

Community-Labor Coalitions and Minimum Wage Campaigns: Beyond the
Campaign

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Introduction

In recent decades, many unions within the labor movement have adopted the strategy of engaging in coalitions with community organizations on campaigns, such those to win living wage ordinances, in order to increase the overall capacity of the working-class movement. The research in this project is intended to answer the research question: What factors impact the ability of labor-community coalitions create a sustainable organization dedicated to advancing the issues of working-class community members after the completion of a minimum wage campaign? Through interviews with individuals familiar with coalition-led minimum wage campaigns, this research attempts to identify factors within the relationship dynamics and organizational strategies of labor-community coalitions that enable the coalitions to contribute to a continued effort on behalf of their members.

The continual decline in the power of organized labor over recent decades presents a need for labor unions to explore a variety of innovative strategies if they are to continue to represent the interests of working people in the United States. Labor-community coalitions and their attempts to pass living wages in different cities provide an example of just this type of necessary innovation. Not only do these coalitions function to fight for the benefits of union members, but they also serve to raise the workplace standards of non-unionized workers and advance issues of racial, economic, and social justice in hopes of bringing about a more just society. By building a collection of coalition that work to actively bridge the gap between the different types of organizations (labor unions, community organizations, and church organizations) that fight for issues based on a similar set of values, labor-community coalitions can potentially provide working-people with the resources and capacity to work against a system that causes ever-increasing inequalities with United States society.

Literature Review

The following literature review serves to contextualize the role of labor-community coalitions in the future of the labor movement and to identify common dynamics and forms present within labor-community coalitions. While an expansive literature exists on these topics, labor movement scholars have dedicated less attention to what must occur in order for these coalitions to continue to evolve and contribute to a sustained sense of solidarity amongst organizations working for the good of the working-class. In considering the previous literature, I hope to situate my own research by considering what types of labor-community coalitions provide the best path forward to develop a strong working-class movement and how the power of these organizations can be most effectively expanded.

Defining Community-Labor Coalitions

Within the past three decades, labor movement scholars have developed a number of different terms to identify and discuss the strategy of labor unions to act in coalition with community organizations and religious organizations in order to advance labor rights and working conditions. Terms such as union-community coalitions, social unionism, community unionism, social justice unionism, and citizenship movement unionism have all been coined by different labor movement theorists in order to explain this strategy of engaging in coalitions with community organizations utilized by some unions within the labor movement (Tattersall 2005). Perhaps, the most noteworthy categorization emerged from Lowell Turner and Richard Hurd who created the term “social movement unionism” to describe the shift in focus of union activity to rank-and-file member engagement and mobilization. This shift was accomplished through engaging in grassroots political action and coalition building with broader community organizing efforts and social movements with the purpose of taking power from corporations and

governments for working-class people (Nissen 2004, Tattersall 2009). Through community engagement with broader movements inherent in social movement unionism, unions are attempting to actualize an “expansion of democratic participation in the workplace and society” (Turner and Hurd 2001). By making community engagement and coalitions a core aspect of the organizational structure of unions, the labor movement positions itself to commit its resources and capacity to enrich a broader social movement solidarity working consistently for social justice issues (Rhomberg and Simmons 2005).

The union coalitions referenced above involve collective activity of common goals between labor unions and community organizations or non-labor institutions for either defined or undefined periods of time with a focus on organizing in order to promote economic and social justice goals (Camou 2014, Frege 2018). While social movement unionism is defined in large part by the implementation of these types of coalitions, many labor theorists are quick to note that simply because a labor union utilizes coalition-building in their strategy does not mean that they should be classified as a social movement union (Frege 2018). Despite some differences present between the phrases that have been developed to explain this innovation in labor union strategy, they all work to describe a form of unionism in which labor unions are acting in alliance with other organizations working for social justice (Nissen 2004).

Accomplishments of Labor-Community Coalitions in Living Wage Campaigns

Through entering into labor-community coalitions, labor unions position themselves as leaders in a broader effort to bring about social justice within the community. Through engaging with social and economic justice issues, such as living wages, campaign finance reform, or progressive candidate campaigns, coalitions provide “a key channel for unions’ transformation from organizations representing simply their membership to a social movement of working

people (Reynolds, 1999). In turn, due to the support of unions in the efforts that community organizations lead in the region, these organizations are more likely to attempt to mobilize their own members and the resources that they have in support of unionization efforts, labor organizing, or legislation surrounding labor. Successful labor-community coalitions increase workplace democracy and work towards increasing the overall capacity of a comprehensive, working-class movement within the region (Turner and Hurd 2001). Rhomberg and Simmons argue that labor-community coalitions provide the most viable and powerful option through which low-income individuals and individuals of color can garner power within their communities through becoming stakeholders in the decision-making processes of their own communities. This power is usually out of the grasp of these people without the sustained collective action and outlet that labor-community coalitions provide (Rhomberg and Simmons 2005).

Coalitions between labor unions and community coalitions provide a platform through which numerous issues affecting the membership of both community organizations and labor unions can be addressed on a large scale. Through these coalitions, unions often attempt to address the needs of their own workers and those outside of their possible membership through legislative regulation of the overall labor market, such as through job-search assistance and job-training initiatives for community members or through campaigning for living wages in different cities (Osterman et al 2001, Reynolds 1999, and Frege et al 2004). Additionally, the existence of labor-community coalitions provides a venue for organizations of all types to convene in order to share their individual knowledge with each other and increase the political will and capacity of organizations fighting for social justice in a community (Greer et al 2007).

One such way that labor-community coalitions work to fight for social justice issues is seen through living wage campaigns that have occurred throughout the United States. The coalition provides the organizations with a venue to utilize their collective resources to win the campaign, despite each type of organization in a labor-community coalition typically having different goals. For example, unions typically want to organize more workers, raise the pay of their members, or raise the pay of workers who may compete with their members for jobs. Community organizations, more generally, have a desire to increase the living standards for their members and residents in the community. Finally, religious and student groups engage in labor-community coalitions with the hope of improving the overall social well-being and enabling their members to engage with uplifting activities (Freeman 2005).

The eventual success of labor-community coalitions in enacting living wages is often determined by the ability of the coalition to effectively frame the community dialogue about the issue. In instances of a successful campaign, the coalition typically frames the issue around a basic sense of fairness, stating that people working a full-time job should be able to cover their basic necessities, and elucidating the benefits for the entire community. On the other hand, if opponents of the ordinance dominant the community perspective on the issue by stating the ordinance will be unrealistic, too expensive, dangerous to the local economy, or only beneficial to specific groups, the measure is more likely to be blocked (Luce 2004).

Factors of Success

While a great deal of literature analyzing the form and function of labor-community coalitions, significantly less information exists relating to the factors that lead to or are necessarily present in a coalition for success to occur. In attempting to find success, unions and community organizations must combine their resources in order to build the capacity to address

issues through “building a strong organizational infrastructure, developing a transformative culture of solidarity, and melding together several different tactical forms of political power” (Dobbie, 2009 A). Indeed, the level of success that a labor-community coalition is likely to find in their work has been demonstrated to be directly tied to how additive and transformative the strategies and logics utilized are (Dobbie 2009 B). The ability of coalition member organizations to develop a deep infrastructural connection, through the development of a formal coalition organization dedicated to facilitating interaction between coalition members, has also been demonstrated to enhance the level of opportunity for success, both by legitimizing and renewing the labor union and its coalition partners (Tattersall 2005). If this infrastructural base is not purposefully developed in order to account for the natural differences between member organizations, coalitions have been shown to be much less likely to find success in their work (Dobbie 2009 B).

The transformative power of labor-community coalitions on the coalition members is perhaps most notable in consideration of living wage campaigns. Reynolds and Kern (2001) state, “When unions join active living wage campaigns, not only do they help change public policy, they transform themselves. They join efforts that involve many of the core aspects needed to revitalize organized labor as a progressive social force.” Centering labor-community coalitions around a living wage issue enables the coalition partners to combine their collective resources in order to address an issue outside of their individual capacity. Coalitions for living wages typically contain progressive organizations with a high level of miscibility, as defined by Vasi (2006) as “how available different movement are for coalition and their willingness to combine in coalitions that transcend their particular movement.” These highly miscible organizations allow for the living wage coalition to develop a transformative and collaborative environment

through ideological compatibility and strong previous connections facilitated by bridge builders (Swarts and Vasi 2011).

