, or the confidence that their actions can change their lives or those of others.

Chapter 4 will detail the theoretical importance and practical steps that Philadelphia pursues in the development of self-efficacy of its recruits.

ACT UP Boston, as did most other chapters other than Philadelphia, failed in nurturing self-efficacy in its potential members. It is not an easy task to convince someone who has been cornered into the most resource-poor and oppressed of social locations that they can do anything else, especially when the system has been so robustly constructed to thwart mobility and resistance. The default recruitment strategy is to poster, or to do conduct street outreach, or, with more advance planning and resources, host what are called “teach-ins” or one-time education sessions. None of those panned out with much success for the New York or Boston chapters.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the role of critical episodes in the development of norms among SMOs. It localises this theoretical argument within the particular time moment of diversity deficits among the memberships of ACT UP chapters. This crisis represents a “day of judgment” for SMOs, a key juncture that 1) reveals divergent levels of group norms, and 2) obliges SMOs to attempt and implement such norms into practice. Critical

episodes, in other words, become a fork of opportunity—or failure—for groups to follow through on their ideological word.

This comparative case analysis of ACT UP provides rationale to the variant degrees of completion of the causal step from group inclusivity (x2) to physical inclusion (x3). The New York chapter, despite its size and thus relative abundance of leaders of colour, failed to internalise any genuine intentions for inclusivity in its mainstream core of white gay men. New York's recruitment efforts did not materialise into significant participation from DRs, due largely to its deficit of values; the revived form of ACT UP Boston, in turn, failed not for lack of inclusivity values but rather for scarcity of resources and tactic.

Philadelphia, in contrast, exploits the critical episode to activate group norms of inclusivity, some dormant because of the urban environmental factors discussed in Chapter 2 and others actively sought through the agency of several white champions who carve out room for recruitment. With respect to the relative balance of each set of causal factors, I cannot quantify in this small case study of very small member SMOs the influence of structure versus agency. But Chapter 4 does offer a tracing of this positive case, outlining the more precise theoretical mechanics and strategy that accompany values of inclusivity for successful recruitment of heterogeneous members.

Chapter 4. “Getting free [ride], chips and orange...and I went to New York”: recruitment of descriptive representatives (DR)

4.1 Introduction: a theory of DR recruitment

Critical to the social movement organisation (SMO) theory of substantive representation (SR) is the involvement of descriptive representatives (DRs), or individuals from the most disenfranchised constituencies. This chapter proposes a theory of recruitment for such DRs.

First, I would like to situate the role of recruitment within the causal mechanism central to this thesis. If implemented with serious intentionality and investment in DRs, recruitment processes represent the clearest manifestation of group-level inclusivity norms (x2). Recruitment can serve as the missing causal link between x2 and x3, physical inclusion.

The failure of recruitment in the ACT UP historiography. The vast majority of SMOs do attempt recruitment of DR populations, but often with limited and disappointing extents of success. Recall the trajectory of our cases: the difficulty of recruiting DRs (PWAs) in ACT UP was quite patent. Chapter 3 detailed empirical evidence and analytic reasoning behind the common failed attempts for recruitment in ACT UP New York and

Boston. Solving the collective action problem was not easy, especially when it demanded participation from resource-starved populations.

From this chapter on, the thesis focuses solely on the positive case of Philadelphia: not without its own shortcomings, but indeed with the development of one particular leadership pipeline that has sustained an impressive lineage of DR leaders for the past two decades. In fact, I place the temporal divide between 1.0 and 2.0 of ACT UP Philadelphia and New York at 1995. It is a year significant for two reasons. This time signifies the ending peak of the diversity crisis described in Chapter 3, and it also marks the founding of Project TEACH within ACT UP Philadelphia, a critical programme that leads to DR retention and leadership development. This innovation of recruitment allows Philadelphia 2.0 to become the only positive case that proceeds to physical inclusion and down the causal chain to SR.

Offer of theoretical innovation. In its pipeline for SMO recruitment, this analysis argues for a redefined conception of selective incentives as an answer to the collective action problem. The problem of collective action is rooted in the disincentive of individuals to work together toward a given common good, especially when they believe that others would organise to provide that good in their absence. Individual participation in SMO activity demands great costs of time and energy, with uncertain returns for the collective goal. Furthermore, among DR populations that experience high levels of political disenfranchisement and economic need, successful recruitment and sustained SMO participation becomes even more unlikely.

What strategies are successful in recruitment, then? Other than coercion, Olson's answer to the collective action problem lies in the use of selective incentives: rewards or punishments that are specific to the individuals who participate in the collective activity. In this proposed theory of recruitment, I expand traditional understandings of selective incentives in what Wilson and Clark call "purposive" organisations. Purposive organisations, as their name would suggest, exist and operate for a moral or political purpose, rather than as strictly commercial or social entities.¹ Specifically, I emphasise the neglected recognition of material goods in securing participation from DR populations in SMOs, one type of purposive organisation.

This chapter lays out a theory of recruitment that deploys material incentives as the initial gateway for attracting participants, especially resource-poor DRs (Figure 11). Recruitment does not end when people come in the proverbial door of the SMO. The SMO must also couple the provision of material goods with deliberate investment in participants' education and empowerment. Only with this process of politicisation and development of self-efficacy can SMOs sustain involvement from DRs. This investment demonstrates true intention for inclusivity among SMOs, a group-level translation of individual predispositions for inclusion.

¹ Clark and Wilson, "Incentive Systems."

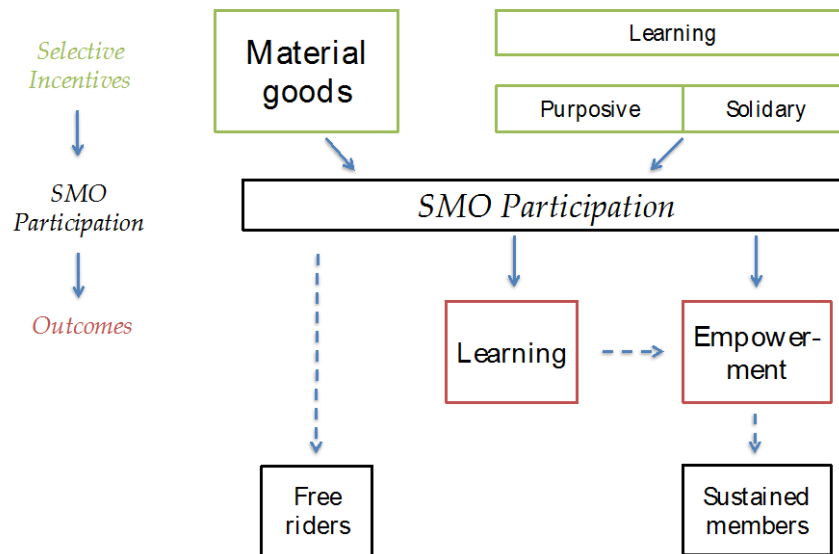


Figure 11. Theory of recruitment proposed in this chapter. Dotted lines indicate probabilistic but not deterministic sequencing of outcomes.

This theory of recruitment serves to contribute to strands of existing SMT and political science:

1. Its relation to *selective incentives* is clear: I call to the forefront the role of material incentives and learning as key motivators for SMO participation, especially among resource-starved DR populations. Such revised solutions to the collective action problem testify to the ironic importance of *self-interest* in engineering successful programmes for the collective good. Self-interest operates as a driver to ensure that individual participants secure the resources (material or otherwise) required for SMO participation.

2. This theory provides the beginning steps to forming an SMO that develops future leaders from the most affected communities. This pipeline is critical to overcoming Michels's *iron law of oligarchy*. With recruitment leading to the end goal of empowerment, I describe how an SMO can democratise power and knowledge beyond the hands of the concentrated few.
3. The empirical examples from ACT UP offer innovations to the *resource mobilisation theory (RMT)*. Such recruitment processes are necessarily resource-intensive, often with demands for time, energy, and money that are beyond the bounds of grassroots SMOs. This chapter demonstrates how such groups can foster powerful links with established service institutions in ways that do not compromise the ideological direction of SMOs but allow them access to resources on a far greater scale.

This chapter dedicates much of its discussion to strand (1) on selective incentives. Then interweaved through the analysis is discussion of strands (2) and (3) on oligarchy and RMT, an interfacing of theories that I will return to discuss most explicitly in the conclusion.

4.2 The relevance and power of material incentives

This section argues for the importance of material incentives in recruitment processes of DRs in SMOs. SMT has focused on the socio-psychological benefits of participation, with

great neglect of the necessity of material provisions for members with significant barriers to political participation. I highlight in the ACT UP case how material incentives are employed in its Monday night meetings, impressing through empirical data their allure, instrumental importance, and associated challenges.

4.2.1 “What are selective incentives?”: conventional answers

Selective incentives to be crucial in Olson’s *Theory of Collective Action* as one of the two routes of solving the collective action problem, and the unique answer for doing so without the force of coercion. Yet despite their importance, Olson does not provide great specificity on the operationalisation of such incentives. He notes that they must be “selectively given” only to true participants in the organisations, that they can be positive or negative (reward or punishment), and that they can be material or social (e.g., citing as an example insurance benefits to people who join unions).²

Given the importance of the collective action problem in political science, it is no surprise that many bodies of literature have tried to pick up where Olson left off—SMT among them. Directly or indirectly, SMT has offered its interpretations of selective incentives. Such hypotheses form the crux of the age-old question of “why people participate” in SMOs. Just to sample a few explanations: some theorists emphasise collective identity, or the feelings of belonging and identity fulfilment that come from SMO participation; scholars of the social network strand speak about the lure of

² Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*, 72.

connections and social pressure; and advocates of deprivation theory talk how participants aim to tackle societal deficits toward a given need or issue.³

As varied as these explanations may be, they tend to have one characteristic in common—they are, most fundamentally, what are called “solidary” or “purposive” incentives. I borrow this terminology from the famous typology of incentives in political science, drawn from Wilson and Clark’s 1961 paper that is still oft-cited in organisational studies today. “Solidary” incentives refer to the benefits or costs associated with interpersonal relationships, such as respect, honour, or friendship derived from fellow members in the group. “Purposive” incentives fulfil certain moral or ideological ideals through participation (e.g., feeling like one has “done the right thing,” for giving one a sense of namesake “purpose”).⁴

These explanations offer some convincing if also partial answers to “why people participate” in SMOs. The empirical data derived from my interview questions of “why you joined ACT UP” would suggest so much. For many of the allies who did not have personal links to HIV or AIDS, the promise of “purposive” rewards allured them to ACT UP. For example, as two long-time ACT UP members have said:

Julie Davids: “During those years there was also a lot of attacks on abortion rights, and so I first was drawn to pro-choice organizing and I contacted these groups and they just wanted my money or my vote and I wanted to do more, and so when my friend Mike brought me to ACT UP it was like, here, write this

³ Emblematic papers for each of the above theories: Friedman and McAdam, “Collective Identity and Activism”; Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements”; Klandermans and Oegema, “Potentials, Networks, Motivations, and Barriers”; Klandermans, “Mobilization and Participation”; Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*; McClendon, “Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics.”

⁴ Clark and Wilson, “Incentive Systems.”

press release, make this sign, do all this stuff...But there was immediately a role, I was put to use.”⁵

Kaytee Riek, when she talks about the work that drew her ACT UP, puts it quite simply: “I felt useful.”⁶

Both of the respondents quoted here are white, HIV-negative women. But not only they “felt useful” in ACT UP. Paul Yabor, a white, HIV-positive man who came out of prison to ACT UP, has taken charge of social media networks on Facebook for ACT UP Philadelphia and other groups nationally and internationally (e.g., ACT UP Latino, ACT UP Kenya). He describes his project of connecting AIDS activists with great pride, likening it to “feeding a baby.”⁷ For others, ACT UP “gave me something to do” — a sentiment voiced by people who have lived at the margins of society after drug abuse or an HIV diagnosis.⁸ The SMO provides them a niche of action and purpose. ACT UP, too, realises this “purposive” desire in incentivising membership. In the last page of the information packet, it asks “what would you like to do?,” following the query with a menu of discrete and clear options for participation, from “write speeches” to “paint banners” to “cook food.”

Julie and Kaytee also speak of the *solidary* benefits of joining ACT UP:

Julie Davids said that ACT UP affirmed a political and sexual orientation that she was striving to discover during her college years, when she joined the SMO: “Everyone was treated equally as having ideas and taking responsibility, and it really gave me a place to live by my values, and also — as someone who was coming out myself, to be in this welcoming, queer affinity.”⁹

⁵ Julie Davids, interview with Dan Royles, New York, NY, September 28, 2012.

⁶ Riek, interview.

⁷ Yabor, interview.

⁸ Green, interview; Bell, interview.

⁹ Davids, interview.

Kaytee Riek reflects on the alluring admiration that she had for this group of people, “a community of people who seemed like a lot of fun.”¹⁰

Waheedah Shabazz-El joined ACT UP in a manner that speaks both to the power of the SMO’s recruitment strategies and to the draw of solidary incentives. She is an HIV-positive, Muslim, African American woman and one of the most recognised leaders of colour in ACT UP. Waheedah’s first contact with ACT UP came with a visit from member John Bell, when she was behind bars and just diagnosed with HIV. At the time, John was an HIV+ outreach worker. She recounts the story:

This guy comes to visit me, an official visitor... I thought he was an attorney, I thought my family had hired an attorney for me. But then he started talking about HIV—and he started talking about ACT UP, and he started talking about Philadelphia FIGHT [a non-profit]. And he was saying that there were all these people that were waiting for me—waiting to receive me when I got out. He told me that he had been living with AIDS for over 20 years—and that gave me the—the glimmer of hope—that I needed, and I held on to that.¹¹

Waheedah’s account demonstrates the draw of ACT UP’s solidary incentives. She wanted to reciprocate the goodwill of John Bell, to join a community that expressed interest in wanting her, and as she says, to realise her potential and identity as an HIV-positive person among others who had done the same. Other HIV-positive ACT UP members, too, have told stories of solidary incentive: inspiration and desire to join a group of people whom they respected.¹²

¹⁰ Riek, interview.

¹¹ Shabazz-El, interview.

¹² Morales, interview; Hamilton, interview with Mary Petty, Philadelphia, PA, March 17, 1998. Cited from Petty, “Divine Interventions,” 91.

4.2.2 Material incentives: activists care about their purses too

Solidary and purposive incentives constitute distinct classifications of selective incentives; but what defines their greatest commonality is what they are not: material. It is no coincidence that conventional explanations in the SMT sideline or all-out avoid discussion of material goods as incentives. The logic is as follows. SMOs are organisations of members committed to certain political goals; they are far from profit-making entities that follow corporate practices of monetary reimbursements or salaries. According to conventional wisdom in SMT, self-interest cannot figure into SMO participation as naked desires for material gain—such declarations are antithetical to the very purpose of activist work.¹³ Wilson and Clark's typology says so much: "purposive" organisations like SMOs rely primarily on purposive incentives for participation. So do analyses of social movements, as Chong states in his famous discussion on selective incentives in the civil rights struggle: "We would be hard-pressed...to account for much public-spirited collective action by tracing it to the material incentives supplied to participants."¹⁴ Very little of the literature recognises that SMOs can rely on a diversity of selective incentives that vary according to time and context, that these categories of selective incentives are not mutually exclusive, and that material incentives can serve as an effective gateway for participation.¹⁵

The remainder of this chapter counters these assumptions of non-material incentives in SMO recruitment. I argue that material goods are a crucial component to solving the

¹³ Chong, "Coordinating Demands for Social Change," 127.

¹⁴ Chong, *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement*, 32.

¹⁵ Hirsch, "The Creation of Political Solidarity in Social Movement Organizations."

collective action problem. This assertion holds especial truth when SR in heterogeneous SMOs demands participation from a wide array of constituencies, including DR populations that are starved for resources and with high barriers to political participation. Among such barriers are the socioeconomic necessities in SMO involvement, costs as simple as transportation to meetings or Internet access for work. For recruitment of resource-starved populations, the promise of solidary or purposive rewards cannot suffice. Material goods can act as incentives for both allies and beneficiaries; and for beneficiaries who are often DRs, they serve as critical pre-requisites for SMO participation.

In ways that solidary and purposive incentives cannot, material incentives fulfil very concrete and proximate needs for their recipients; the benefits are realised immediately upon receipt. Their fundamental importance is corroborated by psychological theories, too. As Maslow's hierarchy of human needs state, basic physiological demands of food and shelter come first, before high-order desires for feelings of belonging (as with solidary incentives) or moral cognition (purposive incentives).¹⁶

The next section exhibits the role of material incentives in the ACT UP Philadelphia case. I argue that through investment in very tangible rewards such as food and subway tokens, the Philadelphia chapter attracted DRs with a success unmatched among its sister chapters.

¹⁶ Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation."

4.2.3 Material reward as selective incentive

Among ACT UP chapters, the Philadelphia group has been exceptional in its use of material incentives as a gateway for participation by a greater diversity of members. Here I analyse the effects of material incentives on the ACT UP Philadelphia membership.

The empirics illustrate a complicated story. Clearly, material goods are necessary to secure attendance from certain DR populations—and even allies. However, the internal controversy in the group around material incentives also reveals that they are an imperfect sieve for recruitment: concerns of cost-efficacy and free riding abound.

a. The material incentives fulfil true need

Further chapters will invite a closer look at ACT UP proceedings, but a quick glance at the Philadelphia meeting room will reveal those material goods. Sitting at a table on the side of the room—and on the laps of participants around a circle—are food out of tin vats that ACT UP members cook for each other. At meetings and demos, the treasurer or another trustworthy member is passing out subway tokens for attendees who cannot afford the round-trip fare.

The small sums of money and food are not insignificant for many attendees. Waheedah Shabazz-El said, “When people have to struggle everyday just to figure out “what we’re going to eat,” sometimes they came to those meetings, [and] that was the only meal the

person may have gotten that day.”¹⁷ As for the subway tokens, they cause some of the most heated tussles in ACT UP, because they represent valuable money: \$1.80 apiece in Philadelphia. AIDS service providers and ACT UP members talk of the “token scam,” in which HIV+ people may frequent several AIDS service organisation meetings—and then ACT UP in the evening—to collect, say, 8 tokens (or \$14.40) on a good Monday. In the underground economy of the city, tokens serve as a viable form of currency. Tokens cannot be returned to the Philadelphia transit authority for a full refund; but if one goes on the right street corners, they do trade for a dollar’s worth of food or crack.¹⁸

The material need of some in the group is evident even in the seasonal fluctuations in attendance. In many years, winter has won out among the seasons for hosting the most crowded ACT UP meetings. The warm church room serves as a respite for the bitter winter winds of Philadelphia: a shelter for those in unstable housing situations. Still others come because it was a literal shelter from harm. Women of colour, sex workers, and others have used ACT UP as a place of safety from their streets of employment.¹⁹

Keep in mind that material rewards are relevant and useful even when they are not an absolute necessity for participation. That is, material incentives can serve as useful tools for attracting more resourced allies, too. Well-known among ACT UP members was the “deal” that Chapter 2 referenced. If one were to come to Philadelphia and join the group, ACT UP would guarantee a bicycle, free housing, a pack of gum, and six dates with

¹⁷ Shabazz-El, interview.

¹⁸ Shabazz-El, interview; Davis, interview; De Marco, interview.

¹⁹ Shabazz-El, interview.

one's favourite ACT UP activist. Members speak of it with a sense of humour, but the material incentives are not a joke: ACT UP has put up many members in group houses for cheap or non-existent rent; for others, the homes have hosted matchmaker sites for romantic partners. Among the group's most prominent members are people who had packed up and moved cities to join ACT UP Philadelphia.²⁰

Note that material goods are important incentives for all SMO members. Unlike the subway tokens or food at ACT UP, the promise of benefits under the relocation "deal" appeal not to the most economically disenfranchised. Rather, it targets a population with the privilege of geographic mobility, young urban transplants that might choose ACT UP as their activist spot with the additional enticement of material reward. Material incentives can operate effectively at all socioeconomic strata.

b. Problems of free riding are not insignificant side effects of material incentive

The flow of such currency is not uncontroversial. At multiple points during its history, ACT UP as a group has decided to terminate (and/or re-start) its policy of free dinners and subway fare. Why? "To keep a certain element out," one member says.²¹

Free riding is real. I borrow the term "free rider" from Olson's work, but with different usage in this context: I define a free rider as someone who receives material incentive without true participation, true participation considered the intention to further the

²⁰ Riek, interview; Davis, interview.

²¹ De Marco, interview.

political goals of the SMO. Technically, free riders should not exist in the context of selective incentives (they are, after all, supposed to be selective). However, the free riding that occurs here and in later empirical sections is prevalent because attendance and participation do not necessitate true buy-in to the SMO's political goals.

Some attendees are free riders by this definition: they are less activists than they are scavengers looking for their next meal. Poorer members, often of colour, have clamoured for the “young white kids” at meetings to buy them pizza.²² One ACT UP member described different “codes of conduct” during the meeting, some engaged in the work of activism and others more concerned with eating or stealing things.

As a former treasurer, this member said that her most difficult task in ACT UP was the token allocation. She often had to confront people who were taking tokens even though they had not ridden the subway—people who were embezzling those tokens for drugs. ACT UP has even had problems with the token distributors themselves: questions of honesty have arisen when subway money has not been allocated fairly, or at all.²³ These problems over the \$1.85 coin pieces never have been resolved, and perhaps never can be.

Free riding becomes especially worrisome when organisational cost is taken into account. The practice of material incentives has been expensive for an all-volunteer group like ACT UP: “We couldn’t afford to do this anymore,” says Jose de Marco. Pizza and a

²² Shabazz-El, interview.

²³ Prusakowski, interview.

bottle of pop would set the SMO back \$30 or \$35 a week, expenses coming out of the pockets of members.²⁴

Members have disagreed vehemently over the right policy, for arguments hold traction on each side. An SMO, of course, aims to have a membership committed to the cause rather than to the freebies. Some say that those who really care would attend regardless of the material rewards.²⁵ However, the reality is that its poorer members would not be able to afford participation without such assistance. Jose de Marco reconciles this attrition as a necessary and natural step to recruiting other descriptive representatives, calling this filter theory of recruitment a process of “weeding out the weeds” among those prospective members “who just come for the freebies.”

4.3 Sizeable but incomplete recruitment pipelines: ACT UP and recovery houses

The previous section exposed a fundamental tension inherent in material incentives for SMO recruitment: material incentives fulfil immediate and important needs among DR populations, but they also introduce corollary problems of free riding and high resource demands. The remainder of this chapter will delineate a process to mitigate these “side effects” of material incentive provision.

²⁴ De Marco, interview.

²⁵ Ibid.

Namely, I argue that SMOs must invest in the *learning* and *empowerment* of their prospective recruits to ensure sustained and meaningful participation. Such investment strategies serve not only to minimise the proportion of free riders relative to committed participants. More importantly, they also can democratise knowledge and power to develop leaders from DR populations, thus counteracting SMO pressures to oligarchy as in Michels's iron law.

Greater levels of investment can foster commitment among prospective members, in turn reducing the severity of the free rider problem. However, this education and empowerment model requires a magnitude of resources disproportionate to the limited capacity of grassroots SMOs. The ACT UP case reveals one possible solution: linking up with service entities that play host to large numbers of potential DRs. Sustained partnerships with service institutions can enable greater scales of recruitment for SMOs in terms of numbers, intensity of investment, or both. Over ACT UP's history, the Philadelphia group has partnered with PWA support groups, needle exchange programmes, and a wide range of service providers in and out of the city.

In this section and the next, I walk through two such partnerships within ACT UP Philadelphia: two recruitment pipelines that take much of the credit for the diversity of the SMO's membership. The first, in relation to recovery houses, boasts dramatic success in the numbers of participants it has mobilised and exposed to political protest; nonetheless, the free rider problem is still glaringly apparent. The second, a formal set of

courses called Project TEACH, demonstrates the true potential of learning and empowerment for DR recruitment.

4.3.1 Opportunity for DR recruitment: the potential of material incentives and political empowerment

The development of the recruitment pathway via recovery houses arose out of a direct desire and need to develop greater DR in the SMO. In the mid '90s, ACT UP Philadelphia was struggling. Its floundering of membership and activity mirrored that of its sister groups in other cities. Most of its members were white and queer, and numbers had been dwindling.²⁶

Two of those white queer members, Julie Davids and Paul Davis, believed that the group had to follow the epidemiology in their membership. Statistics showed that many of the newly infected were POC and IV drug users. In 1991, intravenous drug use accounted for 30.5 percent, and blacks and Latinos for 76 percent of all AIDS diagnoses.²⁷ These demographics, ACT UP determined, were to be most crucial for recruitment: the membership had to reflect these DR populations most affected by HIV/AIDS.

The group identified a crucial avenue for outreach: recovery houses. Disproportionately located in the poorest areas of the city, recovery houses provide shelter for drug addicts and alcoholics. Social workers and substance users alike know that Philadelphia is

²⁶ Recollected from Acosta, interview; De Marco, interview; Davids, interview.

²⁷ Philadelphia Department of Health, "AIDS Reported Cases."

notorious for its host of recovery houses: not only in terms of the sheer quantity of such institutions (an estimated 400-500 throughout the city, with as many as sixty per square mile), but also for their incredible lack of regulation and ease of entry. Recovery houses are run by non-professionals, require no licensure, and are subject to no formal regulation (“This recovery house shit is mass production down here,” a former addict in Philadelphia said).²⁸ They house thousands of low-income addicts who come by the vanloads from Baltimore, Greyhound buses on the Eastern corridor, and even one-way air tickets from towns in Puerto Rico.²⁹ They are, in other words, a large and ready-made population of potential recruits for ACT UP.

Because of recovery house recruitment, buses of attendees for ACT UP “demos” (political demonstrations) have been packed with low-income, African American protestors since 1997.³⁰ Around the turn of the 21st century, ACT UP Philadelphia often sent 10-13 buses of demonstrators to actions in Washington, D.C. and New York. The group would turn out six or seven hundred people to each protest, on issues ranging from federal pledges on AIDS funding to the U.S. trade policy on access to generic antiretrovirals for the Global South.³¹

I explain the magnitude of this recruitment method’s success through the lens of the proposed theory in this chapter. The target population in question—clients in recovery—are poised to benefit hugely from critical steps in the recruitment pipeline: the receipt of

²⁸ Fairbanks, *How It Works*, 9.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 3–4.

³⁰ De Marco, interview.

³¹ Davids, interview.

material incentives and the empowering effects from the act of political participation itself.

Material incentives. The recovery house model demonstrates the power of material incentives in pipelining DR membership. Given their precarious circumstances, clients in recovery are a population especially sensitive to material incentives. The chance to attend political demonstrations offers an open world for “souls who have never [before] left a four block radius of home.”³² For them, a protest presents the opportunity to travel to a destination that is not a recovery house or jail cell or welfare office. Combine the free transport with the promise of a free meal or two and a couple subway tokens—and we have an offer that is highly enticing, all politics and protest aside.

Potential for empowerment. Political participation can prove especially empowering for this target population. The very act of protest upturns scripts of surrender and submission that predominate the discourse of recovery. An ACT UP member and former injection drug user, Joyce Hamilton explains the vast contrast between the philosophy of recovery programs and that of ACT UP:

Recovery told me I don't have to fight anymore...as an AIDS activist we fight for what is right. It was easy for me to separate both of them. In recovery we say 'I surrender' and 'I don't fight anymore'...I understand...and I stopped fighting [addictions]. But being an AIDS activist I'm fighting for my people, for the minority people. And it made me feel really good about myself inside that I'm fighting for me and other people.³³

³² White, interview.

³³ Taped interview from Joyce Hamilton (March 18, 1998); cited from Petty, “Divine Interventions,” 92.

Joyce speaks not only for her experience but those of many in recovery. The process of recovery often borrows from the principles from the 12-step movement, preaching a surrender of self to the authority of a higher power.³⁴ ACT UP's "stand up fight back fight AIDS" philosophy, in contrast, butts head-on with such edicts of submission. For people who had suffered from multiple forms of political disenfranchisement, an opportunity to involve oneself in ACT UP could prove especially meaningful. The SMO politicised the process of recovery from one of surrender to one of "fighting for [oneself] and other people," toward empowerment.

Also clear in Joyce's words is the notion of purposive incentive: "I'm fighting for my people, for the minority people. And it made me feel really good about myself inside." She speaks to the fulfilment of purpose as a clear benefit and incentive to her participation. As a recruit from the recovery house, her sentiments speak to the powerful coexistence of both material and purposive incentive. Material incentives get recruits in the door, and purposive incentives import a stronger and collective vision for continued participation, as in Joyce's case.

At ACT UP demonstrations, the empowerment shift can occur not only in rhetoric but also in practice. Psychological literature argues that power stems largely from one's own self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one's belief that s/he has the requisite capability to succeed in a given task, and it can develop through the opportunity to practice said tasks. In the context of the demonstration, recovery house recruits can become empowered through a

³⁴ Maskovsky, "Fighting for Our Lives," 154. Green, Fullilove, and Fullilove, "Stories of Spiritual Awakening."

heightened sense of self-efficacy through the successful execution of protest: holding signs, marching down the street, chanting verses, or controlling crowds.³⁵ The last role is known as marshalling; that is, marshals ensure that the other demonstrators stay on the sidewalk and do not transgress public rules that would put them in danger of arrest. As Waheedah remembers of the less literate and educated members, “For some people, that [the ability to marshal] was all they had to offer.”³⁶ They may not be the ones to offer press interviews or decide on political strategy.

But even as tasks such as marshalling or sign-holding may be the most basic components of political demonstration, they also are the most fundamental. Without them, there would be no protest. And hence these opportunities for participation at different levels are not at all insignificant. They enable participants to be feel needed, heard, and useful.

4.3.2 Opening the pipeline via institutional courtship

ACT UP recruitment could have never reached the magnitude that it did without strategic partnerships with the institutions that housed their prospective DR populations. ACT UP members developed significant relationships of trust and reciprocity with the operators of recovery houses, many of them former addicts themselves. In some years, ACT UP members pursued a regular courtship with the administrators. One female ACT UP member recalled developing a flirty relationship with a manager; it was not coincidental, perhaps, that she was never denied an opportunity to recruit from his

³⁵ Bandura, “Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning”; Conger and Kanungo, “The Empowerment Process.”

³⁶ Shabazz-El, interview.

house.³⁷ Hannah Zellman, another white female ACT UP member, describes having regular lunch dates with the managers at the beginning of the “courtship” process:

John and I used to go out and just like have lunch with recovery house leaders — and just like kick it with them — to sort of maintain those relationships. Which also meant that like — when I called and said, “Hey, can we come out and talk about this thing?” They were like, “Oh, this girl is not just —,” which is not to say that I continued forever... There was a point at which — we then did just kind of rely on the fact that they like knew us and didn’t court them — quite as much — you know.³⁸

The relationship with some recovery houses developed to the point that ACT UP could count on certain programmes to send their entire clientele on buses to demonstrations.

As John recounts from one demonstration, “So, when I asked him [the head of the recovery house] to come, they [all the recovery house clients] came. Fortunately for us, that badass program gave us two full buses. In addition to that, they cooked fried chicken for everybody on that bus. That’s how involved they were, right?”³⁹

It became a win-win situation: ACT UP mobilises more participants from DR populations; those participants have opportunities to leave and get a taste of activism. If all the clients in a recovery house were to go to the demo, then the staff got a free day off. Given the staff incentive, however, demonstration attendance may not have been entirely consensual or pure-intentioned. Members have reported that some operators forced all their clients out the house for the sake of absolving themselves of a day’s responsibilities.⁴⁰

³⁷ Prusakowski, interview.

³⁸ Zellman, interview.

³⁹ Bell, interview.

⁴⁰ De Marco, interview.

The vast majority of recovery house recruits by ACT UP Philadelphia have been African American. With some exceptions of “whites only” admission, recovery houses usually will host people of any colour. Still, they do tend to be segregated by ethnicity in Philadelphia, and institutional racism rears its head in economic differentials, too: white houses tend to be far more stable and well funded than their black counterparts.⁴¹ The vast majority of recruits to ACT UP demonstrations are black: African Americans form a plurality of the city’s population today, and they are disproportionately represented in substance abuse treatment programmes.⁴² Furthermore, the black recovery houses are more likely to host in-patient clients. One ACT UP member said that the white recovery houses often engage in a practice sarcastically called “intensive outpatient”: a fancy term for cutting clients a portion of the state’s check for substance abuse treatment and letting users stay out on the street, all for less work and more money for the recovery house operators themselves.⁴³

4.3.3 Free riding explained: investment deficits in education and empowerment

The above sections explain the success of the recovery house recruitment. ACT UP demonstrations represented huge opportunities of escape, material reward, and empowerment for clients in recovery; and it courted the key managers that granted access to the people at these institutions. These factors offer the backstory to the sheer masses of people that ACT UP turned out to its demonstrations, people who very much

⁴¹ Fairbanks, *How It Works*, 81.

⁴² Lim, Lamb, and Boettcher, “Drug Use in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2013.”

⁴³ Yabor, interview.

satisfied the definition of DR. Their black skin and oversized, over-worn clothing visibly reflected the racial and class realities of the epidemic.

This sub-section illustrates how and why ACT UP's recovery house pipeline fails wildly: it does not foster long-term participation, a critical outcome in my proposed theory of SMO recruitment. It lacks significant investment in its prospective members, and thus does not develop sustained membership beyond one-off attendance at demonstrations. To illustrate this argument, I deploy an analysis of the "free riding" phenomenon, again defined as the receipt of material incentives without true intention for political participation. In the ACT UP demo context, a person would "free ride" by eating the free food and asking for tokens without any desire to contribute toward the campaigns of the SMO.

This free riding, I argue, reveals much more about the lack of ACT UP's investment in these recovery house clients than it does about the character of the clients themselves. Under a superficial analysis, one could easily construe free riders as the problem. Such interpretation is the most straightforward: participants are exploiting the goodwill of the SMO to "just come for the freebies."⁴⁴ Yet I contend that participants are more victims than perpetrators of exploitation in this instance. "Free riding" is only a symptom of a much larger problem, the SMO's exploitation of black (DR) bodies for political campaigns.

⁴⁴ The words of De Marco, interview.

The SMO's recruitment pipeline dedicates—no pun intended—token material resources to the recruits, rather than resources toward education and empowerment that could develop these one-time recruits into long-term members. Here I introduce a narrative excerpt from my field notes on free riding. My analysis explains free riding behaviour as a natural outcome of failed educational investment that must be part of inclusive recruitment models. I end the sub-section with aspirational comments from ACT UP members on how to improve their recruitment strategy.

A representative re-telling of free riding. Below, I introduce a participant observer's account of free riding, as my field notes documented on September 17, 2013. This illustration serves to 1) to underscore the salience of material incentives in political participation, and 2) to explain the free riding behaviour recounted below. Again, I view free riding not as a mark of character failure of individual recruits, but rather as a symptom of systemic deficits in the recruitment process.

Some recovery house clients take advantage of the material rewards, I argue, because that is the only benefit that they can derive from the demonstration. The SMO does not always invest the time and resources to build the capacity for full understanding and appreciation of the political ideals that underline such protests. Hence my account describes the effects of over-packing lots of wearied bodies on interstate bus rides. Indeed, attendees with whiter skin and fuller purses may have behaved similarly:

September 17, 2013 was a two-part protest: the main one on Wall Street in coalition with labour unions and other activist organisations for progressive taxation; and a separate demonstration at the Pennsylvania office of a key

politician on the Ways and Means committee, with the political power to influence passage of legislation on progressive taxation. At the Philadelphia stop, people clambered out of the bus—not to grab protest signs to cross the street and shout, but rather to pass around cigarettes and ensure that they got their smoke break.

After both demonstrations, we boarded the bus to return from New York and Philadelphia. It was a long day, seven hours after all of us had eaten our sandwich lunches. And it was with the hungry stomachs that the group saw the eruption of most passion: not over politics but over plates. Dinner on the bus had been delayed. When we passed a roadside soup kitchen on our way out of New York City, one woman half-joked that we should stop the bus to get food there. After sandwiches were again passed out for dinner, shouting matches broke out: some accused others of taking more than their fair share, quieter bus riders snuck extra food into their bags.

One ACT UP member recalls the sentiment of many on this 2013 anniversary demonstration of and with Occupy Wall Street: “A lot of people just were like ‘Oh New York trip! Hey, I mean getting a free [ride], chips, and orange...and I went to New York.’”⁴⁵ Others reported that some participants, after taking the free bus and lunch, abandoned the demonstration to go shopping in the City.⁴⁶

Analysis: SMO's lack of true investment in education and empowerment. As the story and the interview comments communicate, recovery house clients find the material incentives of demonstration attendance to be particularly alluring. Escape, food, and freedom are on offer. Because of the strong appeal of the material incentives alone, there exists strong potential for participants to free ride: to “participate” with the physical attendance of their bodies but not the political presence of their minds. Many recruits who climb on

⁴⁵ Maxfield, interview.

