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Movements, Moments, and Movement-Moments: Generational Approaches to Organizing for Social Change

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MOVEMENTS, MOMENTS, AND MOVEMENT-MOMENTS:
GENERATIONAL APPROACHES TO ORGANIZING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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List of Terminology and Acronyms:

MPA: Maine People's Alliance

MESA: Maine Student Action

MAP Model for Social Movements: Defines a social movement as a "collective action in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized, sometimes over years and decades," (Moyer, 2001, p. 10) and emphasizes the use of the "people power" to create social change by mobilizing people to assert their power over corporate and state institutions.

Organizing: The act of building power to advocate for policy changes through organized money and/or people.

Community Organizer: A person who self-identifies as an organizer through a grassroots community organization.

Student Organizer: Either a student who self-identifies as an organizer, or a person who is not a student and has a defined role of organizing students.

Occupy: A movement that began with "Occupy Wall Street" as a response to the late 2000's financial crisis that began in September 2011, and included protests in over 951 cities across 82 countries, and over 600 communities in the United States (Thompson, 2011).

BLM: Black Lives Matter, a chapter based national organization in the United States working for the validity of Black Life and to (re)build the Black liberation movement (http://blacklivesmatter.com/).

Generation: A social creation in which a particular birth cohort was raised with and imprinted by unique historical and cultural circumstances.

Efficacy: A person's perception of whether political change is possible, and that the individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change.

Collective Efficacy: A person's perception of the system's responsiveness to collective demands for change.

External Efficacy: A person's perception of the responsiveness of the political system

GI Generation (AKA, The Greatest Generation), born between 1901-1924: Came of age during the depression and fought in WWII. GI refers to both government and general issue.

The Silent Generation, born between 1927-1945: Named such because of the period of conformity in which they came of age.

Baby Boomers, born between 1946-1964: One of the largest generations, named after the boom of childbirth after WWII, Baby Boomers were the leaders of the Civil Rights Era.

Generation X, born Between 1965-1980: With a slightly smaller age range than other generations, this generation came of age during a cultural "high" after the Civil Rights Era.

Millennials, born between 1980 and 2002: Named after the dawning of the new Millennia that occurred during their lifespan, Millennials came of age during the financial crisis of the late 2000's.

Generation Y: Generation Y and Millennials are often referred to as the same generation, though many older "Millennials" identify more strongly with Generation X, or do not identify with either the characteristics of Generation X, or the unique cultural experiences of Millennials (e.g. social media). This research refers to those participants as members of Generation Y.

NVivo Coding Software: A software designed for coding qualitative research, that allows researchers to import and analyze documents through creating themes, word frequency searches, visualization techniques, and more.

Google Hangout: A free Google service for communicating in real time with both audio and video, and allows multiple users to connect in one "hangout."

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Abstract:

Due to a recent upswing of college protests, and generational theory authors positioning Millennials as powerful players in building a new left to shift American politics, this research seeks to understand how different generations of organizers for social change approach their work. Emerging literature on social movements, political efficacy, and generational frameworks, combined with an analysis of the current political climate, illustrate the strong possibility of this new left being built.

This study asked participants of multiple generations about their experiences in the field to uncover perceptions of their role in the movement, differences in collective and external efficacy, and how organizers cope with organizing in the world as it is while aspiring for deeper, more structural change. To conduct this research, a survey was sent out to organizers in the field that yielded results from six members of the Baby Boomer generation, five members of Generation X, three organizers who identified as Generation Y, and sixteen Millennials. In addition, five in-depth interviews, three with Millennials, and two with non-Millennials, and a focus group with two Millennials and two non-Millennials were carried out.

The experiences of these organizers, while not representative of their entire generations, showed that while there were many common threads, the formative experiences of generational cohorts deeply affect the way they frame the work. Defensive or "SOS" organizing and a focus on electoral work and winnable initiatives seem to have had an impact on the overall efficacy of older organizers, while Millennials point to Occupy, the Bernie Sanders campaign, and Black Lives Matter as inspiration to escalate the movement… or the moment? The separation of the movement and the moment, and how to balance the two, emerged as an ongoing question that will have profound implications on the potential of organizers to build the new left.

Introduction:

The authors that coined the term "Millennial," William Strauss and Neil Howe, forecast that a recurring generational cycle positions the United States to be on the cusp of what they call a Crisis (1997). Propelled by fear, uncertainty, and a period of unravelling, they claim that this Crisis will change the direction of our political climate to the same scale as the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the New Deal, all roughly eighty years apart. With a recent upswing of college protests, and generational theory authors positioning Millennials to play a powerful role in shifting American politics to build a new left, this research seeks to understand how different generations of organizers for social change approach their work, and how the formative experiences of these generations play a role in the possibility of a movement-moment that produces this shift.

Are Millennials another generation of wide-eyed youth, or do they see what Howe and Strauss foresaw nineteen years ago? With Millennial idealism often being attributed to a person's youth, it is crucial to dig deeper into how formative organizing experiences have played a role in the construction of approaches to the work for the different generations in the field. This study asked participants of multiple generations about their experiences in the field to uncover perceptions of their role in the movement, differences in collective and external efficacy, and how organizers cope with organizing in the world as it is while aspiring for deeper, more structural change.

Organizing for social change, or the act of building power to advocate for policy changes, has experienced shifts from the defensive, or "SOS organizing" of decades past, to a focus on electoral winnability, to the hopefulness that comes from recent mass mobilization.

One's collective and external efficacy (the belief in the collective's ability to create change in the system, and the belief in the system to respond to those demands, respectfully) are found to deeply impact one's goals and behavior. In organizing, these goals and behavior are deeply connected to the choices one makes regarding political education, demands, strategies and juggling one's ideals with what is possible in the current political system. Effective organizing must begin with the world as it is, not the world as it should be, but the formative moments of a generational cohort have been found to influence how one might perceive the world as it is, tangibly shifting the starting line of that organizing.

Author's Interest and Relationship to the Research:

Maine People's Alliance (MPA) is a nonprofit founded in 1972 that focuses on multi-issue grassroots organizing, education and leadership development in the state of Maine. Historically, student organizations and activists have played a critical role in promoting social change and pushing the envelope by creating tension with direct action and ripening conditions for a movement to take place (Morgan & Davies, 2012; Kohstall, 2014; Broadhurst, 2014; Boyd, 2013; Anderson, 2015). In the past, students have been involved with MPA's campaigns, but the organization lacked the capacity to use those students to build out a broader base on their campuses, where there is a concentration of energized, passionate, and like-minded youth. For this reason, I spent my internship with MPA building a student organization under their umbrella, called Maine Student Action (MESA), and am now working with Maine People's Alliance to continue this student work while also organizing a local chapter.

Maine People's Alliance is part of National People's Action (NPA), a national network of grassroots organizations that was founded ten years before the foundation of MPA. Recent

trends of mass mobilization by college students across the country as well as a united city-wide base of strong student organizers in Chicago, IL, led to the launching of NPA's own student organization called Student Action, a national affiliate of Maine Student Action. Student Action provides a unified theory of change, leadership development opportunities, and a national table of leaders of statewide and campus organizations from across the country. Participants in this study were found through these national affiliates.

After internal observation of the perspectives and practices of organizing of both community and student organizers, differences in approaches to the work appeared. The research conducted examines those approaches and how organizers use these approaches to navigate the political system. As a member of the Millennial generation, which is often characterized as idealistic, interest in this topic emerged after struggling to balance my own progressive values between what is pragmatic and possible to achieve in the current system and wanting to fight for revolution in that very system. It appears as though most students and members of the Millennial generation see organizing as a means of mass mobilization to build towards that revolution, while others push for reforms. Within the scope of organizers in the NPA and Student action network, this research examined the relationship between generation, perceptions, efficacy, and pragmatism, as well as how that affects the way an organizer approaches their work. This was guided by the following questions:

- How does one's generation affect their approach to organizing?
    - How do the formative experiences of different generations of organizers affect their perception of the work?
    - How does one's generation affect their collective, and external political efficacy?

      o   How do different generations of organizers balance short term and long term

goals of the movement?