The presence and strategy of leadership within both community organizations and labor unions in coalitions also impact the likelihood of success of labor-community coalitions. One particular form of this vital leadership comes from “bridge builders” who sustain the relationships between community organizations and labor unions through the use of the knowledge gained from their experience working with both types of organizations (Breecher and Costello 1990). If present, these leaders often introduce innovative strategies for the coalition to employ and enable the coalition to connect with organizations fighting for a variety of social justice issues, thereby expanding the base of solidarity and possibilities of the labor-community coalition (Frege et al. 2004). Additionally, “bridge builders” work to foster a collaborative yet active coalition environment, in which all membership organizations contribute to the fullest degree possible (Dobbie 2009 B). In bridging these gaps between community organizations and labor unions within a region, leaders enable coalitions to fully utilize the connections available to them. This often leads to success through success as they often pressure government representatives to at least grant small concessions, which has been shown to encourage the continued effort and collaboration of labor-community coalitions. This short-term reassurance is viewed as a necessity by some due to its role in sustaining a labor-community coalition through its early stage so that it has time to increase capacity to a stage where it is able to be sustainable in the long-term (Krinsky and Reese 2001).

While winning short-term concessions have been shown to be vital, other theorists point out the importance of keeping the end-goal of the coalition in mind through every decision. Dobbie proposes accomplishing this by avoiding potential short-term issue losses that could lead to a

fracture of the solidarity of the coalition moving forward (Dobbie 2009 B). Dobbie's line of reasoning in this argument is built off of the strategic choice framework previously developed by David Weil designed to assist labor unions in thoughtfully making everyday decisions. Through the strategic choice framework, Weil attempts to create a framework that allows for labor unions to successfully work towards their larger organizational goals through their day-to-day decision-making. This framework states that every decision made should prioritize increasing the strategic leverage and organizational capacity. In doing so, even if the decision may not necessarily be the obvious choice for the short-term strategy, in the long-term, the union's industry power should be increased (Weil, 2005).

In a study attempting to discover the exact elements and actions that lead to a success in labor-community coalitions across different regions and issue areas, David Dobbie lays out a six-step organizational process that he found to be similar across coalitions that ultimately found sustainable success. The process was as follows:

- 1) Map the local movement infrastructure and diagnose gaps
- 2) Connect this network through a series of 1-on-1 and small-group conversations
- 3) Knit together a diverse core group of leaders by negotiating the conflict between them and developing a common vision
- 4) Build intermediary institutions to serve as network hubs and provide technical capacity in policy research, leadership development, etc.
- 5) Search out economic justice campaigns that fuse together the interests of a broad constituency
- 6) Link these campaigns to electoral politics and a long-term vision (Dobbie 2009 B).

A key element of fusing together broad interest and linking coalition campaigns to electoral politics in living wage campaigns is engaging the community in the efforts. Marked differences have been noted in the way that union-initiated coalitions facilitate community engagement, as opposed to community organization-initiated coalitions. Figure 1 illustrates the differences that arise in labor-community coalitions fighting for a living wage depending on

what type of organization initiates the coalition. The research indicates that when the campaign is initiated by community organizations there is a greater likelihood of continued community involvement in the coalition’s effort post-campaign victory (Prowse et al. 2017).

	Community-led campaign	Union-led campaign
Initiation of the campaign Strategy/ Motivation	Unorganised workers seeking to improve their working and non-work lives, and their terms and conditions of employment generally	Centrally determined i) membership growth ii) improved terms and conditions of employment iii) no broad social objective
Trigger point for union involvement	Workers approach the union which sees opportunity to increase its presence and membership	National campaign
Union's action in being involved	Some lay reps training (for immediate campaigning and for ongoing organising) "we'll help nurture your activity"	Officer led Support through campaign materials, negotiating expertise, some lay reps training (for ongoing organising) "we'll take over from here"
Nature of the campaigning	Waged in moral terms: "greater good/right thing" arguments community support in similar terms, from workers' churches, etc. non-industrial activities, e.g. complaints choir community support for the non-industrial activities	Waged in industrial terms: economic arguments, but also will use moral persuasion implicit/actual industrial action able (in local government) to use political persuasion
Focus and place of activity	i) with the employer: primarily at the top level (vice-chancellor, governors) ii) outside the work space, i.e. to access the "target" (vice-chancellor, etc.) – outside the chancellery, through YouTube	i) with the employer: primarily at the bargaining table ii) workplace activism iii) generate a media presence
Outcome	Living Wage paid, but some offsets Membership increase	Living Wage paid Flow-on to contractors Membership increase
Ongoing union-community relationship	Community groups' continued involvement Ongoing union activism	

Figure 1 (Prowse et al. 2017)

Importance of Labor-Community Coalitions in the Future

Many labor theorists view labor-community coalitions as a vital, if not necessary, innovation if the labor movement is to regain a larger sense of power within the United States. In confronting the forces of neoliberal capitalism, David Dobbie views labor-community coalitions as the single most viable solution to push forward the struggles for economic justice presently occurring, as they serve to bring together labor unions and community organizations, which are often fractured and disconnected if not for purposeful actions (Dobbie 2009 A). In the wake of

labor's continual loss of power, unions must continually seek new avenues to regain their power (Tattersall 2009). Coalitions serve as just this form of innovation and advancement of past union strategies, as well as a broadening of labor's traditional goals means that labor-community coalitions should be welcomed and encouraged (Frege 2018). Unions that have historically favored militancy, leftist ideology, and issues that extend beyond the workplace are more likely to work with community organizations in coalitions. In a societal structure that often works against the good of working-class individuals and people of color, labor-community coalitions provide a vehicle for these people to act together in order to increase their collective capacity and power and to redefine the channels of participation in politics and public discourse (Rhomberg and Simmons 2005).

Labor-community coalitions represent an advancement past the traditional union organizing strategy that allows for labor's growth and the creation of a labor movement focused not on business unionism, but on movement building for working-class people in accordance with Social Movement Unionism (Dobbie 2009 B, Turner and Hurd 2001, and Nissen 2004). This focus on movement building and shift away from business unionism allows for unions and coalitions to utilize their resources to not simply fighting for minor concessions from the employers, but instead moving for society-wide progressive change (Swinney 2000). This shift embodies the goals of social movement unionism and labor-community coalitions, as David Reynolds states "in today's context, progressive change means not simply redistributing the economic pie, but also democratizing how that pie is made (Reynolds 1999)." Living wage ordinances provide one vehicle through which labor-community coalitions can accomplish this goal through organizing new workers and providing benefits for already unionized workers,

while also providing valuable insights into how labor unions can utilize labor-community coalitions to effectively rebuild the power once held in the labor movement (Luce 2005 B).

While many labor theorists believe that labor-community coalitions are a key to the future of the labor movement and progressive change, many have found the contributions of these coalitions to be relatively lacking in effectiveness to this point in their usage. Despite often being successful in altering the discussion around pro-worker policy issues and even getting such policies passed through legislatures of different levels, impediments often exist once these advances are made. For example, in several cities, the legislature has either refused to fully adopt or fully implement such policies after their successful passage (Camou 2014 and Doussard and Gamal 2016). Further arguments centering on the external obstructions faced by labor-community organizations, such as the need for them to exist within relatively liberal political areas with access to legislators willing to promote their issues (Doussard and Gamal 2016), and internal obstructions such as their “unwillingness to engage with imaginative solutions outside of the capitalist ideology (Camou, 2014).” Beyond these difficulties, it often proves difficult to measure the actual levels of success found through labor-community coalitions. Due to this labor-community coalitions are at times viewed as, at most, a secondary solution or strategy in the labor movement’s efforts in the present day that should be used to support the primary efforts of political organizing, member organizing, and employer engagement (Frege et al. 2004).

Motivations for Joining Coalitions

A number of opportunities in the current socio-economic structure encourage unions to participate in labor-community coalitions. The circumstances motivating labor unions to seek out coalition partners in their efforts can be categorized into three groupings: the political and economic context surrounding the location of the coalition, the union relationships and structural

features that center the union as an organization, and the preexisting identity of the union that informs their decision-making processes and enables them to identify potential coalition organizations with common identities and interests (Tattersall, 2009). In the context of the broader labor context of the United States, the desire to act in coalition to address issues surrounding housing, welfare programs, and public services has been linked to the increasing level of vulnerability of jobs and high levels of turnover and unemployment within communities (Black, 2005).