⁴⁶ E.g., White, interview.

the buses and hold protest signs on the street do so without full understanding or buy-in of the issues at hand.

On the discussion of material incentives, we realise a counterintuitive irony. Yes, part of the risk of material offerings lies in the potential of free riders who can unfairly access the selective incentive; however, equally or more dangerous is the fact that free riding can serve as a reassuring excuse for SMOs to rationalise recruitment as a purely economic transaction, that people's time and energies can be fairly compensated by food and free transport. For all the subway tokens that they may dole out, ACT UP can be guilty of "tokenising" its own recruits.

In their treatment of recovery house recruits on demonstration days, ACT UP can fail to harness much of their potential for empowerment. The SMO has at times provided a partial but incomplete pathway from participation to learning to empowerment, as illustrated in the recruitment process. For most demonstrations, two ACT UP members would go to a recovery house for what they call a "teach-in," or an explanation of the issue at hand and the reasons for why protest was needed to pressure policy changes or political shifts. From there, clients would sign up to attend if they so chose; and those who climbed on the bus would sometimes (but not always) receive another teach-in to refresh on the substantive content and practical logistics of protest.

Thus, ACT UP generally made some attempts for education of their recruits. But the complexity of the political issues or organising was often lost on protest attendees, as Waheedah admits:

A lot of people would—would come to ACT UP meetings; they were always ready to make signs, they were always ready to be marshals [crowd controllers], they were always ready to create chants—right, but didn't really understand the systems about organizing a march or organizing a campaign.⁴⁷

Aspirational visions for a more powerful recruitment model of investment. ACT UP members themselves recognise that they could do much more to invest in recruits. Ideas have ranged from visiting recovery houses not purely for the purpose of recruitment but for personal development, or follow-up with recruits after a demonstration for mentoring or further leadership opportunities with the SMO.⁴⁸ The failure to execute such visions stems more to the lack of resources than to a lack of good intention. In fact, it can be argued that the very success of its recruitment precludes true investment—that with the sheer numbers of recruits comes the impracticality of intensive education or empowerment.

Take, for instance, Hannah's comments below. She expresses a wish that ACT UP would invest more in the people whom they used for their demo attendance. She acknowledges and laments the fact that ACT UP often did not treat the recovery house relationship with reciprocity:

I think that there was a sincere effort to do teach-ins – and try to out ways to really give people the information – and be like, “This is why we want you to join us.” I think that – those relationships with recovery houses or other places

⁴⁷ Shabazz-El, interview.

⁴⁸ E.g., de Marco, interview; Zellman, interview.

weren't always reciprocal – and I remember – like – I was not the only one that said this...

If we expected them to come with us, we need to show up if they have a block party or cookout – or think that, **“We need to go – we can’t keep asking them to give us a bus full of black people, you know.”** And – and it’s also complicated to go into a community and be like, “You should care about this,” rather than hearing from them – and figuring out how to then have a conversation about why they should care about AIDS. Yeah, I mean I always really struggled with ways in which ACT UP and FIGHT and TEACH [acronyms for other partner organisations to be explained in the next section] was a conduit for bodies of colour – living with HIV – to turn out to a protest.⁴⁹

However, the ideological dreams or practical limitations of a small grassroots SMO like ACT UP do not excuse the expedient and exploitative nature of its recovery house pipeline. ACT UP has focused on mobilising high attendance for its actions, not deep development for leaders. ACT UP has been accused on numerous occasions of bringing in buses full of their “angry black mob.” Hannah’s lament that ACT UP has used black bodies is not an uncommon or unfounded one; many people from ACT UP have admitted as much.⁵⁰ Even at meetings, members employ a very instrumental rhetoric themselves: recruitment centres around this key word of “bodies,” of “wanting bodies at our action.”⁵¹ The next section will develop a process of recruitment that is faithful to a true intention for inclusivity.

⁴⁹ Zellman, interview.

⁵⁰ McTighe, interview; Shabazz-El, interview; Roy Hayes, personal interview; Riek, interview.

⁵¹ White, interview; participant observation.

Recovery house model

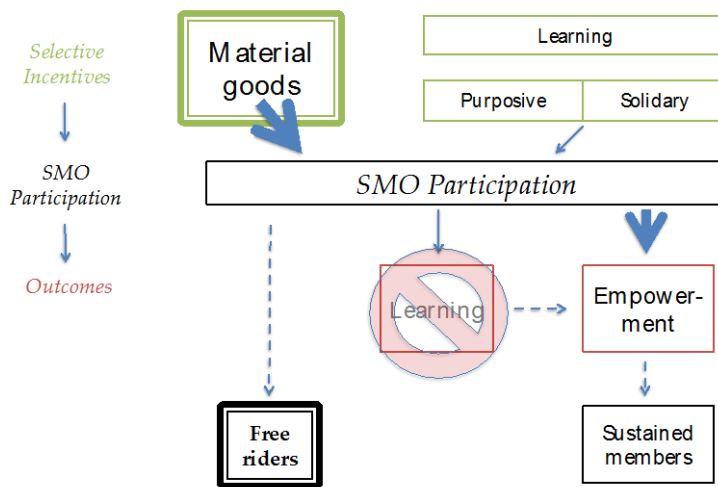


Figure 12. Summary of the recruitment process in ACT UP's recovery house outreach. The most pertinent elements are emphasised with thicker arrows in the diagram. Learning is (largely) absent.

4.4 True inclusion in recruitment: TEACH

I turn to investigate another recruitment programme in the ACT UP sphere: a set of classes called Project TEACH, or simply TEACH. TEACH does not fall strictly under the SMO's umbrella, but the classes are closely coordinated with ACT UP demonstrations and recovery house clients. If recovery houses are the literal houses from which ACT UP draws busloads of recruits, TEACH is the "schoolhouse" for others. Though not tiny by any means, TEACH is the smaller but arguably more robust pipeline for ACT UP recruitment. It does not boast the same magnitude of sheer numbers from recovery houses, but it offers a far more structured pathway from material reward to education, empowerment, and solidary and purposive incentive.

Here I walk through the ways in which TEACH builds this pipeline of selective incentives, a pipeline made strong by the intensity and depth with which it invests in its participants. TEACH overcomes the free rider problem that haunts our prior empirical examples of ACT UP meetings and demonstrations. TEACH employs commitment devices in its deployment of material incentives, and more importantly, it invests in its participants to develop the empowerment necessary to sustain SMO participation.

4.4.1 Innovations in theories of SMO recruitment and participation

Before diving into a history and analysis of TEACH, I will first delineate the theoretical innovations that it offers for models of SMO recruitment. The programme represents a complete follow-through of the recruitment pathway that this chapter outlined at the start.

As its name would suggest, critical to TEACH—and to any truly inclusive recruitment model—is the provision of opportunities for *learning*. Literature in fields such as pedagogy studies, cognitive psychology, and organisational management places tremendous importance on the role of knowledge. Knowledge is a means to develop intrinsic motivation and power in students, employees, or people most generally.⁵² However, SMT is shockingly silent on any discussion of learning and its link to SMO participation and empowerment. The closest interface with learning comes in resource

⁵² Bandura, *Self-efficacy*; Ryan and Deci, “Self-determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-being.”; Conger and Kanungo, “The Empowerment Process.”

mobilisation theorists' labelling of knowledge as a key resource for SMO maintenance; but no thread of SMT recognises the role of knowledge on an individual level for political participation.⁵³

In accordance with psychological theories of education and management, I define empowerment as the development of *self-efficacy*, or one's own belief that s/he is capable of succeeding at a particular task, in this context political participation.⁵⁴ Otherwise stated, self-efficacy is one's perception of his or her own power. I argue that several types of learning (factual, political, and experiential) offer distinct pathways to feed into one's self-efficacy and thus empowerment. The TEACH example in particular demonstrates how the combination of programme curricula, expectations, and structures can empower participants for collective political action. With empowerment comes the greater probability that recruits will become sustained members. Why? Highly tied to self-efficacy is intrinsic motivation: one is much more likely to do something if s/he believes that s/he can do said task. Models in SMT corroborate such assertions, showing that self-efficacy is a strong determinant of an individual's likelihood to contribute to collective action.⁵⁵

Final note: Even with a full recruitment process such as the one presented here, not all recruits will join the SMO as sustained membership. Funnelling and attrition are natural processes. Nor do I attempt to assert that the recruitment process is so educational or

⁵³ e.g., Cress and Snow, "Mobilization at the Margins."

⁵⁴ Conger and Kanungo, "The Empowerment Process"; Bandura, "Perceived Self-Efficacy in Cognitive Development and Functioning."

⁵⁵ Finkel, Muller, and Opp, "Personal Influence, Collective Rationality, and Mass Political Action."

empowering that members enter with all the confidence or knowledge to sustain themselves through their entire tenure in the SMO. Rather, a recruitment pathway should be capable of equipping its participants with the resources that would allow them to overcome the initial barriers of entry: this is the goal of recruitment.

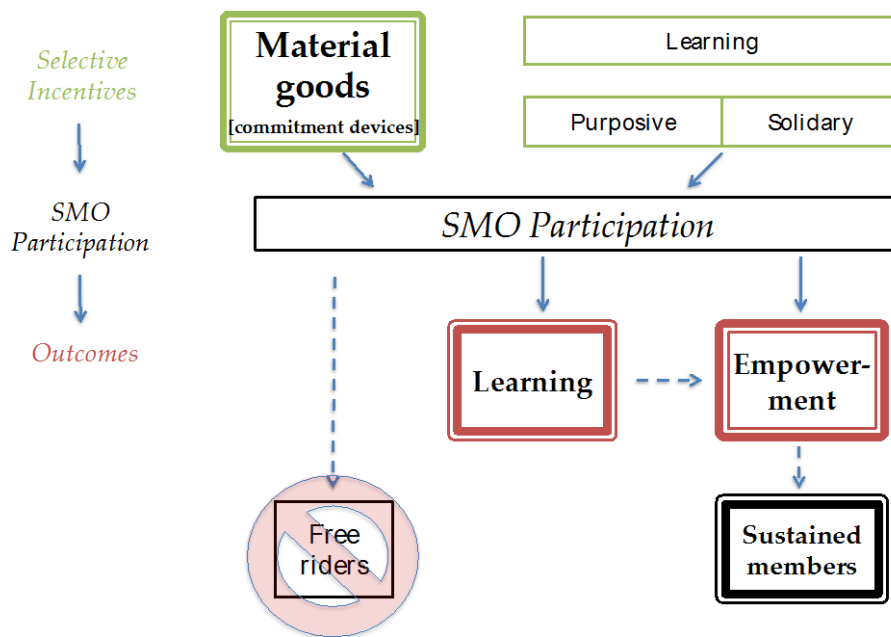


Figure 13. Recruitment theory as applied to the Project TEACH example. The most pertinent elements of the theory are emphasised in the diagram; the free rider problem is largely mitigated.

Let us now turn to a brief historical overview of TEACH and an analysis of its recruitment pathway.

4.4.2 Genesis of a DR pipeline: background on TEACH

The story of Project TEACH starts with one ACT UP member's tenure as a volunteer at a nearby non-profit. Julie Davids was working for Philadelphia FIGHT, an HIV/AIDS organisation in the ACT UP neighbourhood. She was representative of ACT UP's anarchist fringe of white, HIV-negative activists from West Philadelphia—perhaps best described by TEACH student John Bell's memory of her appearance: "Her hair was green, sometimes pink. She wore combat boots and cut-off green pants and she didn't shower all the time. But this woman created Project TEACH."⁵⁶

How did Julie and others create Project TEACH? They identified a crucial gap in the service provision for PWAs: education. Existing prevention programs tried "talking to HIV-positive people about how to not get HIV," but absent were initiatives to educate PWAs about treatment and self-care. Many groups, ACT UP included, attempted to recruit POC to advocate on such issues. But as Julie explains, they "weren't being supported to access the information to give significant input to go toe to toe with the experts."⁵⁷

Julie and fellow ACT UP activist Jeff Maskovsky wanted to close this gap, to provide education as a means of collective empowerment. In 1995, the year that I artificially mark as the dividing year between Philadelphia 1.0 and 2.0, Julie and Jeff secured a small grant to launch TEACH under the Philadelphia FIGHT service umbrella.⁵⁸ Julie said that

⁵⁶ Bell, interview.

⁵⁷ Kahn, "TEACH the People: Pioneering 'Secondary' Prevention to Positive Individuals."

⁵⁸ Ibid.

she envisioned TEACH both as a PWA training course and as a bridge to recruit more POC to AIDS activism.⁵⁹

TEACH originated as a 30-hour training in 10 sessions; classes maxed out to capacity at 20 to 30 people, with a waiting list 100 names long.⁶⁰ The demand swelled to the extent that TEACH began to offer specialized courses for those who were recently released from prison, or for caregivers of PWAs. Today, TEACH boasts on the order of 3,000 graduates.⁶¹

Historically, it has served as a remarkably effective recruitment tool for DRs to ACT UP. One member's instance of rapid-fire transition from TEACH to ACT UP indicates as much: Antonio Davis graduated TEACH on Saturday, joined ACT UP at his first meeting the following Monday, and then was sent to Washington, D.C. for a demo two days later.⁶² The program unanimously receives credit among former and current ACT UP members for transforming the demographic of the group.⁶³ As one ACT UP veteran described it, TEACH is a "regenerating machine for new bodies."⁶⁴ Julie estimated in 2004 that 80 to 85 percent of the HIV-positive members in ACT UP Philadelphia were graduates of TEACH.

⁵⁹ Davids, interview.

⁶⁰ Davids and Sowell, "Project TEACH Instructors' Handbook."

⁶¹ Davids, interview.

⁶² Davis, interview.

⁶³ Davids, interview; Davis, interview; de Marco, interview; Subways and Emmer, "AIDS Activism."

⁶⁴ Acosta, interview.

4.4.3 Material incentives and commitment devices

In terms of the provision of material goods to incentivise and secure participation, TEACH resembles the Monday night ACT UP meetings: teachers too distribute subway tokens and the provision of meals during class.⁶⁵ But critical to securing attendance at TEACH classes are what behavioural economists term commitment devices: schemes by which participants must demonstrate high or complete levels of participation in order to receive the selective incentive.⁶⁶ In effect, such commitment devices provide a partial antidote to the free rider problem: there exist very high thresholds to attaining the material rewards.

Unlike the food or subway tokens that are promised at every session, the monetary rewards in TEACH are only available after completion of sixteen sessions of an eight week course. Thanks to funding from private companies, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and other AIDS funding sources, TEACH has offered stipends of \$100-150 to participants upon their graduation from the program.⁶⁷ A small team of TEACH alumni also enjoy the paid opportunity to do presentations on HIV/AIDS in community settings; they receive compensation of \$35 per presentation. Again, one must be a TEACH graduate to qualify for such work opportunities.

⁶⁵ Kahn, "TEACH the People: Pioneering 'Secondary' Prevention to Positive Individuals."

⁶⁶ Bryan, Karlan, and Nelson, "Commitment Devices."

⁶⁷ Davids, interview; Kahn, "TEACH the People: Pioneering 'Secondary' Prevention to Positive Individuals"; Bazargan, "Implementation Guide: Project TEACH."

4.4.4 Learning as pathways to empowerment

The TEACH curriculum advances three critical forms of learning, each with their distinct link to empowerment:⁶⁸

1. *Self-care for people living with HIV (technical knowledge).* TEACH endeavours to impart knowledge that offers as much material benefit as the food or token incentives. The technical knowledge of HIV/AIDS benefits its learners in a very physical sense: for PWAs, the curriculum of TEACH offers as much bodily sustenance as does food or water. Participants learn about the biomedical aspects of HIV/AIDS and the realities of “living with HIV,” or the psychosocial aspects of the disease such as the associated stress and stigma of disclosure.

The course aims to enable PWAs to make their own decisions about their health. Realise that this technical knowledge serves as a form of a material, if also intangible, selective incentive: if people possess a better understanding of what their bodies need and how they can better live with HIV, they can live better lives in a very tangible sense. In the history of the AIDS movement, furthermore, this type of biomedical expertise has served as prerequisite knowledge not only for the self-care of PWAs themselves, but also for the

⁶⁸ Sowell, interview; Bazargan, “Implementation Guide: Project TEACH”; Kahn, “TEACH the People: Pioneering ‘Secondary’ Prevention to Positive Individuals.”

highly technical treatment activism in which laypeople with AIDS have engaged.

2. *The history of AIDS activism (political knowledge)*. TEACH underscores that PWAs today cannot take their current array of treatment options for granted: the medications now available only exist because of the agitation and gains of AIDS activists. Only because of significant protest did the definition of HIV/AIDS expand to encompass variants of the condition in injection drug users and women. As one of the most celebrated TEACH students reminisced on what he did not know before the completion of the course, “How is it that I don’t know that gay white men in Philadelphia addressed HIV and AIDS, to the degree that they fought for and put in place policies and made it possible that the Food and Drug Administration passed laws that will allow medications to be implemented [and put on the street?].”⁶⁹

This knowledge serves to effect several psychological shifts. In itself, the history is inspirational, as the course underscores that “the activists who became experts in HIV treatment were self-taught.” TEACH participants may begin to realise that they owe a debt to their precedents in history, and that this debt leads to a moral imperative to continue such work as long as the epidemic continues. This knowledge, in other words, may serve as motivating force for movement joining.

⁶⁹ Bell, interview.

3. *Awareness of avenues to movement joining, with direct opportunity to participate (experiential knowledge).* TEACH educates its participants about avenues for activism, should people wish to get involved and attain experiential knowledge. For example, the following slide provides examples of TEACH alumni who have mobilised their communities in distinct ways:⁷⁰

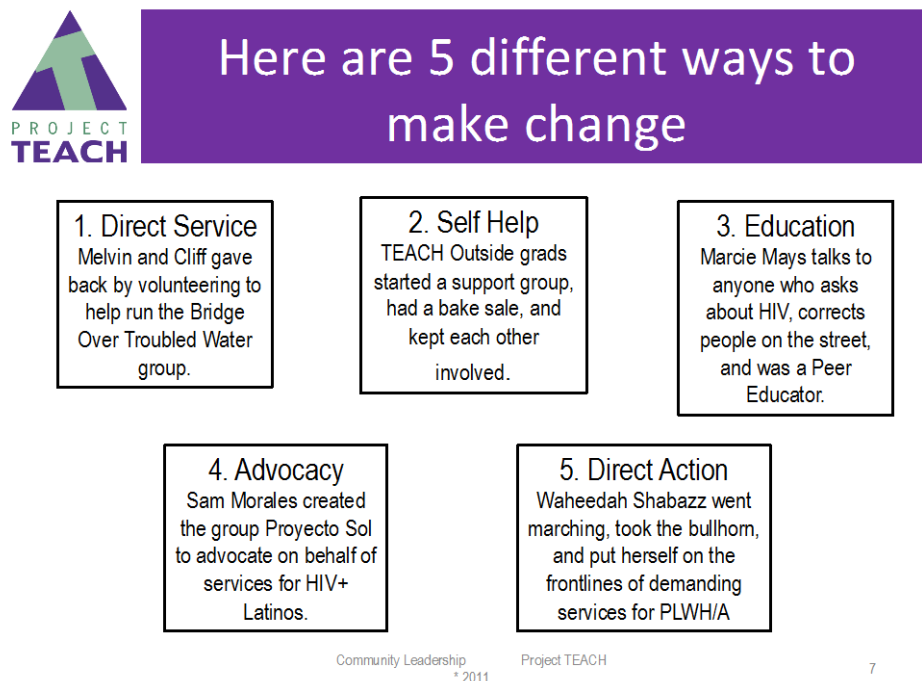


Figure 14. Slide from the TEACH presentation on "Developing Community Leadership." This slide belies the reality of TEACH as an ACT UP pipeline. Although only the "direct action" example seems to directly correspond to ACT UP activity, all of the individuals listed above are ACT UP members as well as TEACH alumni.

Experiential knowledge of "direct action" was readily available during the programme. If ACT UP were having a demonstration during the running of

⁷⁰ Fink, "Developing Community Leadership."

the course, participants would have the opportunity to attend the demo in lieu of a class session. As one TEACH instructor described it, “We were going to be able to expose people to AIDS activism and let them like – dip a toe in – and see if – see if they thought the water was fine.”⁷¹

4.4.5 Empowerment expectations and structures

I argue that three critical components of TEACH facilitate empowerment among its participants: the programme, curriculum, and structures for further action. TEACH makes clear that 1) students possess power in their knowledge, that 2) the programme creates expectations that they would use that power toward the collective good, and 3) there exist clear routes for exercising such power. Here I turn to analyse the expectations that TEACH holds for its students to harness such knowledge for the collective good, and the opportunities that the programme structure provides to enable such avenues of empowerment.

Expectations. The TEACH curriculum makes very explicit that its participants have the ability and responsibility to exercise power for change. The motto of the course is “Each 1 TEACH 10,” referring to the expectation that each participant will spread their newfound knowledge to at least ten others in their community.⁷²

⁷¹ Sowell, interview.

⁷² Bazargan, “Implementation Guide: Project TEACH”; Davids and Sowell, “Project TEACH Instructors’ Handbook.”

The course explains that individual action is critical for collective progress. One of the course presentations offers direct coaching for collective action. The language mirrors that of a pep talk. The slide is annotated with the script, “This is what can happen when fish decide to work together – Notice there are many different fish, different colors, shapes and sizes – the same is true with activism. We need to come together for a common goal. You have to organize and come together with your different skills to pull it off, like the fish.”⁷³

⁷³ Fink, “Developing Community Leadership.”

There are lots of little fish swimming alone. Each little fish is easily picked off one by one by the bigger fish.



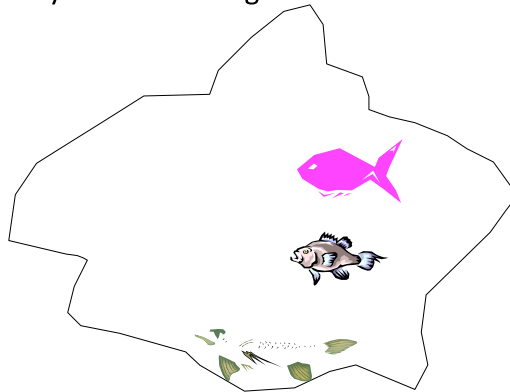
Community Leadership
© 2011

Project TEACH

14

Building Power:

The little fish *can* build power by joining together.
Then they can eat the big fish!



Community Leadership
© 2011

Project TEACH

15

Figure 15. Slide from the TEACH presentation on “Developing Community Leadership.”

This little/big fish analogy provides a visual illustration with the intention to develop self-efficacy among its participants, or the belief that one has the requisite ability to pursue and succeed in collective action. Even though many of the students may have

experienced forms of political disenfranchisement, TEACH emphasises their combined power can effect change in larger political structures.

Avenues for future action. TEACH commits significant resources to providing avenues for its participants to actualise its expectations. In other words, it facilitates a real mobilisation of “little fish” through its link to ACT UP. The prior discussion on experiential knowledge explained how the course designs some “classes” as on-the-ground learning through ACT UP demos. The programme also offers opportunities to become peer educators or class assistants: graduates return to teach future generations of students and act as informal case managers. It offers small stipends for others to prepare and deliver presentations in their own communities.

The staff also facilitate further involvement for TEACH participants who wish to do so. As Hannah recalls, she would do a sort of simultaneous translation for her students as they went from TEACH to the Monday night meetings:

When John Bell and I were teaching together...[because] he was an ACT UP member and I also like because I was an ACT UP member, it – led to different kind of – I don’t know like legitimacy, or like – one of the things that was always on the table for my students was – if you want to come to an ACT UP meeting, come meet me at FIGHT at – 5:45 – and we’ll walk over together – because it was really intimidating to go into that room alone. And so I would go in and I would sit there and translate for people, “This is what they are talking about, this is what this means.”

This kind of “translation,” as Hannah calls it, was not a fixture at every meeting. But she was not the only one who took the effort to bridge gaps of knowledge for less experienced members. John Bell, outside of his function as a TEACH instructor, also held

Sunday night gatherings to rehash ACT UP meetings. As a former addict himself, John would invite new recruits coming out of recovery houses to the group house he shared with other ACT UP members.⁷⁴

ACT UP facilitated remarkable levels of empowerment in some of its members.

I close this discussion with words from Ira Maxfield, a TEACH graduate and ACT UP member. From a tiny town of 5,000 in Pennsylvania, Ira describes himself as “a little farm boy [that] goes to [the] big city,” the self-labelled “black sheep of the family.” He found TEACH in 2013, not long after a stint with drugs and the murder of his mother.

Ira speaks about the ways in which the programme was empowering to him:

Trust me, it’s been a fight because I really couldn’t put myself in that loop of people that are, “I’m going to survive and everything is okay” because in my case the world was ending. I wanted to die and I felt there was no reason for me to be here anymore, and TEACH gave me new life actually.

I really didn’t care if I survived or not but, through TEACH, I met wonderful people that I consider family now, and people that helped lift me up when I couldn’t lift myself up, or when I was wearing a mask, they helped chip it away. After TEACH I wanted more...

I found and looked to activism, or I would look for other classes that I could possibly join and get involved in that would further my knowledge about what I have, and where do I go with it.⁷⁵

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented a theory of SMO recruitment of DR populations. The three empirical examples outlined from the ACT UP Philadelphia case (Monday night

⁷⁴ Prusakowski, interview.

⁷⁵ Maxfield, interview.

meetings, recovery house outreach, and Project TEACH) span the spectrum of possibility and success in recruitment. They vary widely in terms of scale, from a few new members per weekly meeting to hundreds of recovery house clients at a single demonstration. These strategies range, too, in terms of their scale of SMO investment and participant empowerment. Ultimately, the success of recruitment pare down to three dimensions of SMO inclusivity:

1. How wide of a net can be cast (scale of numbers);
2. How much of that net catches participation from the most affected populations (DRs); and
3. For those who are recruited, how much that net educates and empowers people for sustained and meaningful political participation.

Our recruitment theory outlines the strategies that offer greatest promise for the initial recruitment and sustained participation of DR populations. As indicated in the introduction, this discussion thereby contributes greater insight on debates in SMT on political participation and broader questions in political science on collective action and oligarchisation. I revisit each of these interfacing theories in turn to sum up this chapter.

*Michels's iron law of oligarchy.*⁷⁶ Strictly speaking, oligarchy concerns the dynamics (and inequality) of power as they pertain to *existing* members already in an organisation. The most substantial discussion of oligarchical structures in ACT UP will come in the next chapter, where I discuss practices of internal inclusion—that is, inclusion among

⁷⁶ Michels, *Political Parties*.

members already present in the group. This chapter has focused more so on external inclusion, or the recruitment of *prospective* members not yet in the SMO.

Here I do mention Michels's iron law of oligarchy, however, because modes of recruitment can figure as important precursors to organisational propensities—or solutions—to oligarchy. This chapter's theory of recruitment has highlighted the instrumental importance of learning and empowerment as prerequisites to true political participation. These prerequisites provide the starting point to the iron law of oligarchy. The knowledge and power that recruitment imparts upon prospective members, I argue, ensures that the metaphorical starting line of new participants is set further ahead. These elements of inclusive recruitment serve together to develop SMO power and democratise decision-making among a broader base of membership.

Selective incentives as one answer to the collective action problem. I recognised that purposive and solidary incentives are indeed important draws for SMO participation, as outlined by theorists such as Wilson and Clark. However, material incentives are of especial importance if an SMO wishes to invite inclusivity of DR populations with resource deficits.

Components of this argument, I realise, may appear crass: poor people may be drawn to political mobilisation not for ideological but very material reasons. However, this observation in itself is significant for re-injecting the notion of self-interest into explanations of political participation. The discussion adds to the oft-neglected truth that

SMOs can harness material self-interest as a critical ingredient to advancement of the collective good.⁷⁷ The provision of material incentives, in turn, can make possible pathways to education and learning that bestow upon DRs a capacity and desire to fulfil purposive incentives, too.

I balance this assertion with the admission that self-interest does indeed have its adverse effects. Material reward schemes introduced their own corollary issues in SMO recruitment, most notably free riding. However, the recruitment theory shows potential to mitigate such problems, namely through greater reciprocity between recruits and the SMO: investment must flow both ways such that each provides the other time, energy, and resources for true participation.

As the theory emphasises, material and educational goods are key links to participant empowerment. Therefore, for SMOs that subscribe to means of political protest, they must also realise the value of service provision. The most successful recruitment models defy the dichotomy of political protest and service provision, a reality most evidently illustrated through the close relationships between ACT UP and service institutions.

Resource mobilisation theory. In outlining the relationships between ACT UP and recovery houses or non-profit organisations such as Philadelphia FIGHT, the Philadelphia case illustrates how grassroots SMOs can gain access to a far wider set of institutional resources than their small size or funding purse might suggest. Admittedly, this chapter

⁷⁷ Mansbridge, *Beyond Self-Interest*; Mansbridge et al., "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy."

presents such expanded resource sets in a black box manner. I note the magnitude of their outcomes in providing for large catchment populations of recovery house clients or intensive service programmes such as TEACH. I have not, however, explained the mechanisms by which ACT UP has developed such unique relationships. This is an intentional omission: I leave the complexity of the explanation to Chapter 7 in discussion of capacity-building for SMOs, and their links to third sector or state institutions.

I conclude with one important reminder. Selective incentives can only partially compensate for the resource inequalities that exist among the heterogeneous membership of SMOs like ACT UP. This chapter has highlighted the power of incentives, especially material incentives, in attracting—and accommodating—DRs from resource-starved backgrounds. Yet incentives do and cannot negate certain barriers to entry that arise as a product of ACT UP's commitment to deliberative democracy. Namely, exclusivity comes as the price for the SMO's loyalty to Monday night meetings as the site of consensus decision-making participation. Participation in ACT UP is only possible for individuals who can afford the opportunity cost of sitting in a room for three hours talking about oft-abstract issues. Free tokens, food, and the education that comes with programmes such as Project TEACH can shift the rational calculus of prospective participants. Yet as the next chapter will underscore, SMOs must implement other features of institutional design to invite and enable an inclusive space for all peoples.

Chapter 5. “Who has the highest shrill”: internal inclusion of descriptive representatives

5.1 Introduction

The prior chapter introduced and modelled a pathway for recruitment of *descriptive representatives* (DRs), or members from the most disenfranchised constituencies. This chapter picks up and extends this pathway toward *substantive representation* (SR), ultimately for the implementation of organisational activities that advance the policy interests of DRs. The sequential logic is illustrated below (Figure 16). Chapter 4 discussed steps 1-2 in securing higher levels of DR. Here we investigate the institutional strategies that invite the political voice and influence of DRs in decision-making processes. The full participation of DRs fulfils the key variable of this chapter, “internal inclusion” (Steps 3-4). With their input and perspective, I argue, social movement organisations (SMOs) are able to form collective interests and opinions that reflect the priorities of the most disenfranchised. This Step 5 determines the direction of SMO activity, a critical precursor to SR.

The vocabulary of this causal pathway extends the theory of Iris Young. Most specifically, I borrow her labelling of external and internal inclusion, two distinct goals

for SMOs.¹ External inclusion refers to the physical presence of peoples in processes of discussion and decision-making; internal inclusion signifies a higher order criterion in which excluded peoples possess power and influence within political bodies once they have gained access. The prior chapter on recruitment had addressed external inclusion; this chapter, internal.

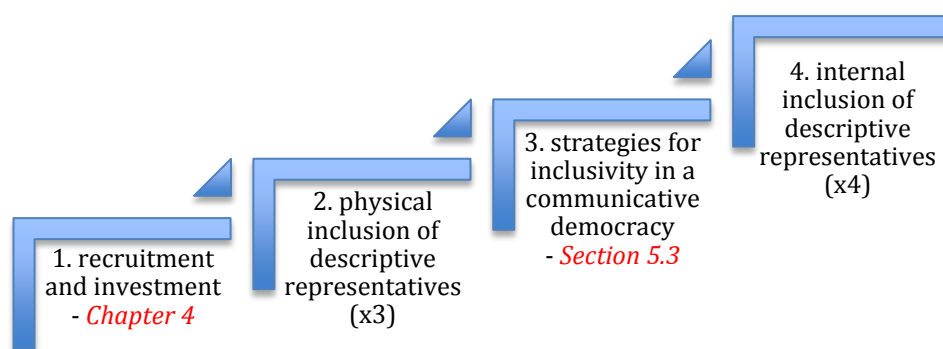


Figure 16. Conceptual outline of Chapter 5 sections. Note that the illustrated pathway is both probabilistic and iterative.

Through empirical data on ACT UP Philadelphia, the arc of my argument builds upon the tradition of political theorists of DR. Scholars such as Mansbridge, Phillips, and Young have asserted that the DR is essential for the achievement of SR in political bodies: for example, that female legislators should be present in national legislatures for policy changes on gender equality or other issues concerning women.² As discussed in

¹ Young defines these terms in the negative sense (e.g., internal and external exclusion). Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 53–57.

² Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*; Mansbridge, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?”; Williams, *Voice, Trust, and Memory*; Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*.

the prior literature review, however, the causal processes are grossly unclear: how do we facilitate the internal inclusion of the most disenfranchised, how do we ensure that their political voice has influence, and why does their influence matter for the successful SR of their interests?

The alternative hypotheses on offer fail to answer such questions. The introduction noted that the political science literature on the DR → SR link presumes the action of DRs in elected office. In such cases, representatives gain internal inclusion into the political institution by virtue of their position; it is an *ex officio* power, authorised by the constituents who elected them. As this study focuses on informal SMOs, the process of internal inclusion is not at all straightforward: there are no formal channels of authorisation for DRs to gain such power.

To propose means of internal inclusion for informal SMOs, I wade more deeply into the realm of political theory than in chapters previous. This chapter expands upon Iris Young's concept of "communicative democracy." This theoretical construct is the second-best option in approximation of internal inclusion. Like Young's theory, this chapter advances the critical nature of non-rational tools in decision-making spaces, especially as they allow for the contribution and power of DRs. Yet Young's theory is incomplete in its omission of organisational agency: the deliberate steps and formalising structures that an SMO can engineer toward internal inclusion. The theory proposed in this chapter will expand the notion of a "communicative democracy" to become defined by *organisational-level* structures that offer voice to DRs. While Young's analysis lingers in

the pure realm of political theory, I strengthen the causal propositions advanced here with the empirical lens of ACT UP Philadelphia.

This chapter advances a causal step for the development of power among DRs, the most disenfranchised sectors of SMO membership. In doing so, this discussion provides the most direct response of any chapter in the thesis to Michels's iron law of oligarchy. By definition, the struggle toward internal inclusion is a battle against oligarchy, against the development of power imbalances among existing members of a group. This chapter offers theoretical innovation to counteract—if not immunise—a political organisation against forces of oligarchy.

Layout of chapter sections. Before delving into the existing normative theory, I must first begin with a substantial discussion on oligarchy: its traditional conceptions in political science, its relevance to informal SMOs, and its very concrete manifestations in ACT UP.

This chapter begins to illuminate the processes by which beneficiaries and allies can learn to offer complementary assets in collective political spaces. Only through this learning together, can they advance the efficacy of struggles for social change. From here arises the capacity for progressive groups such as SMOs to harness the power of difference in bringing voice—and action—for the people most excluded from political processes.

Here we continue to build upon the SMO model of SR as a response to Olson's problem of collective action and Michels's iron law of oligarchy. Of the two theories, we will focus on the issue of oligarchy in this chapter, and explore commitments to Olsonian collective action in Chapter 6. Yet I want to make clear that the attainment of internal inclusion is critical to the realisation of both SMO capacities: 1) collective action from allies and DRs alike, and 2) a democratised power of decision-making within diverse memberships that defeats the Michels premonition of oligarchy.

5.2 Oligarchy

I begin with a discussion of oligarchy within the mainstream literature and in informal SMOs. Oligarchy is the exercise of power and the making of decisions by a small minority of a political organisation (known as the *elite*), a political structure that becomes even more problematic when such actions oppose the will of the majority (the *mass membership* in the diagram below).

Section 5.2.1 will expand the scholarly understanding of oligarchy within the unexpected province of egalitarian organisations (also known as collectivist democratic SMOs).

Section 5.2.2 and 5.2.3 will reveal empirical markers that attest to oligarchy in ACT UP Philadelphia and, by extension, other informal SMOs.



Figure 17. Organisational model of an oligarchy. Leach defines oligarchy as “a particular distribution of illegitimate power that has become entrenched over time.”³

5.2.1 Expanded theory for informal oligarchy

Mainstream political science literature has operationalised oligarchy within the bounds of formalised organisations—or at the very least, organisations that develop (if not begin with) formalised structures.⁴ Michels argued that the development of bureaucracy is inevitable: hierarchy, formalisation, and specialisation will occur with gradual concentration of corrupting power in an organisation.⁵

A less obvious but equally pervasive version of oligarchy can persist in informal SMOs such as ACT UP, or what Leach and other scholars term “collectivist-democratic” organisations.⁶ Reflecting the widespread attempts at egalitarian women’s groups in 1960s America, feminist scholars have been most outspoken in their contentions that oligarchy can take less visible but viciously insidious forms in structurally “equal”

³ Leach, “The Iron Law of What Again?”.