Literature Review:

Frameworks for Organizing for Social Change:

This research will use *The MAP Model for Social Movements* (Moyer, 2001) as a

framework to contextualize social movements and activism. This model defines a social

movement as a "collective action in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized,

sometimes over years and decades," (Moyer, 2001, p. 10) and emphasizes the use of the

"people power" model of power that places power in the hands of the people, which is

necessary to create social change by mobilizing people to assert their power over corporate and

state institutions. Other social movement models do not incorporate the comprehensive nature

of a movement, and focus on actors within the movement. Alvin Zander defines a social

movement as "persons who advocate a change in the beliefs or practices of members and

nonmembers within a relatively large geographical area," (Zander, 1990, p. 15). This definition

does not encompass the development and timeline of the movement, nor the dynamic nature

of the actors involved.

The MAP (Movement Action Plan) model outlines four strategic steps necessary in the

people power model of nonviolent social movements: first, a focus on power holders' policies

to expose and challenge their policies, second, put the public spotlight on the problem, third,

mobilize the general public, and fourth, attract additional members of the general public to

become social activists. This research will seek to discover perceptions of organizing in the

current social movement from multiple organizations with one theory of change who are

working on separate campaigns. Thus, the MAP model is appropriate for discussing a social movement in the context of multi-issue grassroots organizations that seek progressive change.

Organizing for Social Change, provides a framework for five forms of community organizing: direct service, self-help, education, advocacy, and direct action, and examines each form through it's relationship with power, beginning with direct-service organizations being the most accepting of existing power relationships, and direct action organizing most challenging existing power relationships (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991). Adhering to the MAP Model for Social Movements, social movements rely on organizing to shift power into the hands of people, which challenges the status quo of an elite power structure, and as such this research will refer to organizing as the act of building power to advocate for policy changes through organized money and/or people.

Authors in the field of community organizing do not contain a single definition of what it means to be a community organizer (Zander, 1990; Orsi, 2014; Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991, Brady & O'Connor, 2014). Significant literature on the topic of community organizing uses a social work lens to contextualize community organizing (Brady & O'Connor, 2014; Grodofsky & Bakun-Mazor, 2012; Soska & Butterfield, 2011), while other sources describe organizing as a means for building power for direct social action (Alinsky, 1989; Olson, Viola, & Fromm-Reed, 2011).

The National Association of Social Workers defines a social work as "promoting social justice and social change with and on behalf of… individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities," (National Association of Social Workers, 1999, preamble, para. 2). Authors in the field of macro social work agree that there is a need for social work in all levels of the

practice (Donaldson, Hill, Ferguson, Fogel, & Erickson, 2014; Nandan & Scott, 2011; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014), and while social work historically included a twofold approach of both micro and macro-level practice, recent trends have seen a decline in macro-level work and education that gives social workers the skills to participate as leaders in a grassroots, policy, coalition, or electoral context (Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014). The decline of macro-level social workers can be attributed to a lack of institutional support in social work education settings that internally promote clinical work (Donaldson, Hill, Ferguson, Fogel, & Erickson, 2014; Rothman & Mizrahi, 2014).

Social work on the macro level aims to bring about improvements and changes in the largest of systems in society, including "political action, community organizing, campaigning, and the administration of broad based social service agencies or public welfare departments," (Hill, Ferguson, & Erickson, 2010, p. 53). This definition implies that macro level social work seeks only to work within the political system to bring about change. A study of 125 social work students from 12 colleges found that electoral activism was their preferred form of activism, with three-fourths of students participating by signing petitions at least once, while protest actions were less common, with only one-fifth of students having gone to a demonstration, and one in twenty participating in civil disobedience (Swank, 2012). Additional research on the outcomes of community organizing by those who found organizing through social work versus those who found organizing through radical activism or direct actions may help guide the field's understanding the effects of an organizer's lens in their work.

A significant consideration within organizing for social change is when and how to balance incremental changes while working within a corrupt political system with a desire to

radicalize for a revolution (Alynski, 1989; Kanner, 2010; Luxemburg, 1973). Sal Alynski's *Rules*

for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals (1989) outlines how to challenge the

establishment while still being realistic about what can be accomplished. He writes,

> As an organizer, I start from where the world is, as it is, not as I would like it to be…. It is
>
> necessary to begin where the world is if we are going to change it to what we think it
>
> should be. That means working in the system. (Alynski, 1989, p. xix).

Alynski's model of strategically working within "the system" does not leave out the alternative

for radical reforms, but rather maintains that an organizer must consider the means and ends in

pragmatic and strategic terms, and that this often encompasses incremental reforms to

cultivate a widespread base of those looking for change so that a revolution does not "collapse

or become a totalitarian tyranny," (Alynski, 1989, p. xxii).

In a 1900 response to conflict within the Marxist movement, *Reform or Revolution*

argues that they are not two separate tactics, rather that the struggle for reforms is the means

to the social revolution, its aim (Luxemburg, 1973). Other literature cites a concern that

working within the political system will ultimately leave the root of the problem in tact (Kanner,

2010). Allen Kanner examined both the reformist and radical approaches, echoing that a

balance between the two is necessary, writing,

> The radical stance plays to the ego. It also provides seductive opportunities for venting
>
> anger, even when this puts people off. The reformist position is prone to a fear-driven
>
> mentality that loses sight of how compromised it can become and therefore misses
>
> opportunities for effective, bold action. These individual issues cloud our judgment as to

whether, in any given situation, the more modest or far-reaching approach will be most

productive. (Kanner, 2010, para. 7).

Further research into how organizers who seek revolution cope with working within what they

perceive to be a corrupt political system is necessary to determine how to best balance the

need for both tactics.

Political Efficacy:

The concept of political efficacy originated in the middle of the twentieth century,

described as "the feeling that individual political action does have, or can have, an impact on

the political process…. It is the feeling that political and social change is possible, and that the

individual citizen can play a part in bringing about this change," (Campbell, Gurin, & Miller,

1954, p. 187). Later in the century, the idea of efficacy was reconsidered to include two

separate dimensions: internal political efficacy, a person's perception of their ability to

participate in politics, and external political efficacy, a person's perception of the

responsiveness of the political system (Balch, 1974). Perceived efficacy not only plays a role in

personal behavior, but also has an impact on goals, expectations, and perception of

impediments and opportunities (Bandura, 1995, 1997).

Albert Bandura's *Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales* (2006) was used in this

research to guide questions about participants' perceived ability to create change. This guide

explains that questions concerning efficacy should be phrased in terms of "can do" rather than

"will do" because the concept is concerned with perceived capability (Bandura, 2006). Outcome

expectations, and judgments on likely outcomes is another key component in measuring

efficacy, because anticipated outcomes depend on one's judgment of their ability to execute

the strategy to do so (Bandura, 2006). Scales constructed to assess efficacy should contain identified challenges to perform the required activities for participants to judge their ability to meet the challenges, and should be unipolar, ranging from zero, complete incapability in achieving the desired outcomes, to the maximum of the scale (Bandura, 2006). This research will seek to interpret participants' collective and external efficacy in regards to their generation, and so questions will be constructed to more deeply understand the generational differences in outcome expectations of community organizing.

The effects of efficacy on political participation has been widely researched (Beaumont, 2011; Condon & Holleque, 2013; Craig & Maggiotto, 1981; Winston, 2013; Yeich & Levine, 1994). Results from a study offered by Condon and Holleque show that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between general self-efficacy and youth voting (2013). Mobilization and political participation by means of protest has been found to be correlated with high internal efficacy and low external efficacy, as the high confidence in one's competence to create change along with the perception of low responsiveness of the political system leads to a desire to force change by mobilizing outside of the political system (Craig & Maggiotto, 1981). In addition to internal and external efficacy, literature has broadened the construct of political efficacy to include collective efficacy, the perception of the system's responsiveness to collective demands for change (Yeich & Levine, 1994). A high degree of collective efficacy has been presented as another element for optimization of mobilization, because high collective efficacy means that a person sees collective action as an effective means of creating the change they desire (Yeich & Levine, 1994).