Unions that wish to participate in a labor-community coalition do so mainly out of a desire to access the resources held by community partners that can assist the union in achieving their broader goals. These resources can be financial or physical including communications and relationships within the community, expertise on specific issues, legitimacy within the community, or the ability to mobilize large numbers of members in support of the coalition's mission (Frege 2018). On a tangible level, coalitions can help unions to win certification from employers, sustain strikes, organize workers that the union does not have much access to, or achieve legislative changes. On a more ideological level, coalitions enable unions to actively demonstrate their support for social movements or efforts for environmental, social, racial, or immigrant justice (Frege et al. 2004).

The pressures on labor unions to embrace labor-community coalitions as a core part of their strategy include a combination of internal and external forces. Internally, union leadership often present the idea and work to move the union towards a long-term strategy centered on meaningful interaction with the broader community and community organizations. Additionally, internal pressure can arise through a desire within the labor union to address issues of their members that cannot be comprehensively addressed within the workplace alone (Turner and

Cornfield 2007, Frege 2018). Internal pressures that increase the likelihood of union participation in labor-community coalitions include “when they are faced with exclusion from other kinds of resource, when their policy agenda is broadening, when their activist base includes a significant proportion of ‘bridge builders, or when union purpose is conceived in terms of broader social change” (Frege et al 2004). Externally, the supply of coalitions and political opportunities can motivate the union to engage in coalitions in order to take full advantage of all possible resources and possible strategies. The political opportunities promoting the building of coalitions for labor unions include a beneficial governmental structure in which multiple avenues exist for the coalition to work to access and change policy, austerity measures that affects workers and the community, spatially fixed employers that can be regulated at a local level, employer actions unpopular in the community that create a common opposition amongst the union and the broader community (Frege, 2018, Tattersall 2009, Krinsky and Reese 2001). Further, some labor movement scholars have noted that the increase of labor-community coalitions has been motivated primarily by a desire of unions to improve their public image and increase their level of power within political processes and are, therefore, attracted to working within the context of existing campaigns and community organizations (Greer et al. 2007 and Frege et al. 2004).

These external opportunities and internal choices together have driven labor unions in the United States to embrace labor-community coalitions “in an attempted expansion of democratic participation in the workplace and society” (Turner and Hurd, 2001, Turner 2007). Through broadening the scope of their efforts to improve the lives of the working-class, unions that embrace labor-community coalitions have begun to develop an agenda centered around “high road” development and the expansion of civil rights for immigrants and people of color. High road development is a strategy that focuses on increasing wages and benefits for workers and

reducing inequalities through the limiting of corporate subsidies and promoting collective bargaining, such as through living wages, community benefits agreements, and transparency provisions for tax abatements (Camou 2014). The influence of political opportunity on the strategic choices of unions and labor-community coalitions is seen through proclivity for the coalitions to lead campaigns for living wages within cities since the decentralized governmental structure of the United States allows for living wage ordinances to be pushed forth at a local level (Frege 2018 and Frege et al. 2004).

While living wage ordinances provide economic benefits for the community as a whole, these ordinances also provide expanded opportunities for the coalition to evolve their goals beyond the passage and implementation of the ordinance. Through elevating the examples of the living wage campaigns in Baltimore and Los Angeles, Nissen (2000) demonstrates how living wage coalitions can exist beyond their initial purpose by organizing the workers who won the living wage into unions. This strategy “represents a definite maturation of the movement, involving the people benefitting from the wage increases rather than outsiders struggling for other people’s benefit” (Nissen 2000). The long-term goals of the labor-community coalition are often considered from the point of inception, especially in the case of living wage ordinances or other single-issue campaigns. Luce (2005 B) provides an example of a coalition in Atlanta that desired to build a sustained movement and organization in order to address poverty issues whose first effort was to pass a living wage ordinance in the city. When this ordinance was blocked through state preemption legislation, the coalition was able to continue to explore other options to address the issue, such as providing preference to companies that paid a living wage in the granted of city contracts, due to its previous consideration of an organizational mission that was not limited to the single-issue (Luce 2005 B).

Coalitions can also be involved in the implementation of living wage ordinances and produce stronger effects of a living wage ordinance passage. The living wage coalitions are involved in the implementation of about 20% of all successful living wage ordinances. This involvement can take the form of either inside or outside pressure (Luce 2005 B). Outside pressure, in the mold of coalitions of protest, typically suggests that coalitions act as government watchdogs by applying pressure from the outside in order to account for city governments that are in opposition to living wage ordinances. On the other hand, through an institutionalizing of the coalition, as previously mentioned, labor-community coalitions fighting for a living wage ordinance can apply inside pressure by enhancing the capacity of the state when the government may lack the capacity or willingness to comprehensively ensure the implementation of a living wage ordinance (Luce 2005 A). Coalition involvement in the implementation of a successful living wage ordinance also provides an opportunity for those affected by the ordinance to engage to a greater degree with the coalition. Luce (2004) notes that “several living wage ordinances have created a role for those affected by the policy, including informing workers about their rights and creating avenues of redress in cases of noncompliance.”

Types of Coalitions

A number of different frameworks have developed within labor movement theory designed to explain the different forms that coalitions between labor unions and community organizations can take. The political and social conditions within a community greatly affect the type of coalition that will emerge (Tattersall 2009). Carola Frege proposes three main types of labor-community coalitions, including vanguard coalitions, common-cause coalitions, and integrative coalitions in order to explain the differences in lifespan, identity of coalition partners, goals, methods, degrees of success, and power dynamics of labor-community coalitions

In vanguard coalitions, unions entering into coalitions with community organizations that are willing to accept a subordinate role because the union's goals embody progressive ideals. In a vanguard coalition, union typically hold complete control of the decision-making of the coalition, with community organizations providing support through the mobilization of resources, such as membership, expertise, or relationships (Frege et al. 2004, Frege 2018).

The second type of coalition noted by Frege are common-cause coalitions. Labor unions and community organizations both enter into common-cause in order to advance their own organization's distinctive interests. Through a desire to advance a singular issue, community-based organizations and labor unions agree to share some level of decision making in order to advance this cause. However, once the issue is decided, common cause coalitions are likely to become unstable as the coalition partners begin to focus on separate issues (Frege et al. 2004, Frege 2018). Despite this eventually fracturing, common cause coalitions have been demonstrated to be the most effective type of coalition in this framework at addressing an issue introduced to public dialogue by a labor-community coalition (Nissen, 2004).

The third type of labor-community coalition according to Frege are integrative coalitions. In integrative coalitions, labor unions take on the goals and objectives of a community organization, using its resources to advance the non-labor cause. Integrative coalitions often occur when leaders from non-labor organizations are selected for leadership roles within labor unions, thus bringing their previous issues with them (Frege et al. 2004, Frege 2018).

. The two most important aspects of labor-community coalitions include, first, the relationship between coalition partners "based on a demand for solidarity, the identification of common interests or the adoption of the coalition partners' goals" and, second, "the degree of integration of the coalition into state policy-making (Frege et al. 2004)."

Another framework designed to categorize the types of labor-community coalitions has been developed by Tattersall (2005) that identifies four forms that these coalitions may take. These coalitions include ad hoc coalitions, support coalitions, mutual-support coalitions, deep coalitions. Ad hoc coalitions are convened in order to address a specific group's agenda and are marked by engagement centered solely on this issue with little long-term strategy or member engagement taking place (Tattersall 2005).

Support coalitions are also short-term, yet they have a higher degree of common interest amongst the member organizations. Support coalitions are usually organized around a single issue and dissolve shortly after a campaign comes to an end. Additionally, support coalitions are typically controlled by the organization that convenes the group, with unions expecting more than the community organizations can contribute and unions not completely engaging with the coalition's needs (Tattersall, 2005).

Mutual-support coalitions are formed through the mutual direct interest of all participating organizations and involve a much greater level of buy-in. At the mutual-support level of coalitions, union members begin to be mobilized in support community organization goals. As allowed by mutual interests and similar organizational missions, mutual-support coalitions create a space for mid-term levels of planning moving into the future (Tattersall, 2005).

Finally, deep coalitions work intensively on an issue through a frame of the improvement of the social conditions for all working people. These groups prominently feature a decentralized structure, a purposeful engagement of the union membership, and long-term strategic planning for continued efforts centered upon improving the condition of those that the coalition represents (Tattersall, 2005).