⁴ Zald and Ash, “Social Movement Organizations.”

⁵ Michels, *Political Parties*.

⁶ Leach, “The Iron Law of What Again?”; Mansbridge, *Beyond Adversary Democracy*; Rothschild-Whitt, “The Collectivist Organization,” 1979.

organisations.⁷ Most famous of these explications is Jo Freeman's namesake essay on *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*. Freeman argues that in many respects, informal organisations are especially prone to oligarchic tendencies ("tyranny"), or an especial ease with which a minority can come to dominate the decision-making and power distribution of a group.⁸

Unlike most formalised institutions of representative democracy that authorise their representatives through elections or other means, collectivist organisations have no such claims to accountability for their representatives. Freeman writes, "Informal structures have no obligation to be responsible to the group at large. Their power was not given to them; it cannot be taken away."⁹ ACT UP is an illustrative example of such a tyranny, a fact about which the group itself is almost comically honest. Val Sowell recalled typical holiday ACT UP meetings, when the group would revisit Freeman's work on structurelessness: "Whenever it was an ACT UP meeting that fell on a holiday, we would always try to have somebody there, but we usually knew that it was only going to be three or four people. And so – for a while there we would...read the *Tyranny of Structurelessness*. That was our like holiday celebration."¹⁰

The following analysis exposes clear empirical markers of oligarchy as they specifically manifest within contexts of collectivist-democratic organisations. I first trace the

⁷ Ostrander, "Gender and Race in a Pro-feminist, Progressive, Mixed-gender, Mixed-race Organization"; Scott, "Beyond Tokenism"; Sirianni, *Learning Pluralism*.

⁸ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Sowell, interview.

informal structures of tyranny as evidenced through unannounced and exclusive fora of decision-making that occur outside the formal “floor” of the SMO. More generally, oligarchy can also take root through barriers to participation. I analyse these barriers that are especially pertinent to resource-poor DRs: SMO-imposed demands of high education, access to technology, time, and other resources necessary to take leadership.

5.2.2 Informal structures of tyranny

Freeman speaks of informal structures of tyranny, or communication networks that exist outside the group’s official channels of discussion. They tend to form not across lines of one’s qualifications or contributions to the movement, but rather from personal characteristics (“background, personality, or allocation of time”). As Freeman emphasises, these networks are not based on the former criteria that determine the efficacy of an SMO, but rather those that one uses to select friends. These friendship groups bestow more power onto those that are included and none for those who are excluded. They are, simply put, cliques of oligarchy.¹¹

Freeman’s predictions ring ominously true in the operations of ACT UP. When I coded my empirical data, I had created a category label called “concentration of power: pre- and post-meetings.” According to the formal rules of ACT UP, the group is to make all of its decisions at the weekly Monday night meeting that is open to anyone who wishes to attend. Consensus on the “floor” of this meeting holds supreme authority in the group.

¹¹ Freeman, “The Tyranny of Stucturelessness.”

Yet, this assignment of power to democratic consensus was corrupted by pre- and post-meetings between the official 6-9pm Monday time. A number of members admitted to such problematic gatherings, often among the “core” ACT UP members who had the most power and/or were already friends.

Waheedah Shabazz-El directly references the “tyranny of structurelessness” in her assessment of the pre- and post-meetings, noting their secret and exclusive nature outside of the formal structure of the group:

There’s always – there was always a meeting before the meeting, and sometimes there were meetings after the meeting. You know you’d know it [laughs] –, but once you understood the structural power to – to the – the tyranny of structurelessness –, you understood that you weren’t paranoid – that yes, there were meetings going on– That you weren’t invited to—¹²

Hannah Zellman confirms one of Freeman’s assessments of the “informal tyranny,” that such oligarchy was based in the existing privilege and resources of some members over others. It was by this basis that members of the “clique” came together:

It was like the post meeting, meeting at Dirty Frank’s – where we’d have a bunch of beers, and – like sort of further – like interrogate – the work we were doing – which is also a complicated clique – piece – that I think comes up in a lot of movement – work – because most of the folks that ended up there were the kind of like – white folks who had access to privilege and resources and wealth – West Philly – like a largely queer – anarchist like – people drinking beer right?¹³

5.2.3 An unequal and concentrated core of power

Describing the core: oligarchy.

¹² Shabazz-El, interview.

¹³ Zellman, interview.

The pre- and post-meetings represent Freeman's structures of informal tyranny: exclusive spheres that corrupt the egalitarian intentions of structureless organisation. Their pervasiveness speaks to a *core* of power among certain individuals who tend to be at the centre of such meetings.

"Core" is one of the most common terms in ACT UP lingo that members have evoked in our interviews, referencing the concentration of power among certain individuals that defines oligarchy in any given organisation. The core, as members say, is nebulous and fluid. As Waheedah said, "Sometimes you were a core member, and sometimes you weren't."¹⁴ The porous nature of the core, however, does not negate its potency. If we were to extend Freeman's line of thought, it may in fact suggest the opposite: the undefined and foggy borders of the core can further obfuscate attempts to identify or mitigate its power.

Even if its boundaries are at times unclear, the existence of the core is anything but. At some meetings I have attended, individuals have not recited ACT UP's opening mantra or even bothered to set up the chalkboard for proceedings until "the right people" arrive.¹⁵ These "right people" are clearly understood if not formally recognised as leaders. Some leaders have sat at the helm of ACT UP power for many years—a fact of longevity that is emblematic of low rates of leadership turnover and a key indicator of oligarchy.¹⁶

¹⁴ Shabazz-El, interview.

¹⁵ Ibid. participant observation.

¹⁶ Leach, "The Iron Law of What Again?".

I cite one telling discussion of oligarchy within ACT UP itself. When departed ACT UP veteran and leader Julie Davids returned to the group for a visit, she facilitated an activity in which members took out flip chart paper to draw maps of the power structures of ACT UP Philadelphia. All of them drew variants of a “core,” most of which still included Julie, even though she had left the group long ago.¹⁷

Explaining oligarchy: the resource demands of deliberative democracy.

Why does this core of oligarchy exist? Or, why are there such stark differences in power and authority among individuals in the group? I explain this oligarchy as a combination of two primary causes: 1) the high resource demands of deliberative democracy, and 2) the heterogeneity of members’ capacities to meet such high demands.

For ACT UP and other SMOs, their format of consensus decision-making necessitates a significant investment of participant resources. Here I explain the difficult nature of ACT UP meetings, their challenges underscoring the barriers to sustained participation in the group. If people cannot stand the requirements or frustrations of consensus, it is not possible to diffuse power—and dissolve oligarchy—among a broader base of membership.

¹⁷ Davids, interview.

The very process of reaching consensus is time-consuming in itself, hence the three hours (or more) set aside for meetings each week. Participants who come one week may not return the next. Participation fluctuates, as Waheedah describes it:

Our capacity goes up and down. People leave, they go to school, they go abroad. You know – several of our members disappear – you know for months at a time. Some become homeless, some become helpless; you know some go to jail...There's hardly any way to predict – what our membership is going to look like...Sometimes the room is like – so full there's...standing room only. And then sometimes you go to just bare bones, it's like – three or four, five people – who don't feel there is enough people there to make a decision.¹⁸

With ACT UP's open membership policy, people come and go as they wish—or as they are able. It is difficult to build leadership among the most transient sectors of the membership: the homeless, the helpless, and the jailed, as Waheedah had said.

Participation in consensus is demanding not only in time, but also in patience and rhetorical skill. Democratic deliberation can be tedious. Jose Benitez, who has come as an intermittent attendee to meetings, likens the experience of ACT UP meetings to having an incomplete meal. Consensus is frustrating, he remarked, because “it is more process focused than anything else...it never feels like the meeting has a beginning, middle, and—only a middle.”¹⁹ During one meeting's deliberation, I observed one member playing on his smartphone, another fumbling with long parts of his beard, the facilitator pacing, and the participant sitting next to me slouching in her armchair. It is not always easy to stay attentive.

¹⁸ Shabazz-El, interview.

¹⁹ Benitez, interview.

Engaging in deliberation requires the capacity to argue, to hold one's ground, and to persist. Paul Yabor, a member who himself can get heated during meetings, talks about the process like "it's a pissing contest." He describes consensus as "worthwhile" and "democratic," but also emphasised the ways in which one person's proposal may win over another: "Who can hold their breath the longest? Who has the highest shrill?"²⁰

Consensus rests on one's ability and perseverance at contention.²¹

Explaining oligarchy: resource inequality. Here, I delineate the vast levels of difference in resources (and access to resources) among ACT UP members. The preceding paragraphs illustrated that ACT UP's consensus, however democratic, ironically acts to exclude: it demands intense investments of time, patience, and rhetorical ability that not everyone enjoys at his or her disposal. With the sheer diversity within ACT UP, some individuals could very much meet such resource demands and participate in consensus, and others much less so. The more resourced individuals, thus, have managed to hold, maintain, and accrue power over a less privileged majority.

Inequality in ACT UP manifests as a stark divide of resources. As exogenous factors to the group, they are invariably concentrated in some and absent among others—before members even arrive at ACT UP. "There's a lot of dereliction – you know – of what ACT UP members come and...people have mental health [problems], they don't have medicine. It's a lot of needy folks that show up, and they are not savvy enough to make

²⁰ Yabor, interview.

²¹ Kozeniewski, interview.

the quick decisions – and move forward,” says Waheedah.²² She belies almost a defeated outlook in her comments, adding that “some of the people that you help – no matter how much you help them – it’s never going to be enough – because we have a system that perpetuates the same conditions.”

Inequalities in capacity and access to resources, thus, lay fertile ground for oligarchy. I draw upon three particular examples of resource inequality to underscore the process by which oligarchy in the SMO has taken root: members’ levels of access to technology, knowledge and language, and self-confidence.

Technology. The divides manifest through quite material routes, even through “democratising” media such as technology. After the common adoption of email in ACT UP’s trajectory, access to technology cleaved a new line of inequality. It determined one’s ability to receive information, partake in decision-making processes, and ultimately develop power.

The digital divide, in other words, was also a power divide. On occasions, the group has made decisions over the ACT UP email list-serve rather than wait for the weeklong stretch between meetings. However, this practice ended up excluding members who were not as conversant in computer literacy or had to find a public computer to check their email. Jose laments that sometimes, he feels that he “doesn’t have a lot to work

²² Shabazz-El, interview.

with.”²³ Sometimes, the self-identified “rag-tag group” does not even have enough money to maintain its own phone line.²⁴

Technology has represented a material vehicle of inadvertent exclusion. In the late ‘90s, when ACT UP began to adopt an organisational list-serve, beneficiaries would report arriving at Monday night meetings, only to discover that entire email chains’ worth of conversation had occurred in the intervening week. Decision-making also began to happen between keyboard strokes and the wires of the Internet. It was only after some back-and-forth deliberation that the group agreed to leave e-mail for less important ACT UP matters, although even today the convenience of electronic communication has preserved its critical role in ACT UP information sharing and decision-making.

Knowledge and language. E-mail and the Internet represent very material manifestations of greater—and more abstract—gulfs of resources among ACT UP members, namely those of *knowledge* and *education*. Technology bestows power upon its users through greater ease of communication and access to information. One could say the same of the more specialised language of politics and activism, too. Vocabulary offers its users a more expedient tool of communication, but it also excludes those who do not have access to the education necessary to deploy such words.

Divides of self-efficacy and self-esteem also exist, patent in the DRs’ admissions to their own lack of confidence. Roy Hayes, another black and HIV-positive member of ACT UP,

²³ De Marco, interview.

²⁴ Shabazz-El, interview.

admitted thoughts that “my talent wasn’t good enough.”²⁵ When I interviewed Paul Yabor, a white HIV-positive ex-convict who just became homeless, he insisted multiple times to me that “he wasn’t the smartest tool in the shed.”²⁶

Unequal power and self-confidence among members. Let me explain the combined effect of these two factors: one, the absolute differences in knowledge, and two, the relative feelings of inadequacy and lack of power among beneficiaries. They manifest in the different cultures of argumentation and decision-making present in the group. I noticed during my time in meetings that power and self-confidence often cleaved along lines of gender and education. Women, especially women of colour, would be more likely to back down and shut down after their ideas or suggestions are criticised at an ACT UP meeting. Their style of deliberation contrast starkly with that of the more seasoned and powerful white allies, who are prone to and almost seem to enjoy fighting, defending their opinions viciously with no fear of push-back.

In subtle, non-verbal language, too, the group reinforces a certain distribution of power during its deliberative meetings. Members, whether consciously or not, react very differently to ideas depending on whose mouth is the source. Sometimes in a long deliberation, the very same suggestion might be put forward twice. A black HIV-positive member might offer a proposal; and his voice goes largely unheard, as others are checking their phones or concerned with hurrying up the meeting. But then five minutes later, when an affirmed leader pipes up with a very similar idea in content but packaged

²⁵ Hayes, interview.

²⁶ Yabor, interview.

in articulate rhetoric and delivery — the rest of the group will engage, offer feedback, and begin to build a formal proposal to bring to the table. Even covert body language such as eye contact and head nods can betray the allegiances and faith that individuals bestow to some members' contributions but not to others.

5.3 Organisational structures for internal inclusion

The remainder of this chapter aims to debunk this myth of a zero-sum game between heterogeneity of membership and equality of power. Indeed, scholars such as Freeman and Mansbridge are correct to assert that homogeneity is easier than heterogeneity to manage in SMOs that strive for democratic power; such claims align with our intuitions. How, then, do these organisations combat oligarchy?

I propose an expanded framework from Iris Young that advocates institutional modes that privilege alternative modes of communication. In particular, I draw from her theory of communicative democracy and its three constituent strategies: greeting, narrative, and rhetoric. She underscores her conception of democracy as “communicative” rather than “deliberative.” This distinction marks key points of departure from “too restrictive a notion of legitimate political communication...[with] connotations of the primacy of argument, dispassionateness, and order in communication.” Young’s theoretical discussion underscores the importance of emotion and conflict as vehicles of inclusivity, a counterintuitive argument to be further elaborated in the latter half of this section.

In relation to the existing literature, this section serves to disrupt long-held assumptions in theories of deliberative democracy. The existing literature often presumes rationality and articulate argument. In contrast, Young and I discuss features that are anything but logical in the traditional sense.

That said, I am not arguing that greeting, rhetoric, and narrative are replacements to reason and logic. Reason and logic are indeed critical for a communicative democracy. Whether appeals to reasons or emotion, any rhetorical devices are susceptible to use as ends of manipulation or deceit, as much as they can be powerful tools for fair deliberation. However vulnerable to distortion, however, these oft-forgotten and less appreciated forms of argument are nonetheless important. Non-rational features of organisational design allow for greater participation and inclusion of the disenfranchised.

Starting with Young's theory, I advance her tools of communicative democracy from a dyadic to an organisational purview. The expansion of her theory enables the development of novel models of SMO design for internal inclusion of its DRs. This section invokes substantial empirical data from the ACT UP Philadelphia chapter to illustrate how DRs become important not as physical bodies but as political voices. This chapter then argues for the practical utility of such voices toward the SMO goal of SR.

5.3.1 *Beyond rationality: the manner of inclusive communication*

Below I illustrate the utility of Young's theory in the SMO context. Her framework of communicative democracy explicates the processes by which a physically heterogeneous group can achieve internal inclusion. That is, it demonstrates how inclusive structures within an SMO can invite the most disenfranchised DRs to feel welcome within a group (greeting), to express themselves with emotion and manner liberated from traditional conceptions of reason (rhetoric), and introduce unique and diverse perspectives linked to experience (narrative).

Models of communicative democracy that strive to include and value the contribution of excluded peoples are far less measured, articulate, and efficient than we might like to imagine. Society's privileging of order and rationality in discussion fails to make room for other modes of argument that are just as if not more effective at amassing influence and driving action. The following analysis illustrates how ACT UP members—many DRs from traditionally excluded groups—exert voice in modes that may seem contrary to social norms of discussion and progress for decision-making.

I draw upon Young's three categories of inclusive communication:

1. *Greeting*, the social acknowledgement of one another in a political body.
2. *Narrative*, the sharing of personal experience.

3. *Rhetoric*, the means by which a message can be expressed through figures of speech, emotion, and other forms of nonverbal language.²⁷

In the weaving of Young's theory and SMO empirics, I advance a more complete understanding of communicative democracy through the ACT UP data. Young's framework is guilty of a sterile distance from empirical reality, as her normative purview neglects to aggregate power within a collective group for deliberation. She largely presumes a speaker-listener (or communicating / communicating to) dyad that situates the development of inclusivity on the level of individual-to-individual, even as she intends it to apply to the group-level concept of communicative democracy. In doing so, Young's theory is blind to the vital potential of organisational structures that frame individual channels of communication.

A site visit to ACT UP. The subsequent argument draws heavily from data in organisational micro-dynamics within ACT UP Philadelphia. I employ an in-depth analysis of my field experience at one particularly illustrative ACT UP meeting (December 2, 2013). This dive into the micro-politics of communicative democracy enables our outlining of an organisational-level understanding of inclusive communication, to penetrate the aforementioned black box of process.²⁸ The interpretation draws from a broader swath of data collected across thirteen months of attendance in ACT UP meetings, interviews with key members, and other triangulating sources. The narrative below explains how each of the above categories of inclusive

²⁷ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 40.

²⁸ Morris and Mueller, *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*; Morris, "Reflections on Social Movement Theory."

communication (greeting, rhetoric, and narrative) contributes to a culture of SMO inclusivity.

Imagine ourselves walking to the Episcopal church that has hosted ACT UP for more than two decades. Philadelphia in December feels cold: the temperature is just above freezing, but the wind chill at 6pm makes for a frigid evening. People amble into the meeting room with oversized thermals covered by even more oversized coats. Some ACT UP veterans have noticed that the meeting attendance has historically surged in the winter months, precisely because the meeting provides excuse for a couple hours' warm shelter inside.²⁹

a. Greeting

As new members to the group, we would experience ACT UP's ritual greetings from the get-go. Often, the group would pair us first-timers up with a "buddy" to introduce us to the group, hand us a new member packet, offer us food, and ask for our own names and agenda items to the meeting. These forms of recognition ("greeting"), I argue, lay a critical foundation for welcome and trust in an organisational environment that can otherwise be quite contentious and overwhelming.

Upon entering the ACT UP space, we are welcome inside, just as anyone else. Members of the police, press, or pharmaceutical are asked at the start of each meeting to identify themselves, but even they are allowed to attend. An open environment, however, does

²⁹ Davids, interview.

not necessarily connote a welcoming one. The late 1990s version of the introductory packet for first-timers at ACT UP admits so much: “The meetings can run very long and become heated and emotional...it can be extremely confusing and overwhelming for new members and even old members.”³⁰ In recognition of the importance of new attendees, ACT UP has at times designated “new member buddies” to ensure that people receive a proper greeting into the organisation. In my first meeting, I got whisked out for a smoke break that doubled as a 2-minute orientation on the issue at hand (for that meeting, progressive tax systems) and a briefing on ACT UP.

The new member packet, the new member buddy, and the orientation: such components in ACT UP ensure that people feel acknowledged in their initial foray into the group. They are various forms of greeting, or forms of “public acknowledgment.”³¹ Greeting constitutes the most basic ingredient to outlaying trust within a political body, especially in a heterogeneous organisation like ACT UP. Extending symbols of recognition and making initial links are crucial in a SMO that does not attract members according to common lines of identity or experience. Greetings need not be a particularly demanding form of communication in time or energy expenditure; a head nod, a hand wave, or the small offer of food can constitute greeting in various contexts.

Yet greetings are absolutely crucial for their communication of respect and politeness; they are “saying without anything said,” overriding an initial barrier of awkwardness.³²

³⁰ ACT UP Philadelphia, “New Member Packet.”

³¹ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 57.

³² *Ibid.*, 58–59.

In the words of theorist Charles Taylor, they constitute a crucial “politics of recognition.”³³ The organisational greetings that ACT UP employs for its new members, in fact, “say” a lot. Yes, the new member packet or buddy conversations function as a communication channel for recognition, but they also serve to transmit knowledge from veteran to new members.

ACT UP institutionalises greetings beyond the first point of entry, too. Every week, meetings open with a ritual of greeting: members introduce themselves, receive a round of applause (plus a verbal group welcome, if it is their first meeting), and are asked if they would like to contribute anything to the meeting agenda. The last request implicitly signifies not only the invitation but also assumed value of each person to the group. Often, names are immediately forgotten, and usually only the more veteran members bring items of discussion for the meeting. Nonetheless, the individual recognition of each participant seated around a circle constitutes a routine of comfort and inclusion. It may be the only time that a new member speaks for the entire meeting—and just that is a feat in itself, given that members report how terrified they were at their first meetings. One of the most prominent ACT UP leaders today admits that he did not speak for his first three months of meetings; others say they chose “to be quiet” in the midst of what they felt “like [was] a shouting match.”³⁴ The widespread feeling of intimidation upon initial entry into ACT UP, therefore, makes greeting an even more crucial component of the SMO design.

³³ Taylor, Gutmann, and Habermas, *Multiculturalism*.

³⁴ De Marco, interview; Zellman, interview; Speaker, interview; Kozeniowski, interview.

Greeting, I argue, can also extend beyond the verbal and nonverbal forms that Young and others traditionally associate as communication. Signals need not only be head nods or words of introduction; they, too, come the material goods that the SMO offers to members: plates of food and subway tokens.

b. Narrative

We now turn to examine the latter two components of Young's tripartite framework, rhetoric and narrative. In the following discussion of this meeting's proceedings, we focus on both the roles of rhetoric and narrative. Such a double-lensed analysis makes apparent the synergies in their respective capacities to foster inclusivity and representativeness.

We first consider narrative. Narrative story is the most outstanding means by which excluded peoples can contribute unique perspective to the discussion. A strong tradition in SMT advances the importance of narrative as a motivating force for participation and solidarity among members in a SMO.³⁵ Narrative has enjoyed strong practice and critique in the feminist movement, as groups of women would gather in "consciousness-raising" groups to share stories of shared injustice as a form of politicisation and personal activism.³⁶

³⁵ e.g., Fine, "Public Narration and Group Culture"; Hunt and Benford, "Identity Talk in the Peace and Justice Movement." Hinchman and Hinchman, *Memory, Identity, Community*.

³⁶ Hogeland, *Feminism and Its Fictions*; Sowards and Renegar, "The Rhetorical Functions of Consciousness-raising in Third Wave Feminism."

Our section on greeting provided an overview on the welcoming routines of every meeting. Here, let us go beyond the opening rituals to investigate how narrative and rhetoric operate within discussion on a specific issue within ACT UP's long-standing housing campaign. Through the microcosm of this discussion, I demonstrate the critical role of narrative sharing by DRs. Narratives import a sensitised awareness of the issues at the centre of the SMO's political agenda, conveying an empirical truth through the undeniable reality of experience. DR narrative is accompanied by rhetoric, which refers to the manner in which words are said. In the case of this meeting, Jahmiah and Ramon underscore an urgency indicated by inflections of passion and shouting.

Now to the discussion. Since 2008, ACT UP Philadelphia has been striving to gain greater provisions for housing of PWAs.³⁷ This particular meeting tackled questions around a housing study that the City's AIDS Activities Coordinating Office (AACO) had commissioned to researchers at the University of Pennsylvania. The last such study was done in 1996.³⁸ Erin, a graduate of the University's School of Social Work, had links to the principal investigator and wanted to use the forum of the ACT UP meeting to decide on the best study questions and metrics to assess the housing situation of PWAs and craft a political case for greater budget allocations.

Soon enough came a discussion as to whether people coming from recovery houses deserved priority on the waiting list for housing. At this meeting was a mid-sized group of eleven: four low-income African Americans; six white members, including two trans

³⁷ Riek, interview.

³⁸ Acquaviva et al., "AIDS Housing Needs Assessment."

men and two women; and myself. To my knowledge, the only HIV+ people in the room were also African American.

Here follows a walkthrough of a 20-minute debate in the middle of the meeting. Note the importance of narrative:

James speaks up. He is a newcomer to ACT UP, someone who walked in late to the meeting with his friend Ramon from the World AIDS Day events. He voices his anger at the fact that he has seen recovery user after recovery user bumped up the list to get housing, only to lose it all again upon relapse; he had been waiting on the housing list for years. He expresses this frustration while sitting next to his friend Ramon, who has suffered from serious substance abuse issues.

Then, Jahmiah—who is currently facilitating—chimes in, saying that he left his children in order to find substance abuse treatment in Philadelphia. He invokes the American value of self-reliance, as someone who has managed to find couches to sleep on when he was homeless. Impassioned, Jahmiah asks for someone else to take his position as facilitator, feeling too emotional to adhere to the guidelines of neutrality that ACT UP expects for the guides of group discussions. He has the self-consciousness to know when to step down, feeling that he can no longer hold neutrality.

Erin, the one who initiated the conversation on the housing assessment, acknowledges the importance of their discussion while transitioning the conversation. She reframes the debate, first noting to acknowledge the intense frustration and the validity of their emotions. Perhaps a common response for SMO circles would have shifted away from the substance of the conversation to avoid conflict. In such a heterogeneous group, more privileged people may feel the tendency to leave the conversation alone, in fear of trespassing social taboos or not being able to answer with personal experience.³⁹ Erin, on the other hand, relies on her authority as an organiser of the group, as a caseworker manager, and her experience in ACT UP. She says that yes, housing does not always work, but ACT UP operates with a “housing first” policy that recognises the need of housing as a human right and thus that everyone deserves a place to live.

Analysis of the conversation. Here with this snapshot of the ACT UP meeting, we can realise several lessons about narrative.

³⁹ Tatum, “Talking About Race, Learning About Racism”; Case, “Discovering the Privilege of Whiteness.”

One, the account demonstrates a powerful complementarity that is made possible by DRs and physical heterogeneity. The narrative bares the personal experiences of low-income constituencies who have experienced the policy issue at hand (housing insecurity) and can attest to their own personal experiences (Jahmiah and Ramon); and that experience can be re-framed and mixed with the policy knowledge that is gained from the perspective of the service provider, in this case Erin.

This complementarity exemplifies one of Young's chief arguments about the use of narrative. As she says, "Storytelling is often an important bridge....between the mute experience of being wronged and political arguments about justice." The excluded tell a narrative with the language and of the experience that is most familiar to them. In doing so, this public reflection raises a greater understanding of the nature of this injustice as suffering.⁴⁰ The use of the word "bridge" in Young's description is a critical one; not only is it a philosophical bridge of empirics to theory, but it too is a bridge of solidarity, one that brings an audience together in a common experience of politicisation through story (more on solidarity in Chapter 6).

In communicative democracies, narrative derives its power not only in its affirmation of experience but also in its imparting of knowledge. Through their personal stories in the passage above, DRs contributed some of the most critical points about the housing needs assessment. ACT UP ultimately documented these points as recommendations for the

⁴⁰ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 72.

University of Pennsylvania researchers. For example, the first line item in the minutes from that meeting emphasises how the definition of homelessness is too narrowly construed. Jahmiah discusses his own experience of couch surfing from one friend to another, never becoming officially homeless to merit his own housing. The debate about the politics of merit of housing for substance users, in turn, derives directly from the experiences of people like James and Ramon. They see themselves surpassed on the waiting list by people who gain and lose their housing with their ins-and-outs of substance abuse. Their experiential narratives lead ACT UP to understand the importance of questioning the logic of priority.

c. Rhetoric

Here I turn to analyse how the above encounter employed techniques of rhetoric. Young's definition of rhetoric can take several forms: emotional tone, figurative language, nonverbal gestures or props, or the tailored orientation of speech to one's audience.⁴¹

The content of Ramon and Jahmiah's stories served a critical purpose in their narrative. Each of their narrated experiences carries logic, but even more potent are the roots of emotion that erupt in the room from their discussion. Rhetoric here serves as a force of invigoration and reengagement, especially in contrast to the dry technicalities that can abound in AIDS activism.

⁴¹ Ibid., 65.

Returning to the empirics from my field observations, the previous meeting had become dominated by the discussion of several white queer anarchists around the biomedical nuances of new antiretroviral treatments, a discussion that lost many of the poorer and non-white members (one of them expressed his confusion by half-joking, “You all just talked about 30 or forty drugs. I’m getting high from all this drug talk.”⁴²). That meeting, one of the most technical discussions I have seen in ACT UP, saw some activists on their phones, others playing with their beard, the facilitator pacing, and still others slouching in their chairs. The very personal and heated discussion in this meeting stands in stark contrast. The heat and conflict fulfil several functions.

Aside from its narrative content, Jahmiah and Ramon’s discussion with Erin was notable for its emotive charge. Yes, they put forth a huge vulnerability in the content of their personal disclosure, but the impact of their speech derived not only from story substance (narrative) but also the manner of delivery (rhetoric). Voices were raised, and the two became combative in a highly personal but respectful manner. Rhetoric (the emotion and manner of argument) heightens urgency through both the communicated emotion of the DRs (e.g., Ramon’s anger at substance abuse users) and the told authenticity of the PWA experience. In contrast to the prior technical discussion above, the room had filled with an attentive energy that was absent before. I will stop my discussion short here, for the next chapter will further explain the role of emotion and conflict as forces in moulding common perspective for SMOs.

⁴² Speaker, interview.

5.3.2 expanded conceptions of communicative democracy: beyond Young

Through this case study of ACT UP, we flesh out processes of internal inclusion that are necessary precursors for SR. The following discussion breaches the implicit assumptions within and expands the parameters of Young's theory. Here I wish to emphasise several points: 1) political bodies can institutionalise practices to advance internal inclusion of DRs, 2) our understanding of these strategies (greeting, rhetoric, and narrative) need not and should not exist in discrete and mutually exclusive silos; and 3) communicative democracy serves to advance the self-efficacy of its participants.

1. Organisational rather than individual inclusivity. Though set within the group context, Young's idea of communicative democracy is couched on the level of individual choice and interaction (e.g., one wave of the hand, or a person's recounting of their story). It neglects to recognise and highlight the ways in which groups can sculpt a particular organisational environment conducive to inclusivity.

SMOs can promote norms of a communicative democracy through the institutionalisation of certain habits and practices. The cultural architecture of ACT UP, for instance, routinised the go-around of introductions at the start of meetings (greeting), or the open floor for unstructured discussion that invites emotion or story (rhetoric and narrative). Or, when Jahmiah conducts a time check in the middle of the meeting, he achieves a dual purpose: 1) he ensures that the meeting is progressing accordingly, and 2) he makes time for a smoke break, carving out a space for cigarettes, informal talk, and greeting halfway through a heated discussion.

2. *Overlap in inclusive strategies.* Let us also recognise that neither the classification nor specific benefits of inclusive practice need be discrete across categories. One example occurs at a point in the meeting when the members are signing up for outreach responsibilities according to partner organisations. James offers to speak to BEBASHI (Blacks Educating Blacks About Sexual Health Issues), and then volunteers his friend Ira to come with him (“Hey, whatcha doin’ tomorrow?”). The collegiality and openness of the invitation to the entire group is both a form of greeting (a one-to-one public recognition) and rhetoric (the ways in which informality communicates a degree of camaraderie). Immediately following, Jahmiah quips in response to his non-invitation, “What am I, chopped liver?” His joke, in Jahmiah’s typical dry humour and half-jest, communicates his eagerness to come along. Here, this brief exchange exemplifies the capacity of spontaneous greeting and the rhetoric of friendly informality to foster greater inclusivity in the group.

3. *The development of self-efficacy.* Young overlooks other benefits that follow from simple practices of communicative democracy—most notably, the ability to develop self-efficacy in members. Recall from Chapter 3 that self-efficacy has been demonstrated in the literature as a critical avenue for the granting of power (or “empowerment”) for DRs.⁴³ Let us explore why below.

⁴³ Bandura, *Self-efficacy*; Conger and Kanungo, “The Empowerment Process.”

These forms of inclusive communication serve as a departure from the dominant conceptions of reasoned and articulate argument. In doing so, they offer windows of opportunity to develop self-efficacy within members of more oppressed backgrounds, those who may not appear to be natural participants of democratic deliberation.

Greeting, for example—Young would say that they constitute one signal for cultural courtesy and recognition. But as ACT UP shows, SMOs may often use greeting to help members understand one another on a more substantive level. The new member packet, the pairing of old and new meeting attendees—these means foster social interactions but also the exchange of institutional knowledge necessary for internal inclusion.

The new member packet, for example, provides individuals with an array of possibilities to contribute to the SMO; its last page offers options for participation in the group.

Under the heading of “What do AIDS Activists Do? / What Would You Like To Do?” the list includes possibilities such as “cook food” and “eat” (forms of greeting) along with more traditional asks such as “develop leadership” and “make speeches.”⁴⁴

There are seemingly intuitive lessons that SMOs often forget when they engage in campaigns toward formidable sociopolitical ends (e.g., end AIDS). Among them is the fact that the basic recognition of humanity and need within each of its members is as crucial as tactic or power analyses. Greeting fulfils such an instrumental goal in SMOs, as it accepts and invites members to contribute to the SMO in ways that are most

⁴⁴ ACT UP Philadelphia, “New Member Packet.”

appropriate and exciting for them. Take, for instance, Melvin—an older gentleman with a significant lisp who has been a part of ACT UP for over two decades. He does not talk much in ACT UP meetings, but in our interview, he told me that he took pride in his role as “outreach specialist,” or the greeter in the group: the designated friend to new members and the coffee maker for every meeting.⁴⁵

Narrative is similarly powerful: it furthers both SR (in introducing certain perspectives) and DR (in ensuring that people feel valued). In our example of the housing needs discussion, Jahmiah had been facilitating the entire meeting; he has attended regional trainings and developed leadership potential. But with James and Ramon—two much newer members, one of them entirely new—their injection of personal narrative is the first time in the meeting that they speak. And now, they are steering the discussion.

As theorists have failed to note (Young included), narrative here is important not only for the perspective that it imparts to others, but also for its very capacity to cement DR. For the more disenfranchised members who have not been through programmes like Project TEACH—they begin to feel included, they begin to invest in themselves and their emotions, and they begin to realise—if not before—how intimate the link between ACT UP’s policy work and their own lives can be. Such personal perspective offers greater basis for understanding of others, as discussed above, but also a sense of utility for themselves. The rationality-based accounts of SMOs have discussed self-interest as a key motive for sustained participation. And as we have noted before, critical too is the

⁴⁵ White, interview.

development of self-efficacy as a route to empowerment and continued political involvement.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the processes by which oligarchy manifests in informal SMOs (the “tyranny of structurelessness”), and offered several clear features of institutional design to mitigate such oligarchy and promote internal inclusion (x4). The consensus style of decision-making common to collectivist-democratic organisations (e.g., ACT UP) is uniquely susceptible to oligarchy. Yet at the same time, I argued that with the right features of institutional design, this format of communicative democracy can make internal inclusion possible, especially inclusion of DRs who are often excluded from traditional styles of decision-making.

The significant theoretical innovation of this chapter is as follows: this study takes Young’s theory and broadens its parameters from an individual basis of dyadic conception to encompass structures of institutional design. SMOs such as ACT UP have injected greater intentionality to their communicative democracy: they have incorporated rituals of greeting, invitation of narrative, and deployment of rhetoric to open contribution from DRs. These institutional features of communicative democracy welcome and empower a more heterogeneous constituency.

The work is not easy, but so important. Internal inclusion of DRs is especially significant within the ideal of communicative democracy that is practised by ACT UP. Within a grassroots group with open membership, all participants gain access to and are expected to exercise decision-making powers starting at their first meeting. The process of becoming a representative for the HIV/AIDS epidemic is thus one of personal volition, signified by one's own decision to attend Monday meetings. There exists no form of public authorisation by others (e.g., no formal vote for entry), nor external forms of accountability. With greater autonomy and no formal channels of communication with the representatives, the identity and voice of the representatives, the activist members, become only more important, as they have possess greater latitude for discretion in political decisions and actions.⁴⁶ This section delineated organisational structures for alternative modes of communication that allow for internal inclusion; and in carving out this space, SMOs may realise their own defences against the iron law of oligarchy and toward more powerful political participation.

⁴⁶ Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*.

Chapter 6. “You can’t leave ACT UP”: solidarity development

6.1 Introduction

This chapter theorises the development of political solidarity in SMOs. My definition of political solidarity consists of two key components: a shared political orientation toward SR and the moral obligation of participants to pursue actions toward SR.

Contextualising political solidarity in the overall SMO theory of SR. More so than any other chapter that precedes it, Chapter 6 introduces a set of group dynamics that depend and build upon the sociological accomplishments detailed in prior sections. From Chapters 2-4, we had arrived at an inclusive SMO environment in which descriptive representatives (DRs) had become members in both presence and power.