Social Media:

With today's youth being the first generation to have grown up with access to social media, this plays a key role in understanding generational differences, and consequently, many recent studies on the role of efficacy and political participation focus on the impact of social media (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebaek, 2012; Park, 2015; Velasquez & LaRose, 2014; Zhou & Pinkleton, 2012). Several studies have appeared within the last decade emphasizing social media within generational approaches to politics (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Earl, Hurwitz, Mesinas, Tolan, & Arlotti, 2013; Lee, 2006; Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady & Verba, 2012; Velasquez & LaRose, 2015). A study of the influence of social media on taking action found that online actions are good entry points for participants new to activism, because online actions are likely to attract those who are peripheral members of an organization, or who do not traditionally take part in any actions (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002). These online collective actions are also most efficient as collective persuasive action, rather than confrontational action (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002), meaning that the Internet is better used in a social movement to persuade others to join the cause, rather than being used to directly challenge an existing power structure. Enjolras et al. present further research into the mobilization effects of social media, noting that participants mobilized through social media tend to be of lower socioeconomic status and younger than those mobilized through an established organization (Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebaek, 2012).

While social media has been shown to be an effective tool for engaging and mobilizing people (Brunsting & Postmes, 2002; Enjolras, Steen-Johnsen, & Wollebaek, 2012) little attention has been paid to the political and economic effects that push them to engage in

politics. A foundation of community organizing and personal behavior is the concept of self-interest (Barbalet, 2012; Ozymy, 2011; Platt, 2008; Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991). Self-interest, according to *Organizing for Social Change* is what an organizer gets out of organizing, whether it for themselves, their families, or their community, and points out that the root of the word is "self among others," (Bobo, Kendall, & Max, 1991, p. 6). In other words, considering one's own self-interest includes reflecting on where their needs fit into those of the larger society, though individuals often fail to understand their own self-interest or how their actions may affect political outcomes (Ozymy, 2011). Consequently, it is necessary to not only research how to most effectively engage Millennials, but what collective self-interest drives them to mobilize and engage in the current political climate.

Generational Frameworks:

A generation, in the cultural sense, is defined as a social creation in which a particular birth cohort was raised with and imprinted by unique historical and cultural circumstances (Biggs, 2007; Mannheim, 1952; Schuman & Scott, 1989). One of the first examples of comprehensive generational theory was presented by Karl Mannheim in *The Problem of Generations*. He wrote that "[the problem of generations] is one of the indispensable guides to an understanding of the structure of social and intellectual movements," (Mannheim, 1952, p. 286). Mannheim's theory emphasizes the socially constructed nature of a generation and explains that the continuous emergence of new participants in the cultural process means that our culture is developed by individuals who come into fresh contact with the existing cultural heritage, and any one generation can only participate in a temporary and limited section of the historical process (Mannheim, 1952). Simon Biggs suggests that the consequences of this on

public policy are that while younger generations are positioned to be active in attempting to replace older ones, older generations tend to act in a way that attempts to suppress younger aspirations (Biggs, 2007).

Young people and students have historically played a role in advocating for social change (Broadhurst, 2014; Friedenberg, 1981; Boyd, 2013; Anderson, 2015). Before the twentieth century, student activism primarily involved advocating for change on their own campuses (Broadhurst, 2014). One of the most influential student movements began in 1960 when four African American students sat down at the whites-only lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina (Morgan & Davies, 2012). These sit-ins continued every day for six months, and a few months later the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was born (Riva, 2012). The radical student activism of the 1960's helped define the Civil Rights Era, with a myriad of other student organizations forming, including Students for a Democratic Party, Student Peace Union, Southern Student Organizing Committee, Young Americans for Freedom, and more (Broadhurst, 2014). The tactics used by SNCC are still used as a model for student activism in the new millennia, with student protests including a 32-hour sit-in to remove Woodrow Wilson's name from public policy of Princeton, a strike by the University of Missouri's football team to call for the resignation of the president, and 250 students entering the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to protest donors who support political austerity measures that resulted in loss of funding to public universities (Pauly & Andrews, 2015; Nitkin, 2016).

At the time of this research all traditional undergraduate students belong to the Millennial generation, described by scholars as those who were born in the last two decades of the 20th century (Much, Wagener, Breitkreutz, & Miranda, 2014; Downing, 2006; Corgnet,

Gonzalez, & Mateo, 2015). Millennials are distinct not only in being the first generation to grow up with social media, but are both the largest and most racially diverse generation in American history (Winograd & Hais, 2011). Their social, political, and environmental circumstances have prompted many authors to describe them as a unique generation that will greatly transform our society (Gallup, 2016; McConvile, 2014; Perticone, 2014; Winograd & Hais, 2011). These social, political, and environmental circumstances include coming of age during a recession, a threadbare safety net for the young, a decline in government higher education funding, as well as a resistance to right-wing populism, which to some signify an upcoming rise of a new left, propelled by Millennials, that upends three decades of growing neoliberalism (Beinart, 2013). The author of "Millennials have gotten royally screwed: that's why they're voting for Bernie Sanders," argues that the generation receives a great deal of bashing as "a bunch of narcissistic, lazy, entitled, coddled, uninformed digital junkies who just can't deal with the world," (Lynch, 2015, para. 1) but that they are also faced with staggering economic inequality. Not all writers in the field agree with the notion that Millennials will propel this radical shift, as Shaun Scott explains, the capitalist propaganda and marketing schemes of the '80s and '90s places Capitalism in the core identity of Millennials, and that positioning the generation as a solution to capitalism's problems "feeds into a destructive narrative of generational exceptionalism that discourages forward thinking Millennials from building on the work of past generations of radicals," (Scott, 2016, Beyond Generational Politics, para. 3), although this article does not address the line between high efficacy and "generational exceptionalism."

Howe and Strauss's *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy* (1997), written by the same authors that coined the term "Millennial," uses a historical analysis of generations to

suggest an 80-year cycle called a "Fourth Turning." Authors described this eight-decade long, four-generation cycle in the context of two separate events that take place during each cycle, an "Awakening" and a "Crisis." An Awakening is what authors describe an event that rearranges the inner world of spirit and culture, while a Crisis rearranges the outer world of power and politics. Previous Crises, taking place about every eighty years, include the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the New Deal (Howe & Strauss, 1997)

Written before the new Millennium, when juxtaposed to the current political climate, their outline of social and political events that lead to a Crisis supports their suggestion that the Millennial generation is one that will challenge the status quo in a new way with an upcoming Crisis. The event that Howe and Strauss assert to come first in a Crisis is a "catalyst," or a startling event or sequence of events that produce a sudden shift in mood. It can be maintained that the 2008 recession, Occupy Wall Street, and the recent uprisings against police brutality were catalysts of the current political climate. These catalysts lead to a "regeneracy" of civic life, about three years after catalytic events, which can be seen in the current upswing of mass mobilization (Pauly & Andrews, 2015), a "climax" about midway through the fourth turning, and a "resolution," (Howe & Strauss, 1997).

This cycle includes four archetypes of generations that can be found in American history that reappear in the same order (Howe & Strauss, 1997). The first of their archetypes is the "Prophet," a generation that "grows up as increasingly indulged post-Crisis children, comes of age as the narcissistic young crusaders of an Awakening, cultivates principle as moralistic midlifers, and emerges as wise elders guiding the next Crisis," (p. 84). Baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, are an example of this generation type that has little confidence in

societal institutions to implement their deeply held beliefs, and frequently attempt to weaken those institutions.

The second archetype is the "Nomad" generation, of which Generation X belongs (born 1965-1980). They are described as a generation that "grows up as underprotected children during an Awakening, comes of age as the alienated young adults of a post-Awakening world, mellows into pragmatic midlife leaders during a Crisis, and ages into tough post-Crisis elders," (p. 84).

Howe and Strauss's third generational archetype is the "Hero" generation that "grows up as increasingly protected post-Awakening children, comes of age as the heroic team workers of a Crisis, demonstrates hubris as energetic midlifers, and emerges as powerful elders attacked by the next Awakening," (p. 84). Despite this, Hero generations like the GI generation (born 1901-1924) and Millennials (born 1980-2002) tend to have a high degree of optimism that becomes the primary force in shaping the country. In the context of their predicted upcoming Crisis, Howe & Strauss posit, that "whatever their new economic hardships (and they could be severe), Millennials will not rebel, but will instead mobilize for public purpose," (p. 294). They go on to predict that Millennials, coming of age willing and energized, will inspire older leaders to enlist them for actions that felt hopeless in the last era of political unravelling, and that young adults will view politics as a tool to turn collegial purpose into civic progress, a prophecy that is supported by a recent study that found today's college freshmen to be more likely to protest than students in the '60s and '70s (Pohle, 2016).