Prowse et al. (2017) consider and expand upon this framework for categorizing labor-community coalitions in order to provide a more complete context to consider these coalitions seen in Figure 2. While using the types of relationships within coalitions, an additional category is added in which no relationship exists between the labor union and the community organizations. This category introducing the starting point for both labor unions and community organizations in which they must consider if they need to engage in coalition with each other, and if so, why they must do this. Additionally, the new chart, seen below, develops measures of success for both labor unions and community organizations at each level, which furthers assists in understanding the decisions of both types of organizations that determine the type of coalition that will be formed (Prowse et al. 2017). Through a series of cases studies using the typology of labor-community coalitions advanced by Tattersall (2006), Prowse et al. (2017) consider the different types of coalitions in terms of individual living wage campaigns. Their findings indicate that simple coalitions are the most commonly occurring living wage coalitions, however, they do not find the level of sustained success found by deep coalitions that last well beyond the passage of the ordinance (Prowse et al. 2017).

Another way that labor-community coalitions can be categorized is as either “coalitions of protest or coalitions of influence”. Coalitions of protest attempt to engage the rank-and-file of unions and the members of community organizations in order to pressure government institutions or corporations into meeting their demands (Frege 2018). Coalitions of influence, on the other hand, attempt to build coalitions with organizations that hold power inside of governmental institution with the hope of legitimatizing the efforts of the labor-community coalition and advance their issue through governmental policy angles (Frege 2004).

	Type of relationship			
	None	Ad hoc	Simple coalition	Deeply engaged
Common concern	<i>None Union pursuing its own agenda</i>	Relationship occurs around an event Union or community initiated	Relationship occurs around any issue Union or community initiated	Issues of mutual self-interest to participating organisations Issues framed as a broad social vision
Structure	<i>Union organisation and decision making</i>	Single one off requests No formal or ongoing structure to the relationship	Formal meeting structure for decision making If union initiated, union dominated If community initiated, limited union participation	Unions and community organisations involved in joint decision-making structure Relationship of trust and reciprocity Bridge building across organisational barriers Capacity for individual/rank and file participation
Place	<i>Workplace focus</i>	Organised at any scale	Relationships can be at any level	Multi-scalar capacity Capacity to act locally More likely in industries where capital is fixed
Union participation	<i>Opportunistic solicitation of community support</i>	Instrumental participation only	Union officials participate, if community initiated, junior staff participate Instrumental participation Campaign separate/distant from members	Unions buy into planning process Union vision beyond wages and conditions Union members active participants in coalition events, and in some decision making
Measure of success for a community group	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Achievement of event goals</i>	<i>Achievement of event or issue goals Broadening community activism</i>	<i>Self-sustaining relationships and activism, reinforced through social achievement</i>
Measure of success for a union	<i>Improved wages and conditions for members Increased membership</i>	<i>Improved wages and conditions for members Increased membership</i>	<i>Higher levels of public support for unions and unionism Improved wages and conditions for members Increased membership</i>	<i>Union fulfilling its broader vision of being an effective agent of social change</i>

Figure 2 (Prowse et al. 2017)

Forming Labor-Community Coalitions and Internal Challenges

Power dynamics between coalition members from different types of organizations has proven to be an important aspect to consider in labor-community coalitions. Difficulties and strained relationships often occur within coalitions when the cultures, organizational structures, or goals of coalition members differ from one another (Krinsky and Reese 2001, Bronfenbrenner et al. 1998). In attempting to account for these differences, coalition member organizations must not lose their individual identities in an effort to bring about a collective identity within the coalition. Instead, Dobbie suggests a “crock pot” method of working together within coalitions where

coalitions maintain their individual identity but also gain some aspects of other organizations through their interactions within the coalition (Dobbie 2009 B). The “default option” for unions is often to stray away from coalitions due to the limited amount of resources that many community organizations are able to provide to the coalition or a perception of unreliability of community organizations in the eyes of union leadership (Frege et al. 2004).

When labor-unions decide to seek out coalition partners that are community organizations, they, at times, view community organizations and other coalition partners as one of many different resources available to them that will advance their goals. However, because historically unions are more practiced in the utilization of other resources, such as rank-and-file engagement or labor laws, or direct negotiation with employers, unions have proved hesitant to fully embrace labor-community coalitions as a primary vehicle through which they can achieve their main goals (Frege 2018).

In order for labor-community coalitions to exist and succeed, the collective identities and the intra-coalitions dynamics must propel the organizations to sustaining a lasting coalition beyond that which a baseline willingness to experiment with Social Movement Unionism or labor-community coalitions would allow (Krinsky and Reese 2001). Further, an institutionalizing of the relationships amongst labor-community coalition partners must occur in order to bring about a lasting solidarity within a region. In the case of coalition campaigns for a living wage ordinance, the institutionalizing of the partners can occur when the coalition is able to collectively “aggregate enough resources to create more permanent staffed structures” that do not rely on volunteers that are unable to dedicate their full attention to the sustained success of the coalition (Luce 2004). The development of a truly reciprocal dynamic between labor unions and community organizations is needed for an institutionalization of a coalition to be realized. This

reciprocity is achieved through the sharing of resources, as community-based organizations provide support for unionization efforts within the region, while labor unions support efforts for social and economic justice within the community beyond their own membership base (Camou 2014).

The aggregating of resources and combining of organizational identities in the “crock pot” method is often realized through single issue campaigns, such as campaigns for living wages, which have proven to be the most effective way to build labor-community coalitions. Building a coalition around a living wage campaign prevents coalitions from simply aggregating every issue that each organization cares about, which prevents the coalition from combining their resources around a sustained effort (Dobbie 2009 B). One of the ways that labor-community coalitions are able to effectively address social and economic justice is through living wage campaigns. The coalitions that fight for living wages in cities typically materialize out of previously existing organizations. Additionally, living wage coalitions are comprised of the same “anchor” organizations as other labor-community coalitions. Labor unions, church organizations, and community organizations comprised of low-income residents have all been demonstrated to be vital components of a successful labor-community coalition (Nissen 2000). All of these types of organizations prove necessary because “no single group has the economic muscle to force an employer to improve conditions for workers” (Freeman 2005). Often, unions only choose to engage in coalitions in order to push for a living wage ordinance in an area after an unsuccessful attempt to address the issue on their own (Freeman 2005).

Organizational Structures of Labor-Community Coalitions

Labor-community coalitions and their goal of movement building for social justice solidarity are driven by a combination of the resources and structure of three types of organizations –

membership-based organizations (unions, church groups, and community-based organizations), networks linking these organizations together (the coalition itself), and intermediary organizations that provide technical assistance to the coalition (Dobbie 2009 B). Due to the rarity of finding each of these organizations in a given area that has the necessary capacity to meaningfully contribute to the coalition because two of the types of organizations only exist to serve the needs of the coalitions, existing organizations are often required to undergo change in order to fulfill these needs. If a coalition is unable to find an organization willing to take each of the previously described roles, new organizations may be created in order to build a complete organizational structure for the coalition (Dobbie 2009 A and Dobbie 2009 B). One way in which coalitions can ensure that an organizational structure of a coalition promotes shared decision-making and member-organization commitment is through requiring the organizations commit resources prior to entering the coalition or being able to participate in the decision-making process of the coalition. This ensures that within any of the previously mentioned types of organizations, there is meaningful buy-in amongst all organizations that make up the coalition (Dobbie 2009 B).

The organizational structure and willingness of labor to embrace coalition building to this point have been a reflection of both the tendency of social movements to reinvigorated existing institutions and the tendency of existing institutions to attempt to limit social movement influence. In order to hold the capacity to be a leader in movement building, the leadership of labor unions must embrace social movement unionism and labor-community coalitions (Turner and Hurd 2001). “Prefigurative leadership approaches” provide a strategy for coalitions to create an organizational structure that enables the leadership of a coalition to focus on the coalition’s ultimate goals from the beginning of the coalition’s existence (Dobbie 2009 B). Once this form

of unionism is embraced by leadership in the movement, the organizational structure of the resulting coalition must be one through which the individual organizations' goals are not only represented, but also through which their interests are transformed through dialogue and interaction with other groups (Dobbie 2009 A). One example of the necessity can be seen through the correcting of past racist attitudes that permeated the labor movement. In order to create a multi-racial working-class movement, coalitions must work to actively transform the bigotry found within the institutions and rank-and-file membership of some unions (Dobbie 2009 B). Through creating a transformative "learning organization" through which institutions are transformed to most effectively contribute to the working-class movement, coalitions will be able to adapt to new circumstances and prevent becoming stagnant and out of touch with the membership base that ultimately makes up every organization within the coalition (Dobbie 2009 A). In fulfilling this role as the force of transformation within the labor movement, labor-community coalitions are able to contribute beyond only union growth, but also to the overall benefit of the entire labor movement (Tattersall 2009). As unions have gained more experience in working in coalition with community organizations, this transformation and improvement of the entire movement has been actualized. As Rhomberg and Simmons state, "this 'second generation' of community-labor alliances has developed a more sophisticated awareness of problems of organizational reciprocity and partnership, grounded in the kinds of workplace and community issues that low income and working-class people face daily (Rhomberg and Simmons 2005)."