To situate the concept of political solidarity to the rest of this thesis, I suggest that we imagine the pathway to SR as a driving route to a set of specific destinations. The prior causal steps in this causal mechanism built a functional car that represents the heterogeneous SMO. Here, I treat the two components of political solidarity in the following metaphorical terms: 1) the SMO membership agrees to drive the car in the right direction (e.g., *shared political orientation*), and 2) it possesses a charged car battery to arrive at our destination (e.g., the *moral obligation* or will needed to achieve SR).

In the prior chapter, I focused primarily on how informal SMOs can battle Michels's iron law of oligarchy. We engaged in a discussion on how they can counteract the tendency of grassroots groups to form concentrated cores of power, and how certain institutional features can engineer internal inclusion among a diverse membership. This chapter turns our attention from Michels's oligarchy problem to another principal issue in the organisation of political groups: Olson's problem of collective action. The following discussion aims to explain the psychosocial shifts that SMOs catalyse among its participants to develop *political solidarity* among its participants. This solidarity, I argue, constitutes the dominant link to sustain participation and collective action among beneficiaries and allies alike.

What is solidarity? Solidarity is a messy term in SMT. As past SMT scholars have admitted, "building solidarity is perhaps the most crucial yet under-theorized process in organizing people for social change—an essential yet elusive component of any successful movement."¹ This chapter aims to shed greater light on the causal processes by which common perspective and obligation can be built in the SMO environment. Adapting Subašić et al.'s 2008 definition, I operationalise solidarity as two key components:²

- 1) The formation of a *common perspective* that bridges divergent conceptions of self-interest among the membership, especially those divided between

¹ Dobbie and Richards-Schuster, "Building Solidarity through Difference."

² Subašić, Reynolds, and Turner, "The Political Solidarity Model of Social Change."

beneficiaries and allies; and

- 2) The development of feelings of *mutual need and obligation*, in which members believe that their own participation and that of others is necessary for the accomplishment of SMO goals. In other words, solidarity must be a two-piece package: members in an SMO must have both the *perspective* and the *motivation* necessary to act as a collective toward a common set of agreed goals. Here I will note cognitive shifts that can change the behaviour and actions of SMO participants, what SMT calls “frames”.³

I draw from the empirical material of both beneficiaries and allies in the following sections. Some substrates of obligation apply more to one group than another: for example, beneficiaries feel morally indebted and obligated to the AIDS movement for literally having saved their lives, whereas allies do not. The evidence here derives largely from self-reported comments and my participant observation, with significant commentary from one black beneficiary, John Bell, in particular. I admit upfront that this empirical base is rife with subjectivity and its limitations. That said, the lack of personal interpretation would be entirely more problematic, for these cognitive processes of meaning making and reality construction constitute the very definition of frames and the resultant product of political solidarity.⁴

³ Goffman, *Frame Analysis*; Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation”; Snow and Benford, “Master Frames and Cycles of Protest”; Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements.” Benford, “An Insider’s Critique of the Social Movement Framing Perspective*.”

⁴ Goffman, *Frame Analysis*; Snow et al., “Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation.”

Roadmap for the following discussion. This chapter is divided into three sections according to the key components of political solidarity: one on political orientation and the latter two on moral obligation. First, I pick up where Chapter 5 left off. We will discuss the ways in which the communicative democracy described in the prior chapter is not only useful for its capacity for inclusivity, but also for the processes by which consensus shapes and bridges gaps in experience among beneficiaries and allies. Together, the group sculpts a shared perspective by which allies come to understand the needs and interests of beneficiaries. The second and third sections, in turn, trace a typology of feelings within the self that characterise a binding discourse of obligation, one that sustains SMO participation. The third section focuses on moral obligation as it is specifically rooted in substrata and causes of self-interest.

This analysis will deliver several contributions for SMT. Although much of the empirical data will centre on individual psychology, the SMO context is critical to creating fertile ground for such cognitive developments toward solidarity. This next theoretical step toward solidarity relies heavily upon the heterogeneity that has been achieved through the earlier steps in the causal mechanism: the first section will speak to the importance of conflict, rhetoric, and disagreement in the formation of group perspective. In relation to moral obligation, I illustrate how certain organisational characteristics facilitate moral commitment to political participation: the model of consensus and deliberation, the setup of high expectations, and the emphasis on political education. Counterintuitively, self-interest figures as a critical backbone to the moral impetus for obligation among SMO members.

6.2 The formation of group perspective in communicative democracy

This section focuses on the first of the two key components of political solidarity: the development of a shared political orientation toward issues of SR. In particular, I outline how deliberation processes in SMOs can facilitate a group *perspective* that reflects common agreement and intention to pursue specific actions that are substantially representative (SR). The process of deliberation refers to the involved and often lengthy conversations, or arguments, that arise among members when the group is attempting to reach consensus on a given issue or action proposal.

This discussion builds upon the theoretical groundwork of communicative democracy laid in Chapter 5. The prior chapter had introduced features of institutional design that opened the SMO floor for the contribution and empowerment of descriptive representatives (DRs). Here I turn to demonstrate how these communicative tools (e.g., rhetoric and narrative) further operate to shape a group perspective for SR.

I distinguish this chapter's discussion from that of Chapter 2. Previously, we had spoken about the motivations and tendencies that tend to predict the involvement of allies and beneficiaries and allies in social movement struggle, especially in activities that invite and promote the inclusivity of heterogeneous groups. Here, Chapter 6 discusses reasons for why such people who get involved stay involved, less from an individual perspective

of life trajectory or social location and more so from the collective environment and culture of the SMO. Critically, I discuss not only the motivation to begin or sustain SMO involvement, but also the pathways by which individuals develop the perspective to invest their involvement in ways that benefit and work toward the goals of the group as a whole.

Theoretical contribution. Here I argue for the capacity of deliberation and communicative fora in shaping common perspective in spite of—or because of—group heterogeneity. Alternative hypotheses have relied heavily on the binding glue that “collective identity” may have upon SMO participants and their ability for mobilisation. Such theory assigns great staying power to a kind of homogeneity, “a perception of a shared status or relation.”⁵

My theory of SR runs all but counter to this thread of SMT. It rests upon the attraction of difference: up to this point, the mechanism has focused on the sustained participation and input of DRs. At the point of developing political solidarity, in turn, this theory realises the assets that arise from these internal differences in identity. It speaks to the critical role of deliberation, rife with emotion, conflict, and disagreement, in achieving consensus on political goal. I evoke the same institutional features of non-rational communication that were discussed in relation to inclusivity of people (DRs) to show their simultaneous purpose in the inclusivity of ideas and eventual group perspective.

⁵ Polletta and Jasper, “Collective Identity and Social Movements”; Friedman and McAdam, “Collective Identity and Activism.”

6.2.1 Tools in communicative democracy for perspective formation

Below I illustrate a simple pathway from DR participation to an SMO-wide group perspective and thus shared political orientation. Again, this process assumes that the SMO has practised the strategies of inclusivity discussed in Chapter 5, so that beneficiaries feel empowered and able to participate in the SMO (as indicated in Step A of the below model). Step (B) emphasises the unique value that DRs offer to the SMO via *perspective*, or the positional knowledge that is accumulated from the experiences, social location, and history of individuals.

This section explicates the process by which beneficiaries and allies aggregate individual perspectives to create common group interest, all through the medium of communicative democracy. Through the deliberative process, the SMO forms group perspectives, interests, and opinions that better reflect priorities of SR. Again borrowing from the political theory of Iris Young, I show that only with this collective group perspective can an SMO develop a shared political orientation that is prerequisite to SR.

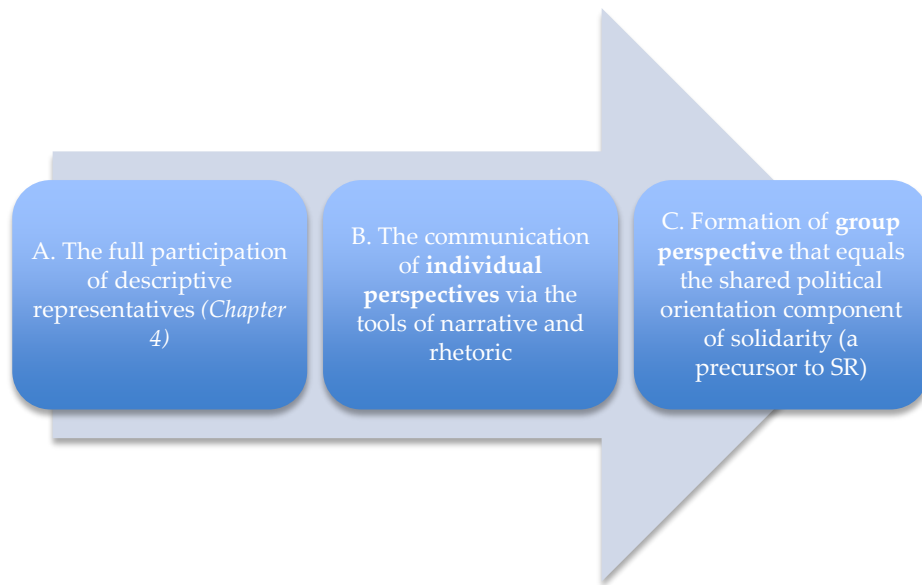


Figure 18. Process for the development of group perspective in SMOs that practice communicative democracy. Group perspective is a critical component of political solidarity that is necessary for pursuit of SR activity.

Communicative democracy, in opening up participation to beneficiaries or DRs, serves to introduce individual perspectives that become collective group perspective through deliberation. As discussed in Chapter 5, the departure from a strict reliance of rationality proves to be a key hallmark in the inclusivity of SMO spaces for heterogeneous constituencies. Here I elaborate that communicative democracy is significant not only in its potential to further the inclusivity of *people* (such as descriptive representatives), but also very much in its inclusivity of *ideas* and *perspectives*.

Perspective. Zoning in on Step B of the process above, I would like to further discuss this notion of perspective as a key component to shaping a shared political orientation in the group. Young describes perspective as the lens by which one sees the world, “a way of looking at social processes without determining what one sees.” The lens is bounded by

one's social location and identity.⁶ For example, a man is less likely to have a perspective that is sensitive to issues of sex and sexism, for he does not experience that particular form of discrimination. As a result of their general perspective, men are less likely than women to prioritise policies that address gender discrimination.

Perspective is an exogenous characteristic of a SMO membership. It is a permanent attribute of each of us, an unasked-for facet that invariably develops with time and experience. In the SMO context, a group can only benefit from a heterogeneity of perspectives if it brings those perspectives in the form of new and diverse members. Only through the vehicle of bodies and souls—not logic of mind—can a group gain broader spectra of perspectives. DR thus is instrumentally important in fulfilling the diversity of perspectives (and thus interests and opinions) in ways that inform and motivate a shared political orientation in an SMO.

Deliberative democracy acts as a means to ensure the inclusion of as many perspectives as possible, what Weldon likens to “puzzle pieces” needed for assembly. Through this puzzle assembly, groups can give rise to excluded interests that may have been left out of the original agenda or at the point of final decision-making.⁷ As the ACT UP Philadelphia new member packet very simply states, in bold: “You are a member of ACT UP...Your voice is needed.”⁸

⁶ Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 146.

⁷ Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*, 44–45.

⁸ ACT UP Philadelphia, “New Member Packet.”

6.2.2 Tools in communicative democracy for group perspective

Here I present one self-contained anecdote that illustrates the practical mechanics of deliberation in forming a shared political orientation within ACT UP Philadelphia. Of the many possible instances of SR deliberation in ACT UP, I choose this story for its especial significance, both in the historiographical sense within the AIDS activist narrative and in its theoretical illustration of abstract points outlined above. From a historical perspective, the instance below highlights how the group began to consider and eventually take on global treatment access of drugs in the Global South (largely sub-Saharan Africa) as one of its most extensive campaigns in its history. Recall that in the theory chapter (Chapter 1), I cited global treatment access as one of five chief axes of SR in the U.S. AIDS movement. From a theoretical level, this anecdote underscores the importance of rhetoric and conflict as tools in communicative democracy that advance a group's understanding and adoption of common issues for SR.

One disclaimer before delving into the story: I admit that despite its illustrative purchase, this empirical instance does not fit perfectly with the political theory discussed earlier. The ultimate shared orientation stems from the deliberative contribution of a white HIV-negative ally, not a DR's experiential perspective. This mismatch I will discuss further in the analysis.

Recall John Bell, a long-time African American and HIV-positive ACT UP member. His words tell this story best. John recounts the first time that he remembers global treatment being mentioned in a Monday night meeting. It was out of the mouth of

someone we would call an AIDS activist ally rather than a beneficiary: Asia Russell, an HIV-negative white anarchist and prominent ACT UP member. John says:

Asia brought the issue, the deaths of people, the ravaging of HIV in Africa, the sub-Saharan Africa...She put it on the board, she said, "I want to talk about Africa."

By this time, I had some clout in ACT UP, people listened to me, I had a voice...I said, "I'm a decorated Vietnam veteran. I'm an Afro-American, living in America. I don't want to hear no shit about no AIDS in Africa." I said it so forcefully that Asia sat down. And I mean it from my bottom of my heart that Asia Russell sat down, and she never said anything.⁹

The story does not end there, but let me pause to make several observations. First, John reveals his own self-awareness that he "had some clout in ACT UP...had a voice." This is a man who said he "only came to Philadelphia to detoxify from heroin, cocaine and alcohol," who thought, as an HIV-positive person, "underst[ood] that the only course that was left for me was death." And coming from one of the most disenfranchised of social locations, John Bell was heard. That when he protested Asia's attempt to talk about global treatment access, she listened and sat down and did not say another word for a week. The first portion of this anecdote demonstrates the respect and voice accorded to beneficiaries and DRs in the group—an inclusivity that I have emphasised throughout this thesis to be so critically important.

This story illustrates the value of communicative democracy as exemplified by the power of rhetoric. Recall that rhetoric refers to the manner in which participants deliver their messages and input in deliberation. Text on paper does not grant full justice to

⁹ Bell, interview.

John's commanding presence in a room, but his recounting still reveals the weight that his protest had upon the meeting. John said he "don't want to hear no shit about no AIDS in Africa." Note the cursing in his words and imagine the force with which they were said. People listened. He tells us that because he "said it [that sentence] so forcefully," he forced Asia to sit back down. Certainly, rhetoric matters in the delivery and deliberation of ACT UP issues.

John now continues his story:

The next week, she [Asia] did the same thing and I did the same thing. Asia said, "I want to talk about Africa." And I said, "I said that I'm decorated Vietnam veteran, I have problems with that being in America. I'm an Afro-American, living in America. I have problems with that. I don't want to hear by [sic] any Africa, AIDS in Africa." And I said it again, I said it so forcefully, Asia just sat down.

Then next week came, she did it again. But this time, her response after I said that, because I said it, this is the third week in a row. This time, she said, "John, I know you have problems being a decorated veteran in America. I know you have problems being an Afro-American in America. But what I'm talking about is the amount of deaths. Do you hear me?"

And then she began to teach me, so she came up with a response. She began to teach me and when she taught me, she taught the room and everybody jumped on the same page. The axiom in that is that if somebody shoots you down, you don't go away. With these guys and gals that come from jail, that's the first thing that they will do, because they'll tell you, "Fuck you," and walk out. So we teach over that. So I'm in the process of teaching that to the students.

Now, that's how you bring issues to ACT UP.¹⁰

¹⁰ Bell, interview.

The ending of the story comes after three weeks of back-and-forth. Ultimately, Asia opens the avenue to teach other members about the sheer severity of treatment access problems in the Global South.

Several further points to raise about this example and what it represents for the potential of deliberation in creating shared perspective:

1. *Anger and emotion.* As discussed above, John's anecdote illustrates one instance in which rhetoric, emotion, and rhetoric operate in the communicative democracy of the SMO. In particular, the anger in John's words exemplifies its utility in amplifying his voice in ways that extend beyond rationality. Scholars of critical pedagogy and activist scholars, for example, argue that the articulation and experience of strong feelings are critical prerequisites to effecting productive outcomes of conflict: that is, the challenging of prior assumptions and the greater understanding of different perspective.¹¹
2. *Conflict.* Conflict is central to this particular story, as it is definitional to all politics. We engage in political process because two or more parties have disagreement that must be resolved; such is the root of the civil disobedience or political advocacy activities with which SMOs like ACT UP engage, activities that are external-facing in attempt to influence mainstream channels of power.

¹¹ Dirks, "The Power of Feelings"; O'Brien, "I Could Hear You If You Would Just Calm Down"; Graeber, *Direct Action*.

However, less understood and discussed is the role of internal conflict as a gateway to group learning, especially in heterogeneous groups. When inclusive SMOs open the possibility for a heterogeneity of constituencies to express a diversity of opinions, only through conflict can SMOs realise the range of disagreement and come to common understanding in spite of (or because of) such difference.¹² Conflict is important for what its presence signifies: it indicates that there are heterogeneous groups of people in the room with vastly different interests, a reality that will make deliberation more difficult, complex, and frustrating.

Instrumentally, conflict forces participants in a deliberative democracy to reconsider their prior beliefs.¹³ Indeed, the expression of differing idea can cement and polarise opinions. But when done in an environment that has fortified the understanding of respect and the utility of tools such as narrative, SMOs can achieve a shared understanding, if not necessarily agreement.¹⁴

3. *Rationality mediated in environments of communicative democracy.* This case also exemplifies how a white ally (Asia Russell in this instance) can persuade DRs (e.g., John Bell) what constitutes SR and on what issues the group should focus. This direction of power flow as located in allies and exercised upon DRs is not uncommon, even in ACT UP Philadelphia. Even though much of my theoretical

¹² Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*, 83.

¹³ Osterman, "Overcoming Oligarchy"; Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent*.

¹⁴ A crucial argument in various works of SMO scholarship, including those on LGBT organisations. See, e.g., Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent*.

discussion has focused on the ways in which DRs can uniquely contribute to and inform the SMO agenda, I also acknowledge that allies can drive the SR agenda. Much more on this discussion will follow in Chapter 8, when I pick up a further analysis of ACT UP's global treatment campaign and discuss the problematic oligarchies that do indeed manifest in this work.

For now, I only want to note that some of the power of the ally's argument for a particular kind of SR rests in rationality and fact. In this case, Asia Russell urges ACT UP to campaign on global treatment access because of its stark importance in the AIDS epidemiology: the very rational calculation that over six million people around the world still lack access to antiretroviral drugs.¹⁵ Indeed, ACT UP Philadelphia has always boasted proudly that critical to its success is that the first half of its "homework and hell-raising" strategy is the extent to which facts and evidence will direct and empower its activism.¹⁶

In a communicative democracy such as that of ACT UP's Monday night meetings, the opening and importance of routes for emotive and non-rational components do not negate the necessity or utility of empirical evidence. Rather, I argue that the facts are irrevocably linked to their communication and delivery. Even here, with Asia's insistence on broaching the definition of SR so that the group thinks about transnational work, it is only with her ability to deliberate and navigate the

¹⁵ UNAIDS, "Global Report: UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2012."

¹⁶ Collins, "For Pioneering AIDS Activists."

emotions of others in the group that she can deliver the rational components of her argument with full weight.

This point becomes particularly salient when we trace the continuing battles over the years to convince beneficiaries that their HIV-positive status in the United States is similarly linked to the plight of others in the epidemic halfway across the world. ACT UP Philadelphia has employed a number of routes of rhetoric to develop this shared political orientation. Members have made signs or placards to show the number of people who are waiting lists for drugs in say, New Orleans versus Kenya and Uganda. They draw analogies between ADAP (AIDS Drug Assistance Program) and PEPFAR (President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief), respective funding streams for treatment access domestically and internationally. Members have said that making this issue- and interest-linkage successful has not been easy. But with wit and rhetoric, the group has communicated the urgency and moral necessity of the issue through creative media of expression, either through analogies or visuals or words ("They [people in the Global South] have access to nothing but death. We have access to politicians.")¹⁷

6.3 Obligation in political solidarity

¹⁷ De Marco, interview.

The second component of political solidarity is the moral will of SMO participants to pursue common goals for SR. The prior section traced how deliberation can lead to formation of group perspective and a shared political orientation. Here I describe the cognitive substrata that create a sense of moral obligation among participants in an SMO. I first underscore the theoretical importance of obligation to explanations of SMO participation, and then move onto an empirical classification of the various roots of moral obligation. The empirical discussion is divided as three key themes: commitment to internal and external beneficiaries of the movement, ideological subscription to the collectivist model of consensus, and the strong conviction in self-efficacy that girds a moral obligation to continue such work.

6.3.1 Obligation versus accountability: the theory

Obligation: a stronger hold than accountability. I should begin this section by scoring a critical distinction between my term of choice, “obligation,” as opposed to the more common notion of “accountability” in SMOs. For the theory of SR in this thesis, I will illustrate the mightier force of obligation as it commits SMO participants to political solidarity. The key distinction as I outline will showcase a novel theoretical lens for understanding purposive selective incentives and their power for overcoming the Olsonian problem of collective action.

In related bodies of scholarship, academics often speak of both political and social accountability. The field of political representation analyses the modes of accountability

that bound representatives to their constituents, whether that may be the threat of losing one's chances of re-election or the suffering of other democratic sanctions. Mansbridge describes this model of representation as the traditional form of "promissory representation."¹⁸ Accountability, too, has become the trendy concept for the analysis of institutions (not persons) in the civic society (non-electoral) realm, as organisations such as NGOs are too bound to certain kinds of governance by funders, constituents, or other rules.¹⁹

Social accountability is a more informal facet of representation, and arguably equally or more important than political accountability in most contexts. Though less visible than legal means of accountability, its power is generalised and universal. Social accountability applies to all groups, thus relevant to organisations in fields as disparate as business studies and human psychology and SMT. In fact, in informal SMOs, social accountability is the only form of accountability that exists; by definition, groups such as ACT UP refuse any formal means of political accountability for the sanction or recourse of behaviour on the part of representatives.

Theorists have flavoured social accountability with a number of conceptual names: the desire for conformity, honour, respect, collective identity, all often this idea of cognitive "frames" that link individual interest to the collective good.²⁰ No matter the name, all

¹⁸ Mansbridge, "Rethinking Representation."

¹⁹ Anderson, "What NGO Accountability Means - and Does Not Mean"; Peruzzotti, "Civil Society, Representation and Accountability."

²⁰ Friedman and McAdam, "Collective Identity and Activism"; McClendon, "Social Esteem and Participation in Contentious Politics"; Subašić, Reynolds, and Turner, "The Political Solidarity Model of Social Change"; Polletta and

these social pressures can facilitate collective action. The applicability and strength of social accountability in any province of human interaction is not to be discounted; the popularity and proliferation of studies that boast of the amplifying effects of social networks is one such testament to the scholarly belief in its force.²¹ In ACT UP, too, members recognise that social accountability plays its fair share in the SMO's political solidarity. Waheedah uses the very language of accountability within the group and to the constituency when she surmised: "One of the reasons that kept ACT UP Philadelphia together [is] because we held each other accountable. You know, we were accountable to our own self, we were accountable to our constituency."²²

Yet, I argue that in SMT and other fields of organisational studies, scholars have overlooked a far more binding form of motivation of political participation: obligation. Unlike accountability, obligation stems not from one's desire to impress others. Rather, obligation derives from the ideological conviction that it is one's duty or responsibility to sustain SMO participation.

Existing scholars on obligation. There do exist a small handful of scholars who have theorised on obligation. In her study of the 1960s student sit-ins, Polletta (1998) mentions the importance of "moral imperative" for participation.²³ Benford (1993) discusses in greater detail similar participant vocabularies around "propriety" as a source of

Jasper, "Collective Identity and Social Movements"; McClain et al., "Group Membership, Group Identity, and Group Consciousness"; Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

²¹ Snow, Zurcher Jr, and Eklund-Olson, "Social Networks and Social Movements"; Diani and McAdam, *Social Movements and Networks*; Scott and Carrington, *The SAGE Handbook of Social Network Analysis*.

²² Shabazz-El, interview.

²³ Polletta, "'It Was Like A Fever...': Narrative and Identity in Social Protest."

motivational framing, but admitted that there exists a paucity of theory on the conditions that lead to the adoption of such vocabularies and cognitive frames.²⁴ More extended discussion on obligation has been concentrated in other academic fields further astray from pure SMT. Two of the most prominent papers on the subject come from Schwartz (1977) and Stern (1999), in social psychology and environmentalist studies respectively.²⁵ Stern, in his paper proposing a modified version of Schwartz's "moral norm-activation theory," states the following: "We propose that movement success depends on movement activists and organizations building support by activating or reshaping personal norms to create feelings of obligation."

I maintain that the following discussion of moral obligation holds definite congruencies with Stern and Schwartz's treatment of the concept. Yet I also underscore the unique theoretical innovation of the concept, that SMT should better account for the personal substrata that root obligation such that it becomes critical glue for maintaining SMO participation. Critical to Stern and Schwartz's belief in the importance of moral obligation hinges on an "ascription of responsibility" to oneself, or participants' conviction that their actions will indeed fulfil ideological and practical goals. This conviction is otherwise known as self-efficacy, as we discussed in Chapter 3 and will further elaborate in Section 6.3.3.

²⁴ Benford, "You Could Be the Hundredth Monkey."

²⁵ Stern et al., "A Value-belief-norm Theory of Support for Social Movements"; Schwartz, "Normative Influences on Altruism."

What I outline immediately below and in further sections, however, is the importance of other sources of less than altruistic fulfilment in participants' development of moral obligation. It is, in many ways, an argument counterintuitive to common sense, because morality and self-interest do not seem to correspond. But as the next section 6.4 will explain, self-interest figures quite prominently in discussions of obligation.

Purposive incentives. In this analysis of self-interest re-enters the discussion of selective incentives. I return to underscoring the difference between accountability and obligation—and the theoretical significance of the latter—by revisiting Wilson and Clark's typology presented in Chapter 3.²⁶ If we can recall, social accountability fits squarely into their notion of a "solidary" incentive: a desire to participate in a group for accruing the benefits or avoiding the costs associated with interpersonal relationships, such as friendship or honour. In contrast, "purposive" incentives draw from the desire of participants to actualise certain moral or ideological ideals ("doing the right thing").

In both theoretical terms (for informal SMOs) and empirical grounding (via ACT UP data), I argued in Chapter 3 that groups may draw and sustain individual participation through a combination of such incentives, especially solidary and purposive incentives in grassroots, mission-driven organisations. What I would like to take further, however, is the development of the purposive incentives that we discussed at the point of recruitment or joining an informal SMO. Earlier I cited Kaytee Riek confessing that "I felt

²⁶ Clark and Wilson, "Incentive Systems."

useful [because of ACT UP]" and Paul Yabor relating to his ACT UP projects like it was like "feeding a baby."²⁷

Yet this section argues and illustrates that these feelings become even stronger over the course of deeper involvement in the SMO, that incentive does not suffice as an appropriate word to label such motivations for political participation. No longer is it a carrot or a stick, but an obligation that becomes more akin to a *duty* rather than a choice. For this reason, obligation becomes a much more powerful stronghold on securing and sustaining participant involvement than does social accountability. As I will describe later, this dominant notion of obligation does not preclude motives of self-interest or rational calculations of cost-benefit in involvement. However, below I would like to emphasise the moral and ethical components that SMO participants attribute to their participation.

In claiming moral obligation as a strong form of purposive incentive, this argument constitutes a theoretical contribution to overcoming Olson's problem of collective action. Keep this in mind as the empirical examples illustrate the ways in which allies, individuals who do not directly benefit from movement goals, are still morally beholden to the SMO work.

²⁷ Riek, interview; Yabor, interview.

6.3.2 Obligation as commitment to internal and external beneficiaries

I first discuss this notion of obligation as it arises from the commitment of SMO participants to each other or to other constituents in the movement.

a. Internal obligation to other beneficiary members

Many ACT UP participants, beneficiaries and allies both, explain that they are involved in ACT UP because they feel a commitment to people with HIV and AIDS who have been a part of the group, the DRs of the AIDS epidemic. I thus label this section under the heading of “internal solidarity” in reference to the feelings of obligation among members within the SMO itself. Of course, this sense of obligation has differed in nature according to the era and the person. For beneficiaries or PWAs in the early years, before the 1995 approval of protease inhibitors (drugs to treat HIV), people were very aware that they were literally fighting for their own lives, for the hope that their work could find drugs to combat the virus in their bodies. It was not only a desire to save one’s own body; as common if not more so has been the expressed obligation for the well-being or lives of their fellow compatriots, both in the pre- and post-protease inhibitor era.

ACT UP Philadelphia members have expressed such sentiments of duty. In remembering his sick friends from the past, black PWA leader John Bell laments the stories of people in and out of ACT UP. They had died from AZT and other medications that wasted away PWAs until they were no longer a part of this world. He ties an explicit connection between his strict sense of duty to the current work of the SMO and

his friends who have died: “They’re part of my life, which is one of the reasons why I do what I do.”

John argues that only with the work of activists like him that PWAs can continue to live, so that the metaphorical “flood” can be held back. Pay attention to John’s language, which evokes strong sense of obligation through his use of command words such as “can’t,” “have to,” “need to,” and “requirement”:

You can’t leave ACT UP until you have somebody to take your place. It is the requirement of the activists in Philadelphia to get people to understand... It’s like holding back a dike. You’re in a position and you’re holding back water. If you leave, the flood will happen. So you have to get people to take your place. You need to train somebody to understand how you understand stuff and then when you have that person, they’re coming to the ACT UP meetings and you can walk away and say, “*I’ve served my time.*”²⁸

John Bell employs diction that evokes connotations of military service in describing the obligation of ACT UP members—a choice of words that perhaps reflect the fact that he first described himself in his interview as a “decorated Vietnam veteran.” He exhorts his fellow participants to “serve their time” in the excerpt, as he underscores the necessity of developing the next generation of activists. John was HIV-positive himself and passed away in 2012 after many years in ACT UP.

Broader and more abstract than the internal commitment to other members within the group is this notion of duty to constituents outside the SMO, another binding factor in the development of obligation among members. Similar to how John described his ACT

²⁸ Bell, interview.

UP participation as “serving [one’s] time,” Waheedah also (interestingly enough) likens the SMO’s work to a kind of public service. She speaks of how ACT UP would “spring into action” for any “fire” crisis that threatened their constituency—either on an individual basis (e.g., “this thing that had happened in their building”), or a systemic and political level (“this funding stream” or “budget”). The group has addressed fires big and small: from discrimination cases as individual as the layoff of an HIV-positive employee at a Whole Foods grocery store to campaigns as generalised as the fight for federal funding for drug access in sub-Saharan Africa.²⁹

6.3.3 Obligation to the consensus model

For some if not all participants, the consensus process serves as a root of moral obligation that binds members to the decisions and subsequent actions bound by the group. Despite the frustrations and intergroup disagreements, the procedural ideal of consensus imparts beliefs of righteousness, legitimacy, and trust to its participants. Some members may not be happy with the final outcome of a deliberation; they have often talked about tense disagreements and frustrations during the Monday night meetings. Still, however, they respect the ideological integrity of the procedure. These findings align with the theoretical concept of procedural justice: the notion that people will honour a given outcome by virtue of a (perceived) fair decision-making process, and not necessarily by their agreement with the outcome itself.³⁰ Psychological experiments, too,

²⁹ ACT UP Philadelphia, *The Actuplist Archives*.

³⁰ Lind and Tyler, *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*; Thibaut, Walker, and others, *Procedural Justice*.

confirm this concept of procedural justice: they show that deliberation will increase the likelihood that groups decide upon cooperative choices.³¹

Even if members may not always feel beholden to one another, they do indicate a high degree of respect to this most fundamental bedrock of ACT UP, this consensus model of decision-making. John Bell indicates this contrast exactly, as he argues that members are not tied to the opinions of “any one person” but rather the group “agreement that makes the decision.”

John defends the tedious reality of ACT UP’s consensus-based model (“meetings should be...four fucking hours long”). His loyalty to the practice of communicative democracy in the group is very common among members.³² At times, ACT UP has talked of deviating from the consensus process for easier and less time-consuming modes of deliberation, but it has remained only that—talk. ACT UP members describe the style of Monday night meetings with almost a religious reverence. They call, ambiguously, both the physical floor of the church basement and the metaphorical floor of the meeting membership as “sacred ground.”³³ As Albo, cited in Chapter 2, spoke of his motivations to join the SMO in anarchist practice, the consensus model is the totality of some motives for SMO participation.

³¹ Orbell, Van de Kragt, and Dawes, “Explaining Discussion-induced Cooperation.”

³² Tucker, interview; Jeavons, interview; Benitez, interview; Yabor, interview;

³³ Kozeniweski, interview; Gossett, “Che Gossett on AIDS Activist Kiyoshi Kuromiya’s Legacy.”

6.3.4 The backbone of self-efficacy

Reading between the lines, this rhetoric of obligation intimates and depends upon a strong conviction in self-efficacy, both that of the individual and the group. That is, ACT UP members strongly believe that their own efforts and the collective efforts of the SMO will effect great change in the lives of PWAs in Philadelphia and throughout the world.

A number of SMT scholars have spoke to the importance of self-efficacy in creating a sense of obligation among SMO participants. Benford speaks of the linked vocabularies of “propriety” and “efficacy” that motivates participants in the nuclear disarmament movement.³⁴ More generally, the previously cited theorists of obligation argued that SMO participants must believe in the projected output and impact of their work in order to do it in the first place—a fairly intuitive argument.³⁵

I emphasise that the strong sense of self-efficacy arises from very intentional features of ACT UP’s organisational design: the embedded pep talk, education, and consciousness raising of its history all play into equipping their membership with confidence. ACT UP introduces a high set of expectations for participation from members from their first point in the group. The introductory packet handed out first-time meeting attendees attests to ACT UP’s belief in the potential of its members. The text from the ACT UP New York packet is the original, and the Philadelphia version says the same:

There is a great deal to do in the fight to end the AIDS crisis. It is up to you to decide where you fit into that fight and how much time you have to commit. We

³⁴ Benford, “You Could Be the Hundredth Monkey.”

³⁵ Stern et al., “A Value-belief-norm Theory of Support for Social Movements”; Schwartz, “Normative Influences on Altruism,” 19.

encourage you to start a new group within ACT UP if there is no committee or working group that addresses your concerns and interests. ACT UP is in a state of constant evolution. Your skills and experiences are valuable in the fight against AIDS.³⁶

ACT UP commutes a blatant “you can do it” rhetoric to its members. “You” are a part of this fight, you can start new groups, you have skills and experiences that are needed.

In the ACT UP context, members’ incredible sense of pride and faith in the power of their SMO’s work is not unfounded. The very history and success of ACT UP suggests that perhaps there is no other AIDS group that has advanced the rights and lives of PWAs like they have, that without this SMO that has rested on the leadership and participation of DRs, there would not have been the progress of drugs and funding that has saved millions of lives. Present within the discourse of self-efficacy is almost a saviour belief of exceptionalism, a conviction that if we in ACT UP were not to do this, perhaps no one will.

ACT UP Philadelphia ensures that new and old members alike do not forget this incredible legacy and history of AIDS activism. Such a historical consciousness of possibility, Chapter 4 argued, fostered self-efficacy among recruits. That is, recruits learn that ordinary people like them had achieved AIDS victories in the past, and that they too could do it now. The history serves another purpose, too: it binds activists to feelings of gratitude and debt that feed one’s obligation to the movement.

³⁶ ACT UP Philadelphia, “New Member Packet”; ACT UP New York, “ACT UP New York City.”

John Bell's words articulate these theoretical truths. He calls ACT UP his "job." Part of his job, he believes, is to impart a historical understanding of the AIDS movement so that PWAs act up in continuation of this activist struggle:

Every day I breathe, I prepare to go to the ACT UP meetings. Every day, every class. *That's my job.* It's not about them [other HIV+ people] becoming fucking scientists or going the fuck back to college, I don't do that. I said, if you're living well today, and you have medications, the result of you having a medication is directly connected to ACT UP Philadelphia, directly connected. You know, also you have case managers and all these other people put into place, it's not by any whim that had happened. Activists in Philadelphia did that for you.³⁷

Above, John emphasises that "the result of you having a medication is directly connected to ACT UP Philadelphia." That is, he and other PWAs benefited directly from the successes in drug treatment and access that past activists had won. The historical realisation fuels a sense of gratitude for what AIDS activism has given John and others in tangible benefits of life years and quality.

Moreover, this connection engenders a consciousness of "debt" that drives the substrate of moral obligation central to this chapter. SMO participants learn that they have gained and thus "owe" the movement their very literal lives. This feeling of debt serves to motivate participation. I say "debt" very deliberately. In common parlance, debt is synonymous with financial obligation. Transposed to the ethical substrates of SMO involvement, this concept of debt undergirds, very literally, a *moral* obligation to repay one's returns back to the movement.