Their fourth generational archetype, that encompasses the Silent Generation (born 1925-1945) and what some sociologists are currently calling Generation Z (born after 2002)

(Igel, 2012; Turner, 2015), is the "Artist." This generation "grows up as overprotected children during a Crisis, comes of age as the sensitive young adults of a post-Crisis world, breaks free as indecisive midlife leaders during an Awakening, and ages into empathic post-Awakening elders," (p. 84). Missing here is Generation Y, a generation that is often lumped together with Millennials (Hipp, 2016), though the very unique social and cultural conditions of Millennials leave many who were born in the late 1970's or early 1980's to identify with neither Generation X or Millennials, and identify as Generation Y instead (Hipp, 2016). For this reason, this research will allow participants on the higher end of the Millennial range to self-select into Generation Y if they more closely identify with that title.

N. Susan Emeagwali explored what motivates Millennials to be leaders, and found that the top motivating factor in becoming a leader was a desire to help others, and cited Paul Pyrz, the president of LeaderShape, a non-profit aimed at training leaders, saying that the biggest difference he saw between the Millennial generation and older generations is

an acknowledgement that something has to be done to address the issues facing the world. They want to have more meaning in their lives and demand that they connect with the purpose and mission of any organization they are a part of. (Emeagwali, 2011, What Motivates Millennials to Become Leaders, para. 8).

This is echoed in *Their Highest Vocation: Social Justice and the Millennial Generation*, which describes the generation as one that is deeply concerned about social and economic inequality and the most politically progressive generation in US history (Fox, 2012).

The book *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation is Remaking America* (Winograd & Hais, 2011) outlines the Millennial role in changing the nation, and asserts that

Millennials believe in acting locally, directly, and as part of a group to solve societal problems. The authors write, "Millennials believe that what the world needs most is thousands of community organizers, working at the local level to solve their own country's and the world's problems, linked electronically, of course," (2011, p. 226). *Millennial Momentum* also points out that Millennials believe that sharing information widely is the best way to change behavior (Winograd & Hais, 2011), and thus the ability of Millennials to propel concrete change is dependent on their ability to use innovative social media and information sharing not just to raise awareness, but to build power for the changes they seek through organizing for social change.

Research Methodology:

Approach and Rationale:

This qualitative research was explored through multiple methods of data collection and frameworks for analysis with participants who have a variety of experiences organizing for social change. While many organizers have a clearly defined role, numerous organizers are working in an unpaid and unofficial capacity through their local organization. A "community organizer" will be defined as a person who self-identifies as an organizer through a grassroots community organization. A "student organizer" will be defined as either a student who self-identifies as an organizer, or a person who is not a student and has a defined role of organizing students. This distinction is important because while many community organizers are Millennials, student organizers are organizing people primarily in their own generation.

This research is qualitative, as it is seeking the meaning behind the approaches to organizing, though a few quantitative questions were asked to probe the participants to think

deeply about where they stand on issues. In order to minimize my own subjectivity, I used the grounded theory approach, which finds interpretations through grounding one's findings in the experiences of the participants (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). With just 30 respondents to the survey, there is not enough numerical data obtained to draw assumptions of entire generations, though it will be used to explore the results found in the explanations. Likewise, the verbatim quotations selected in the presentation of this data do not represent the views of all members of a particular generation, rather they were chosen as representative of themes drawn out of the inquiry.

Data Collection Methods:

First, I gathered data through a survey of both student and community organizers from Student Action and National People's Action affiliate groups. These surveys were distributed through personal and professional networks. Student organizers were found through MESA and their national affiliate Student Action, and community organizers were found through Maine People's Alliance and their national affiliate National People's Action. It was distributed both through personal contacts and by email to members of an NPA google group. The survey used to gather data on organizers' experiences in and approaches to organizing, the relationship between their work and the "system," and their self-interest in the work. This was returned by thirty participants from thirteen different states.

I then conducted five in-depth interviews, three with student organizers and two with older community organizers, all from different parts of the country via google hangout, phone, and in person, as well a focus group of two student and two community organizers via Google Hangout (see terminology page), to further investigate these perceptions of the work, and how

they cope with pragmatism in the political system. The focus group included organizers from both NPA and Student Action to draw out responses and reactions to different approaches and experiences in the work. Participants in the focus group were asked to take one minute to write their immediate responses to each question before responding verbally so that individual responses were uncorrupted by reactions from other participants. They were then asked for responses to those reactions, and a natural discussion followed.

Data Analysis Methods:

The data from this research was coded and broken up into themes with the use of NVivo coding software (see terminology page). Survey results were broken up by generation on multiple excel sheets and then uploaded to the application, and interviews were uploaded after they were transcribed. This software was used to comb through the data and pull out themes, including ageism, formative experiences, leadership development, liberation, possibilities, urgency, and organizing then and now. The survey was returned by six Baby Boomers, five members of Generation X, sixteen Millennials, and three who chose to identify as Generation Y, making it sixteen Millennials, and fourteen non-Millennials total.

These themes were pulled out of the survey using multiple methods. Because there were roughly as many Millennial responses as non-Millennial responses, general themes were first pulled out from the collective replies with the data separated as such to compare Millennials and older community organizers. Then, each survey question was coded separately, about half of which were coded by specific generation, and half by Millennials and non-Millennials. Questions that were coded by generation were questions that directly addressed generation, like "how has your generation affected your self-interest?" Questions that were

coded in the non-Millennial group were more broad, for example, "how do you define the system?"

Themes were found in the in-depth interviews and focus group first with constant comparative analysis, which allowed me to consistently find new themes, and arrange in new subgroups. The four larger themes with smaller subgroups that emerged from these interviews were: Movement v. Moment, Political Efficacy, Role in the Movement, and Self-Interest, with Millennials being an added theme in the older group. Both in-depth interviews were done with organizers on the cusp of generational lines, one saying that she is technically a Baby Boomer but identifies as a Gen X, the other saying that she identifies as a Gen X but is technically Gen Y, so these interviews were coded again through the Millennial and non-Millennial lens.

Limitations:

The limitations in this research included time restraints, using convenience sampling for data collection, and a personal bias from personal observation in the site. The time restraints involved in this study affected the amount of in-depth interviews that I was able to conduct, as well as my ability to reach out beyond my own personal network of organizers to obtain this data. I used convenience sampling to survey and interview organizers of local and national affiliate organizations who are operating under the same theory of change to move their work, and thus may induce a bias in the way they approach and understand organizing in a social justice context. With this sampling being taken from organizers from national affiliates, in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted via Google Hangout, affecting audio quality, and created a non-intimate setting, which may have been a limitation in how open participants were willing to be.

As a student organizer myself, I have more student organizers in my network than community organizers, which affected my ability to balance the number of surveys that were completed by non-Millennials and non-student organizers. The number of non-Millennials were about even with the number of Millennials that completed the survey, which allowed for deep comparison between the two, but not having an even number of participants from each non-Millennial generation affected the ability to thoroughly study each one. I also made myself aware of my own personal subjectivity as a Millennial regarding this matter during the data analysis, to reduce personal bias in the interpretation. The analysis of questions regarding efficacy, which are tied to beliefs about what can happen in the future are influenced by my own efficacy, though being conscious of this bias helped ground myself in the experience of all organizers. Results from this study were also affected by which organizers I chose to interview, many of whom I already have an underlying assumption of their attitudes and approaches to organizing.

Findings:

The following data presents four important themes that came out of this inquiry: Formative Experiences and Socialization; The System, Reforms, and Revolution; Balancing Act; and Efficacy. These themes appeared through both the survey results as well as the focus group and in-depth interviews.

I. Formative Experiences and Socialization:

Formative experiences of a generation are the unique historical and cultural circumstances that imprint each generation. This became a critical theme in both survey results and and in-depth interviews in order to explain the approaches to organizing according to

generational experiences, rather than simply age differences. The following data was drawn from both sources.