Coalitions' New Organizational Constructs of Power

Discussion amongst labor theorists on the strategies that labor-community coalitions can use to gain meaningful power within their community typically revolves around the dynamic of

insider power versus outsider power (Frege 2018). Even outside of the scope of coalitions, labor union strategy typically attempts to mobilize their resources to bring about policy changes by either engaging in discussions with government officials, which is considered insider strategy, or by taking direct action against corporations or the government through large-scale protests (McIlroy 2000). These designations are not mutually exclusive, however. Labor-community coalitions have been found to be most successful when they effectively combine the strategies of insider power and outsider power to maximize their capacity and influence within the community (Dobbie 2009 A). A focus on both insider and outsider strategies allows for labor-community coalitions to address the issue at the heart of the coalition in the short-term, while simultaneously building the capacity of the coalition for the long-term benefit of the broader social justice effort of the community (Dobbie 2009 B).

The insider power developed through the building and maintenance of positive relationships with political representatives provides perhaps the most valuable outcome of labor-community coalitions, as once they have the support of these officials, coalitions are able to ask their allies to champion issues that advance the good of the working-class (Doussard and Gamal 2016). However, this insider power is only attained through an acceptance from the government as “legitimate representatives.” Without this acceptance, unions typically engage in politics as the previously discussed coalitions of protest, which does not require the expectation that governmental agencies and representatives will engage in good faith dialogue with the coalition (Frege et al 2004).

In a different conceptualization of labor-community coalitions and the power that they hold within an area, Camou considers the coalitions through an urban regime theory framework, previously developed by Clarence Stone. Stone explains urban regime theory as the governing

capacity that is “created and maintained by bringing together coalition partners with appropriate resources, nongovernmental as well as governmental.” However, within Stone’s theory, this governing capacity, and accompanying power in the community is normally only held by the elites within society (Stone 1993). Following Stone’s Urban Regime Theory, Camou conceptualizes the role of power building through labor-community coalitions as the “power to,” meaning the power to develop an agenda and then actualize that agenda through an institutionalizing of the coalition’s goals through policy change. In partial agreement with Doussard and Gamal. Camou argues that most of the value and power that labor-community coalitions are able to build is reliant on the political channels that they build, either through the election of candidates from inside their coalition or through building positive relationships with elected representatives (Doussard and Gamal 2016 and Camou 2014). Camou finds that labor-community coalitions are actualizing their societal agendas through the “creation and maintenance of institutions that act towards the benefit of the working-class instead of corporations”, thereby developing their power primarily through insider power strategies and acting in accordance with Stone’s Urban Regime Theory (Camou 2014).

Methods

The following methods are intended to gain information in order to answer the following research question: What factors impact the ability of labor-community coalitions create a sustainable organization dedicated to advancing the issues of working-class community members after the completion of a minimum wage campaign? In order to answer this question, I conducted a series of seven semi-structured interviews with organizers from organizations that participated in minimum wage campaigns as a part of the broader coalition. I connected with organizers and staff members who participated in minimum wage campaigns in Washington D.C., Pennsylvania, San Mateo County, CA, and Missouri. These coalitions provide examples of coalitions who that either successfully or unsuccessfully attempted to increase minimum wages within their cities and who now stand at different levels of organizational advancement. The variety of organizations enabled the research to consider the different outcomes of labor-community coalitions that campaigned for increased minimum wages in the context of their intra-coalitional relationship dynamics and the strategic choices made by the coalitions.

Through the semi-structured interviews, I was able to gain a clear understanding of the relationship dynamics between coalition organizations before, during, and after a campaign. I believe that by engaging in conversations with organizers from community organizations, labor unions, and religious organizations, I gained a fairly comprehensive view of the structures and strategies that lead to coalitions creating lasting change and solidarity within a community. Because I had only one opportunity to engage with each organizer because of their busy schedules, semi-structured interviews allowed me to gain the most amount of information from a single interview. Through the open-ended questions, I was presented with new information and perspectives outside of my previous research of the past literature on the subject.

The sample size for this research included seven semi-structured interviews lasting about forty-five minutes each. One problem that I came across during my research was developing an interview guide that allowed me to get the most accurate, complete view of the dynamics and success of the many coalitions. Within the interviews it seemed like some organizers or staff members were somewhat unwilling to divulge the full picture of what occurred during and after a campaign if the coalition dynamics became strained at some point of the coalition. Others, however, were very upfront and open about the difficulties present in the coalition that they participated in.

In order to complete my research project and interviews, this research project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at Occidental College.

Interview Questions

1. What intentions and goals did your organization have in mind that led them to join the coalition?
2. In what ways was your organization able to contribute to the goals of the coalition?
 - a. Was your organization's level of participation consistent with your expectations prior to becoming a part of the coalition?
3. In what ways, if any, did the analysis of the issue differ between the organizations in the coalition?
 - a. How did the coalition attempt to resolve these differences in analysis?
4. How do you feel that your participation in the coalition was beneficial to both the short-term and long-term goals of your organization?
5. What was the organizational structure of the coalition?

- a. Did this structure enhance or limit the amount of participation and democracy within the coalition?
6. Did all of the participating organizations in the coalition have a similar level of decision-making input, whether through a vote or in discussion, within the coalition?
 - a. What factors shaped this level of participation and decision-making?
7. How have the relationships between the organizations that participated in the coalition contributed to the increased collaboration amongst working-class organizations within your city?
8. How has the coalition worked together, formally or informally, on additional issues or other campaigns after the initial campaign?
 - a. What organizational aspects of the coalition contributed to the level of interaction between organizations within the coalition after the initial campaign?
 - b. Have the same organizations been leading the coalition or have other organizations advanced issues of their own?

Findings and Analysis

The information obtained from interviews with staff members of organizations that participated in labor-community coalitions produced a series of findings that inform the following section. Firstly, the ability of labor-community coalitions to increase their long-term capacity can be directly linked to the quality of the rapport between organizations upon the completion of a minimum wage campaign. Secondly, when coalitions adopt or fall into informal organizational structures, the long-term capacity potential of an organization is considerably lessened. Lastly, in a high number of the coalitions that were a part of this study, the previous relationships between national organizations and “local validators” provided the circumstances necessary for the initial convening of the labor-community coalition around a minimum wage campaign.

The Ability of a Coalition to Move Beyond an Initial Campaign is Directly Tied to the Quality of Relationships in the Campaign

The ability, or lack thereof, of labor-community coalitions to develop and increase their capacity beyond a minimum wage campaign is tied directly to the quality of the relationships that are facilitated within the coalitions. While positive inter-coalitional dynamics can foster work on other economic justice issues or broader social justice issues, disagreements and unmet expectations can lead to a damaging fracture amongst the organizations working to advance the good of the working-class in a community. However, even in circumstances in which the relationships within a labor-community coalition are damaged, the relationships that are strengthened in a campaign for an increased minimum wage enable increased levels of collaboration between organizations working for progressive goals in a city. Despite some relationships being damaged, in all of the campaigns studied at least some new connections were

built during the initial minimum wage campaign that led to collaborative relationships being created. While some organizations may be left out from further collaboration due to fractured relationships or a belief that further coalitional efforts are not in their best interest, the organizations that do remain committed to similar goals through the coalition body are able to work together on new issues.

In both San Mateo County and Washington DC, this breakdown in relationships occurred between the labor unions and the other organizations that were a part of the labor-community coalitions. Bradley Cleveland of the San Mateo County Community Union Alliance described how new leadership of the San Mateo Labor Council altered the organization's strategy in favor of moving away from coalition-building with community organizations and workers' centers. Despite the successes in winning increased minimum wages in cities throughout the county through the Union Community Alliance, the new leadership of the Labor Council decided to work for wage ordinance using their own resources.