³⁷ Bell, interview.

6.4 Obligation linked to a moral self-interest

In the empirical data, a language of self-interest belies a set of critical motivations for the feelings of obligation among SMO participants. I alluded earlier that this counterintuitive finding constitutes one of the critical theoretical innovations in my treatment of obligation. Individual desires, often reducible to the economic algebra of cost and benefit, reinforce much of the collective and moral sense of duty. Obligation is deeply rooted in one's own morality, but that morality is still subject to a self-interested calculation from SMO participation. I contend that self-interest operates not as a nefarious or negative factor; rather, it motivates sustained participation through its tie to obligation and moral reciprocity, two feelings derived from the realisation of self-gains from SMO participation.

My argument stands in direct confrontation to earlier theorists on obligation and SMO participation. Stern wrote in 1999, "Personal norms and altruistic values are important because social movements, unlike pure interest groups, are organized around normative claims on individuals and social organizations to *act on the movement's principles for reasons other than self-interest*."³⁸ In arguing the very opposite, my empirical evidence on obligation concretises the theoretical vanguard led by Mansbridge and others in reinforcing the importance—and beneficence—of self-interest in SMT.³⁹

³⁸ Stern et al., "A Value-belief-norm Theory of Support for Social Movements."

³⁹ Mansbridge, *Beyond Self-Interest*; Mansbridge et al., "The Place of Self-Interest and the Role of Power in Deliberative Democracy." Boyd and Richerson, "Culture and Cooperation."

Staking unique claims in the literature. I am not the first to mobilise field data to forge an empirical buttress in this theorised link between altruistic ideals (e.g., obligation) and self-interest. Yet in contrast to extant scholarship, my study advances a distinct and especially individualistic notion of self-interest. The most common explanations of altruism label allies as ego-seekers who do such work for their own psychological fulfilment.⁴⁰ SMO members in this case study have reported similar sentiments of pride (*“never [have I] had a moment when I wasn’t proud of ACT UP”*⁴¹) or self-satisfaction from the work.

The empirical data below unearths individual rationale for the development of obligation that beholds them to SMO participation. Below I outline these tangible gains that SMO members, both beneficiaries and allies, have reported from their participation in ACT UP.⁴²

In a number of the experiential statements below, the language of guilt is closely fettered to this sense of obligation. Many members reflect on their benefitting from ACT UP and their moral necessity to remain within it. They speak strongly to this idea of obligation and punitive emotions that they self-impose if such obligation is not fulfilled.

⁴⁰ Giugni and Passy, *Political Altruism?*; McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements.”

⁴¹ Yabor, interview.

⁴² Orbell, Van de Kragt, and Dawes, “Explaining Discussion-induced Cooperation”; Boyd and Richerson, “Culture and Cooperation.”

6.4.1. For beneficiaries, the gifting or extension of one's own life

For beneficiaries, strong language of obligation arises from the realisation that they have fulfilled significant parts of their self-interest, namely an extension of life and purpose because of their SMO participation.

Self-interest can come in the most basic desire to preserve one's life, especially in relation to the AIDS movement. Its material gains manifest very directly into countable life years: the activists of years prior had secured life-saving drugs that transformed the disease from death sentence to chronic life condition. Take, for instance, Benjamin Green, a member of ACT UP and a black, low-income PWA. It happens that all the respondents cited in this section belong to this same demographic of SMO beneficiaries. Ben tells the story of how he got to ACT UP: it followed an epiphany that he owed his daily drugs to AIDS activism. He recounts the day he had come out of prison, traveling in the rain from jail to his father's house. He decided that he "gotta get rid of the [medicine]...[and] threw it away" so that dad wouldn't know his status. Yet when he joined TEACH, he began to learn that his PWA compatriots had done all the activism that they did to gain rights "at a time that folks could not get medicine." This knowledge shamed him into reflecting upon the time that he chucked his own drugs, the guilt then propelling him to get involved "in helping other folks."⁴³

Ben speaks to the very direct and bodily benefit of ACT UP drugs to his life, rationalising his obligation to participate through the guilt of historical benefit he has

⁴³ Green, interview.

accrued from the movement. Yet the thoughts of beneficiaries below showcase the importance of “life-saving” in a less literal sense, one that can be generalised to beneficiaries in any social movement who experience especially acute political disenfranchisement. Given their resource-starved circumstances by consequence of neoliberal economic systems and societal neglect, the gift of SMO participation can provide especially significant dividends to such beneficiaries.

Some ACT UP members will state the life-saving nature of the SMO explicitly, as black and low-income PWA Roy Hayes recounts: “I became part of ACT UP Philadelphia in 1987, and it was great. They saved my life.”⁴⁴ I also cited Ira Maxfield, another ACT UP member in Chapter 3; he had spoken about the impact of participation in TEACH, a programme that started from ACT UP initiative: “I wanted to die and I felt there was no reason for me to be here anymore, and TEACH gave me new life actually.”⁴⁵ Ben, who I cited earlier, also dedicated himself to ACT UP because he was ““trying to get clean,” to [give] me something to do...[to] keep my mind off of drugs.”⁴⁶ He ended up co-founding a group with other ACT UP members to combat discrimination against people with HIV in prisons.

During an interview before his death, John remembers a poignant statement that his TEACH instructor told him at the conclusion of his course:

Julie Davids told me to my face that as I graduated Project TEACH, if I wasn’t successful then people was going to die. I took that as a challenge. Julie said that,

⁴⁴ Hayes, interview.

⁴⁵ Maxfield, interview.

⁴⁶ Green, interview.

if we we're not successful, if ACT UP is not successful, people would die. *What the fuck, do I want to live and sleep without that on my conscience?* I don't want that, when the information is here. I don't want that. So, that's what I work for. It's not about me, it's not about anything for me to acquire for myself. It's about passing of the accurate information, and I added accurate information on purpose.⁴⁷

John's comments here are interesting for several reasons. He evokes the strong language of "conscience" that derives from his belief and Julie's, a conviction that people's lives rest upon the success of ACT UP participants such as himself. Interestingly, John denies any involvement of self-interest, that "it's not about anything for me to acquire for myself." Apparent through his revealed life trajectory, however, is that he did derive personal benefit from participation in ACT UP, a benefit that left him beholden to the group for life and overall well-being. It was during his time in ACT UP, his widow remembers, that John kept off drugs and stayed sober.⁴⁸

6.2.2. For allies, direct sustenance through the professionalisation of AIDS

Suzy Subways, a former journalist in New York for the national magazine for PWAs, *POZ*, said that her job led her to her second tenure in ACT UP after returning to Philadelphia: "Having made a living off of AIDS, I felt like I needed to be an AIDS activist [again]."⁴⁹ Her terminology mirrors that of a Philadelphia PWA support group newsletter back in 1992, which called people like Suzy as "people living off AIDS" (PLOAs) who profited from the suffering of "people living with AIDS." Her work represented a symptom of what some PWAs viewed as a "parasitic opportunistic

⁴⁷ Bell, interview.

⁴⁸ Prusakowski, interview.

⁴⁹ Subways, interview.

infection...anywhere you find PWAs, you can be sure PLOAs are in the vicinity, buzzing, ready to put the bite on." The newsletter refers to the diversion of dollars that could go into direct provision for PWAs (e.g., housing or drugs) that instead funnelled livelihoods to case managers and other so-called providers.⁵⁰ Note that the vast majority of such PLOAs are allies and not beneficiaries, for allies tend to possess the disproportionate resources of education, social capital, and wherewithal to obtain such jobs in the AIDS world.

Certainly, some sentiments of having "lived off AIDS" are internalised by the service providers themselves. Pangs of guilt and conscience feature heavily in the participation (or lack thereof) of allies who have spent years in the AIDS service world. Some even call the AIDS sector an "industry" for the infusion of dollars and monies that have bureaucratised the "business" of AIDS:

Hannah Zellman, at the time an instructor with John Bell for Project TEACH, said that she felt irresponsible doing her work without participating in ACT UP: "I felt really – irresponsible for – not – for like sort of being in this class, talking about the history of AIDS activism. Grounding all of our work in that and not – actually being – immersed in that work."⁵¹

Val Sowell, a member of ACT UP from 2005 to 2012, ultimately left because she found it too difficult to be a part of an AIDS service organisation where she experienced conflicts of interest with ACT UP members who were also her service clients. So now every Monday night [before meetings] – I pretty much am racked with guilt about not being there, but...that is easier for me than being there [laughs] so – so it's... a little bit of like a rock and a hard place.⁵²

⁵⁰ Jackson, "PLOAs: The Newest Opportunistic Infection."

⁵¹ Zellman, interview.

⁵² Sowell, interview.

As some ACT UP members have rationalised, part of the guilt comes from the knowledge that unlike people who actually live with AIDS—rather than “live off AIDS,” in the terms of the newsletter—allies in the AIDS service industry have the liberty to opt in and out of AIDS activism as they wish. In her words, Waheedah bares this critical distinction between ally and beneficiary:

There’s those people that are mostly impacted – who have to – who – who – can't change their career or who – you know, who can just go away and decide, “Well, I don’t want to work on HIV anymore. I’ll go save the whales,” [pffft] – you know.

There are – are – people in the group who don’t have that option. You know...who want to travel and want to go to Africa and see the epidemic in Africa. You know who had never had the opportunity. There are people in the group who have gotten jobs as a direct result of being an AIDS activist, [when] people with AIDS don’t get the job.⁵³

This excerpt reveals a key tension and, in the last sentence, perhaps a bit of resentment in this difference in mobility. Allies do not share the burden of bodily attachment to a serostatus that binds them with physical obligation to battle the virus within their bodies. However, they often report a moral integrity that binds them to ACT UP, threatening them with significant ethical guilt to grind at their conscience if they were to leave.

6.4.3. For beneficiaries and allies, knowledge as motive for participation

The language of obligation and guilt comes into play in relation to participants’ knowledge gain, too. Here I deduce the importance of learning according to the revealed preference of SMO participants. Some ACT UP members directly cite their participation

⁵³ Shabazz-El, interview.

to knowledge gains, whereas others drop out because they feel like they are no longer developing new skills. This analysis resonates with that in Chapter 3, which argued that knowledge is a key and oft-neglected selective incentive in enticing and sustaining SMO participation.

As demonstrated in the former analysis, members cite the idea of ACT UP as teacher in the bestowal of either concrete skills or self-efficacy: “ACT UP taught me – that – I – that – that I don’t have to be bound by anything. That we could try anything, we can do anything.”⁵⁴ “ACT UP changed my life. It helped me find out who I am, my place in life, and where I needed to be and do.”⁵⁵ Some members explicitly admitted that learning kept them in the group. Waheedah explains, “I think that’s another reason why I stayed at ACT UP, because I learned life skills. I learned how to be amongst a diverse group of people, I learned how to agree, to disagree. I learned the process of consensus.”⁵⁶

For others, the glue of moral obligation to SMO participation loses its binding power when this self-interest sink of knowledge is no longer filled. Sam Morales, an HIV/AIDS educator through Latino TEACH, said that he had left ACT UP because “there’s only so much I can learn, and we all have a course [his course being Latino community work].”⁵⁷ Ben Green reflects similarly. He was the member that I cited twice before for his historical consciousness and drug habits bringing and binding him to ACT UP. He said that he stopped going when he “wasn’t really collecting information” or serving a

⁵⁴ Shabazz-El, interview.

⁵⁵ Davis, interview.

⁵⁶ Shabazz-El, interview.

⁵⁷ Morales, interview.

specific role within the group. When Ben no longer enjoyed the knowledge and self-efficacy benefits of SMO participation, he no longer felt the obligation to stay within the group.⁵⁸

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the steps that lead a heterogeneous SMO membership to a consensus of political orientation and binding feelings of obligation, the two ingredients that constitute political solidarity necessary for SR. In realising political solidarity, the theory elucidates further insights into overcoming Olson's problem of collective action. It relies heavily on an unlikely set of ingredients for solidarity. The empirics speak to dynamics of conflict, self-interest, debt, and guilt that ultimately create a binding commitment to one's own power (via self-efficacy) and the responsibility to deploy that power for the SMO and its goals of SR.

In relation to the first section on the development of shared group perspective, I argued for the instrumental importance of communicative democracy. Chapter 5 outlined its ability to open up participation and power-taking by DRs. Here I emphasise that by extension, communicative democracy offers room for the deliberation and contention that develop shared perspective among SMO members. With the example of Asia making the case for a global treatment access campaign in ACT UP, I illustrate that

⁵⁸ Green, interview.

rationality-based arguments certainly can and should inform the direction of SR; however, this alternative hypothesis for formation of political orientation is not sufficient in itself. Within a heterogeneous group, such logic can only be heard through the mediation of other tools such as rhetoric, emotion, and conflict.

In the second half of this chapter, I fleshed out the concept of moral obligation and its capacity to sustain participation as a strong purposive incentive in SMOs. Participants in the case study of ACT UP demonstrate both internal and external obligation to other beneficiaries within the constituency, as well as a belief to honour the decisions and follow-through of consensus process. I root obligation in the prerequisite feeling of self-efficacy among members, as earlier scholars such as Benford, Stern, and Schwartz have theorised.

This analysis brings into relief the critical nature of organisational context in shaping individual feelings on obligation (the “framing process” of SMOs). I spoke of the consensus model and the ideological commitment that participants invest for its follow-through. Very intentionally, the SMO facilitates self-efficacy in its membership. ACT UP invests heavily in the political education of its participants, schema that Chapter 4 demonstrated to be critical to recruitment but is just as significant here for member sustenance. Awareness of the movement’s history, in particular, inculcates beneficiaries with a debt and gratitude that they owe for the medicines that keep them alive; introduces to members high expectations of what is possible and what must be done;

and offers knowledge that ties its participants to greater feelings of indebtedness and motives of reciprocity.

Distinctively, this chapter's line of argument bares the naked power of self-interest in the formation of moral feelings such as obligation. I revise rationalist accounts of SMO participation, linking economic calculus to personal beliefs. This theoretical contribution falls in line with a newer body of work in SMT that has rediscovered self-interest and its complementary role to morality and collective action.⁵⁹ In doing so, I counter alternative hypotheses of political altruism as well as explanations in the European new social movement literature on solidary incentive (e.g., collective identity).

⁵⁹ Mansbridge, *Beyond Self-Interest*.

Chapter 7. “That’s why we have allies”: the power of strange bedfellows

7.1 Introduction

This chapter latches the final key to substantive representation (SR) for SMOs. The prior chapters carried the progression from inclusive predispositions to recruitment to the operation of a communicative democracy. This deliberative forum opens up the floor for the perspectives of descriptive representatives (DRs), which in turn enables the development of a shared political orientation and moral obligation that defines political solidarity. If I return to the analogy of a car that represents the heterogeneous SMO, political solidarity provided the necessary map (e.g., perspective) and jump-started the electrical energy in the battery (e.g., moral will) that is needed for driving.

Yet we have not spoken of how to fill the proverbial tank with gas: a catchall metaphor for other resources that SMOs deplete more quickly and require in higher quantities.

When this chapter speaks of *resources*, it employs the broadest possible definition: money, information, time, or human energy and motivation.¹ Our SMO car cannot begin driving without such resources; these resources are the missing link between SR intention and

¹ Edwards and McCarthy, “Resources and Social Movement Mobilization”; Cress and Snow, “Mobilization at the Margins.”

action. This chapter explains the practical mechanics in resource mobilisation for collective action toward SR.

This chapter investigates the novel pathways by which an SMO such as ACT UP Philadelphia harnesses both internal and external *synergies* to amass the proper fuel, or resources, necessary for its destination of SR. I use the word synergy deliberately. Its etymology traces back to corporate-speak and its reference to the comparative advantage that comes with the merger of several businesses. Sometimes that merger can be an unexpected marriage: for example, an algorithmic search system acquires a video-sharing start-up (e.g., Google buying YouTube for \$1.65 billion in 2006).² Synergy relies on the combination of dissimilar but complementary entities: the development of a whole that yields greater returns than would the mere sum of its parts.

Such synergies arise from “resource complementarity,” the key concept in this chapter. Borrowed from literature in management studies, resource complementarity refers to the combination of distinct sets of resources from two or more dissimilar partners in alliance.³ Resource complementarity derives its power from synergy. SMOs can yield a far greater degree of resource mobilisation by drawing from the cooperative effort of dissimilar and unlikely partners than it can from a homogeneous base.

This chapter refers to two types of resource complementarity and their resultant synergies: “*member complementarity*” and “*organisational complementarity*.” The first is

² Sorkin and Peters, “Google to Acquire YouTube for \$1.65 Billion.”

³ Harrison et al., “Resource Complementarity in Business Combinations.”

internal, the second external. Member complementarity produces a synergy between *DRs and allies* within the SMO. Resource complementarity occurs between *grassroots SMOs and external partners*. The latter refers to an interaction of diverse organisational entities, the complementarity granting all parties a flow of information and resources that is critical to the achievement of their respective goals.

7.1.1 Theoretical innovations in the realisation of resource complementarity

Via resource complementarity, this chapter offers a novel theoretical route for resource mobilisation among informal SMOs. It becomes a critical gateway to solving the resource deficit problem that is especially pertinent to SMOs in our theoretical bounds; that is, organisations that aim to represent and incorporate disenfranchised constituencies, populations without much economic means or social capital.

I first explain the significance of resource complementarity to the causal mechanism of the thesis. Up to this point, the thesis has focused on the steps that develop the leadership of membership from disenfranchised constituencies (DRs). Yet with the inclusion of DRs, we attain greater heterogeneity that is the subject of dooming hypotheses in the SMT. The law of involution predicts that this internal diversity leads to internal fracture, as it did in ACT UP New York and many other SMOs. The preceding chapter on political solidarity attacks this preconception, arguing that DRs can actually ground group perspective and motivation through the deliberative process and their contributing substrata toward moral obligation.

Yet the resource question is still outstanding: in all this recruitment of DRs, how do SMOs manage to maintain their own existence? Recall from the introduction that one of the most famous streams of SMT, resource mobilisation theory (RMT), predicates SMO success on its namesake ability to mobilise resources. Informal SMOs, often volunteer-based and in want of all resources (human, economic, institutional), have dooming diagnoses because of their work at the margins. DRs from disenfranchised constituencies, by definition, do not have traditional means of capital or resources to offer informal SMOs that are resource-poor themselves.

If such SMOs do indeed manage to survive, they must often violate their ideological roots, SMT hypothesises as the phenomenon of “goal displacement.”⁴ Resource complementarity offers a causal alternative that flies in the face of such damning predictions of SMT. It turns traditional assumptions on their head: movement goals and memberships at the radical margins of society need not be liabilities for SMOs. In resource complementarity, SMO work with disenfranchised people and issues can offer critical assets, which in combination with more privileged or institutionalised partners, releases and reifies an often-unrealised power rooted in the synergy of difference.⁵

The argument of member complementarity, in particular, uniquely sources its greatest organisational assets from *the internal representatives themselves*; DRs offer resources of perspective and tactic and wisdom that are unattainable elsewhere. Unlike competing

⁴ Zald and Ash, “Social Movement Organizations.”

⁵ Breines, *The Trouble Between Us*; Piatelli, “Stories of Inclusion?”.

theories that assume SMOs depend on external funders or political structures for sustenance, my theorised pathway relies on an internal sustainability from within its membership. This mode of resource mobilisation stays faithful to its constituents and not to the perverted motives of external actors. Resource complementarity thus speaks directly to both Michels and Olson: SMOs build up immunity against trends toward oligarchy and galvanise collective action toward SR.

Legitimacy as critical resource. As I mentioned earlier, resources can take on a diversity of forms.⁶ Tangible resources include the number of dollar bills or volunteer hours at an SMO's disposal. Other, less concrete assets derive their power and capacity from their social perception as "legitimate" (e.g., educational credentials or the skin colour of the membership). Legitimacy figures as a critical resource in my empirical analysis of resource complementarity, and I want to make clear its definition.

Borrowing from Suchman and others' theoretical constructs, this chapter considers legitimacy to be the degree with which SMOs, through its actions or mere appearance, *conform to social expectations and norms held by external actors or audiences.*⁷ For example, when hundreds of low-income PWAs of colour protest at ACT UP demos, the general public or external partners may perceive their mobilisation as "legitimate" because it matches what they imagine to be the "right" kind of protest. The underlying social norm here is that such protests are only valid with the participation of the most affected in

⁶ Edwards and McCarthy, "Resources and Social Movement Mobilization"; Cress and Snow, "Mobilization at the Margins."

⁷ Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy"; Parsons, *Structure and Process in Modern Societies*; Dowling and Pfeffer, "Organizational Legitimacy"; Walker and McCarthy, "Legitimacy, Strategy, and Resources in the Survival of Community-based Organizations."

mass numbers, and in the case of the AIDS epidemic, the most affected are low-income POC. The analysis will demonstrate other instances in which ACT UP intentionally engineers its appearance or inserts certain members into certain contexts to maximise SMO legitimacy.

7.1.2 Resource complementarity as proven in the narrative of ACT UP Philadelphia

The vast majority of this chapter dives into the ACT UP Philadelphia narrative, as empirical proof to a counter-story against the traditional paths laid forward in RMT. Along with its sister chapters in other cities, the Philadelphia group has shared the common disavowal from mainstream funding sources and the development of any internal hierarchy of staff or professionals. The vast majority of ACT UP groups (105 of the 113 throughout history) died within a decade of their founding, thus corroborating RMT hypotheses.⁸ Their members assimilated into non-profit or political entities in the AIDS world, forced by their own need for livelihood to abandon their radical and grassroots home for a 9-to-5 salary in more mainstream places that offered funding.⁹

Philadelphia saw its members drift to similar places. But I argue that even with its membership turnover—or because of it—its makeover in demographic make-up created a sustained base of DR members. These DRs acted in complement with more privileged allies to ensure that the group maintained allegiance and executed its radical mission of

⁸ “Final Chapters”; Halcli, “AIDS, Anger, and Activism.”

⁹ Tucker, interview; Dobbs, interview; Patton, “The AIDS Industry”; Rosenthal, “Who ‘Owns’ AIDS Service Organizations?”.

SR. Together in member complementarity, they mobilised an expanded resource set made possible by the diversity of racial identities and perspectives in the group.

With respect to organisational complementarity, the group developed a powerful positioning to external actors of other AIDS organisations and the state. ACT UP Philadelphia mediated a relationship of fear and respect from those mainstream institutions, rather than following the traditional story of SMO dependence upon more resourced entities. Through strategic manoeuvring, ACT UP benefitted from a rare organisational complementarity. It capitalised upon the magnanimity of its partners' resources without becoming beholden to their funding or political constraints. The next sections elaborate on the empirics of resource complementarity.

7.2 Member complementarity

This section outlines the empirical manifestation of “member complementarity,” or the unique set of resources that arises out of the solidarity of DRs and allies in SMO membership. Only a diverse membership can provide certain advantages: one, the mere—but powerful—*phenotypic* appearance of racial diversity offers a source of great but not uncomplicated legitimacy to the group; and two, a multiplicity of perspectives inform a more ideologically faithful and tactically effective activism.

Member complementarity manifests at various points across the issue-to-implementation pathway for SR. Here I analyse member complementarity according to a collapsed framework of the cascade introduced in the theory chapter (Figure 2 of Chapter 1).

For the purposes of this section's analysis, I condense the pathway into four major steps:

1. Formal development of group consciousness on issue X (e.g., group discussion, placement on the agenda, realisation of a proposal)
2. Group deliberation to end in consensus
3. Group planning and implementation of campaign actions
4. External policy or public influence

Implicitly, the preceding chapters have already discussed the points of complementarity for steps 1 and 2. Chapter 2 explained the variance in individual consciousness on given issues based on one's social location; DRs and allies are likely to have different predispositions to inclusivity based on their experiences of political marginalisation and mobilisation. Chapter 4 and 5 focused on the contributions that DRs and allies offer in SMO fora of communicative democracy. Recall the unique ability of DRs to present personal narratives that feed urgency and moral motivation in the group; I then discussed how diverse perspective leads to a shared political orientation for SR action, through Weldon's analogy of puzzle pieces.

The following two sections discuss the lattermost two steps of the SR pathway: group planning of campaign actions (7.2.1) and the external success of SMO activity (7.2.2).

7.2.1 Group planning of campaign actions

When a proposal achieves consensus and is brought to the planning stages, ACT UP members rattle off a recipe of ingredients, the bread and butter of any action: outreach, press, signs and props, speakers, messaging, and budget. I will discuss each of these components as they apply to various steps of the SR pathway.

For this step of group planning, I focus on the process of outreach as well as the deliberation of demonstration targets and tactic.

a. Outreach

Outreach entails the recruitment, largely of DRs, to participate in the turnout of a given action. ACT UP capitalises upon the *phenotypic* diversity that its membership can offer. This section traces the striking visibility of its outreach pairs (allies like a “little dainty white girl” together with DRs like a “big, black, tall, heavy Muslim”).¹⁰ Solely by their members’ appearance can ACT UP turn heads and grab the attention of prospective members. The presence of allies, too, commutes a gravity and legitimacy to ACT UP issues.

¹⁰ Quoted later in Bell, interview.

This judgment of first appearances—skin colour paramount among them—is particularly relevant to outreach processes that involve brief and often superficial contact. When ACT UP reaches out to DR populations to participate in one action, the process is far less intensive than say, the programme of Project TEACH. In this case, ACT UP is not aiming to empower DRs into activists; it is only seeking sign-toting protestors.

At meetings to plan outreach, members draw up a list of relevant recovery houses and AIDS service organisations (ASOs), and they delegate among each other so that (ideally) two people would go to those institutions, educate people about the issue, and sign up interested attendees.

DRs and allies from the SMO usually pair together to do this outreach, or “teach-ins” in ACT UP lingo. As some ACT UP members have noted, the very appearance of their outreach teams can lend great legitimacy in themselves. John Bell explains the roots of this legitimacy as he recounts one particular pairing, that of his partner Gloria’s niece and fellow ACT UP member Shaheed:

Gloria’s got a niece, her name is Jen [Chuvastnik] and she’s a vegetarian and then I taught this guy, his name was Shaheed. Shaheed is dead now, but Shaheed was like 6 foot 3 and at least 300 pounds, and those two would go out and do presentations, and those two would walk into a room, and people would go [gasp], “Huh?” just for a second. So, without even opening their mouths, ACT UP was teaching. Before they even open their mouths, *they’re being taught*.

Why this little dainty white girl, why the fuck ain’t she afraid of this big, black, tall, heavy Muslim. You see? So, *that diversity, that way of teaching that the reality that there’s an issue so great that we must work and bond on, becomes a teaching tool*

*before we say anything, and that's why ACT UP has to always go out and teach in that fashion.*¹¹

The combination of white with black, men with women, and big with small people—it is a powerful symbolism. The member complementarity of social identities at teach-ins and other recruitment efforts spoke to the power of SR issues to transcend traditional social stratifications for action.

In relation to member complementarity, legitimacy derives not only from the combination of DR with ally, but solely the mere presence of allies in such work. One might assume—as I initially did—that only the mainstream media and traditional power players would value ally presence, or the presence of white faces; that is, that privileged groups would care most that other privileged members of the same social groups were participating.

However, as John continues to comment below, white and more resourced people commanded the same legitimacy not only when pandering to any particular set of people in power, but also when speaking to a low-income and mixed-race group of recovery house clientele:

So, I went to the other program. The majority, they're mixed [recovery house] programs, because you have a mixture of races in Kensington—black, white, Latino—in Kensington. So I went to them and I would gather them, but the question was, how do I sell this? This face [my black face] don't sell shit. *This face in America doesn't sell shit.* I know that, right? So, I need some help. So, who am I going to bring with me?"¹²

¹¹ Bell, interview.

¹² Ibid.

John ends up bringing “this white girl” named Susan Whitaker, an activist who had just come out of college. John chooses her presence not only for the power that derives from their combined complementarity and visible diversity, but also for the sheer and singular legitimacy in the white skin and white face that Susan could offer to the recovery house.

b. Planning of action strategy and tactics

In discussions of overarching strategy, tactic, and efficacy, the SMO benefits enormously from the differing perspectives of allies and DRs. Allies often hold the requisite of political education to analyse structures of power; and DRs provide less of the rational but very important creative dimensions to protest.

Much of action planning boils down to one critical question: who is our political target? ACT UP actions hone in on one particular political figure or institution, chosen by virtue of the target’s leverage to effect policy or cultural change on a given issue relevant to the AIDS epidemic.¹³ The strategy of these actions necessitates an understanding of the American political apparatus on local, state, and federal levels. Only then can an SMO such as ACT UP accurately pinpoint what political body, individual or institutional, can wield the most influence for change on a given issue. SMOs diagnose pressure points on that body, finding the rusty and well-oiled cogs in the political machine and then determining the levers to push or pull.

¹³ Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*.

Not surprisingly, this knowledge tends to be disproportionately concentrated in allies rather than DRs. In the sum of their identities and experiences, DRs lie at the sites most heavily impacted by neoliberal policy cuts or political inaction. Allies, in contrast, are more likely to have accrued the privilege of continued education that has taught them how to teach themselves. They possess, in other words, a type of process knowledge that enables their ability to analyse a political environment and its points of leverage for SMO campaigns.

This cleavage of knowledge tellingly reveals itself through group deliberation, as I discovered through my participation in meetings. When an issue has progressed to the point that members are deciding on the best strategy for action, allies and DRs tend to plan on two distinct planes of tactic and goals. DRs often offer ideas of rallies and public actions that will attract public awareness and media attention; they devise creative ways to disrupt and remind the lives of everyday people of the issues that they face day-to-day. Allies often counter these proposals, arguing for the tactical efficacy of targeting determinate political figures rather than the generalised public.

The illustrative narrative of one action proposal. In my field notes from 2013, I wrote of one particular meeting in which several black HIV-positive members proposed a downtown march and flyering to passerby in Center City about progressive tax legislation.

Progressive tax reform, while a much more distant goal to the AIDS movement than say, beds for people with HIV, has attracted significant attention as a coalition and rallying

issue for many groups on the political left, from unions to community groups to education reformers. ACT UP began to develop plans for a rally in which spokespeople, music, and other props could mobilise public attention on the issue. Mark, one trans white HIV-negative ally member, countered such a proposal softly but firmly. He argued that it would be wiser to target the political office of Allyson Schwartz, a Congresswoman who was running for governor of Pennsylvania.

Conflict arose as usual. From the perspective of the DRs who advanced the original proposal, they interpreted a defeatist subtext to the arguments of the second camp. Allies were saying that ACT UP would not have the capacity to mobilise considerable masses for such a generalised action to be effective; the SMO had experienced recent difficulties in turning out the impressive numbers that they had in past years.

Mark, the original proponent of the politician targeting, eventually offered a compromise after a half-hour discussion and disagreement. He suggested that his original insistence of “let’s have the action at her office” be combined with the Center City component that was originally proposed. This two-part action receives consensus by the floor. The group then moved to discuss the nitty-gritty logistics, such as public transit for large numbers of people, or interactive signs that would invite audience participation from passerby on what they would want the \$350 billion windfall from the proposed tax reform’s revenue to fund in their daily lives.

The course of this deliberation illustrates how member complementarity proves so powerful in ACT UP Philadelphia's work. The final action proposal leverages both of the goals that arose out of the differing perspectives of the DR and ally camps: public awareness and directed political targeting to advocate for, in this case, legislative change. The nature of the consensus process, too, reveals the capacity for buy-in that deliberation creates. On some level of counterfactual imagination, the group would have likely not received the two-part proposal with the same extent of agreement had it simply been proposed by Mark without any preceding discussion.

I must note that although this retelling signifies a DR-ally divide in knowledge and perspective, the distinction is neither a clear-cut nor consistent bisection through the membership. For instance, one white member suggested that if ACT UP were to do specific targeting, they might as well target all the gubernatorial candidates, not just Allyson Schwartz. Jahmiah, a black DR member, responds with an astute teaching moment. He explains that only Allyson sits on the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, and thus she has especial power of all politicians in the local area to mobilise Congressional support for the progressive tax legislation.

This brief exchange illustrates the knowledge development and capacity for political analysis that develop among members who may not have had much of a formal education whatsoever; such DRs receive a political surrogate through their SMO participation. And thus it is wrong to essentialise the generality that allies are the only

ones with political knowledge, even if the assumption is often true by means of differential privilege and resources among members in the group.

c. Sensitivity to constituent populations

During the action planning process, DR perspective imbues ACT UP activities with sensitivities to race and class to which the more privileged position of allies may be blind. Once they decide on the campaign target and purpose, the group deliberates on the tactics to best execute said strategy. ACT UP chooses its tactics on criteria of political efficacy: what ploys will garner the most attention and evoke a desired response from the target? ACT UP defines its tactical repertoire with a signature theatricality to attract great public notice: die-ins with “dead” bodies of live protestors on the street, massive banners strung from public buildings, or props that blare outrage at political figures.¹⁴ This section draws from an example of the lattermost idea of props. Here, I emphasise that while allies may often possess the political knowledge to source strategy and tactic, DRs offer a critical and irreplaceable sensitivity to such planning decisions about actions.

I explain a particular case from arguably ACT UP’s Philadelphia biggest action of the early 1990s. In the fall of 1992, ACT UP was planning a “greeting party” for President George H.W. Bush’s upcoming visit to Philadelphia. Philadelphia’s Bellevue Hotel was hosting a campaign fundraiser for Bush’s former attorney general and Republican

¹⁴ Crimp, *AIDS Demo Graphics*.

candidate for U.S. Senate, Dick Thornburgh.¹⁵ For ACT UP, this was a perfect setup for a demonstration.

Scott Tucker was present at the planning meeting. He was a white gay PWA and a Monday night regular, often donned in the group's traditional fare of black leather jacket, combat boots, and angry rhetoric. Two years ago, the self-identified "hell-raiser" told city officials that they were "murderers" when they cut local AIDS funding; his tendency to lead with his mouth earned him the named honour of "most obnoxious one" among the "lunatic fringe" of ACT UP, according to one city councilperson. When brainstorming for the anti-Bush protest, Tucker was inspired by one of the group's go-to chants: "Bush, Specter, Thornburgh, Duke!¹⁶ Don't it make you want to puke!"¹⁷ He decided on the appropriate medium for this protest: vomit. From there, the group came up with a plan: when the chant reached its loudest during the demonstration, protestors would "spew" their "puke," clam chowder and oyster stew.

Jon Paul Hammond was the voice of dissent. He argued that ACT UP could not dump real food onto the streets when homeless people in the city were starving of hunger. Jon Paul offered his homegrown mulch instead, a solution that would imitate vomit in sight and smell just as well. His proposal was met with consensus. Jon Paul's voice introduced a degree of class consciousness otherwise absent from the group

¹⁵ ACT UP Philadelphia, "History Will Recall Bush Did Nothing At All."

¹⁶ At the time, Arlen Specter was the Republican U.S. senator from Pennsylvania; David Duke was an unsuccessful candidate for Republican nominee in the 1992 presidential election.

¹⁷ St. Hill, "ACT-UP Disrupts Thornburgh Event."

conversation.¹⁸ Jon Paul was a self-described pansexual, Quaker anarchist, and biracial PWA with a dreadlocked ponytail. He dropped out of college to become a sex worker and go-go dancer, and struggled with drugs until the end of his life.¹⁹ To the meeting, Jon Paul brought a perspective distinct from those of the white gay men in ACT UP.

Jon Paul pressured ACT UP to be considerate about how potential audiences may perceive or understand its demonstrations. DRs like Jon Paul have spoken up at various points to offer their unique perspective. With their contributions, ACT UP preserves the exaggerated theatrical tactic that defines its protest, but also ensures that it does not belittle the hardship and sensitivities of its most disenfranchised constituencies.

7.2.2 Success in policy or cultural change

ACT UP's efficacy as a direct action SMO is anchored in its capacity to harness the visual power of white skin in some contexts, and black (or brown) skin in others. The succeeding analysis demonstrates the differential impact of such imagery by external audiences such as the media, police, or state. I divide the following analysis into three sections: one on the white privilege inherent in protestors' relationship to the police, the second on the persuasive purchase of brown and black-skinned spokespeople, and the last on the capacity of allies to infiltrate state policy.

¹⁸ Bowden, "Outraged Over Indifference to Aids, ACT UP Is Rewriting the Rules of Protest."

¹⁹ Acosta, interview; Colletta, "Jon Paul Hammond Prevention Point Co-founder 50."

Much of the SMO's efficacy derives from the pure imagery of the protestors and their phenotypic identities—that is, largely their race. White skin lends power in interface with many mainstream and external stakeholders; others, on the other hand, may respect the representativeness that darker skin might suggest—that is, the presence and voice of POC intimates an SMO's loyalty to the associated knowledge and perspective of such DRs.