Survey participants were asked directly how one's generation has affected their self interest. Generation X was the most likely to say they don't know, or that their generation is something that they rarely think about. One Gen Xer did note that they grew up in the "80s heyday of punk rock and new wave, and its angry rejection of the status quo," and that forces them to consciously be thinking about projecting "a positive plan to fix the world not just be mad at it." The few respondents who identified as Generation Y (on the older end of what some may classify as Millennial, but not identifying with the typical social and cultural experience of a younger Millennial), answered this question with formative experiences like being a first cohort of people who went to college without a national conversation about the ramifications of the rising cost of tuition and taking out loans. Baby Boomers responded to this question with formative experiences as well, one mentioning that growing up in the New Deal era gave them the perspective that "government had a positive role in society, to create opportunity and fairness. It allowed for, unlike times of scarcity, an openness to expansion and inclusion that was fertile ground for the civil rights and feminist movements to begin to flourish," a sentiment that was echoed by other members of the generation who stated that organizing was the catalyst that allowed them to "break through the barriers" when they came of age during the '60s and '70s.

A few Millennials noted that their generation affects their self-interest through their consideration of certain aspects of society being either the same or worse that it has been in the past, saying "realizing that a lot of the things that previous generations had to go through

aren't over for us," "growing up and seeing the effects of how older generations ruined the environment for us (both climate and economy)," and "I'm acutely aware of the human costs of neoliberalism, since that's all my generation has known growing up. There's a huge vacuum in society and it's up to us to use this crisis to our advantage." One Millennial noted, however, that seeing that the struggles of previous generations continuing to take place makes her less inclined to say that their self-interest is affected by their generation because "the American Dream never existed for a whole lot of people, and that really ain't nothing new." In terms of socialization, a few Millennials noted that they feel pressure to disprove negative stereotypes about their generation, while others stated that being part of a progressive generation on social issues pulls them towards this work in a way that wouldn't have taken place without that, through the changing political environment and social media.

With these small differences, the self-interests of a variety of generations of organizers did hold a common thread through the multiple approaches to the work. The survey asked respondents what they got out of organizing, to align with the framework of self-interest given by *Organizing for Social Change*. One small difference was a few mentions by Millennials of a sense of "fighting back "to combat the things that make me angry," as well as that Millennials were more likely to respond that their own liberation and growth was a piece of what they got out of organizing. In an in-depth interview with an organizer on the Generation X/Baby Boomer line pointed out that her self-interest had changed throughout the years, beginning with her own liberation, but called it "almost a selfish act in the beginning, because I wanted… to be able to get up in the morning and be at the same starting line as everybody else, and I saw organizing other folks as a way to get there."

This same organizer noted that the shift in her self-interest came as she began organizing for the movement, rather than the moment, and that now her self-interest in the work is that it "allows me to live out my values." Living out those values is more aligned with what non-Millennials tended to respond to the question of what they got out of organizing in the survey, which was more focused on bringing liberation to others, and "the satisfaction that when people most directly impacted by the issues organize and win on those issues that actually improve their lives for the better." While non-Millennials expressed this self-interest more broadly, the sense of satisfaction from organizing was a strong common thread between all organizers. One Millennial wrapped up their liberation and satisfaction in one statement, saying "a better me, not only do I feel like I'm doing something good, but it changes how I perceive myself as an individual and how I interact with the world."

The strongest common thread between all generations was the relationships and sense of community that they feel through organizing. In an in-depth interview, one Millennial stressed this by saying "I didn't even know what community was, honestly, in so many ways... I was just craving that more and more." She also noted that for students, "it's also a space that kind of immediately creates a community. I think that's part of why people also organize a lot in churches, and I think that young people are not really in church much, so it's like a space to just find people who already feel connected to each other and want to act." Another student organizer warned, though, that campus culture makes it more difficult for them to separate public and private relationships. For older organizers, the importance of relationships was much the same, though more rooted in the work. One mentioned in an interview that relationships are "the bridge between both generations that ought to stay consistent through the long term...

it's really what makes the organizing world go round," while another said that "we need love…

the first rule of organizing, don't do it alone, again, not a simple formula, but I think love has

much more to do with what we are doing."

When asked about the political climate when they began organizing in the survey,

organizers from the Baby Boomer generation were likely to use a negative word to describe it,

like "grim" or "hostile," with a few going into detail about the specific challenges of organizing

under President Reagan with even allies not willing to go far enough. One organizer described

organizing in the heart of neoliberalism in the 90s, saying "all the radicalism of my youth was

gone and reform was the only alternative." Organizers from Generation X mentioned

organizing being very reactionary and defensive, with "a pervasive feeling of powerlessness,

and a resulting hyper focus on local winnability." The few organizers from Generation Y who

answered this question described the climate as radical, changing, and energized. These

responses were comparably charged to the responses from Millennials, who said that the

climate when they began organizing is "polarized" and "divided, divisive, and cataclysmic."

Specific formative experiences that recurred as a response to this survey question were the

Bernie Sanders campaign, the momentous feeling of having an organizer elected as president

(Barack Obama), Black Lives Matter, and Occupy Wall Street. Occupy Wall Street was used as

both an example of widespread dissatisfaction without a cohesive left, and as a source of

optimism for momentum.

Responses from non-Millennials in both this survey and in-depth interviews commonly

brought up formative experiences specific to issue-areas, like the LGBTQ movement, and access

to healthcare. For these organizers, there was a sense of having to relearn and reinvent

organizing as these events changed the political and cultural sphere. One indicated that the climate in which they began organizing did have an effect on their organizing work, as it was their formation, but "it became clear after the crash that we were entering a new political epoch, one that provided and called for more radical and systemic change. So I began to move my organization quickly in that direction and began innovating." A few others mentioned a constant need to evolve and remaining open to feedback and new ideas, but that "a lot of tried and true organizing strategies and tactics are timeless."

In an in-depth interview an organizer who identified as Generation X described her journey, saying,

> when we were in the beginning, we were just sort of organizing to stay alive… and I
> think because of that work… we've established a safer space and structure for long-term
> thinking, so I think that this younger generation has kind of inherited that structure
> without even knowing it.

Her personal story of organizing in that hostile environment led to reflection on what that has meant for her organizing, saying that "the shoulders that they're standing on, to do the organizing that they're doing, in a much more honest way, because it's safe to be honest now, and it wasn't always safe to be honest… and now it's expected." Another non-Millennial organizer echoed the difficulties of organizing in a hostile environment, but said that it affected her work in that "once you're in the trenches for a while you get a better perspective of what is possible, and what it takes to make something possible."

Millennials agreed that the environment has changed, but a maintained that things are not necessarily better, and indicated a shift from anger about the issues to anger at the system

and establishment politics as a whole, because "many issues are not as cut and dry as they were in the past." One student organizer expressed in an interview that she felt as though things haven't improved, saying, "You can go to school, but you'll get a ton of debt, you can get a job but you'll probably be making minimum wage, you'll probably never buy a house, like marriage doesn't seem like a great opportunity anymore. Yeah, like, we like, we had the civil rights movement and everything, but police are still messing us up, and shooting us." Another Millennial noted the political significance of this generational sentiment by saying that "all of these things combined set up such perfect circumstances for quicker, shorter, easier conversations with people like, 'oh, you're disillusioned, I'm disillusioned too, what are we going to do about it?'"

In terms of perspective on what is possible, the formative experiences of Millennials took the opposite effect, and instead made them express a belief that more was possible. One survey respondent tied multiple experiences together saying "Occupy, BLM, Bernie Sanders have built us so much momentum, I think exponentially more people want to be involved with every new movement-moment possibility, and so I think we can keep winning even more and more." This hope was echoed by more Millennials in the survey who expressed that these events "made me feel like people wanted change and something bigger might be possible." There were multiple indications that these events socialized and politicized their generation to want to get involved, making campuses a hot spot for recruiting activists.

Social Media also emerged as a tool that promoted their beliefs and encouraged involvement. One Millennial interviewee went into detail about how politicization through Facebook has influenced her generation, saying,

People's access to reading the same story on like five different websites, just via

Facebook is amazing…. People are just learning so much quicker that we can't read one

side of the story, we have to read multiple perspectives. It's just a big sense of

disillusionment, whether or not you're politicized around it, of like, disillusionment of

big corporations, and corporate media, and like you know, a lot of things that the Bernie

campaign is speaking to.