Despite the withdrawal of labor unions from the original minimum wage labor-community coalition, Bradley Cleveland stated that the positive relationships between the other organizations that were fostered during the coalition allowed for the organizations to again mobilize within a new coalition that extended to issues beyond increased wages. The new coalition, the Working Families' Alliance, is comprised of the more activist-oriented unions and community organizations that were once a part of the Community Union Alliance. Beyond working for economic justice issues, such as increased wages or wage theft, the Working Families' Alliance fosters an environment in which all member organizations are able to use the combined resources of the coalition to address issues that their members face both inside and outside of the workplace. As a result, the new labor-community coalition has worked to address

affordable housing, immigrants' rights, equitable transportation, and displacement issues for all residents of San Mateo County.

A similar fracture in Washington D.C. between the labor unions and the other organizations that participated in coalitions was described by Joanna Blotner of Jews for Justice and Diana Ramirez of the Restaurant Opportunities Center (ROC). Upon the success of the 2016 minimum wage campaign, ROC and other community organizations hoped to use the momentum gained in order to end the tipped minimum wage being set much lower than for all other workers. However, as in San Mateo, many labor unions were unwilling to participate in efforts on issues outside of the minimum wage and decided not to participate much, if at all, in the campaign around the tipped minimum wage. These labor unions did not view these issues as central to the needs of their workers and were, therefore, reluctant to contribute meaningful resources to the campaign.

In considering these events, Joanna Blotner, a staff member at Jews United for Justice in Washington D.C., expressed her view that the overall working-class movement within Washington D.C. was damaged as a result of the coalition work that went into the minimum wage coalition. She stated the belief that due to the disagreements between labor unions and the other organizations that participated in the coalition the overall working-class organizing capacity was significantly weakened within the city. However, just as a new coalition formed out of the minimum wage coalition in San Mateo County, Diana Ramirez described how the Washington D.C. Restaurant Opportunities Center led the convening of a new coalition called One Fair Wage DC. Despite strained relationships between some organizations and labor unions within the D.C. coalition, many of the members of the original coalition collectively used their

resources and political power to pass Initiative 77 in the city, which will incrementally increase the tipped minimum wage until it becomes \$15 per hour.

Because labor unions often provide the bulk of financial resources for a coalition, as previously mentioned in the literature review, the damaged relationships between community organizations and labor unions can have a drastic impact on the mechanics of a coalition moving on past an initial minimum wage campaign. As seen in the interviews with individuals that participated in the campaigns in Washington D.C. and San Mateo County, coalitions that are forced to move forward without significant financial or membership support from the larger labor unions in the area are often forced to do the most that they can in organizing around complex issues with significantly diminished resources. When labor unions are absent from further collaborative efforts amongst other organizations that participated in the coalition either as a result of not viewing the further commitment as beneficial to their own goals or because they were excluded from other campaigns, coalitions are forced to limit the scope of their work at any given time in consideration of the comparatively low level of resources.

In both Washington D.C. and San Mateo County, labor-community coalitions fostered a collaborative environment that led to an increased level of resources being dedicated to increasing the quality of life for working-class individuals in their communities. This continuation of the initial effort occurred in spite of the damaged relationships that led to some organizations – mostly labor unions – not participating fully in these further and more broad efforts. Some individuals that were interviewed, additionally, described the same increased level of collaboration with other organizations following the campaign without the negative relationships between labor and other organizations that occurred in the D.C. and San Mateo coalitions. Lindsey Baker of the Missouri Budget Project detailed that while her organization

typically provides research on health-related issues, through the relationships built in Missouri Jobs with Justice they collaborated with the other organizations in an effort to overturn right-to-work legislation in the state. Sandy Strauss of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches discussed similar collaboration outside of the minimum wage coalition, even after the Pennsylvania coalition had many bills defeated in the legislature, as organizations within the Raise the Wage PA worked together in order to pass paid parental leave within individual cities. Additionally, these organizations eventually attempted to pass a paid parental leave bill and an increased tipped minimum wage on the state level.

The coalition efforts in Missouri and Pennsylvania demonstrate some of the different forms that collaboration between organizations that participated in a labor-community coalition can take on. From these initial minimum wage coalitions emerged new relationships that allowed for organizations with similar missions to work together on common issues. The positive interactions that occurred within meetings of the labor-community coalitions allowed organizations to build networks for the individuals interviewed that created the network necessary to move onto new campaigns outside of the coalition. While these newly formed relationships do represent a positive outcome of the labor-community coalitions, they often occurred outside of the structure of the coalition. Additionally, these further actions often took place between only a very small number of participating organizations. The potential for large-scale capacity building present within coalitions cannot be fully realized through these smaller efforts because the efforts are not able to fully utilize the collective resources of all of the progressive organizations in the community or city.

Informal Coalition Structures Limit Long-Term Capacity-Building

Organizational Power Hampered by Unequal Levels of Participation

As a result of the unequal levels of consequential participation amongst the organizations in the coalition and a structured agenda and meeting schedule, long-term organizational power is hampered because a collaborative and democratic environment is absent within the coalition. Low levels of active involvement create limited levels of motivation for extending the lifespan of a labor-community coalition beyond the completion of a minimum wage campaign, as some organizations view the goals of the coalition as complete upon the success of the campaign.

Informal organizational structures within coalitions limit the long-term capacity-building capabilities of a labor-community coalition, as the decision-making leadership often resides primarily in the hands of the organization(s) that convenes the coalition. In the completed interviews, those interviewed commonly expressed that either their organization or other organizations had simply signed on to the cause in order to lend the political might behind their name to the coalition, while not taking on a very active role in the efforts to raise the minimum wage. This route was commonly taken because these organizations either did not have the resources present to dedicate to the coalition or they did not view the coalition's efforts as central to the need of their own constituency. As a result of the limited level of buy-in from organizations for which economic justice issues are not central to their mission, upon the completion of a campaign, these organizations tend to return to work on their own issues with little prolonged formal involvement in the coalition. Kirk Brungard of the Building Trades Unions of Baltimore and Washington D.C. noted that the large majority of the workers that they represent would not directly benefit from increased minimum wages in Washington DC. While they saw the issue as important for the larger community and therefore signed on in support of

the coalition, the Building Trades Unions did not involve themselves very much in the on-the-ground organizing that the leaders of the coalition were more directly involved in. Following this surface level involvement with the coalition, the Building Trades Unions had not collaborated much with new organizations as a result of the interactions within the coalition.

With the insufficient levels of shared decision-making in labor-community coalitions such as the one mentioned by Kirk Brungard, the coalitions lack a core element that would ensure a high level of commitment across the coalition as noted in the literature review by David Dobbie (2009 B). Instead, Dobbie found that many coalitions are comprised of a core group of decision-making organizations, as well as, a number of sign-on organizations who support the goals of the organization but whose members are not as acutely affected by the issues being addressed by the coalition. The lack of commitment that arises from the incongruence of the goals for the different organizations within the coalition in representing their members inevitably leads to a lack of long-term planning. When organizations do not view the mission of the coalition as central to the improvement of the lives of their members, it remains unlikely that they will be willing to invest the necessary financial or human resources discussed in the literature review that are vital to the institutionalizing of a labor-community coalition.

In contrast to this model, however, Diana Ramirez noted how the coalition that evolved out of the minimum wage coalition in Washington D.C. actively worked to ensure a higher level of buy-in amongst all members of the coalition. After witnessing the ramifications of low commitment, the convening organization – The Restaurant Opportunities Center United – requested that any organization joining the campaign sign an agreement pledging to invest a certain amount of resources, either financial or time-based. In doing so, the expectations of each organization within the labor-community coalition would be clear from the beginning. Diana

Ramirez reported positive outcomes around this coalition that is working to eliminate the sub-minimum tipped wage in Washington D.C. She stated that as a result of the requirement of the commitment of resources from the very onset of the coalition, the expectations of buy-in level were met by each organization in this new coalition. This was not accomplished in the previous labor-community coalition in the city, which successfully raised the minimum wage, yet faced some of the difficult inter-coalitional relationships that were previously mentioned in this section.