The following sections demonstrate the member complementarity—the distinct sets of legitimacies—that arrive with diversity of membership.

a. White privilege and policing

White privilege manifests patently in public acts of civil disobedience. Only white allies can afford to tangle with the police without the racialised consequences assigned to black and brown bodies. This sensitivity to police reception applies especially to Philadelphia, the first city to be sued by the U.S. Department of Justice for racial profiling and violence against POC in 1980.²⁰ John Bell states explicitly the racialised assumptions about black people like himself acting up:

How do I get the police to look at me the same way they look at the white activists? That's the challenge. That's the challenge. See, because my MO [modus operandi] says that when a cop put his hands on me, I'm doing a burglary, selling drugs, or I just robbed somebody.²¹

²⁰ Appeals and Circuit, "644 F2d 187 United States V. City of Philadelphia."

²¹ Bell, interview.

Waheedah, in turn, cites the demographic shift in the AIDS movement from corporate men of ACT UP New York to the majority POC membership in Philadelphia. In public actions, the two groups differ widely in their ability to attract significant attention without risk:

We know that for people who are dark and people of color, we can't take the same risk and chances as someone in the corporate world would take with their rights and things like that. A lot of the people we take to march with us very well may be on probation or parole...

But that's why we have allies... executive directors of direct service organizations, who can stand to get arrested for a couple hours for the cause.²²

Waheedah evokes the very idea of member complementarity when she provides the rationale for "why we have allies." For ACT UP, the white skin of allied members serves as a valuable resource: people can risk arrest and attract dramatic but not dangerous attention from the state and public.

ACT UP, like other SMOs that practice this style of direct action, is very sensitive to the differential capabilities of white activists versus POC. Before an action, the group will decide on certain roles. A few DRs may marshal, or ensure that other protestors stay on the sidewalk and avoid police backlash. In other words, ACT UP ensures that DRs can participate in civil disobedience should they wish to do so. White allies will usually be the handful of members who volunteer ahead of time to risk arrest and jail-time, for they do not have the criminal records or black skin that predispose them to greater danger.

²² Shabazz-El, interview with Dan Royles.

Case: 1991 anti-Bush protest.

The Bush protest outlined earlier offers a most brilliant example of white privilege in civil disobedience. White people got beat up by the police, and the consequences were telling. Recall that Jon Paul Hammond had donated homegrown bags of mulch to serve as the “puke” of disgust for the Republican fundraiser. He also offered a makeshift coffin that ACT UP filled with kitty litter, or “ashes” for the die-in. The demonstrators carrying the coffin pushed through the police barricade, but the coffin then fell “under its own weight” and struck an officer—an accident that spawned an onslaught of police brutality.²³

The city’s 31-page report of police brutality surfaced to a flurry of media attention and sympathy for the arrested protestors.²⁴ The *New York Times* described police officers who “yelled cries and used nightsticks on peaceful demonstrators,” and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* exposed the “faggot” calls and AIDS paranoia of police officers who wore latex gloves to “misbeat” protestors.²⁵ A suit filed against the Philadelphia police department ultimately paid \$76,000 to ACT UP, similar organisations, and injured demonstrators.²⁶ Mayor Ed Rendell passed an order that prohibited any police force against ACT UP actions for the following decade. His executive order enabled a safe pathway for success of ACT UP’s subsequent street demonstrations.²⁷

²³ Slobodzian and Tulskey, “Report.” Kuromiya, “ACT UP Members Attacked by Philadelphia Cops at Bush Demonstration.”

²⁴ Philadelphia Citizen Task Force, “The Report of the Advisory Group.”

²⁵ “Anti-Gay Crimes Are Reported on Rise in 5 Cities”; Slobodzian and Tulskey, “Report.”

²⁶ Kuromiya, “ACT UP Members Attacked by Philadelphia Cops at Bush Demonstration.”

²⁷ De Marco, Jose, interview with Pascal Emmer. Emmer, “Talkin’ ‘Bout Meta-Generation.”

The demonstration revealed that the risk and rewards of civil disobedience differed widely by race. POC were often victims of police brutality, but when white men appeared on the “nightly news...[with] their skulls cracked open by police batons,” it engendered a flurry of media attention and sympathy that would have likely never surfaced had they been black.²⁸ In comparing the differential consequences of the anti-Bush demonstration to a long history of police brutality in communities of colour, this demonstration exemplifies the white and socioeconomic privilege inherent to the tactics of civil disobedience.

b. Descriptive representatives (DRs) as spokespeople

I now turn to the mobilisation of legitimacy and resources that select DRs advance in the group. I engage in a lengthy analysis of the process by which some DRs develop the capacity to become spokespeople for the group at public SMO actions.

ACT UP heavily invests and employs spokespeople, a strategy significant for its instrumental value. The succeeding analysis illustrates the beauty of the spokesperson role for fostering self-efficacy among select DRs and the anchoring of a grounded perspective for ACT UP’s internal and external audiences. This discussion also sheds a critical light upon the ruthless instrumentality by which the SMO exploits spokespeople to harvest the resource of external legitimacy in interface with the public.

²⁸ Quoted from Ibid.

i. Development and training of spokespeople

Chapter 3 traced a funnelling trajectory by which ACT UP recruited and invested in prospective members, especially DRs. The provision of material goods opened a gateway to further education and self-efficacy that in turn sustained SMO participation. Here I extend the funnel even further, arguing that the group identifies a small proportion of those DRs to become articulate storytellers of their own narrative to motivate and legitimise the SR goals of the SMO's campaigns.

Let us zoom in on the trajectory of Waheedah Shabazz-El, the imprisoned woman to whom John Bell reached out to join ACT UP. From first impressions, the Philadelphia native's potential as a spokesperson is apparent: dressed in Muslim garb, Waheedah wears her minority identities of gender and black skin and religion. She speaks with a biting candour and rapid speed that communicates her intelligence and talent for commanding attention.

ACT UP ally members coached Waheedah intensely to become one of the most visible and frequent spokespeople at SMO actions. Her big appearance came in 2004, when the group protested at the U.S. presidential campaign trails:

I remember the first time I was going to make a speech – in DC, and Paul Davis – helped me write the speech, and we were up to like 3:00 in the morning. Paul was due to get – he – we already knew Paul was going to get arrested – when we got to DC, he was acquired – he was going to get arrested.

I pause for a moment: note the very explicit member complementarity, a division of labour between the two distinct groups of ACT UP members. Paul, an HIV-negative

queer white anarchist, is to be arrested. Waheedah is to give the speech in the public limelight. Paul assists her with the writing of the speech.

I kept writing the speech and Paul kept reading and he kept saying, “Okay –, but what does it look like – what would that look like where you come from? What does it look like – what would that look like – in your neighborhood?” So I’m stating a lot of facts – here are the facts, here are the facts – but Paul taught me how to put myself in that the person that was political.

He taught me that the personal was political – and – you know, I was trying to avoid talking about me because I didn’t want to make it all about me –, but it is about me...Then connect it to the national...and what’s going on with me was...the same thing that – that’s the stake for – all these other people.²⁹

Paul helps Waheedah craft her speech to connect her narrative of self to the narrative of the movement. Because of her multiple identities of marginalization, because of her status as one of the best possible representatives of the movement, her story can help others relate to the movement. The two stay up all night at Paul’s house, and then drive over in the dead of the night to get Waheedah home.³⁰

In successive years with ACT UP, Waheedah goes on to deliver the closing preliminary speech at the International AIDS Conference, meet Barack Obama as a community stakeholder with the National AIDS Strategy, and speak at the graves of Dr. Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King on World AIDS Day 2007 in Atlanta.

²⁹ Shabazz-El, interview.

³⁰ Interesting addendum: Waheedah adds that this imagery of white man and black woman driving at that witching hour led to them getting stopped by police—they got racially profiled.

Waheedah's story is perhaps the most exceptional of all spokespeople in ACT UP, but her pride and opportunity as a spokesperson is not unique.³¹ Yetta Speaker, the ACT UP member who craves the megaphone at actions, recounts his "most exciting time" in ACT UP—his photo made a *Time* magazine story on anti-homosexuality in Uganda. Yetta said he "ran around happy for the rest of the month."³² Antonio Davis, a member who joined with Yetta, went to nine activist conferences: "It was very empowering to play every role there was."³³ Waheedah coached Yetta and Antonio as did Paul to Waheedah, an example of intergenerational learning in ACT UP.

These spokespeople echo the theoretical takeaways of Chapters 3 and 4. The DR spokespeople develop a keen sense of self-efficacy because other ACT UP members believed in their capacity to speak up, represent others, and interface with the public in appearances big in profile and fame. They learned how to do press calls, make chants, shoot video, and develop a sense of self that others respect and appreciate. Waheedah muses, "A lot of things I'm able to do now, is a direct result – of my early days and my experience with ACT UP Philadelphia." According to Waheedah, ACT UP Philadelphia granted her power through the bestowal of "information [that] really nobody knew about" and the capacity to "hold community forums." She wins especial attention and respect in her community, assets that she later takes to found the national Positive Women's Network (PWN).³⁴

³¹ White, interview; Speaker, interview; Davis, interview.

³² Speaker, interview.

³³ Davis, interview.

³⁴ Shabazz-El, interview.

DRs, not allies, possess the unique ability to educate other members, constituents, and listeners. Their voice communicates an authenticity to experience, a perspective that delivers urgency and truth for action toward SR.

ii. Instrumental use of spokespeople

With its heterogeneous membership, ACT UP has been very conscious—and smart, or opportunistic, arguably—of its capacity to exploit the political currency of its more articulate DRs. The SMO has employed its spokespeople for the ends of empowerment and consciousness-raising, but also in a manner that raises the ethical eyebrows of people both in and out of ACT UP.

ACT UP is very selective about the DRs that it will nurture into spokespeople. The SMO sees great promise and return on investment in people like Waheedah and Jose. Others, in turn, are largely left in the lurch as to their educational and personal development as activists.

Waheedah is the first to admit that she has benefitted—and utilised—investment from ACT UP at an intensity and level wildly disproportionate to that of other DRs in the SMO. She had spoken previously about the importance of “people mostly impacted by the epidemic” and their need to be “trained and pushed into positions of economic growth and self-empowerment.” Waheedah then goes on to emphasise the disparity between political vision and abject reality of some of her fellow DR members in ACT UP:

“I’ve been around for 10 years, and some of the same people that were sitting in ACT UP when I got here – are still sitting in ACT UP. I’m not sure what they’re waiting for, but, but they’re still there, you know. Who have joined ACT UP Philadelphia, who, I just don’t see any upward mobility.”³⁵

Jose de Marco, a gay African American member and leader of ACT UP since 1996, dissects how the group harnesses its spokespeople. Jose, with greying hairs poking off the scruff on his beard—and his age now just rounding sixty—greet members with warm hugs and smiles at Monday night meetings. But the HIV-positive man looks, speaks, and sighs with a fatigue that he alone can claim to possess in the group. Jose’s fatigue belies an intersection of veteran burdens and burnout: his own bodily battle with HIV, almost two decades worth of fighting in ACT UP, and the burdened torch of being the longest-standing leader of colour in the group. Most others—many of who came with him into the group via Project TEACH—have since died.

Jose has his own spokesperson story. He came to AIDS activism because his partner of eighteen years passed away from the condition in 1992, when all Jose could do was fight for public existence when the cocktail drugs did not exist. He arrived at ACT UP and did not speak a word for his first three months in meetings. But Paul Davis, the same white anarchist and activist superstar who trained Waheedah, did the same with Jose years earlier. Paul and Julie Davids, another white ally member and co-founder of Project TEACH, gave Jose talking points in 1996 to be the chief speaker at a meeting in the state capital of Pennsylvania. At the high-level policy meeting, Jose called for the state to pay for tests of viral load in its funding formulary upon release of the protease inhibitor drug.

³⁵ Shabazz-El, interview.

In the many years following, the constant appearance of Jose's body at actions and name on press releases has led many to conflate ACT UP with Jose himself. Jose is angry with this association. He believes that the SMO's public perception should be a "group of angry people that people are afraid of fucking over" rather than only himself as one person.

Jose acknowledges that ACT UP has and always be resource-starved. But what are the moral benchmarks by which ACT UP put forward the same people again and again as props at actions? Another black member described ACT UP as "using me for my brawns" in reference to the speaking engagements he has had on behalf of the group.³⁶ Like Waheedah, Jose recognises that ACT UP needs to invest in the leadership development of a broader base of members. The group has relied largely on "sticking black faces on a campaign." In defence of such expedience, ACT UP is again an all-volunteer group with only the "labor of love" at its disposal. But Jose still maintains that the "roadmap is fucked up," the "roadmap" being the means by which they ask DRs to become spokespeople.³⁷

It is not clear what is right—is it tokenism or racism? Or is it simply pure strategy, especially if the group does achieve policy outcomes and wins in the name of SR? A vision unrealised would maintain the high public profile of such spokespeople for their political instrumentality, but ensure that they too received the careful development and

³⁶ Davis, Antonio, interview.

³⁷ De Marco, interview.

nurturing to become respected true leaders internal in the group. Waheedah says it best: ""It does matter that...people living with AIDS, can articulate those same things that Asia could articulate, or that Paul Davis could, or some other activist ally who wasn't a person...with HIV.³⁸ Hannah Zellman presses for this space of nurturing, for "stepping back to hear the real shit that people are experiencing and letting that inform our strategy."³⁹ In this legitimate cultivation of such spokespeople, DRs would command true decision-making power and respect in consensus process equivalent to that of the often-white strategic minds of the SMO.

c. Relationship with the state: fraternizing with the devil

The select group of DRs in the prior section served as narrative storytellers to motivate external (and internal) audiences in challenging the status quo to SR. Here I turn to focus on yet another facet of member complementarity, this time with allies. With the right skin colour and education, allies offer a unique legitimacy that allows them to professionalise, penetrate government operations, and further the goals of the SMO.

The current analysis counters the negative assumptions of the professionalisation thesis.

The Weber-Michels model introduced earlier, for example, prophesises the fall of an

SMO's ideological goals due to professionalisation and bureaucratisation.⁴⁰ AIDS

movement history would suggest no different. According to activists and historians alike,

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Zellman, interview.

⁴⁰ McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements"; Zald and Ash, "Social Movement Organizations"; Piven and Cloward, *Poor People's Movements*.

the movement failed because the state and other civil society organisations co-opted the vision and energy of ACT UP members. Many of the chapters, ACT UP Philadelphia included, suffered as their members became part of the bureaucratic cogs of service organisations and government institutions. Larry Kramer, one of the gay white cofounders of ACT UP New York, spoke of former ACT UP activists: “They have become more bureaucratic than the bureaucrats. It’s amazing to behold. A lot of them have sort of made a pact with the devil.”⁴¹

I do not deny the fact that the assimilation of allies into 9-to-5 jobs did mitigate or detract energies from SMO activism. Yet, I challenge the presupposition that professionalisation necessarily predestines a blanket collapse of SMO goals. ACT UP Philadelphia demonstrated great potential in state-activist relationships, that even in the danger of co-optation can arise a paradox of simultaneous opposition and concession—or even outright assistance—from the state to an SMO for the latter’s goals of SR.⁴²

From the archives of available 1992-1993 meeting notes from the statewide HIV Planning Council in Pennsylvania, for example, two of the five-seven regular attendees for the Philadelphia AIDS Consortium were ACT UP members selected on the basis of their professional work, intimately linked with the state.⁴³ ACT UP New York, too, enjoyed a degree of state infiltration. Member Lei Chou recounts:

There were a lot of city workers that were in ACT UP...And there were people who knew people that worked there, that would give us information as

⁴¹ Collins, “For Pioneering AIDS Activists.”; Amaro, interview; Auerbach, interview.

⁴² Parallel reflection as reached in Majic, *Sex Work Politics*.

⁴³ Anna Forbes and Kiyoshi Kuromiya were these members. HIV Planning Council, “Summary of Meetings.”

well...They know of us, and they'd know that they can come to us, when they needed help.⁴⁴

Some ACT UP members provided practical defences for the professionalisation of activists into non-profit organisations and the state. David Acosta, a former ACT UP member and recently retired employee of Philadelphia's Department of Public Health, argued that activists had to fulfil the need for talent in more established sectors ("because the government was basically absent"). He anticipated the Larry-type criticism of "fraternising with the devil," that these ACT UP leaders—himself included—"are now entrenched [in]...the systems [they] fought against." David countered with a rebuttal: he believed that working "in the system" should not be cause for regret, but for pride.⁴⁵

While Larry condemned the assimilation of activists into the state, David celebrated their propagation of "social justice" into "foundations and health departments and policymaking positions." This propagation of the SMO mission into a wider diversity if also more established set of entities, indeed, is a type of resource mobilisation in itself. This bureaucratisation, often so negatively framed in RMT and SMT at large, represents the unique capacity of allies to infiltrate by virtue of their phenotypic but also experiential privileges such as white skin and a college education. I do not negate the danger of betrayal of grassroots missions or co-optation—those fears are well-founded and often actualised—but accompanying benefits exist too.

⁴⁴ Chou, interview.

⁴⁵ Acosta, interview.

7.2.3 Analysis: racial complementarity of phenotype vs. perspective

This discussion on member complementarity reveals the synergy between DRs and allies.⁴⁶ From this synergy arise the capacity for ACT UP to carry issues from group consciousness to consensus, campaign implementation, and ultimately external success. Here this section takes a step back to ask, why is this member complementarity so successful? I root member complementarity to two key sources: 1) the *legitimacy of various phenotypic* representations of race, and 2) the knowledge of *perspectives* that arise from diverse social locations of race, class, and education. In other words, I ascribe the utility of DR-ally complementarity either to their very superficial complementarity of skin colour, or to their deeper and more abstract suites of knowledge that derive from the differential experiences of racial identity.

Under the phenotypic umbrella, this analysis of ACT UP resources concretises the commentary of some political theorists on the vast importance of the visual component of race.⁴⁷ For instance, recall the power that came with the white-black pairs of ACT UP teach-ins: the “dainty little white girl” of Jen coming in with the “big, black, tall, heavy Muslim” of Shaheed. The white girl captured attention by virtue of her white privilege; that is, the recovery house clients were more likely to believe that she is well-educated,

⁴⁶ As I had warned in Chapter 6, the SMO theory of SR in this thesis—and this discussion particularly—relies on a bifurcation of the SMO membership as DRs and allies. It is a useful heuristic but one that is crude and exclusionary of other axes of identity, gender most critical among them. E.g., many ACT UP members and scholars speak to the importance of gender diversity in movements. Baker, interview. Schulman, *The Gentrification of the Mind*, 157. Roth, “Feminist Boundaries in the Feminist-Friendly Organization: The Women’s Caucus of ACT UP/LA”; Freeman, *The Politics of Women’s Liberation*; Epstein, *Political Protest and Cultural Revolution*.

⁴⁷ Hooker, *Race and the Politics of Solidarity*, 5.

that what was coming out of her mouth is true, and that the issue had to be important if a white person was coming into a majority POC recovery house to talk about it. She also offered a sheer novelty to the audience by virtue of her whiteness and femininity. Shaheed, on the other hand, represents a phenotypic DR to whom many of the clientele could relate, someone who could role model the kind of activism in which they would engage.

The phenotypic representation of race, too, served functions not only among the prospective audiences of internal members and protestors, but also the external audiences that would see such protestors. ACT UP has always engineered a careful visibility of race at actions and demonstrations. The white bodies being beat up by police in the 1991 anti-Bush action attracted a special kind of attention that has never been afforded to the many more black and brown victims of police brutality. At the same time, ACT UP has realised and exploited the arresting power that the imagery of hundreds of black bodies can lend to legitimacy. The mobilisation of such a sheer number of DRs does not go unnoticed or unappreciated by external audiences such as the public, media, or politicians. DRs command this unique capacity to marshal crowds and their personal narratives to impress the urgency of SR issues in the movement.

The other experiential forms of complementarity are less patently visible, but no less striking in their diversity and power for SR. Multiple perspectives arise from varying social locations of race, class, and education; and they feature prominently in every stage of the SR pathway. Empirically speaking, ACT UP illustrated how successful actions

depended on DRs' sensitivity to the racial and class elements of SMO demonstrations (e.g., the "clam chowder" of the anti-Bush protest). The SMO benefited from a careful balance of awareness-raising and tactical strategy that derives from the differing priorities of DRs versus allies. Allies, in turn, shared knowledge of the political system that enabled ACT UP's infiltration into city or state politics with their white or class privilege.

7.3 Amassing of resources from external partners

Here I present two sub-sections on organisational complementarity, or the other variant of resource complementarity that arises from the synergy between grassroots SMOs and more institutionalised partners. The first outlines the great scale and resources that ACT UP operations demand. The second, in turn, exposes a re-telling that explains the SMO's success in resource mobilisation (how has ACT UP managed to amass so much money?). I end the section by spelling out the theoretical significance of such empirical evidence.

7.3.1 Let's talk money: outlay of tokens, lunches, and buses

ACT UP required massive gobs of money for its most patent demonstrations of political power, its literal demonstrations of protest. For the group's signature appearance at federal buildings and institutions in New York and Washington, ACT UP needed the money to feed mouths, furnish subway tokens, and shuttle hundreds of people with AIDS from one city to another.

Some quick math of a one-day expense: the rental price for one bus of 50 or 60 people costs on the order of \$1250 a day.⁴⁸ ACT UP, if it were to bring six buses (or as many as thirteen in its very biggest demonstrations), would need to front an average of \$7500 (or as much as \$16,000+) in just transportation expenses alone. The group also offers a round-trip fare for participants to get to and from the bus location in Philadelphia, \$3.60 for two subway tokens per person; for 6 buses of 55 people each, this line item amounts to another \$1,188 ($\$3.60 \times 6 \times 55$) for an average demonstration—double that for biggest size. Add a bag lunch and dinner, which at a conservative estimate would be \$7 worth of food for each of the 330 protestors per day (6 buses of 55), and that is another 2K of money (\$1980 by exact calculation). ACT UP's bill comes up to over \$10,000 for each mid-sized demonstration, or more than double that for its biggest protests—signs, banners, and other supplies not included.

Look at ACT UP's funding streams—the math does not come even close to adding up. When the group remembers to do so, ACT UP passes around a hat each meeting to collect donations that go into an oft-empty bank account. Many years, the group struggles with paying the \$75 phone line bill or keeping a post office box open. They do receive grants from a very select group of funders who meet their criteria of ideological congruency, but even those funds only amount to a few thousand in a good year.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Figures from participant observation.

⁴⁹ For example, the Bread and Roses foundation granted the group \$3,000 in 2006; \$7,000 in 2007, \$5,150 in 2008. ACT UP Philadelphia, *The Actuplist Archives*.

Even with these infusions of money, ACT UP comes out seriously in the red. How do they afford their movement activities? The answer lies in the invisible expenses off the books of non-profit agencies and other institutions in the AIDS industry. Recovery houses, AIDS service organisations, and other groups will gather up the funds to send one bus here or there for demonstrations.

An incredible operation of people and groups siphon money from general operating budgets to fund an inside-outside strategy of protest. The “inside” refers to the funding and support (often under-the-table) from mainstream entities, and the “outside” refers to protest organisations such as ACT UP. The operation happens in ways both big and small, from the one thousand dollars needed for a bus to the couple hundred protest flyers that ACT UP members make in the furtive corners of their day employers’ copy machine rooms.

The most remarkable facet is not even the sheer magnitude of dollars that ACT UP manages to cough up. Rather, those off-balance gifts to ACT UP *represent the strength of its relationships* with more institutionalised groups in Philadelphia and elsewhere.

7.3.2 Evading the non-profit industrial complex: ACT UP’s courtship with ASOs

The beauty—and theoretical significance—of ACT UP’s funding story lies in its capacity to amass a significant magnitude of resources for SMO operations. Its manner of resource mobilisation evades the ideological compromise typical to that of more formal

groups—a success I attribute to ACT UP’s deep utilisation of organisational complementarity. ACT UP cultivates relationships with external AIDS service organisations (ASOs), developing a rapport or cachet that the SMO can literally “cash in” to receive in-kind or money donations. I open this section with a short discussion on the existing literature on “external oligarchy,” and then visit the strategies by which ACT UP dodges co-optation and achieves success in resource mobilisation.

I identify two key reasons for ACT UP’s achievement of organisational complementarity. Both reasons originate in the respect and trust that ACT UP fosters with external organisations. In part, the relationship derives from the overlap in human resources—some service staff at the ASOs are current or former members of ACT UP. But more importantly, ACT UP commands a fierce respect from the ASOs for its radical work of social change that it pursues outside traditional channels of service and advocacy. This community of respect reaps dividends for ACT UP, a metaphorical currency that converts into actual dollars or in-kind donations for its actions.

Existing hypotheses on organisational relationships and oligarchy. First, I offer a brief outline of the literature on “external oligarchy.” This survey emphasises the traditional prophecies of doom that meet SMOs in interaction with larger and more well-funded organisations. Here I speak of an *external* oligarchy, or the concentrated power of privileged individuals and groups who direct the activities and direction of the organisation from a distance. These actors often do so through the stipulations, formal or informal, that they bestow upon their funding streams.

The wide literature on external oligarchy points toward the inevitable assimilation of radical social movements into mainstream politics: SMOs, according to these alternative hypotheses, either forsake their material existence or their ideological commitments. Such predictions extend logically from the theses of bureaucratisation and professionalisation out of RMT and McCarthy and Zald's Weber-Michels model.⁵⁰ More specifically in the non-profit literature, an activist collective named "INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence" has coined this external oligarchy as the "the non-profit industrial complex." They have theorised the ways in which the state, elite classes, foundations, and non-profit organisations have exploited their control of funding streams to divert social justice struggles. The political constraints that come with funding, they argue, have devitalised dissent and the possibilities of mass-based organising.⁵¹ In relation to the AIDS movement, several scholars and practitioners have similarly that the pursuit of money and organisational existence has diverted the strength of movement goals.⁵²

ACT UP's alternative promise. ACT UP's story provides hope and demonstrated success in defiance of theoretical models. The group defines itself on its disavowal from the non-profit industrial complex. In strict allegiance to its radical goals, it does not accept funds from foundations or governmental entities tainted with "dirty money." Yet unlike grassroots groups who make similar pledges of boycott, ACT UP accumulates

⁵⁰ McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements."

⁵¹ Incite!, *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded*.

⁵² Patton, "The AIDS Industry"; Rosenthal, "Who 'Owns' AIDS Service Organizations?"; Chambre, "Civil Society, Differential Resources, and Organizational Development."

resources at unprecedented levels—financial and otherwise—that enable a rarely achieved scale of operations and accomplishments toward SR.

Reason 1: Common people. How, then, is the question. The most obvious answers come from the balance books. The most significant funders of ACT UP work, either in formal terms or off the books, are off-shoot organisations that came out of the brain trust of the early ACT UP. This discussion references the ASO Philadelphia FIGHT, but it applies also to groups such as Philadelphia’s needle exchange programme (Prevention Point), recovery houses with ACT UP alumni, or a number of other service organisations. Philadelphia FIGHT, for example, runs Project TEACH and provides flyer copies, entire buses, and staff time to ACT UP demonstrations; the 501c3 officially became ACT UP’s fiscal sponsor for smaller SMO grants in the 1990s.⁵³ On the days when ACT UP would have demonstrations in Center City, FIGHT would become “a place where people can sign up to get a seat on the bus.” ACT UP activity and catch-up and conversation just happened at FIGHT, because FIGHT was an institutionalised, central, and open home friendly to activist talk during the workday.⁵⁴

Reason 2: Common goals, ACT UP’s uncommon efficacy. Reason 1 offers one reason for the close relationship between ACT UP and its ASO friends: the flow of resources sprout, in part, from the flow of people among groups. The less intuitive answer is Reason 2, the one I argue to have more explanatory power. ACT UP has cultivated relationships of trust and respect, most importantly, I argue, from its proven and unique

⁵³ Trudeau, “Philadelphia Fight Is the Fiscal Sponsor for ACT UP.”

⁵⁴ Sowell, interview.

success in achieving radical goals—often unstated in more formalised organisations—held by PWA communities.

AIDS organisations and ACT UP may not have dissimilar goals. At least in terms of their mission statements (recall: symbolic representation), all of them are fighters against the AIDS epidemic and its associated plagues of racism, classism, and so on. Despite these commonalities, however, only ACT UP enjoys the unique and liberated position of being a healthy distance away from states and other institutionalised streams of funding. ACT UP's existence does not depend on its obsequious relationship to the state; in fact, the very opposite is true: it thrives on antagonism and conflict with bodies of power in the status quo.

Coming back to the example of global AIDS treatment, for instance, ACT UP achieved a substantial nugget of SR that no other organisations could. ACT UP got the talk of global AIDS treatment onto the table, onto the newspaper page, onto the agenda of government officials. Before Al Gore ran for U.S. President in 2000, no one else was talking about generic drugs that priced out the lives of over 90 percent of people living with HIV worldwide.⁵⁵

Why was no one else talking besides ACT UP? The rest of the HIV/AIDS world were silent—these entities that constituted “AIDS, Inc.,” the satirical name that some AIDS activists granted to this large complex of AIDS monies funded to non-profit and public

⁵⁵ James, “To: ACT UP/New York Meeting 1/13/03.”

sector organisations. Former member John James speculates that unlike ACT UP, these more formalised organisations “refused to address this genocide for fear that raising the issue of drug patents and treatment access could threaten their funding.”⁵⁶

In interviews, progressive staff at ASOs identified ACT UP as a critical ally—or enabler—to their success as AIDS service providers. Jose Benitez is the Executive Director of Prevention Point, the needle exchange group that spawned from ACT UP efforts. Every step of the way, Jose cites the importance of ACT UP for ASOs: “If something was going wrong, ACT UP would be someone for us to talk to.” Speaking on behalf of community agencies for AIDS, he says that “[we] see ACT UP as a viable partner of what we do.”

Jose elaborates on these sentiments. When ASOs needed institutional funding and support, he always felt grateful for the “constant push from ACT UP to the City” to advocate for policy. Jose, self-identifying as an AIDS career individual in an “establishment job,” so-to-speak, said that he and his employer ASOs had constraints that ACT UP has never had to experience. For ACT UP to do its advocacy and activist work well, it needed certain resources from the ASOs: money, of course, as we have highlighted, but also information. The “establishment jobs” people would come to meetings at critical junctures and feed ACT UP statistics such as the numbers of people on treatment or referred to case management.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Benitez, interview. Also corroborated by Kozeniweski, interview.

Section summary. ACT UP has gained access to money, information, and other resources that come bounded with the restrictions common to ASOs and “establishment” organisations. This resource mobilisation, with respect to this mutual building of capacity among partners, is otherwise known as organisational complementarity. I explain the roots of the organisational complementarity via ACT UP’s accrual of respect and intimacy of relationships with friend organisations that believe in the SMO’s mission. These partners will do what they can to see ACT UP’s success, because the success of ACT UP is closely tied to the survival of their organisations and their clientele. This story of the AIDS sector in Philadelphia directly affronts and challenges the long-held assumptions in RMT around external co-optation of grassroots groups. It spotlights an informal SMO that achieves a scale of SR commitment and impact unprecedented both among other SMOs for their resource poverty and establishment groups for their political constraints.

7.4 Conclusion

I began this chapter with one simple and motivating question: “How does an SMO such as ACT UP mobilise resources?” To put the common goals and intentions of political solidarity into SR action, an SMO requires investments of time, money, information, and other resources.

This question becomes more interesting when we consider that ACT UP is incredibly resource-poor, and when we realise that extant theoretical explanations do not come close to satisfying an answer. Key hypotheses of RMT, professionalisation and bureaucratisation fail to explain or apply to ACT UP.⁵⁸ Some ACT UP members do move into 9-to-5 jobs, but the SMO stubbornly stays away from mainstream pots of money for which its non-profit partners (ASOs) are competing.

To tackle this question has required the adoption of a concept in management studies, “resource complementarity.” This chapter presented the empirical evidence for how ACT UP has exploited synergies both among its internal membership (DRs and allies) and among external partners such as SMOs. I outlined a novel pathway for resource mobilisation that maintains loyalty, not betrayal and abandonment, of a movement’s most fundamental goals of social change. In examples ranging from the 1991 anti-Bush protest to ACT UP’s reform of transnational drug policies, the SMO has demonstrated great success in operating at an unprecedented scale of people and buses and dollars to achieve a disproportionate impact in SR for PWAs.

This narrative ruptures the organisational assumptions that often limit social change among radical SMOs. The next chapter, in turn, will illustrate that even amidst this great success comes an imperfect and often problematic set of issues that challenge the SMO theory of SR. The final body chapter completes a more realistic if also less romantic

⁵⁸ McCarthy and Zald, “Resource Mobilization and Social Movements.”

model for the mobilisation of not only material resources, but also physical bodies and human souls for the development of political power among communities often without.

Chapter 8. “Renting a black mob”: organisational oligarchy behind one campaign’s success

This final body chapter advances a nuanced expansion of resource complementarity, the iron law of oligarchy, and ultimately the entire progression of the theoretical cascade toward SR. To synthesise the theoretical steps put forth, this chapter zooms into one particular campaign: global treatment access. I cited it earlier as a prime instance of ACT UP achieving success in substantive representation (SR) through its antagonism to the state; it pursued unique approaches of protest that were only possible to grassroots groups free from funding concerns with mainstream institutions. This campaign exemplifies the tremendous capacity of ACT UP to realise and exploit the dividends of resource complementarity for SR.

I plunge into an in-depth study of the internal dynamics of the campaign to emphasise a stark and sobering paradox. Even as ACT UP Philadelphia scored incredible wins in the global combat against stark inequalities of the AIDS epidemic, the group perpetuated its own internal inequalities, textbook examples of the iron law of oligarchy. Such dramatic achievement of SR in the external world has not precluded the development of internal problems of oligarchy within SMOs.

I had some initial hesitations of including this section in the thesis. It is, in some ways, the figurative equivalent of throwing a cold bucket of water onto the story of SMO

success. The following narrative strips the heart-warming overtones of SR achievement to bare the naked and problematic currents underneath. But I commit to explicit discussion of the inflammation of existing fractures. These issues partition the messy empirics of a real SMO from the perfect elegance of an academic theory, clefts that have received some attention but not dedicated examination.

In relation to the iron law of oligarchy, I illustrate that an organisation like ACT UP can be partially co-opted in ways that mirror a concentration of power at the top and even, at times, goal displacement. But as other scholars have maintained, the development of oligarchy does not necessarily implicate a wholesale abandonment of movement goals (goal displacement). As per the table below, keep in mind that Michels's dooming proclamation of oligarchy only encompasses one of the below four boxes in the 2x2 matrix (Table 6).

Table 6. 2x2 matrix illustrating a set of organisational outcomes in relation to the iron law of oligarchy.

		<i>Goal displacement</i>	
		<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Development of hierarchy</i>	<i>Yes</i>	Michels's traditional assumption with the iron law	Positive case in the study: ACT UP Philadelphia 2.0
	<i>No</i>		

ACT UP Philadelphia, in turn, represents an alternative story in which it manifests no immediately visible signs of oligarchy, as it maintains an all-volunteer and no formal leadership structure. But as the following analysis will demonstrate, it does fall partially under the command of a larger institutionalised group called Health GAP, but this

“partial bureaucratisation” actually infuses ACT UP with greater resources of strategy and mobilisation that allows it to meet certain, if not all, issue goals of SR.

This final body chapter aims to accomplish the following three goals.

1. One, to *undress the vulnerable imperfections* of this “most positive” case of ACT UP Philadelphia in its progression toward SR. This raw look at these SMO innards is necessary for a historiography that aims for a most faithful retelling of organisational narrative.
2. But two, and even more importantly, knowledge of the bare sores on ACT UP’s record of inclusivity strengthen the theoretical framework in the thesis. I show that despite one case SMO’s failure to fully follow-through on internal inclusivity and a democratised power, organisations can still manage to fulfil the causal sequence toward SR. *The cascade is robust even despite its imperfect completion* and threat of oligarchy.
3. Third, this analytic narrative impresses the vast complexities of SMO dynamics: in the interface between black and white bodies in a diverse SMO, *internal inequity demonstrates, in fact, some healthy side effects*. The diagnosis of organisational complementarity is not so black-and-white. The relationship between Health GAP and ACT UP demonstrates a problematic oligarchy that on its flip-side also represents symbiotic synergy.

To accomplish these aims, I first highlight the external success of the global access campaign, and then illustrate the internal dynamics of power and inequality among

members. I then discuss the implications of this empirical evidence for the iron law of oligarchy and the SMO theory of SR.

8.1 External success

Before diving into the analysis of oligarchy within this campaign, I first underscore the external successes that belong to the campaign and ACT UP. To contextualise global treatment access among the expansive palette of SMO priorities, we can imagine a selective funnel in SMO work. This funnel characterises the high ratio of many SMO issues to many fewer SMO campaigns: only a fraction of discussions materialise into proposals, and an even smaller fraction become executed demonstrations. Of the handful of ACT UP campaigns, some last for a few weeks and other for a few years; of the longstanding ones such as in Philadelphia public education or AIDS housing, their history is marred by more disappointment and stalemate than outright success.