A few Millennial organizers indicated that seeing their peers express their views on social media

influenced their own views, and that being liberal, progressive, and involved is now "cool".

These new technological tools were also mentioned as aids for harnessing a new anger and

discontent.

Also formative in the work of Millennials was the continued mention of ageism in both

survey and interviews. A few Millennials noted that it comes especially from their targets but

also from allies as well, while another stated that older organizers in her work are generally

excited to see young folks involved. There was a recurring mention of being told that they were

too young to understand the world, combating stereotypes of being entitled or apathetic, and

that they have to be more realistic. As it shows up in their work, a student organizer described

her experience saying "I have to work harder to not internalize that, and feel that what I'm

doing is valid… and it kind of holds me back from forging ahead as much as if that wasn't in the

back of my mind."

When survey participants were asked if these formative moments in the political climate

when they began organizing affect their work, a few Baby Boomers said that it does not, while

others indicated that it made their generation "better at fighting against than for." These constant defensive fights also meant that,

> it required us to have a fair amount of intestinal fortitude and also a commitment and belief that we needed to approach our organizing with a long view. That public education and grassroots outreach had to go far deeper than one-dimensional questions that only reflected the current issue. We had to make a commitment to real movement building that was going to be challenged and questioned (even by our closest allies and many in our own community) at every turn.

Generation X was most likely to say that the political climate taught them the importance of using electoral politics in their work. It was indicated that doing this electoral work helped them stay on the offensive, rather than the defensive fights of the generation before them, and that doing this electoral work helped them use the political landscape for big wins.

While three Millennials stated that the political climate doesn't affect their work, younger organizers on the whole, including Generation Y and Millennials noted that it makes them think about the root causes, and not just trendy issues of the time. An emerging theme was the desire to use the current unrest to create lasting political infrastructure, and seize "movement moments."

Participants who completed the survey and participated in in-depth interviews were asked what they believe their role to be in the movement. Non-Millennial organizers in the survey interpreted this question to be what their current, not historical role is, and echoed that their role is to support and teach the younger generation. Millennials and Generation Y also

mentioned their role learning from older organizers, but had a sense of adding "creativity and new ideas to add to that rich history," and "holding up the light for older generations so they can better understand how different the world is today than it was when they were coming of age." One Millennial summed it up by saying that their role is to "learn, develop new shit, lead." Organizers from Gen X and Baby Boomers indicated that they did not want to hold these new ideas back, and were clear in their need to "support but not get in the way of great ideas and momentum," and "instill a critical and intellectual approach to organizing, one that conserves that which is good and endlessly seeks to both analyze and confess what is not working… and replace them."

The references to leadership development and support allude to a general sense of understanding of the cyclical nature of organizing, which was explored in more detail during an in-depth interview. An organizer from Generation X stressed that her role in the movement is to forge ahead from the rich history of activists before her, and continue blazing the trail for those who come after her, saying,

> There were generations behind me, there were shoulders that I was standing on…. I wasn't around for Stonewall, I can't imagine how scary that must have been, and how much bravery it took for you know, for drag queens in Greenwich Village to say fuck it, I've had enough, I'm going to fight the police, and I'm not going to take this anymore. I bet they can't imagine what it was like to be arrested in England in the early 1900s for being a homosexual.

A younger student organizer echoed this sentiment by asserting the importance of self-care in the work, because "this movement is going to continue and go on beyond us, so I think in order to continue this work, we also have to find it urgent to take care of ourselves."

Two more major themes emerged from Millennial responses to this question in the survey: intersectionality and pushing the limits of the left. A few mentioned that their generation's "broader, more intersectional analysis," pulls the movement to address intersectionality in their narrative, and to not leave certain identities out of demands or discrimination policies. Through this intersectionality lens and a general sense of pushing the movement "to be more radical," Millennials are optimistic in their ability to play a strong role in the movement, saying "I think my generation can provide the energy, anger, and optimism that the movement relies on," and that "I think our role and the role of the generation younger than I am is not to compromise, is to demand what we need, to build our organizing until we're strong enough to make a revolution reality."

II. The System, Reforms, and Revolution:

The following responses are taken exclusively from survey questions about "the system", and their perceptions of reforms and revolution.

a. "The System":

In the survey that was distributed to organizers of all generations, participants were asked to define "the system." The defined the system in the following ways:

Non-Millennial organizers were much more likely to describe the system in neutral terms, like "capitalism" and "the institutions, social power structure, and economic system that underpin a particular society." Nine out of thirteen non-Millennials who answered this

question used neutral terms, while four described the system as oppressive, or "the confluence of corporate, white elites and the power of the wealthiest people to realize their narrow self-interest." Ten out of fourteen Millennials, on the other hand, described the system as oppressive, one simply writing the term "oppressive," as their definition. Others called it "the ruling class and their minions," and the "structural barriers – sexism, racism, corporate power – that infuse all elements of our daily lives and make it harder for us to see our interconnectedness." The other four Millennials used neutral terms like "the way things work" and, again, "capitalism."

The following chart shows the averages for responses to the question, "what is the relationship between your organizing work and "the system"? (Scale 1-10, 1 = push for change by working within the current political system, 10 = build power to directly challenge and work against the system). The first three columns are individual generations within the non-Millennial demographic, the fourth is the total of all non-Millennial responses. Millennial responses were broken into both student and community organizer responses in the last two boxes. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of respondents to that question from each demographic. With only fourteen non-Millennial responses, and sixteen Millennial responses, these averages do not represent the views of their respective generations, rather trends extracted from the participants included in this study.

Baby Boomers (6)	Gen X (5)	Gen Y (3)	Non-Millennial (14)	Millennials (16)	Millennial Student Organizers (10)	Millennial Community Organizers (6)
6.7	6.6	5	6.3	6.9	7.4	6.2

The lowest responses were two 3s, from one Baby Boomer and one Millennial Community Organizer. Four tens were recorded, three of which were from Millennials (two student organizers, one community organizer), and one Baby Boomer.

When asked to explain their answers, all generations were generally on the same page about needing to balance both in their work. The slight difference in framing of the answers, though were in the "buts." Non-Millennial organizers framed their answers in the context of needing systemic change "but also you have to show folks winning is possible by winning under the current system." Millennials tended to frame their responses to why both were necessary by saying "I think we have to work within the systems sometimes to win and effectively build power in the world as it is. But if we're not transforming the system itself, our work is ultimately of little value." One Gen Xer was clear in saying that that the system is not working and needs radical change to win meaningful progressive change, and one out of the 30 organizers, a Millennial community organizer, asserted that "there is nothing fundamentally wrong with our political system," while Millennials on the whole had more responses that stated that building power and replacing systems is the only way out, and that "that's what organizing is or should be. I really believe it when we say the whole damn system is guilty as hell. It's got to go."

b. Reforms and Revolution:

Participants were also asked to choose between "reforms" or "revolution" as the most effective to achieve their ultimate goals as an organizer. The following chart represents how many of each reply were given per demographic. This chart again includes an additional

average of all non-Millennial responses, as well as a breakdown of student and community

organizers within the Millennial generation.

	Baby Boomers (6)	Gen X (5)	Gen Y (3)	Non-Millennial (14)	Millennials (16)	Millennial Student Organizers (10)	Millennial Community Organizers (6)
Reforms	3	0	3	6	2	1	1
Revolution	3	5	0	8	14	9	5

Organizers were given a choice only of the two, and not a third option for "both" to

draw out responses about which they lean towards. This is because a mix of both, with reforms

as a means to an end, signifies that the "ultimate goal" would be revolution, not because the

words are implied to be in opposition. Non-Millennial organizers were more likely to respond

that this was a false choice, as the words are not mutually exclusive. They were also more likely

to say that while a revolution would be nice, that they have doubt that it would be possible,

saying "I lack confidence in a common vision of the revolution," and "true revolutions happen

very infrequently. Most change does come in the shape of reforms, election victories, or

favorable court decisions… measures that bring a society closer to true environmental

sustainability, inclusiveness of all people, elimination of poverty, etc. are to be celebrated, not

scorned." Others that preferred reforms reiterated this in saying that most great developments

in history have "come as the result of reforms, not revolutions," and that "highly effective

organizing can reform governmental systems," though the latter then questioned "is this

revolution?"