Sandy Strauss, director of advocacy at the Pennsylvania Council of Churches noted that the informal, ad-hoc nature of the communications committee with Raise the Wage PA reflected the ebbs and flows of the political opportunity surrounding the raising of the minimum wage in the State of Pennsylvania. This committee within the coalition, as well as the steering committee, would increase the resources and energy behind their efforts in times in which they believed the typically conservative legislature of the state to be more welcoming to the idea of passing an ordinance. Bradley Cleveland of the San Mateo County Community Union Alliance noted a similar ad-hoc nature of the labor-community coalition within San Mateo County. Additionally, Cleveland described the relative ease of consensus-building within these at times irregular meetings of the coalition. The organizations that took on the leadership of this coalition typically agreed upon the strategies that would be best suited to their efforts, only finding surmountable discord in the discussions upon the more specific details in the writing of a minimum wage ordinance.

While a regular schedule of meetings for a coalition would be perhaps unrealistic due to the day-to-day obligations and demands of the organizations participating in the coalition, a lack of consistency in when meetings are held prevents the coalitions from building the structure and

intra-coalitional relationships necessary to advance beyond an initial campaign. When meetings are held only in response to the circumstances or political opportunity surrounding a particular issue, it becomes unlikely that a forum would exist to advance new issues within the coalition, as the entirety of the group's focus will usually be on advancing the primary goal. Further, this irregularity of coalition meetings likely impacts the relative ease with which decisions are made through consensus-building that was discussed with multiple interview participants. As a result of irregular meetings and some organizations having higher levels of influence within the coalition, the meaningful discussions that are necessary to move beyond surface level collaboration remain absent. As some organizations defer to the convening organization of the coalition, a dialogue that critically examines the goals and movement of the coalition is blocked and the goals of a single organization are pushed to the forefront.

A Lack of Paid Staff Limits the Logistical Abilities of the Coalition

The lack of a paid staff that could dedicate their entire focus to the capacity-building of the coalition was regularly cited as a limitation in the comprehensive abilities of the coalition. Bradley Cleveland described the constraints of the labor-community coalition in San Mateo County that resulted from himself being the only dedicated staff member of the Union Community Alliance. He felt that if more paid staff members had worked directly and solely for the coalition, the minimum wage efforts in the County would have been more productive and more dynamic. Sandy Strauss mentioned that while the Raise the Wage PA labor-community coalition enabled the participating organizations to do more together than they could do on their own, the overall collaboration was limited by the fact that every organization remained responsible for their individual mission, which was often outside of direct economic justice work such as increasing the minimum wage. She noted that a paid staff for the coalition would have

likely facilitated a more productive and efficient coalition, as this staff would have taken the internal organizing responsibilities out of the hand of the member organizations themselves.

As previously mentioned in the literature by Stephanie Luce (2004), paid staff proves necessary if a labor-community coalition is to institutionalize their relationships in an effort to build more lasting power within the communities that the coalitions emerged from. However, as evidenced by the interviews within this study, despite the knowledge amongst member organizations that this is a vital aspect of the coalition, gathering the resources necessary to build and maintain this paid staff proved very difficult for the different coalitions. Lacking the financial resources, the coalitions researched through this study were often unable to create the structures necessary for the long-term growth and sustenance of the coalition. Therefore, instead of being able to move forward to issues beyond the minimum wage with the same amount of collective power, the labor-community coalitions often remained in name only, or with only a fraction of the original members.

Previous Relationships Between Local and National Organizations Create Relationships Conducive to the Formation of Labor-Community Coalitions

In many coalitions, the individuals who were interviewed described a high level of engagement between local organizations and national organizations that fosters the relationships necessary to initially form labor-community coalitions. The role that labor-community coalitions play in bridging national and local organizations consistently arose as a topic of importance to the individuals who were interviewed. National organizations often facilitated the formation of the labor-community coalition by bringing labor unions and community organizations into discussions with each other surrounding the issue of increasing the wages of people in the community. However, because these national organizations lack the intimate knowledge of the

specific conditions, political circumstances, and issues facing those within the community, the professionals interviewed stressed the importance of what Lindsey Baker of the Missouri Budget Project called “local validators.” Beyond providing their connection to the immediate community and the validity that a history of being present in these progressive networks, local validators also bring their connections to the media and politicians. This myriad of connections enables the labor-community coalitions to wield their influence and power to sway public opinions on the issue of the minimum wage and move ordinances through legislatures. Additionally, the relationships between local organizations and national organizations gained through working for an increased minimum wage facilitated future collaboration on issues outside of the minimum wage.

Joanna Blotner of Jews United for Justice in Washington D.C. described how the Raise the Wage campaign in her community was initiated largely by national groups that reached out to other local and national groups in order to begin to form a strong coalition in the Capitol. The minimum wage coalition proved to be unique in D.C. due to the large amount of national policy organization headquarters in the city. While these national organizations initially took on the majority of leadership positions on the steering committee for the minimum wage coalition that came together under the banner of DC Jobs with Justice, eventually, the need for leadership from organizations more intimately connected with the people who would be affected by an increased minimum wage became clear. Following this internal realization, the nationally focused groups took a step back in order to allow the local labor unions and community organizations to take the lead of the campaign which proved to be much more effective and efficient.

Lindsey Baker, an Outreach and Policy Specialist at the Missouri Budget Project, described how her research-based organization was brought into the Missouri labor-community

coalition fighting for a higher minimum wage later in the campaign. She noted that the coalition had realized that they needed a local voice that would be able to lend credence towards the issue for local voters. In using the term “local validators”, Baker described a coalition that was driven by larger, national organizations and then supported by these local organizations that were able to more successfully create local support through on-the-ground organizing and through the successful utilization of their political and media connections.

In consideration of the fact that these labor-community coalitions are often initially convened by national organizations, the long-term effects of this dynamic on the sustainability of a campaign and local movement must be considered. In the previous literature, Prowse et al. 2017 noted that an increased likelihood for labor-community coalitions to be able to advance beyond the initial campaign when the coalition was convened by a community-based organization with roots in the local community, as opposed to national union-initiated coalitions. However, as demonstrated through the research performed within this study, a coalition initiated by a local community-based organization is a rarity. While the resources that are made available through national organizations can benefit the long-term goals of the coalition by providing the financing necessary for the institutionalizing of the coalition previously discussed, these national organizations often lack the continued commitment to the local community and the intimate knowledge of the situations having the greatest effect of community members. For a labor-community to find long-term success in being a vehicle through which local community members can address the most pressing issues in their lives, community-based organizations and organizations with familiarity with the community must be active leaders in the coalition.

		<u>Location</u>			
		Washington D.C.	Pennsylvania	San Mateo County	Missouri
Themes	Local Validators Played Key Role	Initially no, however, national groups recognized need and made room for local orgs	Yes	Yes	Initially no, however, national groups realized that they local voices to gain support in the state
	Coalition Developed Institutionalized Structure	No, but in following campaigns this was a priority	No	No	No
	New Relationships Formed Out of Coalition	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Won an Increase in the Minimum Wage	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Coalition Advanced to Address New Issues	Yes, they moved on to attempt to end the subminimum wage for tipped workers without some conservative labor organizations	No, after some failed attempts they are still organizing to increase the minimum wage	Yes, some of the organizations adopted the new name and have embraced a comprehensive justice agenda	Yes, they passed a bill to make political campaigns contributions more transparent and fair in the state.

Table 1

Recommendations

In recognition of the previously described findings in this research, a series of recommendations have been developed to guide labor-community coalitions in maximizing their ability to sustain their efforts towards enacting positive social change on behalf of those that they represent. As evident throughout this paper, labor-community coalitions provide one of the best opportunities for creating this change. Therefore, coalition members and leaders must act extremely thoughtfully and deliberately in order to properly utilize this strategy. Without the creation of structures that facilitate continued engagement with the coalition, a crumbling of the coalition will remain inevitable upon the competition of the initial campaign that the coalition came together in order to address, which often is an increase in the minimum wage. If labor-community coalitions are to successfully reverse the downward trend in labor involvement and the rapid consolidation of global capital, they must evolve to create a sustained network of organizations fighting for the good of working people in cities across the country. The research

completed in this study suggests that the following recommendations would best enable the labor-community coalitions to accomplish this necessary goal.