This context underscores the exceptional achievement of ACT UP's fight for global treatment access. While providing a narrative taste of the campaign arc, this chapter maintains at the same time that it is outside of the scope of the thesis to provide any direct causal links of SMO efficacy in the policy rink. That is, as per the discussion in Chapter 1 around the omitted relationship between campaign implementation and policy success (Step 8 to 9 in Figure 5), I do not pretend to assert any theoretical claims

between certain kinds of campaign implementation and their guaranteed effect on policy change.

The campaign began with Al Gore's first candidacy appearances for his 2000 presidential campaign. Julie Davids remembers:

Where people had these "AIDS drugs for Africa" banners they put out and disrupted, and then overheard the campaign people saying, "AIDS isn't supposed to be an issue in this election, who are these people?" And Gore saying, "How come no one told me about this?" So that was pretty exciting.¹

The first event in June 1999 was in his hometown of Carthage, Tennessee, at which AIDS activists interrupted his speech with the chant that "Gore is killing Africans–AIDS drugs now!" Similar protests continued against Gore and the U.S. Trade Representative (Charlene Barshefsky), until in September the two of them announced an agreement with South Africa that skyrocketed cheaper and generic drug production for its PWAs.²

This sequence of events precipitated the removal of U.S. trade barriers to generic drugs in sub-Saharan Africa and elsewhere. Costs of medicines plummeted from over \$10,000 per patient, per year, to less than \$100.³ Two election cycles later, ACT UP Philadelphia's work with allies became key in ensuring that candidates for the 2008 Presidential election pledged \$50 billion toward AIDS. The *New York Times* credits U.S. AIDS activists

¹ Davids, interview.

² Smith and Siplon, *Drugs into Bodies*; Siplon, *AIDS and the Policy Struggle in the United States*; Royles, "'Don't We Die Too?': The Political Culture of African American AIDS Activism."

³ ACT UP Philadelphia, *The Actuplist Archives*.

(ACT UP a predominant player) for flaring the public consciousness and public policy toward treatment access in sub-Saharan Africa.⁴

8.2 Walkthrough of the internal shortcomings of the campaign

The campaign for global treatment access gives show to huge demonstrations of collective action. Yet in its mobilisation of hundreds and thousands of DRs, this ACT UP campaign inflames the group's most challenging struggles with power and inclusivity. It bares some of the ugliest examples of iron law of oligarchy in one of the most patently "successful" cases of political activism. This case study is powerful for the magnitude of external success it achieves despite of, or because of, the internal struggles it juxtaposes against.

To expose the operation of oligarchy within the global treatment access campaign, I highlight the incomplete fulfilment of two particular causal steps in the SMO cascade to SR: the first in relation to physical heterogeneity (x3), and the second in relation to the group perspective component of political solidarity (x5).

Participation education in recruitment, or lack thereof (x3). Chapters 3 and 4 have analysed at length the deficits of investment that have characterised ACT UP's mass mobilisation of DR members from recovery houses and AIDS service organisations

⁴ Calmes, "Obama Says He Will Seek More Money for AIDS Programs"; Stolberg, "AIDS Activism Growing on Campuses."

(ASOs). To recap, ACT UP has certainly capitalised on the allure of material incentives (subway tokens, food, a free bus ride out of Philadelphia) to attract DRs. The group also launches teach-ins to educate prospective participants about upcoming demonstrations.

Still, according to many members in interviews, ACT UP has often only fulfilled the bare minimum in education and empowerment.⁵ Of course, Project TEACH is one exception, and a significant one at that. But the vast inequities in participant knowledge—and outright ignorance—became strikingly apparent during the global action treatment campaign, in which sheer hundreds of demonstration participants would flood ACT UP buses and demonstrations sites. Journalists at the protests would pick people at random to interview, only to find that many could not articulate the reasons why they were holding signs and shouting.⁶ ACT UP has lost legitimacy among some ASOs and even its own members for the fact that people were being exploited, as Chapter 6 explained, for the phenotypic purchase of their black bodies. “You don’t get...smart just by osmosis, you get smart because somebody told you.” Waheedah speaks to the lack of intentionality in ACT UP’s recruitment schema and corresponding absence of education.

Kate Kozeniewski says that there are people in the group (i.e., Paul Davis) who have done more for PWAs in the world than anyone else that she knows. Yet in 2008 with the big push to keep Obama accountable with AIDS funding, the emphasis became heavy on

⁵ Messac, interview; De Marco, interview; Zellman, interview; Kozeniewski, interview; Shabazz-El, interview; Green, interview; Sullivan, interview.

⁶ Bell, interview; participant observation.

numbers of “how many buses can we take to D.C.”⁷ Kate and others have described the global campaign as a rinse and repeat formula: outreach to recovery houses, fill out buses, pass out sandwiches, and give demonstrators some signs. This formula is precisely what I had described in Chapter 3 as a partial theory of recruitment, when an SMO exploits the utility of one-time material incentives but does not invest in further education for developing longer-time activists and activism.

The oligarchy of nested organisations: the extreme case of Health GAP (x5). We turn to analyse the patent operation of the iron law of oligarchy within the group. As became clear over the course of the global treatment access campaign, the opinions of the few commanded far more suasion than those of the rest of the group. Theoretically, this imbalance of power represents the oligarchy that develops from the failure of deliberative processes in communicative democracy.

This oligarchy manifests very clearly in the empirical narrative of ACT UP Philadelphia’s global treatment access campaign. Paraded by a small and powerful minority, global issues superseded the many other local or state concerns for PWAs. A group of largely white, HIV-negative members were championing the need to work on global campaigns. They diverted a concentration of resources to this particular axis of SR over that of others. Other members, mostly African American DRs but also some other white allies, felt it was still important that the group would prioritise more proximate issues that people were experiencing very directly.

⁷ Kozeniewski, interview.

The story becomes empirically thornier (and more theoretically intriguing) when realising that the core of power rested with members that Kate called “outside agitators”: people who were cuttingly described as “renting a black mob” from ACT UP for their global campaigns.⁸ These agitators were primarily white, HIV-negative, and paid staff of Health GAP (Global Access Project). The descriptor of “outside” may be a misnomer, however, as the majority of these staff had intensive involvement with ACT UP Philadelphia for many years before Health GAP was even founded in 1999. The involvement of Health GAP within ACT UP Philadelphia represents a complicated story of internal/external co-optation.

Global over local. Let us return to the empirical story for now: how were local issues put aside in favour of global campaigns? To best answer, I turn to one person’s experience: Yetta Speaker, a tall African American man sporting a skullcap and frequent enthusiasm for facilitation at ACT UP meetings. His gateway into the SMO in early 2007 came rather by happenstance, when his neighbour Waheedah called him from a couple doors down and asked him to carry some tables and chairs inside from her car. Waheedah, one day, throws Yetta an ACT UP t-shirt, tells him to get him in the car, and they go together to a church for his first protest.

Perhaps more than anyone else in recent ACT UP history, Yetta has felt the sting of having Philadelphia action-based proposals being overturned in favour of resource

⁸ Kozeniewski, interview.

allocation to national campaigns in D.C. and New York. In the fall of 2012, he sat for two hours with two other ACT UP members to plan for a flashy action to target the Obama campaign headquarters, Philadelphia City Hall, and the Bellevue Hotel on Halloween Day. When Yetta presented his idea at the Monday meeting, no one offered support. Perhaps that was enough of a blow to his proposal—but then to add salt to the wound, Health GAP members immediately followed his discussion in the meeting to mobilise for an action in D.C.

Yetta could sense the unfairness in it all. Why was it always ACT UP Philadelphia that had to bring buses and go to other places? Where was the coalition support for the local work in his city? He was mad: he ended up taking a three-month break from ACT UP that winter, a pause that has turned into a yearly sabbatical for him. A suitably timed break, for during the next year in 2013, Yetta proposed a similar action, again shutdown in favour of another global access campaign demonstration.⁹

Waheedah contextualised Yetta's experience within the greater phenomena of Health GAP's inordinate power:

[ACT UP is] their turn out machine, and they have a way of getting what they want....I've seen one time when some of our members wanted to do something around Halloween. They wanted to do some actions to go to some local places and, you know, do some local actions, and they were not supported because – Health GAP came in with a bigger, broader platform, and all energy [was] going toward that, and not toward the locals.¹⁰

Kaytee Riek, a former Health GAP staff member, reflects similar sentiments:

⁹ Yetta, interview; participant observation.

¹⁰ Shabazz-El, interview.

You are like—sitting in a meeting and you’re like trying to figure out what to do about this thing, and then somebody [an important white ally] shows up late and they’re like, “Hey, I’m here, can we talk about this other thing instead and like, let’s go have a big demonstration in DC and use our organizational resources to do that, and – your local stuff is important too, but let’s do this thing.” And it’s like – [the] overdramatized version – but that’s kind of what happened – over and over and over again.¹¹

Roy Hayes, a black PWA, also believes the local-global tension to be symptomatic of the oligarchy of power within the group. In 2012, after 25 years of membership in the group, he disseminated a 6-page reflection or manifesto. It listed suggestions for ways in which PWAs can take power within the group and allies could step back. He writes, “Sometimes I wonder who really has the power within the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power-Philadelphia. Too often, I feel it is not People Living with HIV/AIDS.”¹²

An organisational analysis. The oligarchy perpetuates along lines of race, class, and education: the white, HIV-negative staff of Health GAP holds disproportionate ability to define the direction of SR much more so than the low-income poor PWAs in the group. Such inequality indeed reflects the imbalance of power in greater society. Waheedah describes it best as she paints the contrast between the base of ACT UP and the Health GAP staff, who often travel between Africa and the U.S.:

People were still – left – at the end of the day. Those same people – are still homeless, hungry, helpless, low self-esteem, while other people get to their own boats and fly, and – I’m leaving – I won’t be here because I’ll be out of the country for the next three weeks – and these people are going out of their minds and there’s other people going out of the country.¹³

¹¹ Riek, interview.

¹² Hayes, “Roy Hayes’s Recommendations to ACT UP Philadelphia.”

¹³ Shabazz-El, interview.

The oligarchy also reflects the associated difference in resources that come with the organisational affiliations of Health GAP versus ACT UP. Health GAP is composed of full-time paid staff who have the education, time, and capacity to hone political analysis and strategic planning. All staff shared the same salary, a mark of democratised clout: they were still paid in the ballpark of \$50,000 as of 2009.¹⁴ ACT UP too has a horizontal pay scale, as in a non-existent one: it is an informal, all-volunteer organisation. The same lack of structure that explains the SMO's success in SR also accounts for its vulnerability in relation to co-optation.

Hannah Zellman gives her take on the relationship between the two organisations quite plainly: "In some ways we're [ACT UP is] kind of like the militant...bodies and...wing of Health GAP to, like, supply buses and people."¹⁵ Suzy Subways remembered when another Health GAP member described AIDS activism as a game with "all these chess pieces you have to move to win this game."¹⁶

The act of structured organisations leveraging resource imbalances to gain power, in turn, describes the reality of many social movements. The reflections of Jo Freeman draw clear parallels to analogous co-optation in the feminist movement, in which she described "Unstructured women's liberation groups...becom[e] the troops under the leadership of the Structured organizations."¹⁷

¹⁴ ACT UP Philadelphia, *The Actuplist Archives*.

¹⁵ Zellman, interview.

¹⁶ Subways, interview.

¹⁷ Freeman, "The Tyranny of Stucturelessness."

8.3 Is oligarchy all that bad? A nuanced treatment of the iron law

Our treatment of the iron law of oligarchy thus far has been wholly negative. Here follows theoretical nuance: the most normatively “evil” of phenomena, such as oligarchy, cannot be painted in strict terms of black and white, good or bad.

As illustrated in this empirical instance, oligarchy can come accompanied with a concentrated infusion of resources as it also does, more traditionally, with its concentrated cores of power. I recognise that this argument flies in the face of much of my earlier, more simplistic treatment of the phenomenon. On a broader plane, it defies wholesale rejection of oligarchy among key tenets of SMT and political theory. Yes, oligarchy is problematic: it grants power to some actors, and it suffocates the voices of others—often the DRs most affected and the most disenfranchised. However, critical and much less commonly acknowledged is a nuanced treatment of oligarchy. Indeed, oligarchy has salutary side effects to SMOs that do not necessitate goal displacement, even in its most entrenched of instances as with this case study.

The resource complementarity in Health GAP oligarchy. In alliance with other organisations, the group had secured treatment for the 35 million PWAs across the world to generic medications, slashing the price of treatment from over \$10,000 per

person, per year, to less than \$100.¹⁸ How have external success and internal oppression gone hand-in-hand in this campaign?

I offer some preliminary answers. For all its dominance of the SR agenda, Health GAP cannot be monolithically conceived as the organisational leech that fed off of ACT UP's physical resources—that is, masses of black bodies. Indeed, the counterargument follows from our analysis of ACT UP's relationships with other ASOs in the prior section. Recall that the SMO has benefited hugely from a mutual symbiosis of organisational complementarity. It drew its organising capacity from far more formalised and resourced organisations, Health GAP included. As Kaytee said, "One of the nice things about working for Health GAP is that I got paid to do some of the things that ACT UP needed to get done. So like, you know, it was perfectly reasonable for me to spend three hours on a workday—to go pay for buses—and then like go pick up the sandwiches [to feed protestors]." ¹⁹

Health GAP possessed the capacity of full-time paid staff to engineer political analyses for the AIDS movement. It provided ACT UP a clear direction and focus for activism, as one ACT UP member said: "I was always been really glad for Health GAP's ability to like – be on the pulse of global AIDS particularly...Following the political landscape, and choosing strategic targets – was something that has been I think beyond the capacity of ACT UP to do besides...very locally – for a long time." ²⁰

¹⁸ World Health Organization, "WHO | HIV/AIDS."

¹⁹ Riek, interview.

²⁰ Sowell, interview; corroborated by Shabazz-El, interview..

This analysis illustrates that oligarchy does not necessarily divert SR activity toward mainstream ends. In the case of Health GAP and ACT UP, the very opposite happened. Their synergy of resource complementarity led to a focus on one issue, and the accountability of one stronger and smaller organisation to steady the direction of the larger. Marshalling Health GAP's political brains and ACT UP's physical brawn, they together have challenged and revolutionised U.S. trade policy and the mentality of the chief executive of the most powerful country in the world. This case illustrates that even if oligarchy may still hold great grip upon a group, it can also offer traction toward important goals for SMO DRs. It is, indeed, a funny version of co-optation: a group of people are manipulated and utilised toward very specific purposes, but these purposes are still very much in line with the hopes and dreams of SR. The goals of the oligarchic core differ from those of the DRs (e.g., global versus local), but both sets of goals fall squarely in line with the SMO's definition of SR.

8.4 Conclusion: theoretical implications

What do the empirics mean for the theory? I view this final body chapter not as a qualification against but as a buttressing support for my theoretical model. I acknowledge the irony in such a statement: this section has traced the failures that have occurred at each steps of the causal mechanism. If this is true, how does the empirical evidence presented here serve to bolster my argument? I have outlined how the external

success of one very prominent campaign has gone hand-in-hand with internal issues of oligarchy and power in the SMO. This synchronicity appears to be an outright rejection of the theoretical cascade of the thesis. Have the previous chapters not demonstrated that true heterogeneity and inclusion are necessary for SR?

The immediately preceding discussion on oligarchy (8.3) provides partial answers. It illustrated the double-sided theoretic of oligarchy: the story exposes the highly problematic dynamics of exploitation and domination, but oligarchy is not the incontrovertible evil that theorists have often contended.

The empirics, I argue, bestow a reinforcing proof of the possibilities for political mobilisation that flourish despite such insufficiencies in the SMOs. Even with incomplete follow-through at certain points (e.g., not all DRs achieve political power in the group), the SMO still achieves progression through the pathway to SR. Recall that with the small sample size of this study, the research design has acknowledged that frequentist claims are beyond the claim of the theory. Given the lack of degrees of freedom in this study, I hold no pretence of theorising the degree to which an actor (e.g., a SMO or its participants) must fulfil one step to proceed onto the next one. I can firmly argue, however, that this theory does not demand perfection (faultless achievement of each variable) for SMO progression from one causal step to another.

Ultimately, this chapter strengthens the analytic purchase of the theory in illustrating its durability even in the ugly face of reality. The cascade does not fall apart in application

to the follow-through of this ACT UP campaign; rather, it illustrates that one SMO's fulfilment of the mechanism does not imply that it has become an SMO immune to the endemic problems of power and inequality that characterise the rest of the external world. In admission of this disclaimer, my theory becomes more powerful in its realism. It theorises a pathway by which a very small subset of informal SMOs achieve SR, yet it does not hold pretension that the completion of said pathway eliminates all obstacles to heterogeneity, democratised power, or collective action. These processes of inclusion and learning are both dynamic and iterative.

Synthesis of the case empirics as they exemplify the causal mechanism. On the empirical grounds of ACT UP Philadelphia, I illustrate that the case SMO does indeed meet the requirements of theoretical progression from one step to another in the cascade. It does, for example, invest in material resources to attract DRs, and then turns a fraction of those DRs into the most visible and outspoken SMO members (step 3 to physical heterogeneity). It deliberates and decides on an SMO direction bound by heterogeneity and solidarity. The accompanying resources that come with oligarchy (via the vehicle of Health GAP) even assist in such an endeavour.

Yet I also do not shy away from baring the most problematic facets of this campaign—and by extension, the group at large. It deploys select resources and selective representation of issues (e.g., global over local). In its stark realism, the narrative does not match up to the full theoretical beauty of a communicative democracy. This analysis demonstrates the intractability—or depressing impossibility—of eliminating oligarchy

altogether. It soberly reminds us of the inequalities that necessarily exist in the world but also within SMOs, even in those that are most vehemently committed to dismantling such systems of oppression. In this authentic retelling of SMO success and failure, I hope to realise a powerful theory grounded in the reality of empirical truth.

Chapter 9. “We all saw those connections”: conclusion¹

In closing the thesis, this final chapter aims to recapitulate the causal propositions that were set forth in the introduction and weaved in the empirical threads of Chapters 2-8. It then discusses the broader theoretical contributions to social movement theory and political science. Finally, I delineate bounds of limitation and possibilities for generalisability across other movement contexts.

9.1 A step-by-step encapsulation of causal claims

The thesis sought to answer why and how some social movement organisations (SMOs) have succeeded in their pursuit of substantive representation (SR), while others have not. I grounded the research question in a particular empirical puzzle, lodged within the divergent narratives of three AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) groups. The partial case comparison centred on ACT UP Philadelphia, the one positive case of SR among the 113 chapters in ACT UP history. Though not without its own set of failures, the Philadelphia group has rallied for the unsexy and unglamorous causes that make the face of forgotten people and constituents in America: sex workers, convicts, and low-income POC with HIV. New York, Boston, and its other SMO counterparts, despite all their accomplishments, did not share the same dedicated attention to such issues of SR for the disenfranchised.

¹ Quoted from Acosta, interview.

I traced ACT UP Philadelphia's causal mechanism to SR through a multi-step process model. It began in Chapter 2 at the site of the individual, with a theory pinpointed at individual predictive factors for predispositions to inclusivity (x1). I defined inclusivity as a person or group's valuing of inclusion: their belief in the intentional outreach and recruitment of members who are most affected by the issues at hand, or those most disenfranchised in the movement (DRs or descriptive representatives). Inclusivity, Chapter 2 argued, arose most commonly from the "oppression" or "community" factor: that is, one's own social experience of *oppression*, which grants (but does not guarantee) the capacity to realise the existence of other systems of oppression and the unique perspectives associated with them; or from one's past membership in *communities* that modelled practices of inclusivity (e.g., Val's racial justice training at her old radio station).

A comparative analysis of each SMO's urban milieu reveals a unique capacity of the Philadelphia group to attract individuals predisposed to inclusivity. The city's black radical tradition, low cost of living, and Quaker tradition brought together people who "weren't accepted by the moral majority...already having problems with America."² These exogenous factors in the Philadelphian environment notched its chapter a step ahead of Boston and New York; but common denominators in membership still predominated a common ACT UP identity, regardless of location. The U.S. AIDS

² Bell, interview.

movement, at its inception, defined itself on a mobilisation populated with white, gay men, many coming with their personal or political struggles in LGBT liberation.

Chapter 3, in turn, defined the causal step that primed the fork of divergence in initially very common ACT UP trajectories. Unlike extant theories that focus on the role of “critical actors” or a “critical mass” to catalyse ideological shifts, I argued for the motivating practicality of crisis (“critical episodes”) to engender group norms of inclusivity (x2).³ Chapter 3 pinpointed a common deficit in membership diversity among all three groups in the early to mid-1990s: they were reeling from the attrition of their original membership—many lost to death, burnout, or the escape to normalcy that new antiretrovirals afforded.

This crisis of numbers represented a “critical episode” that revealed and activated dormant group-level norms of inclusivity, or the lack thereof. The New York City case illustrated an abundance of activity by POC during this time, but also a simultaneous failure to penetrate the dominant and white core of “A-list people” who cared only about “drugs into bodies,” not the intersecting plagues of socioeconomic or racial injustice.⁴ The revived chapter of ACT UP Boston, born in the 2012 aftermath of Occupy, incorporated the hindsight knowledge of past failures in the movement. As one of the leaders said, “Anything like ACT UP will never succeed unless racism is overturned.”⁵

³ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Dahlerup, “From a Small to a Large Minority”; Yoder, “Rethinking Tokenism”; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler, “An Integrated Model of Women’s Representation”; Celis et al., “Rethinking Women’s Substantive Representation”; Childs and Krook, “Analysing Women’s Substantive Representation.”

⁴ Quoting the words of ACT UP New York members Jose Fidelino and Charles King, respectively. King, interview; Fidelino, interview.

⁵ Scoppettuolo, interview.

But even Boston 2.0, armed with racial consciousness and the young idealism of a student contingent, lacked the staying power to recruit DRs from the city's low-income communities of colour ("no one would show up").⁶

The successive chapters hone in exclusively on the positive case of Philadelphia to fill in the missing steps of causality toward SR. The Philadelphia chapter, like its later Boston 2.0 counterpart, tried to "step back and figure out why our group is so white."⁷ Unlike the rest of the movement, however, Philadelphia constructed a lasting recruitment pipeline to target and invest in DRs from recovery houses and service providers.

Drawing from the SMO's empirical success, Chapter 4 identified the linchpins to DR recruitment and their physical inclusion (x3). Philadelphia opened the gateway to recruitment with material incentives, a well-established taboo in the SMO literature but a real need to satisfy the resource deficits of low-income DRs. At times, as with its recovery house model, the ACT UP chapters relied too heavily on its promise of lunches and free bus trips—in effect, buying their "angry black mob" for protest.⁸

But with the Project TEACH programme, the SMO successfully linked the reward of pizza and stipends to invest not only in the presence of bodies but also the nourishment of hearts and minds. The TEACH scheme demonstrated the power of coupling material incentives to purposive ones. That is, recruits initially committed to classes because of the material incentives, at least in part; and yet because of those alluring devices, they

⁶ Quoted from Sue, interview.

⁷ Quoted from Davids, interview.

⁸ Shabazz-El, interview; Roy Hayes, personal interview; Riek, interview.

came to learn the requisite history, skills, and self-confidence that both equip and motivate their activism. Serving simultaneously as participant investments and incentives, this schema anchored the causal root of long-term sustenance and participation for DRs in ACT UP Philadelphia.

Chapter 5, in turn, advanced the position of DRs from presence to power. It argued that SMOs can routinise deliberate features of organisational design that promote not only attendance, but also full contribution of disenfranchised individuals. I term this take-up of power by DRs to be internal inclusion (x4) in the SMO. Chapter 5 delved into the susceptibilities to oligarchy that are unique to collectivist-democratic SMOs such as ACT UP. Even with a structureless commitment to supposed equality—or actually, because of it—the Philadelphia group reported pre- and post-meetings of an oligarchic “core” (“yes, there were meetings going on...that you weren’t invited to,” such as “white folks...drinking beer...at Dirty Frank’s [the nearby bar]).⁹ The gulf between cliques of power and members at large, in turn, only became exacerbated with growing heterogeneity and the resource divides that separated the haves from the have-nots in the group, or allies from DRs. I argued for the ironic but causal importance of formalising the informality in the SMO in order to provide clear structures for division of labour and power among the membership.

Central to this formalised combat against oligarchy—and for internal inclusion—is an expanded notion of Young’s theory of communicative democracy. Both the original

⁹ Kozeniewski, interview; Zellman, interview.

theory and my empirical data speak to the importance of non-rational modes of communication (greeting, rhetoric, and narrative) in opening a space for the perspective and voice of DRs in decision-making fora. What the ACT UP Philadelphia case advances beyond Young's original conception, furthermore, is the power of organisational agency. SMOs can develop rituals of greeting and cultures that invite and respect the role of emotion and conflict in deliberation, as ACT UP does in its Monday night meetings (recall my 2-minute smoke break orientation, the go-around introductions, Jahmiah telling his personal story).

The cultural architecture of Chapter 5, in turn, lays the foundation for the causal development of political solidarity (x5) put forth in Chapter 6. I likened the two components of political solidarity, group perspective and moral obligation respectively, to be the directional map and propelling gas to get the SMO engine to its desired destination of SR. In regards to group perspective, the groundwork of communicative democracy provided fodder for the release of anger, argumentation, and indeed, also rationality. As exemplified through the John Bell-Asia Russell exchange on AIDS drugs in Africa, the SMO realised these critical tools to develop, however gradually, a shared political orientation among the membership.

Second, Chapter 6 introduced the moral substrata of moral obligation as the glue to sustained SMO participation in the name of SR. I evoke, once again, the staying power of the blended incentive mix within ACT UP's recruitment schema. Investments toward member education, self-efficacy, and historical consciousness grant participants a reason

to join the SMO. These incentives also become good reason—or more than good reason, obligation—to stay invested in the SMO. Participants speak of this desire to reciprocate the returns they have personally gained, whether it is their professional salaries as AIDS workers or the “life skills” they learned or the simple or profound fact that ACT UP “saved my life.”¹⁰ Underlying the empirical reports of the ACT UP members, thus, is a funny theoretical truth: their morality of collective participation derives from an unexpected place, the realisation of their own self-interest.

Chapter 7 completed the long arc to realising socioeconomic and racial justice, the core of SR in the HIV/AIDS movement. It raised once more the question with which the thesis opened. How did a rag-tag outfit, one that struggled to scrap together rent for its meeting space—read: a token donation to its landlord, the church—manage to pack hundreds of people in pricey buses to protest U.S. trade policy or AIDS funding? Put simply, how has ACT UP achieved so much with so little? The answer comes in its two flavours of resource complementarity, both between its members and with its allied organisations.

I described, at length, the unappreciated power of capacity that arises from the unlikely wedding of queer partners and unlikely bedfellows. Chapter 7 described the arresting imagery that ACT UP commanded in its pairing of phenotypes, as potential recruits and the media alike witnessed how people in all shapes and colours cared about the same issues. It detailed the power of complementary perspectives: they were crucial to

¹⁰ Shabazz-El, interview; Hayes, interview.

determining political targets for tax system reform, planning anti-Bush protests with clam chowder and kitty litter, and evoking DR stories on national television and international conferences. In relation to organisational complementarity, ACT UP commanded a fierce respect from partner AIDS service organisations and the state. Its disavowal of mainstream funding liberated it to adopt policy positions and political tactics that its more moneyed institutional allies, ironically enough, could not afford. And in turn, these partners paid ACT UP back in kind, with donations of buses and photocopies on or off the books.

Chapter 8 concluded the inspiring exposition of ACT UP Philadelphia with a more sombre reminder. Without shame or secrecy, it bared the internal problems shrouded behind huge external success in SR: Health GAP's co-optation of the grassroots agenda, the imperfect education of DRs, and the surprising utility of oligarchy for the SMO. This candid disclosure of exploitation and imperfection, I argued, does not weaken the causal theory that the preceding chapters worked hard to build. Rather, it offers a closing varnish upon the framework that reminds us, scholars and activists, of the tarnish that necessarily accompanies but does not preclude stories of SR success.

9.2 Overall theoretical contribution

Having reviewed the causal steps above, I will now endeavour not to rehash but rather synthesise the broadest contributions of the thesis to social movement literature and

practice. Here I discuss the theoretical lessons in two big buckets. The first refers to a novel conceptualisation of SR, as an outcome variable that necessitates the contention of heterogeneous people and perspective into a collective solidarity and capacity. The second evokes the power of induction from the gritty empirics of SMO process: the thesis realises the lynchpin role of rather unromantic tactical drivers, appeals to material need and self-interest, in the achievement of a romantic ideal of organising for SR.

9.2.1 A re-imagination of substantive representation (SR)

Of the many goals girding the theoretical agenda of the thesis, most significant is the conceptual re-imagination—and empirical proof—of SR and its attainment. I argue SR to be a practical end that lies in the causal hands of SMO agency. The process of achieving SR necessitates an inclusivity not only of policy ideals, but also of a contentious mix of heterogeneous people and perspectives. The engineering of recruitment schema, rituals for internal inclusion, and the other aforementioned causal steps toward political solidarity and resource complementarity—this process, in its totality, demands an intricate and intentional carving of collective capacity that calls on far more than the sole agency of “critical actors” casting votes or the gathering of “critical mass.”¹¹

This ambition for SR trots on a primitive, relatively unexplored path in the literature.

The introduction to the thesis detailed how SMT has largely forsaken SR in favour of more achievable variables such as movement longevity or political consequence,

¹¹ Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation*; Yoder, “Rethinking Tokenism”; Celis et al., “Rethinking Women’s Substantive Representation”; Childs and Krook, “Analysing Women’s Substantive Representation.”

outcomes that do not insist on questions of what people or issues are included and excluded. Perhaps one can partially blame this relative silence about SR on canonical claims of what is and is not “possible” in the SMT world. I almost imagine the thesis as venturing off into territory that has commonly been marked as “no trespassing” for SMOs and their limitations, their realm of possibility fenced off by Michels’s proclamation of oligarchy and the other trajectories of SMO doom outlined earlier (the law of involution, lack of resource mobilisation, and so on).

The thesis joins the likes of only a handful of other scholars in this trespassing, largely in the feminist strands of political theory and SMT, to trace the possible routes out of oligarchy, to DR inclusion, and toward achievement of ultimate SR.¹² I engage and often borrow from the strengths of their theories while realising their ill-fitting nature to this project and its theoretical ambitions; perhaps existing work lacks a strong empirical backbone, their scope does not match mine of informal SMOs, or their operationalisation of causal steps is less than precise.

9.2.2 Tactical tools and the crass spur toward SR

The thesis stakes a unique theoretical claim on SR in its focus on the gritty empirics of technical tactic and process. As detailed in the introduction, it deploys a “microscopic agential approach” toward organisations and their intentional choices of internal structure and design. I realised, through an inductive and iterative process between field

¹² Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*; Weldon, “Inclusion, Solidarity, and Social Movements”; Voss and Sherman, “Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy”; Clemens and Minkoff, “Beyond the Iron Law”; Scott, “Beyond Tokenism”; Poster, “The Challenges and Promises of Class and Racial Diversity in the Women’s Movement.”

and theory, a set of causal propositions that derive from the individual steps from one variable to the next. In the aggregate, these causal claims about effective tactics lead us to a paradoxical truth, the power of unromantic drivers in crafting a more romantic possibility of organising for SR.

What do I mean by this? The incentives for “good” or “normative” movement behaviour often derive from “bad” and unexpected places of self-interest or, in more drastic circumstances, self-preservation. Recall the incredible allure of material incentives for resource-poor DRs: they served as the crass but effective gateways to ultimately drive the desire for purposive and solidary fulfilment. They, DRs and allies alike, later reported other, non-material incentives that followed: from self-efficacy (“ACT UP taught me...we can do anything”); to learning (“most everything I know about how to be a good person in the world, I learned from my experience in ACT UP Philadelphia”); to fulfilling responsibility (“ACT UP...that’s my job”).¹³

The study carves out an innovative space for the institutionalised nurturing of self-efficacy. When members feel useful in a given space, they internalise feelings of commitment and responsibility. Advancing Young’s largely dyadic presumption of communicative democracy into an institutional conception, I advance a group-level means to reach such ends: organisational design choices to establish rituals of greeting, rhetoric, and narrative. These features deepen the sense of involvement and belonging of

¹³ Shabazz-El, interview; Davids, interview; Bell, interview.

the most disenfranchised, a critical means for practitioners and scholars to understand deliberative democracy through the lens of organisational agency and intentionality.

Following this analysis, I describe how members formed feelings of obligation, forged largely by material and self-interested reasons that ultimately motivated guilt, shame, and an ethic of reciprocity to the SMO. The stark rhetoric of sustenance or even “saving” came into play here. Allies speak about assuaging their guilt of having “lived off of AIDS” as AIDS service providers; DRs evoke their very bodily existence when they confess that “ACT UP saved my life.”¹⁴

Interestingly enough, this same dependence on material fodder and personal preservation translates to the organisation in an anthropomorphic sense. One could imagine SMOs, driven by a deliberate agency and conscience, as self-interested and rationally calculating animals. Chapter 3 argued that ACT UP Philadelphia only actualised its moral intentions for inclusivity when it found itself in crisis of a “diversity deficit”; it developed the conviction to recruit DRs when it realised that its own survival was at stake. Chapter 7, in turn, brought into relief the very practical reasons why organisations hold onto and sustain their DRs. Their phenotype of blackness and brownness lends legitimacy to outreach and campaigns, their perspective affords campaigns a greater degree of cultural competency, and the phenotype-perspective combination bestows upon them a unique power as spokespeople. As with the recovery house recruitment in Chapter 4 and Health GAP campaigns of Chapter 8, the

¹⁴ Subways, interview; Hayes, interview; Maxfield, interview; Green, interview.

problematic exploitation of SRs testify to the self-interested reasons, on part of the SMO, for their activities of DR inclusion and political participation.

The critical role of self-interest commands a leading role in the theatre of this social movement story, one far more substantial than its traditional shunned and taboo position in the literature. I bring material concerns to the forefront of arguably ideological battles, an act I already note carries strong theoretical implications in defiance of traditional understandings of selective incentives, norm development, and other tenets in SMT. This re-injected notion of self-interest advances the agenda espoused by Mansbridge and others to realise the importance of crass and rational incentive for collective action.¹⁵

9.3 Portability to other social movements: possibility and limitation

In re-encapsulating the theoretical contributions of the thesis, then, this conclusion begs the question of generalisability. Do the causal propositions, developed within the ACT UP case, carry portability to other movements?

This section iterates an honest assessment of the limitations inherent to the project; and it maintains that the particular attributes of this case study do not negate the analytic

¹⁵ Mansbridge, *Beyond Self-Interest*; Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*. Murray, "The Secret of Scale."

purchase of the greater lessons in the thesis located at the core of all political mobilisation.

9.3.1 What does the case of ACT UP Philadelphia represent?

The perennial question of comparative political science asks, “What is this case a case of?”

The introduction to the study drew a broad fence around a universe of cases: informal SMOs that aim to represent diverse and disenfranchised constituencies. In the unravelling of the positive case of ACT UP Philadelphia, the narrative takes us on a ride of turns in the SMO historiography.

The initial presentation tells a story of organisational makeover. A group in Philadelphia, in a critical episode of crisis common to its companion SMOs in Boston and New York and everywhere in the AIDS movement, re-engineers itself. It reconfigures its membership and issue agenda from one of relatively affluent white and male privilege to that of great socioeconomic and racial disadvantage. The SMO, in other words, elects—through far less formal mechanisms than elections—to zone in on a project of SR that follows the statistics to the heart of the epidemic, its majority constituencies. The causal mechanism details this transformation in its first two steps ($x_1 \rightarrow x_3$), from the individual seeds of inclusivity to physical inclusion and the attainment of DR.

But the causal mechanism does not delimit its work to formerly homogenous organisations that aim, succeed, or fail in makeover to heterogeneity—far from it. Even

with DR, the formidable goal of SR looms far in the distance, with the successive three steps ($\times 3 \rightarrow \text{SR}$) still withstanding. Given physical inclusion, how does an SMO supply and sustain fidelity of leadership, issues, and resource mobilisation that reflect the concerns of those most disenfranchised?

The second half of the mechanism speaks to the vast audience of SMOs that are organising with supposedly powerless people to combat entrenched power structures. It is an underdog story tracing the conditions of possibility created within the locus of agency within an organisation. It tells of the micro-process and politics of all-too-often too scrappy SMOs that struggle against the systems of oppression that manifest in external society and internal organisation.

9.3.2 Is this only a story of ACT UP, or only a Philadelphia story?

Specific to my SMO story of choice are several particularities of organisation and environment. I outline them here, but I stress that many if not all of the crucial theoretical steps travel with greater portability than might be initially assumed. That is, external structure is not totalising; organisational agency holds a tremendously important role in determining outcomes of SR.