A few Baby Boomers disagreed that an equitable society can be created through

reforms in the current system, one saying that we are not in a "reformable situation," going on

to explain that "meaningful solutions would be more of a revolution than a set of reforms. And to truly free human beings and create equality will eventually require an actual revolution -one that ends capitalism altogether, creates a classless society and puts human needs and freedom over profit and property."

Neither Millennial that chose "reforms" explained their answer, though in other sections of the survey one noted that electoral work within the system is generally the work that they do, and the other questioned, "why destroy power when you can take control of it?" Many of them reiterated the same sentiment of needing reforms to energize and use as stepping stones for the larger movement, but that they are not enough on their own. These responses generally agreed with the analysis that the root causes keep reforms from being effective, because "the US was built on racism, colonialism, and capitalism… we are gonna need radical change if we actually want to see this shit work for us and not just for the elites." Others held a little more urgency than was found in the responses of non-Millennials by saying "we don't have time to negotiate," and "the world as it is is unjust and kills people." There was no sign of doubt in a revolution by Millennials, in fact a bit of hope was found in some statements, with one writing, "once people realize their power, they will be unstoppable."

III. Balancing Act:

Participants of in-depth interviews and the focus group were asked how they juggle their desire for bigger, longer term goals with the need for pragmatic solutions right now, and the following data is taken primarily from these interviews. The words reform and revolution were not initially introduced to participants unless they verbalized them themselves, in order to

promote conversation around how to foster a healthy balance between long-term and short-term work, rather than potential defensive reactions to either word.

a. Non-Millennials:

Non-Millennial organizers spoke to their experience in the field and fighting for the space to think for the long-term. One said that "in the beginning I was organizing for the moment, which was to change something that needed to be changed, and I didn't have that, that experience that you get after you do this for a while, you start to get a long-term vision, and movement building stuff." Multiple non-Millennial organizers indicated that the beginning of their careers, they were organizing for short-term victories. One organizer explained that because of mobilization deliverables, making room to plan long-term has been a difficult battle, saying, "we've had to fight for that space, and we continue to have to prioritize it, to name it, to fight for every inch of that space." Another described her experience juggling long-term work with a ballot measure, saying, "for a couple of years I was part of the movement, and we were having these conversations that were really hard, and then we had an issue that went on the ballot, and we had to change our messaging and be super focused, and so I did, and then the campaign was over and I went back to the more long-term organizing and messaging." She went on to say that the organization "almost became dormant during the time that we were in campaign mode... it's different tactics, it's a different pace, the calendar is different, the conversations are different."

These conversations tended to discuss the importance of that long-term work, and also stressed that "in Social Justice… time moves a little slower," something that both participants of an in-depth interview wondered if Millennials had a full understanding of. In the mean time,

they emphasized the importance of reforms to keep the long-term ball rolling. Using the

Affordable Care Act as an example, a community organizer explained that while she believed in

a government run healthcare system, that she didn't have high hopes for that to pass while her

state is still struggling to pass Medicaid expansion. She went on to say that her work revolved

around getting that passed and the best that it can be, and then keep the spotlight on to pass

the bigger and better reforms when another moment comes along.

Using the moment for the movement in this regard was a common thread among non-

Millennial community organizers. One explained that moments are the catalysts of the

movement, as they take an opportunity, or crisis, and build something with it, while another

connected this strategy to the Affordable Care Act by discussing the healthcare crisis before it

was passed, with millions in the US without access to health insurance, while also

acknowledging that this wasn't the "perfect answer" because it's still operating in a broken

system, but keeping the long-term vision meant pushing towards a world that is ready for the

bigger demands is necessary. This was examined more through examples that created urgency

themselves, like Black Lives Matter and police brutality, as well as examples in which organizers

have to create that level of urgency, like tax reform. This urgency in the moments, explained a

Gen Xer, is what engages and mobilizes people to participate, which increases efficacy through

wins and gets them involved in the movement.

Balancing the long-term and short term came down to messaging for these non-

Millennial organizers. A community organizer with a rich history in balancing messaging for

short and long-term wins used an example of a campaign that didn't have an eye towards long

term movement building. She described using polling data in the campaign that said that if they

talked about a driver's card for immigrants as a safety issue, and not about how it impacts their

families, they would have a better outcome but still likely lose. She reflected, "but at the end of

the campaign we had done nothing to move the conversation about immigrant families."

When asked how to balance that messaging had the polling data revealed that the safety

conversation would gain them a win she said,

> I think that's when you start talking about base building, and so you're having one
>
> conversation with voters, who you just need to change enough minds using the
>
> messages you have to get the votes that you need, but at the same time, you're having
>
> deeper conversations with folks that are presumably in your base… there's multiple
>
> layers of messaging depending on who your audience is.

Echoing this sentiment, that changing the narrative along with those legislative wins is

necessary, other organizers mentioned that making those long-term goals outside of the

legislative arena explicit and never losing sight of the long-term vision is crucial, while also

"thinking realistically about what needs to be in place in order to successfully achieve that

bigger vision."

b. Millennials:

While the non-Millennial organizers stressed their experience in the slow pace of

change, the sense of urgency that they emphasized for moments was found for the Movement

in Millennials. While they understood that change takes time, one Millennial explained that

"there's a difference of urgency in Millennials that you don't have to explain that I've had to

explain to people of different generations," and went on to compare this sense of urgency

within those generational differences by saying, "when I say urgency, it's not even a, we don't

have all day as a time thing, but also as a seriousness thing, like we actually as a planet, as people, as like, white people in the movement for racial justice, we do not have all day to sit here and talk about this one thing." Multiple student organizers cited historical patterns as to why they feel this urgency for deeper structural change through their narrative around not having seen a lot of changes in their lifetime, and connecting the issues that need reforms to the foundation of this country through slavery and the exploitation of labor.

A few non-Millennial organizers commented on Millennials' sense of urgency, calling for patience and stressing that the moment is crucial in gauging how much work you have to do for your long-term goals. While the "idealism" in Millennials was described as important in propelling older folks and keeping the energy alive, one community organizer also connected this urgency to the social climate that Millennials grew up with, saying,

> I don't think that Millennials like the word incremental, I think they think that just means we're stalling. They may not be fond of the word pragmatic, because that's just not the environment that they were raised in. They were raised in an environment where everything is almost instantaneous, so why can't it be that way with society too, why can't people change as quickly as I want them to?

She also went on to say that while she was organizing to keep their heads above water in the beginning of her career, and concluded that Millennials inherited a structure that gave them an opportunity for long-term thinking without even knowing it, because they're no longer playing defense. When asked about this shift in organizing during the focus group, a Millennial student organizer agreed that this is a piece that she has taken for granted in her work.

Millennials did not disagree that there was a need to balance both and to prioritize wins that improve everyday lives. One student organizer explained "it's like how to deal with people's day to day needs, because when we don't do that, it leaves out… I think it's very classist actually in a lot of the way it shows up, but like what, how do we simultaneously do the political education so that we're on the same page about a revolution?" Political education, as with the messaging piece with more aged community organizers, was found to be a key component here, by calling for those reforms, bringing those people who want to reform stuff in, and having the right conversations, she continued, "I don't want to be talking about anti-corporation, I want to be talking about Capitalism."

When the above organizer was asked how she responded to those who said that incremental reforms are the best way to get there she groaned and said "I say, 'yes, and…'" This sentiment was displayed in the way that Millennials described the demands of their campaigns. Multiple young organizers mentioned that they balance the two by including both lofty and realistic demands in their work, and keeping an eye on the long-term vision, "but we probably can't do that [at our action] on June 9th. So what are we doing to do instead that isn't?" It emerged that Millennial participants in this study found this tension in their work to be a positive element, and that staying in that tension and discussing it with the organizers and team they are building is important in balancing the two. A few Millennials reflected on their generations inclusion of these lofty demands by noting that it appeared as though their generation was willing to risk more, and another said "it's as if we have nothing to lose."