Institutionalizing the Coalition During the Initial Campaign

Throughout the findings obtained through this research study, as well as, the information observed in the literature review, a clear need exists for labor-community coalitions to advance beyond ad-hoc meetings and informal organizational structure if they are to be in a situation to continue to address issues beyond an initial minimum wage campaign. Additionally, a platform and structure must be developed that enables all organizations to play decisive roles in the continued decision-making of the coalition. Therefore, labor-community coalitions should institutionalize the coalition early on in the initial minimum wage campaign in order to ensure that continued efforts are made through the coalition. Following the example set by the ROC United-initiated campaign in Washington D.C., requiring that participating organizations dedicate a set amount of resources consistent with their means will ensure that a meaningful commitment is made to the coalition by each participating organization. This institutionalization can be accomplished through four actions: 1) developing a paid staff that is responsible to the logistical aspects of the coalition, 2) putting forth a decision-making strategy in which all participating organizations have an equally weighted vote in the coalition, 3) implementing a regular meeting schedule that can be attended by a representative from all organizations, and 4) requiring that organizations commit to providing a specific amount of resources, be they financial or organizing, before entering into the coalition.

If a coalition uses all four of these aspects of the recommendation made in this paper, their continued consequential commitment to the goals of the labor-community coalition will be ensured. While organizations without this institutionalized organizational structure typically fail

as a result of a lack of leadership, the research performed in this study suggests that the creation of a more formal structure will increase the likelihood that these coalitions succeed and are able to more comprehensively address the needs of the local community and the people that the participating organizations represent. With a paid staff, the more logistical responsibilities of running a coalition will be removed from the hands of other organizations that are likely overworked with their own agenda. Therefore, the needs of the coalition will constantly be considered and have regular attention being paid to them by this paid staff member. This dedicated staff will also be able to play the role of intermediary between the different organizations and ensure that all participating organizations are able to fully interact with the coalition.

Further, this recommendation can assist in solving the issue of lack of across the board commitment that arose in many of the labor-community coalitions studied in this research. Additionally, through the implementation of a structured decision-making process, in which each organization receives an equally weighted vote, the issue of organizations simply signing on will be eliminated and organizations will have a dedicated platform that will allow them to present issues that they would like the coalition to dedicate resources towards.

A Willingness of Organizations to Commit Resources to Peripheral Issues

While the labor-community coalition in San Mateo County was forced to move forward without the continued involvement of the main labor body in the region, the coalition that formed out of the initial campaign can provide a powerful example of how coalitions can work together to address a wide range of topics. This coalition, the Working Families' Alliance, has evolved well beyond the initial minimum wage campaign and has since addressed a wide variety of issues that affect people in the area including affordable housing, immigrants' rights, equitable

transportation, wage theft, and displacement issues. In taking a comprehensive view of the needs of community members, the Working Families' Alliance has successfully brought about more equitable conditions in the lives of working people in the state.

The combined resources of a labor-community coalition can significantly impact a wide spectrum of policy on the local level. However, in order for this to occur, many labor unions must follow in the mold of more activist-oriented unions, such as UNITE/HERE or SEIU, and adopt a comprehensive issue-based agenda that extends beyond contract negotiations or other workplace issues. As evidenced in the research previously detailed, upon the completion of a campaign, a split often occurs between labor unions and community organizations because the labor unions do not view issues outside of the minimum wage as central to their mission, and therefore, they are unwilling to commit resources to campaign for these issues. However, as these unions often fund a large portion of the work done in the initial minimum wage coalition, their continued support is necessary.

Therefore, this research informs the recommendation that labor unions and community organizations must be willing to commit some form of meaningful resources to the goals of the other organizations within the labor-community coalition. In doing so, the coalition will be able to better address the needs of the community through increased access to resources necessary to affect local and statewide policy. In order for this recommendation to be possible, however, it is imperative that community organizations and labor unions alike recognize the need to adopt a mission that extends beyond their traditional goals and places the needs of the coalition near the center of their agendas.

Prioritizing Local Voices

As previously discussed in both the literature review and findings sections, labor-community coalitions find higher levels of success when they are initiated and led by local organizations. These organizations must have an intimate knowledge of and involvement with the local community and their needs. Additionally, in order for the preceding recommendation to be successful, a need exists for all the coalition member organizations to have this understanding. However, from a study of previous campaigns, it appears unlikely that smaller local organizations will have the resources and capacity to convene labor-community coalitions with large numbers of organizations. Yet, the need for local organizations to play a prominent role in the decision-making of these coalitions persists. Therefore, regardless of the scale of organization that plays the role of initiating the labor-community coalition, “local validators” must play a role in leading the direction of the coalition upon the completion of the campaign.

In order for this to be accomplished, national organizations must take a step back in the decision-making process to ensure that the organizations most acutely aware of the needs of the local community. If a coalition is to build a sustainable organizational structure and mission beyond an initial minimum wage campaign, local organizations must be willing to meaningfully contribute their time and knowledge to the coalition despite often lacking significant resources. This recommendation proves to be reliant on the accomplishment of the institutionalization of the coalition previously mentioned in this section. Through requiring each organization to contribute resources on a sliding scale commensurate with their financial and people-based capacity, this coalition framework ensures that “local validators” will be closely connected to the coalition but not over-extended in their own work. Further, ensuring that each organization holds

an equally-weighted vote on coalition matters secures an avenue for these local organizations to continuously contribute to the coalition's agenda.

Finally, an advisory committee made up of local organizations could be developed within a coalition in order for these organizations to discuss issues that they regularly see in the community before bringing these matters in front of the entire coalition. This advisory committee would provide a space where these organizations can become more familiar with each other, perhaps leading to new collaborative efforts outside of the coalition or strengthening each organizations connection with the coalition. Primarily, however, an advisory committee would enable local organizations to discuss issues within the coalition and the community amongst themselves prior to bringing these issues before the entire community. The presence of the committee of local organizations would ensure that the larger national organizations are not leading the agenda of the coalition more than they should and that the coalition is actively working to address the needs of the community members that they are representing to the highest degree possible.

Conclusion

The research presented throughout this paper aims to expand on the existing literature on labor-community coalition through shedding light on the strategic decisions that labor unions and community organizations can make in order to ensure that the coalitions they form can successfully expand beyond an initial campaign to increase a local minimum wage. While the increased minimum wages throughout the city won through the collaboration of working people through these coalitions have proved to be very important victories, the potential in these coalitions can extend far beyond these initial campaigns. However, for this potential to be fully realized the participating organizations must remain dedicated, both financially and in decision-making, to address issues outside of the minimum wage.

The interviews completed within this study serve to examine the dynamics and results of a number of labor-community coalitions throughout the United States. The staff members interviewed for this project provided vital qualitative information regarding the circumstances that either enabled future positive collaboration between coalition members or seriously strained existing relationships, thereby weakening future broad-based organizing work in that location. Through discussions with these individuals, a number of main findings and sub-findings were arrived at which serve to inform the series of recommendations made to the member organizations of labor-community coalitions. These findings include 1) the ability of a coalition to increase the working-class power within a locality is directly tied to the quality of the relationships facilitated within the coalition, as positive relationships increase collaboration and negative experiences severely weaken collaborative actions, 2) informal organizational structure limit the long-term capacity-building capabilities of a coalition through unequal participation and the lack of a dedicated staff, and 3) in many coalitions, a high level of engagement between local

and national organizations before the convening of a coalition fostered the relationships necessary to initiate the coalition.

Limitations

Two main limitations arose through the process of this research project, which were both related to the availability of interview participants in the study. Despite reaching out to over one hundred individuals, it proved difficult to find people willing to be interviewed for this project. Therefore, while the individuals interviewed were able to discuss a variety of campaigns, few coalitions studied had multiple people representing them in the study. Therefore, a comprehensive view of each campaign was difficult to ascertain, as one organization often provided the only voice for a coalition. Additionally, also as a result of the difficulty in finding individuals willing to participate in an interview for the purpose of this research study, the sample size of the research is somewhat low. Ideally, this study would have been able to have a higher number of interview participants in order to more comprehensively speak to the ways in which labor-community coalitions function and adapt to new circumstances.

Next Steps

Following the findings and recommendations presented in this research, the initial next step in the project would be to increase the sample size of individuals interviewed from participating organizations in labor-community coalitions for minimum wages throughout the United States. Through gaining a larger pool of perspectives and data, the accuracy of the findings and recommendations could be ensured. With this more comprehensive view, research could be done to more quantitatively view the decisions of each coalition in conjunction with the lifespan and effectiveness of each labor-community coalition. By developing a list of individual factors associated with success or failure in a labor-community coalition and examining their

presence in each coalition, a quantitative dataset could be created. This dataset could then be compared with the qualitative findings that emerged from the initial research to examine if the two sets of data either agree or contradict each other. Further study of labor-community coalitions proves necessary if the presently largely disjointed organizations are to successfully and efficiently utilize the power that they collectively hold.

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