This project speaks to the universe of “informal SMOs,” or these ironically “rule-less” organisations that are indeed bounded by certain rules: open membership, egalitarian structures of decision-making, and an all-volunteer base. Some of the theoretical

contributions pertain strictly to this universe. Notably, the construct of a “communicative democracy” depends on a consensus style of decision-making that invites deliberation, sharing of personal narrative, and conflict. Only then can SMOs foster the key ingredients necessary for shared perspective toward SR and political solidarity (x6). I do not attempt to tackle the mechanics of battle against oligarchy in more formalised organisations with clear modes of election or accountability.

The greatest limitation of my causal mechanism? Group size. Olson argued size to be a key constraint in the success of collective action; and as some feminist theorists have noted, communicative democracies fail on metrics of scalability.¹⁶ They rely on a small enough membership for feasible engagement in greeting (recognition of other faces), deliberation, and ultimate buy-in toward a certain direction for SR.

The AIDS epidemic has presented an urgency of crisis and an opportune drive for action that is unparalleled among other social movements. The disease struck many young people who did not expect—or settle for—such a looming death. HIV-positive individuals had some years between diagnosis and the onset of symptoms, a prognosis clock that granted finite but crucial time for activism. In mobilisation was the singular promise of bodily life, the most tangible material incentive a social movement theorist could ask for. (“ACT UP was a necessity because people wanted to stay alive.”¹⁷)

¹⁶ Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action*; Phillips, *The Politics of Presence*, 52.

¹⁷ Williams, interview.

The life-or-death circumstances of the AIDS movement are very much a double-edged sword, however. The ticking threat of mortality honed the effort of groups such as ACT UP New York to pinpoint a determinant enemy, the HIV virus, and focus its campaigns on drug development and access. As the thesis has noted, the time and resource-limited milieu of the AIDS movement only served to further funnel self-interest toward the narrowest political agenda of antiretroviral treatment. (“For them [the majority of ACT UP New York], it was all about drugs into bodies.”¹⁸) The emotional milieu of precarious life and high emotion often served to inhibit any understanding of the socioeconomic and racial causes of the AIDS epidemic.¹⁹ The work of the Philadelphia group, under this understanding, becomes only more remarkable. Despite the undying rates of mortality to this day—members are still passing—the Philadelphia chapter has corralled inclusivity to campaign for causes that fanned far beyond biomedical concerns to prison justice, welfare programmes, and condoms in schools.

This work is replicable elsewhere. The historiography of the AIDS struggle and other movements, in turn, reveals that ACT UP Philly, in all honesty, is not incredibly special.

Many of the mechanism steps to SR are unique neither to ACT UP Philadelphia nor Philly the city. Take, for instance, the importance of material incentives in enabling the purposive and solidary incentives—and participation—for DRs. Many Philadelphia AIDS service organisations (ASOs), some of them spinoff babies founded by ACT UP members, employ tokens and food as critical accommodations for their low-income

¹⁸ King, interview.

¹⁹ Gould, *Moving Politics: Emotion and ACT UP's Fight Against AIDS*.

clientele. These material hooks evoke the work of Black Panther programmes in Philadelphia decades prior, providing free breakfast, clothing, medical services, and child care in the black community.²⁰ Thinking back to the urban analysis of Chapter 2, one might wonder: can such blend of service in resource-poor SMOs only happen in a hospitable ecology like Philadelphia? That is, in a place with dirt-cheap rent (\$100/month) in collective houses, or a black radical tradition that powers racial justice groups toward inclusivity?

In short, no. Such practices in radical service as activism span far beyond Philadelphia. Though divorced from selective incentives, Minkoff's analysis of women and minority groups since 1955 details a hybrid form of organisation that straddles service, advocacy, and protest.²¹ Marwell speaks to a "triadic exchange" among community organisations, service provision, and electoral politics that reflects the potential synergy in hybridising these often-isolated organisational forms and spaces.²² Outside academic conversation but in direct relation to membership expansion, Murray recently published a study of civic organisations that demonstrated how scale and political power develops from the dangling of material incentives: promises of member insurance by the NRA, benefits from the AARP, and servicing models from unions as only a few examples.²³

A natural question then arises: how do scrappy groups like ACT UP Philadelphia afford such resource demands like "free" oranges and subway tokens and bus rides for its

²⁰ Black Panthers Party, "People Needed for Community Programs."

²¹ Minkoff, "The Emergence of Hybrid Organizational Forms." See also Polletta, *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting*.

²² Marwell, "Privatizing the Welfare State."

²³ Murray, "The Secret of Scale."

protestors? Chapter 7 offered a conceptual answer called organisational complementarity in the context of Philadelphia's institutional ecology: ACT UP Philly came knocking on the doors and balance books of more resourced allies. In isolation, the analysis might suggest an exacting formula for organisational symbiosis: ACT UP Philly gave direct rise to Philadelphia FIGHT and other ASOs, its members becoming founding progenitors of much service activity in the city. ACT UP Philly's positionality in the organisational ecology is critical, indeed, for enabling its draws of cash and human time in ways that averted goal displacement despite oligarchy.

This model of organisational complementarity replicates in histories as intimately related to ACT UP as the spinoff groups of New York's chapter. The Big Apple certainly is not the first place in America where one would imagine cheap housing and a favourable urban ecology. Yet two of ACT UP New York's babies turn to focus on housing justice and other SR issues on large scales of membership and action, mobilising resources also without the goal displacement that Michels, McCarthy, or Zald might theorise. Housing Works, in particular, sprouted out of the Housing Committee of ACT UP New York. It peppers Manhattan and other boroughs with thrift stores and other social enterprises. The profits from social enterprise make up 90 percent of the revenue, and they make Housing Works the largest community-based ASO in the U.S.²⁴ Both Housing Works and New York City AIDS Housing Network (NYCAHN, now called

²⁴ Housing Works, "Our History."

VOCAL-NY) have focused their community organising efforts on strictly issues of SR with respect to low-income POC.²⁵

NYCAHN, in many ways, mirrors the reconfiguration of ACT UP Philadelphia to intensely recruit members for fights on welfare, housing, IV drug use, and other marginalised issues. The group got clipboards, and they pipelined people not from recovery houses but in welfare centres for people with AIDS. They got phone numbers and rung people multiple times before actions. Jennifer Flynn, a co-founder of the group, describes the parallel logic of recruitment pipelines that coupled direct action with service: “NYCAHN was an organizing group that added on social services because our members were in so, you know, dire direct need.”²⁶ A follow-up to this study, then, might find an interesting task of comparison between NYCAHN and ACT UP Philadelphia for their similarities in organisational agency, and presumed difference in structural and urban context.

The causal non-negotiable. The cursory peek at NYCAHN, then, begs a question not only for close relatives of ACT UP, but for all informal SMOs in the study’s case universe of heterogeneous constituency. What ecological factors must exist for an organization like ACT UP Philadelphia to re-engineer itself, or for a new group like NYCAHN to build its base from scratch?

²⁵ Shepard, “Housing Works, Shelter Kills!”; Shukaitis, Graeber, and Biddle, *Constituent Imagination*; Shepard, *Community Projects as Social Activism*.

²⁶ Flynn, interview.

To answer this question, I hone in on a very necessary intermediate outcome within the causal mechanism: DR. For very instrumental reasons, an SMO must develop DR. DRs can offer the irreplaceable wisdom of their own experience in issue selection and campaign planning (Chapters 5-7); they can motivate an urgency of action and frames of obligation for the entire group (Chapter 6); and they can parade en masse to attract media attention and legitimacy, assuming that such diversity is a valuable political resource (Chapter 7).

To develop a leadership pipeline for DRs, then, what in an SMO's greater ecology of activism must hold true and constant? I offer a preliminary explanation. Chapter 4 emphasises agential choices of the SMO in setting up a two-phase system of recruitment of material incentives in an initially wide net and then an intensive programme of investment for a smaller group. Those schema depend on money and organisational infrastructure, and several options exist: an allied ASO in Philadelphia's case and a profitable social enterprise as with Housing Works.

The more difficult issue lies with finding an accessible pool of DRs to mobilise. The critical ingredient in an SMO ecology, I argue, comes in the *presence of accessible service institutions that serve large numbers of DRs*, most likely people who are low-income. In Philadelphia's case, it is the unusual density of recovery houses; with NYCAHN, welfare centres. From here, I generalise these anchors to be any institutional hubs, most likely in cities, which play host to a substantial number of prospective DRs who have mobility of access to protest and political participation. (For example, centres for the incarcerated

would not qualify.) If these DR centres can offer in-kind donations (like the recovery house that threw to ACT UP a bus and some fried chicken, along with its entire clientele), all the better—but at a minimum, what an SMO needs in its ecology is a service population to mobilise in organisational form that enables recruitment and political mobilisation at scale.

9.3.3 Broader possibility of allyship and DR complementarity

Before closing, I would like to highlight one final point of generalisability in relation to the re-imagined concept of SR in the thesis. The complementary roles of allies and DRs travel far beyond the confines of AIDS activism, and its racialised conceptualisation offers especial lessons to American social movements.

Among its primary theoretical and practical aims, the thesis endeavoured to expand the existing locus of responsibility for SR beyond people directly affected so that it becomes a group-level duty that relies on the resources and perspective of both DRs and allies. This collective imagining of SR, then, invites practical questions of which members and by which processes movements are able to practice inclusion. The thesis tussles with dogged debates over allyship that arise especially within the racialised milieu of the United States.

In the strictest of terms, the AIDS movement would consider the dichotomy of allies and DRs as people living with HIV and those living without. But I emphasise the importance

of the bifurcation of these groups in this thesis—and in many U.S. social movements—along lines of race. The racialised nature of allyship, I argue, is highly specific and pertinent to the American context of political mobilisation.

America's history has been particularly successful in its particular branding of race, searing blackness with a ferocity that exposes our nation's dependence on black and brown bodies, a social construction of "otherness" that legitimises their exploitation for labour, capitalism, and the maintenance of a social hierarchy upon which whiteness perches. This "force field of American racism" has constructed certain sensitivities not only to injustice but also the struggles against such injustice.²⁷ It is an ahistorical reality reproduced in the permanent fabric of race and resistance in the country. For instance, in the celebrated 1964 U.S. Freedom Summer campaign, some of the most prominent black organisations in the civil rights movement strained under the paternalism and "white saviour complex" of idealistic white volunteers who flooded Mississippi.²⁸ Such eruptions over so-called white allyship are recurrent, flaring up in contemporary struggles too. Today's analogues of such civil rights leaders, leaders in the Black Lives Matter movement told "angry white people [that] the Ferguson protest was not about you."²⁹

ACT UP Philadelphia is not unique in the fact that some of its greatest controversies come in its deployment of the phenotypic purchase of race among its protestors. Recall,

²⁷ Fields and Fields, *Racecraft*.

²⁸ McAdam, *Freedom Summer*, 23.

²⁹ Martis, "Dear Angry White People, The Ferguson Protest Was Not About You."

for instance, the derogatory talk of ACT UP's deployment of the "angry black mob" for protests, exposed in Chapter 8 as engineered by the largely white, HIV-negative staff of Health GAP; or, as in Chapter 7, the plastering of black faces on campaign material and rally podiums to become spokespeople for the movement. White allies are in the back scenes holding front seats of power: pulling power strings with state allies, developing campaign strategy, and often commanding control of the purse clasp.

This deliberate division of labour—which sometimes, one can call inclusivity, and at other times, tokenising or outright racism—often does indeed further the reach and impact of SR. It embodies the complicated valences of race and their absolute necessity in ACT UP's organising, as the member complementarity argument in Chapter 7 argued. The differential phenotype and perspective associated with gradients in American skin colour became instrumental to the internal solidarity and external impact of the SMO.

Whenever presenting this project—and in particular, the member complementarity argument—to academic or activist audiences, I hear one question more frequently asked than any other. They ask, what are you saying about the normative role of allies and DRs in social movement struggle? Does this thesis imply that white people are critical to racial justice movements and their success in the United States?

Here, I admit that issues of generalisability become thorny. I do not claim that every SMO or every movement must involve allies, or that American activists of colour should deliberately replicate the racial power structure in SMOs. My intention is not to call for

the pandering of SMO support via white allies with more diplomas and green bills. At the same time, I take into account the very practical realities of the resource divide in the United States, and its deep scoring across lines of skin colour (e.g., a black family owns ten cents of wealth to every white family's one dollar).³⁰ In the movements battling the most severe of injustices, its DRs will come from the most resource-poor of environments, not unlike the low-income people of HIV at the heart of the AIDS epidemic. The thesis carves out a mode of SMO agency that acknowledges—and is often stymied by—the high fences of racial divides. Even as these fenced divides have been the cause of SR failure or entire movement breakdowns in other contexts, however, I demonstrate that with respect and especial attention to these borders, they become more porous than they may often appear.

Movement participation cannot change skin colour; but the associated inequalities across black and white can indeed begin to be bridged. The causal mechanism of the thesis outlined the transference of resources both material and informational, a confluence of material incentives and educational investments that relay the building of power among those who traditionally have held very little. This potential becomes inspiringly apparent in the meeting deliberations. For example, Chapter 7 cited a meeting in which a black PWA, someone who moved to Philadelphia for mental health treatment, took centre as the central source of political knowledge; he rattled off an explanation about one Congressperson's statutory power on the Ways and Means Committee of the House and her instrumental position as a political target for ACT UP. At times, low-income

³⁰ Oliver and Shapiro, *Black Wealth, White Wealth*.

PWAs of colour know better than any other members in the group the most up-to-date facts on intricate HIV treatments or the best route of strategic attack for a particular campaign.

The thesis is a testament to the mobilisation of power across difference. The theoretical backbone depends heavily on the reified role of DRs and allies alike, but at the same time, it blurs the lines of this dichotomy in a demonstration of the permeability and contagion of social movement incentive, obligation, education, and action. I reinforce the instrumental importance of DRs at the steering wheel for the SMO vehicle of SR. I do not exempt the critical responsibility, and at times, practical necessity of (often whiter) allies. Yet I impress the vital place of DRs not as victims, but rather as the antidote against organisational oligarchy.

Claiming to end injustice of one kind or another, SMOs only actualise these noble missions if they first invest the internal development of those whom society has most forgotten. SR begins with the deliberate investment in the material location of participants, a physical inclusion that leads to the expansion of their voice and contribution, and ultimately the heavy lifting of political strategy and campaign success that is realised among DRs in a small minority of SMOs such as ACT UP Philadelphia.

9.3.4 Closing notes

Through its investigation of the gritty realities of organisational agency, the thesis has drawn broad strokes in SMT and political science. It realises big ideas resonant with activists and (a minority of) scholars on the power of self-interest in collective action, the complementarity of haves and have-nots. It actualises these theoretics in the documented practice of one SMO that boasts power in an impressive pedigree of accomplishment, though not without its very real struggles with—and, at times, violations of—ideals in political participation.

This one SMO showcases the ability of what can be done without paid staff, without the preaching to big donors and the estrangement from original grassroots goals. It hurls aside vertical hierarchy in favour of formalised practices that foster the meeting and power of people of all kinds. The thesis envisions sustainable activism that satisfies the most ambitious desires of DR leadership through the crass and practical placeholders of material need and self-interest.

Recall the root cause of HIV and AIDS: “The structures of social and economic and gender and racial power...[that] was killing,” as one black ACT UP New York member phrased it. This interlock of systems of power serves one big purpose. The job of oppressive structures, as embodied in the neoliberal erosion of social welfare and universal humanity, is to divide and conquer. They stuff individuals into the smallest of socially constructed boxes, labelled as gay, female, black, HIV-positive, drug user, or any combination thereof. We suffocate in pitted conflict and infighting that only continues to

stomp upon the most disenfranchised. This oppressive project succeeds all too often, even in the vehicles of social movement founded on a contentious opposition against such boxes. The thesis revisits the bread and butter of organising tools—at times, literal bread and butter, as with the sandwich lunches on protest buses; and other times, education and investment in a stubborn if never perfectly realised ideal of inclusivity—that, in conjunction, connect dots of struggle toward a more brilliant universe of substantive representation.

Appendix A. Interview guide

Below is the interview guide that I employed. The annotations in italics describe the respective coding categories and variables to which interview questions correspond.

Goals of the interview

- To understand individual **perspectives** on **inclusivity** and **representativeness** in ACT UP
 - o Subjective opinion: do they feel ACT UP is representative/inclusive?
 - o Process and cause: what makes ACT UP representative or not?
 - o Normative thought: what could ACT UP do better?
- To **contextualize** people's stories through their own **personal history** and background
 - o What drew folks to ACT UP? Why do they stay/drop out?
- To gain broader **reflections on ACT UP in context**
 - o Comparison to other AIDS service organisations, We the People, etc.
 - o How has ACT UP changed as the political and social environment has evolved?

Interview questions

i. Personal history

#1 and #2 probe the past backgrounds and experiences that represent exogenous factors that may predispose individual persons to activism (x1, personal predispositions to inclusivity):

1. To start out with, I ask everyone the same questions: your age, how long you've lived in <<X CITY>>, and what years you've been a part of ACT UP?
2. What brought you to ACT UP and AIDS activism?
Probe: Any prior involvement in AIDS organisations? What did you think of your first meeting or first times in ACT UP?

#3 and #4 tease at subjective perceptions of self-interest and benefit gained, and the self-efficacy felt in ACT UP (related to x5, political solidarity).

3. Why do you put time and energy to ACT UP? What has kept you going to Monday night meetings and actions (or what has led you to drop out)?
*Probe: Any mentoring, help along the way, etc. What do you feel like you gain from being a member of ACT UP? **Individual benefit** is key to explore here.*
4. How would you describe your role in ACT UP?
Probe: How has this role developed? Do you like this role? Do you feel like you make a difference in the group?
5. Is there anything you've been particularly proud of or frustrated about in ACT UP? Personally and from a group standpoint?

ii. Reflections on the group

#6-8 endeavour to reveal members' evaluations of the organisational culture: do they find it inclusive or not (x3, physical heterogeneity; x4, internal inclusion)? Why and how?

ON INCLUSIVITY (probe for specific examples):

6. Do you feel like ACT UP is welcoming to everyone of all colours and backgrounds? Why or why not?
Probe: Any times where there have been problems between the people who are black or white, poor or educated, etc.?
7. How does ACT UP make sure that people are able and want to:
 - a. Come to meetings,
 - b. Feel comfortable in the group, and
 - c. Take on roles and make decisions in the group?
8. How could ACT UP do better on all of this?

#9-10 tackle the issue of substantive representation very directly, though often responses to other interview questions will also reveal key insights (Y, SR).

ON SUBSTANTIVE REPRESENTATION (probe for specific examples):

9. Do you feel like ACT UP **stands for and works on** the issues that are most important to people living with HIV? Why and how?
10. How could ACT UP do better to stand for and represent people with AIDS?

OTHER:

11. How does ACT UP build relationships and work with other groups?
Probe: Does ACT UP do this well? How could it do it better?
12. What do you think has been some of ACT UP's biggest successes? Disappointments?

iii. Closing

13. Do you have any documents, photos, or anything else from ACT UP? Other people that you would recommend me to chat with?
14. Anything else you'd like to mention?

Field notes

At the conclusion of the interview, record field notes as soon as possible. Field notes should include a brief description of the interviewee (nonverbal expression, appearance, rhetoric), relevant information that the respondent provided prior or after time of recording, and any other context.

Appendix B. Substantive representation (SR) indices for ACT UP chapters

I made a list of major campaigns for each of the four ACT UP cases in the thesis (Boston 1.0 & 2.0, Philadelphia, New York). To obtain these data, I relied primarily on SMO history in archival documents, also triangulated with interviews and periodical sources.

Definition of qualifying campaigns. I only consider campaigns that hold the following aim (the *ends*) via a particular tactical *means*:

- *Aim*: to challenge the status quo of political systems and institutions for social change
- *Tactic*: to engage in ACT UP's signature style of "direct action." Direct action tactics include demonstrations, strikes, and sit-ins. Often, these modes of protest obstruct the activities or practices of a political target, namely an individual or organisation that commands the institutional power to enact policy change.

For example, the 1992 anti-Bush protest detailed in Chapter 7 would qualify as an ACT UP Philadelphia campaign. It specifically aimed to protest and change the neoliberal policies of the Bush administration. The kitty litter coffin and homegrown mulch represented props of *direct action* that aimed to disrupt the campaign fundraiser of their political targets.

On the other hand, when ACT UP Boston 2.0 tested 500 youth, mostly low-income, for HIV, such an effort did indeed tackle inequalities in the AIDS epidemic for social change. But this important campaign does not qualify under the criteria for direct action; it is instead a service provision effort. TEACH, despite its lynchpin position within the causal mechanism for SR in ACT UP Philadelphia, would also not qualify. In contrast, I do consider needle exchange efforts as service provision *and* direct action, for they were founded in strict defiance and with explicit purpose to change the law.

I counted a group of demonstrations or protest activities as a single campaign if they share a common set of political targets and political demands. For example, ACT UP New York and Philadelphia 2.0, together with many other allies, campaigned for more than ten years against a group of stakeholders in the U.S. federal government to win greater funding and cheaper costs for drugs in Africa. This campaign represents, in aggregate, a great number of individual demonstrations and protests for the same common ends.

List of SR campaigns. Below is a more detailed table that lists the qualifying campaigns within each of the pre-determined categories of SR. Excluded from the count are many ACT UP efforts that enacted effective policy changes but fall outside the scope of the treatment of SR in the thesis. Omitted are the treatment and data (T&D) campaigns that

won expedited access to antiretrovirals for PWAs in the United States. For ACT UP New York and Boston, T&D campaigns formed the vast majority of their activities. They constituted huge victories in the AIDS movement, and indeed the most physically impactful for PWA bodies, but they were not executed with the express concern for their most disenfranchised constituencies.

My final note: I caution that this list is necessarily partial, that it contains omissions. No list can be a comprehensive record of all campaigns in ACT UP. SMOs, for their emphasis on action and not historical preservation, regrettably have only partial documentation of their work and success. The records for ACT UP Philadelphia's campaigns in the 1990s and early 2000s (pre-Internet), I note, are particularly sparse; interviews data fill in some but not all historiographical holes. The New York and Boston groups had much more comprehensive records in historical archives.

Table 7. Index scores of substantive representation for the case SMO trajectories in the thesis.

	PHILLY 1.0 (1988-1994)	NYC 1.0 (1987-1994)	BOSTON 1.0 (1987-1996)	PHILLY 2.0 (1995-PRESENT)	NYC 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	BOSTON 2.0 (2012-2014)
i. Transmission of HIV among intravenous drug use users	○ Sets up the illegal Prevention Point Philadelphia that then wins funding from the city (1991-1992)	○ Initiates the Lower East Side Needle Exchange (1990)	○ The IV League distributes needles to drug users (1995)	○ Leads protests against federal ban on needle exchange (1997-1999, 2009)	○ Protests Clinton's ban on needle exchange (1997-1998)	-
ii. Transmission of HIV among people of colour or low-income peoples	○ Goes on hunger strike and succeeded in the maintenance of Betak, a nursing home for HIV+ elderly in Philadelphia (1990-1991) ○ Wins access to condoms in schools (1991) ○ Campaigned against the racist and homophobic treatment of black HIV+ gay prisoner Gregory Smith (1990)	○ Youth Education committee succeeds in introducing condom distribution and sex education in NYC schools (1989-1995) ○ Campaigns for the medical and social rights of HIV+ prisoners in New York state government policies (1991)	○ Launches protest at the Massachusetts state house to advocate for rights of prisoners with HIV (1992-1993)	○ Campaigned for the treatment of HIV+ prisoners in New Jersey (2004) ○ Opposes city budget to preserve funding for Project TEACH (2007) ○ Pressures Philadelphia Prison System to ensure availability of condoms in jails (2006) ○ Lowered the cost of drugs for low-income PWAs in the U.S. ○ Increased funds for outreach to sex workers ○ Campaigned for greater provision of resources for youth prevention	-	-

	PHILLY 1.0 (1988-1994)	NYC 1.0 (1987-1994)	BOSTON 1.0 (1987-1996)	PHILLY 2.0 (1995-PRESENT)	NYC 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	BOSTON 2.0 (2012-2014)
iii. Housing for People with AIDS (PWAs)	o Allies in successful fight to prevent federal cuts to AIDS housing (1994)	o With a very strong and active Housing Committee, protests the city and federal policies to house PWAs (1988-1993)	-	- o Continues fight to preserve federal funding for AIDS (1995) - o Engages in major (and largely thankless) housing campaign to win more funds from the City for HIV+ beds (2009-present); improved conditions in homeless shelters for homeless PWAs	-	o Organises people in town halls for protest of city and federal AIDS housing policies (2012)
iv. Systems of social welfare for low-income people	-	-	-	- o Gains concessions from the state during a neoliberal reform of Medicaid, health access for low-income Pennsylvanians (1995) - o Protests President Clinton's welfare reform (1996) - o Joins in protests against the World Bank and IMF (2000) - o Thwarts huge cuts in Medicare and Medicaid (2005-2006) - o Protests against Governor Corbett's elimination of General Assistance, a welfare program for the poor (2012) - o Joins movement for a progressive tax system (2012-present)	- o Pushes NY state officials to restore AIDS funding for low-income PWAs, ADAP (1996) - o Participates in anti-globalisation protests against the World Bank and IMF (2000) - o Demands national health care in the United States (2007-2009) - o Joins movement for a progressive tax system (2012-present)	-

	PHILLY 1.0 (1988-1994)	NYC 1.0 (1987-1994)	BOSTON 1.0 (1987-1996)	PHILLY 2.0 (1995-PRESENT)	NYC 2.0 (1995- PRESENT)	BOSTON 2.0 (2012-2014)
v. Preventative programmes and drugs for HIV/AIDS in the Global South	-	○ Latino Caucus helps to found an ACT UP chapter in Puerto Rico (1990) ○ Succeeds in releasing and housing 78 HIV+ Haitian refugees from Guantanamo Bay (1992-1995)	-	○ Serves as a major player to slash the cost of medicines worldwide with the removal of trade barriers; pressured federal government and Presidents Clinton, Obama, and Bush to pledge billions of dollars toward HIV/ AIDS globally (1996-today) ○ Joins in solidarity actions to support drug access and HIV+ activists in China and Thailand (2002-2003, 2008 respectively)	○ With many allies, fights for transnational treatment in the AIDS Drug for Africa Campaign (1996-present) ○ Protests on behalf of HIV+ activists and drug programs in China, Brazil, and Uzbekistan (2002, 2005, and 2010 respectively)	○ Protests at the house of U.S. Senator John Kerry for greater global AIDS funding (2012)
Number of SR campaigns	5	8	1	17	9	2
Total number of campaigns	9	37	15	19	16	3
Percentage of campaigns dedicated to SR issues (1=0-20%, 2=20-40%, etc.)	3 (55.6 percent)	2 (21.6 percent)	1 (6.7 percent)	5 (89.4 percent)	3 (56.2 percent)	4 (66.7 percent)
TOTAL SCORE (of 10)	6	6	2	10	6	6

* ACT UP New York was indeed a very prolific group in terms of campaign activities, a testament to its status as the flagship chapter worldwide. The size of its membership and resources dwarfed that of its sister groups (e.g., ACT UP New York's budget in 1990 was over \$1.2 million; ACT UP Philadelphia's at \$23,000 at 1991.¹ Its campaign number is also especially high, however, because of the much more comprehensive nature of its historical record compared to those of other chapters.

¹ Green, "Homework and Hell-Raising."

Appendix C. Primary Sources

This appendix lists interview sources, archives, and periodicals used in the research for the thesis. Participant observation as detailed in the introduction also constituted a significant primary source.

i. Interviews conducted by the author

Philadelphia

Albo Jeavons	December 6, 2013
Anna Forbes	October 2, 2013
Antonio Davis	December 3, 2013
Benjamin Green	December 16, 2013
Chris Bartlett	October 2, 2013
David Acosta	September 28, 2013; October 28, 2011
David Fair	September 27, 2013
Gloria Prusakowski	December 4, 2013
Hannah Zellman	September 26, 2013
Ira Maxfield	October 1, 2013
Jose Benitez	December 5, 2013
Jose De Marco	November 7, 2011; September 30, 2013
Julie Davids	November 8, 2011
Kate Kozeniewski	December 14, 2013
Kate Krauss	September 26, 2013
Kaytee Riek	September 26, 2013
Laura McTighe	August 29, 2013
Luke Messac	October 3, 2013
Mark Marisco	December 12, 2013
Melvin White	September 17, 2013
Paul Davis	November 13, 2011
Paul Yabor	December 4, 2013
Roy Hayes	September 23, 2013; September 27, 2013; October 1, 2013
Sam Morales	December 13, 2013
Scott Tucker	September 16, 2013
Suzy Subways	December 7, 2013

Tamar Smith	September 30, 2013
Teresa Sullivan	October 2, 2013
Val Sowell	September 24, 2013; October 1, 2013
Waheedah Shabazz-El	September 24, 2013
Yetta Speaker	September 30, 2013

New York

Andy Vélez	September 5, 2013
Ben Shepherd	September 10, 2013
Bill Dobbs	September 18, 2013
Eric Sawyer	September 29, 2013
Jennifer Flynn	September 5, 2013
Jim Hubbard	August 29, 2013
Kenyon Farrow	September 10, 2013
Laurie Wen	August 30, 2013
Marce Abare	August 24, 2013
Moises Agosto	September 23, 2013

Boston

Brook Baker	August 21, 2013
Craig Jackson	October 28, 2011
David Hamburger	August 11, 2013
Dawn Fukuda	July 25, 2013
Gary Bailey	October 17, 2011
Gary Daffin	November 3, 2011
Gerry Scoppettuolo	August 11, 2013
Hortensia Amaro	October 10, 2011 October 20, 2011
Jason Lydon	August 16, 2013
Johannes Wilson	August 21, 2013
John Auerbach	November 2, 2011
Kim Sue	August 22, 2013
Margie Thorp	August 21, 2013
Michael Goldrosen	July 24, 2013
Michael Melendez	October 17, 2011
Orlando Del-Valle	September 27, 2011
Rae Jones	January 23, 2014
Ray Schmidt	November 4, 2011
Rhoda Johnson-Tuckett	November 9, 2011

ii. Interviews from other primary sources

From the ACT UP Oral History Project (New York):

Aldo Hernandez	March 17, 2003
Andy Vélez	February 26, 2004
Anne-Christine D'Adesky	April 15, 2003
Charles King	January 20, 2010
Dan Keith Williams	March 26, 2004
Elias Guerrero	March 17, 2004
Gonzalo Aburto	August 26, 2008
Gregg Gonsalves	January 19, 2004
Heidi Dorow	April 17, 2007
Joan Gibbs	July 21, 2012
Jose Fidelino	October 13, 2004
Kendall Thomas	May 3, 2003
Kenneth Bing	May 30, 2007
Larry Kramer	November 15, 2003
Lei Chou	May 5, 2003
Maxine Wolfe	February 19, 2004
Ming-Yuen S. Ma	January 16, 2003
Moises Agosto	December 14, 2002
Richard Elovich	May 14, 2007
Robert Vasquez-Pacheco	December 14, 2002
Ron Medley	December 28, 2003

From the African American AIDS Activism Oral History Project (Philadelphia):

Julie Davids	September 28, 2012
Roy Hayes	June 7, 2012
Waheedah Shabazz-El	June 5, 2012
David Fair	April 13, 2012

From Pascal Emmer, Jessica Rodríguez, and Puck Lo (Philadelphia):

John Bell	April 6, 2008
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iii. Archives, periodicals, and other primary sources

The following sources complemented material from interview and participant observation for a more comprehensive historical analysis of ACT UP.

- *Formal archival institutions* include the **New York Public Library** and its extensive collection of ACT UP New York records, of which include documents produced by the Majority Action Committee and other caucuses for POC. For primary documents,

media coverage, and historical context to ACT UP Philadelphia, I accessed the **John J. Wilcox Jr. GLBT Archives at the William Way LGBT Community Center**, the **Temple University Urban Archives**, and records at the **Historical Society of Pennsylvania**. **Northeastern University's Special Collections** holds a set of historical documents relating to ACT UP Boston, the Boston LGBT community, and the city's communities of colour.

- *Personal archives* provided material from activists who have kept documents in informal repositories, namely the recesses of their closets and hard drives. ACT UP members who offered such material include **Bill Dobbs** of ACT UP New York and **Anna Forbes, Scott Tucker**, and **Val Sowell** of ACT UP Philadelphia. Historians and scholars who also offered uncategorised materials included **Libby Bouvier** of Boston's History Project, **Orlando Del Valle**, also of Boston, and **Abigail Halcli**, formerly of ACT UP Columbus.
- *Online resources.* **Kiyoshi Kuromiya**, one notable and deceased ACT UP Philadelphia activist, began the Internet revolution in his city, and from his virtual presence remain a series of AIDS publications called *Critical Path Newsletters*. As a member at each of the respective chapters, I also accessed and perused the electronic email archives of **ACT UP Boston**, **ACT UP Philadelphia**, and **ACT UP New York**. They included email chains from 2008 to present.
- *Periodical review.* I conducted a periodical review of mainstream, ethnic, and LGBT newspapers in New York, Boston, and Philadelphia from 1987 to present. Of particular interest were the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Boston Globe*, and the *Philadelphia Tribune*. I also conducted broader searches in PWA magazines such as *POZ* and *HIV Plus*, and carried out further periodical research to corroborate specific interview narratives and facts.
- *Other literature.* I drew from the **websites of ACT UP chapters, service organisations, and city agencies** for their respective histories. I also conducted a literature review on the **epidemiological literature** on PubMed surrounding racial disparities in the AIDS epidemic. **U.S. Census** data and governmental materials from the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** provided official statistics on the racial demographics and AIDS epidemiology of respective cities.

Appendix D. HIV epidemiology data.

These graphs are to accompany the discussion of the “who” and “what” of SR issues as discussed in Chapter 1. Estimates are based on a modelling method specific to HIV epidemiology (the extended back calculation) based on case surveillance data.¹

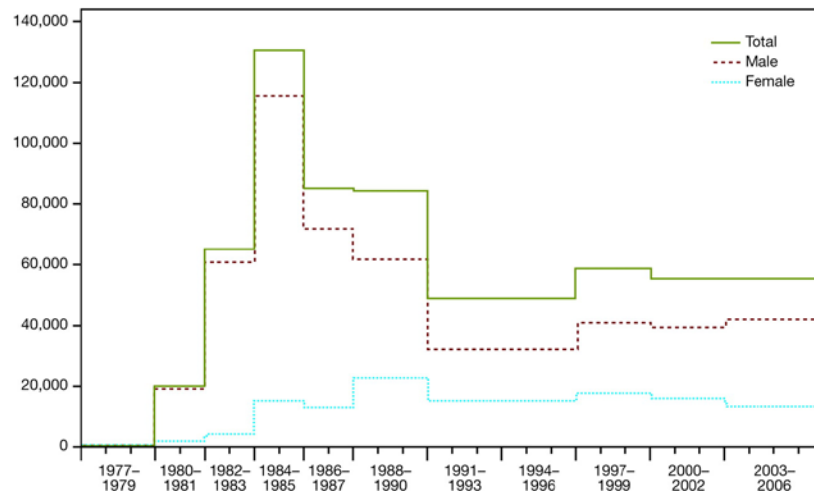


Figure 19. Estimated number of new HIV infections by gender, 1997-2006.

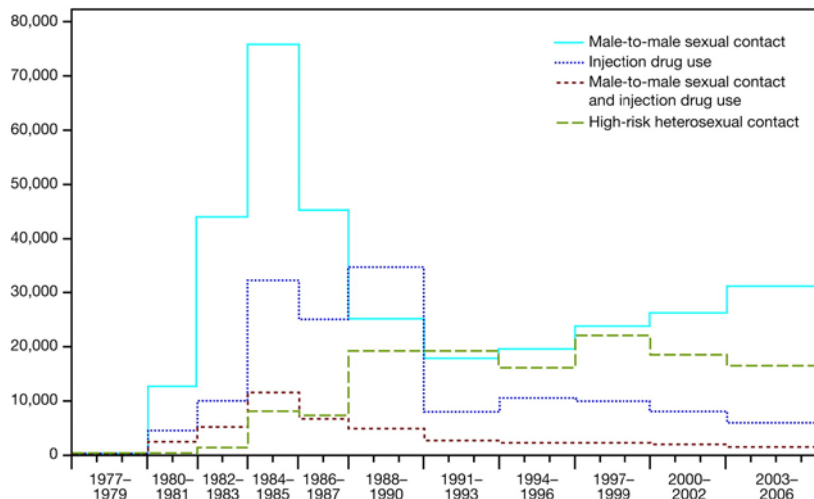


Figure 20. Estimated number of new HIV infections by transmission category, 1997-2006.

¹ Moore, “Epidemiology of HIV Infection in the United States.”

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