IV. Efficacy:

The concept of efficacy was a significant theme in both survey and interview responses, and the following data is derived from both sources. Survey questions regarding efficacy were designed to specifically draw out participants' perceptions of their ability to create change. Interview and focus group participants were not asked questions directly about their perceived ability to create social change, but pragmatism, idealism, and visioning all appeared as themes that supported corresponding survey results.

a. Survey Responses

To gather insights on organizers' perceptions of the current direction of organizing, and whether we are currently in what one survey participant called a "movement-moment," they were asked what they thought organizing could accomplish in the next ten years, on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being a lot less than it did in the last ten years, and 10 being a lot more. Their average responses are represented in the chart below, including an average of all non-Millennial responses, and a break down of Millennial student organizers and Millennial community organizers.

Baby Boomers (6)	Gen X (5)	Gen Y (3)	Non-Millennial (14)	Millennials (16)	Millennial Student Organizers (10)	Millennial Community Organizers (6)
6.3	7.6	8.7	7.3	8	8.4	7.2

While Generation Y was the most likely to say that reform was their ultimate goal, over revolution, they were also the most likely to believe that community organizing was going to accomplish a lot more in the next ten years. They explained that the current political climate of passion, excitement, and attention to politics gave them hope, and shows that "our generation

is ready for change." Both Baby Boomers and organizers from Generation X showed neutrality on the question, one saying that "young people also seem fired up – but hey we were when I was in my 20's too." Another agreed that there were some positive signs that organizing will accomplish a lot in the next ten years, but that "I am also rendered sober about the extent of entrenched power and societal ills, such as colonialism that permeates the entire fabric of the U.S." Others saw those positive signs as indications that organizing is building momentum, a few of them citing the same formative moments that Millennials did in their hope for the future. One wrote, "from occupy to Bernie to Black Lives Matter - our movement is manifesting itself in more ways. We just have to capture that space and keep pushing forward."

Only one organizer, a Millennial student organizer, believed that less would take place over the next ten years, scoring this question with a 3, but did not explain their answer. Outside of that organizer, all *student* organizers ranked this question with an 8 or above. A Millennial community organizer who gave this question a neutral score still indicated a belief that a stronger movement is coming, though they were unsure whether it would be in the next ten years, saying "When the sleeping giant awakes, things will move fast, but it's hard to tell when that moment will come." Those Millennials who indicated a strong belief in achieving more in the next ten years than the last ten, explained that "the crisis is accelerating," and again cited Black Lives Matter, Occupy, and Bernie Sanders Millennials as strong sources for the momentum that they see having an impact on what organizing can accomplish, in addition to "new tools, technology, and a new anger and discontent."

In addition to whether or not organizing will accomplish more over the next ten years compared to the last, participants were asked to rate their confidence in organizing to carry out

specific tasks within the next ten years with efficacy scales beginning at 0 (no confidence) to 10 (complete confidence). The tasks for this question were chosen to represent two tasks that work within the electoral system, and two that would be completed outside. The average scores by demographic are below, including an additional average of all non-Millennial answers. The highest scores by generation are shaded in dark grey, and the are lowest shaded in light grey. The dark outlines indicate the highest score within Millennials, after being separated into student and community organizers.

	Baby Boomers (6)	Gen X (5)	Gen Y (3)	Non-Millennial (14)	Millennials (16)	Millennial Student Organizers (10)	Millennial Community Organizers (6)
Gain progressive control of the House and Senate	3.2	4.8	2.7	3.6	4.2	4.3	4
Pass campaign finance reform	2	4	4.3	3.2	5.3	5.8	4.5
Mobilize over one million participants in a National Day of Action	5.5	6.8	5	5.9	7.2	6.7	8
Build enough power on the left to establish the progressive parallel to the Tea Party	3.2	6.4	5.3	5	6.9	6.8	7.2

Participants who were Baby Boomers and Generation Y were found to have the lowest overall collective efficacy, while Millennials had the strongest. All average scores tended to be higher for the tasks that would take place outside of the electoral system, with "gain progressive control of the House and Senate" being the only one with no generation averaging above 5. Millennials were the only generation, on average, to believe that we are likely to pass campaign finance reform, if only by a small margin, and student organizers had slightly higher collective efficacy in tasks that worked within the political system than Millennial community

organizers, and slightly lower when it came to completing tasks that did not involve the electoral system.

While the word "win" was over three times more likely to be used by non-Millennials in the survey, Millennials were much more likely to talk about a vision or that more is possible. They spoke of the strong possibility of an actual left being built, of escalation in scale of their organizing, and of making concrete structural change. A few Millennials indicated that the growing collective efficacy of their generation increases their own, saying "for a long time, people thought that we don't have the power to make political change, and we sometimes still think that, but as a collective, I've seen the power that we bring together," and "once people realize their power, they will be unstoppable."

b. Support from In-Depth Interviews and Focus Group:

A community organizer on the cusp of Generation Y and Generation X noted that her experience in the field gave her a better sense of how to be realistic, saying "one you're in the trenches for a while you get a better perspective of what is possible, and what it takes to make something possible. I think the older generation might be like 'ok, it's going to take these seventeen steps, though, to actually make that happen." A Millennial organizer instead emphasized the vision, though, saying,

> I think the vision piece is huge. Because we don't need to know all of it tactically, of
> what we're going to do, but we can't ever stop ourselves and only think that we can only
> do this, like this much. Um, 'cause so many things like the fight for $15, it took like one
> city to win it, and now it bolsters every other city's movement for $15, and same thing

with like, I mean look at the free education student movement, it took one country to

have the movement, and it bolsters everyone else's movements.

This visioning piece was also echoed in a few Millennials' responses to what they see as

differences between generations, a few of whom mentioned that they see the demands that

older organizers are pushing for being within the realm of the world as it is, and another

mentioning that living in the world as it is versus the world as it should be is another tension in

their work, because "I don't want to live too much in reality and think about what's only

possible, because oppression lets us, tells us to limit ourselves," and that "our minds have been

so colonized to not imagine anything better, so sometimes it feels like with a wider age group

of people, the vision gets smaller, because I feel like well they haven't seen it in their lifetime,

so it seems super impractical."

With a primary focus on the movement, and an understanding of the importance of

short-term wins, many Millennials pointed to their formative experiences as justification for

their visioning and higher collective efficacy, saying that these have made people wake up in a

lot of ways. One student organizer wrapped up how she framed the work by saying, "I mean we

should win stuff right now, and build on those wins to get there, but it's like, the prize is a lot

further down the line in my eyes."

Discussion:

Conclusions:

Revisiting the principal research question, "how does one's generation affect their

approach to organizing," this data demonstrates that while the work may show up similarly, the

collective efficacy of a generation, formative experiences, and socialization frame the work differently.

It appears as though older organizers define "the movement" as long-term work and separate the movement work from the moment, while Millennials tend to include their loftier "Movement" demands in their demands for the moment. Referring to the *MAP Model of Social Change*, defining a movement as "a collective action in which the populace is alerted, educated, and mobilized, sometimes over years and decades," this data suggests that most organizers view the current political climate as being in a "movement," though there is differing opinions on when that movement began. Older organizers, having worked to educate and mobilize their bases for decades to get us ready for the accelerating climate, have been working to build the movement for some time, while Millennials experienced formative events during their coming of age that alerted the populace of these systemic problems, catapulting the movement.

The inclusion of these "lofty" demands may be attributed to their overall higher collective efficacy, and were also attributed by some non-Millennials as being idealistic or unrealistic. With a few Gen Xers and Baby Boomers mentioning that they were more enthusiastic and idealistic in their youth as well, it is unclear whether this is truly because of the young age of Millennials or the arrival of a "movement-moment." What did appear is evidence that Millennials hold more anger at the system itself than the specific policies in the system, as indicated by the oppression focused definitions of "the system," the generation wide sense of disillusionment, and the formative experiences, Occupy, Bernie, and BLM, that all call for structural reform and political revolution.

It seems as though this newly intense anger and focus on systemic injustice on the left nation-wide is what one might call a "moment," though it is precisely what non-Millennials had to fight to include in their long-term work while trying to stay afloat. As one Baby Boomer pointed out, you need a sense of urgency for change in order to engage and mobilize a base, but one may wonder how to move forward when the sense of urgency is about the corrupt system itself. Non-Millennial participants of this study stressed the importance of reforms to get where we need to be to make those deeper structural changes. Now, by no coincidence, we have a generation of young people who have been socialized by the long-term narrative work that non-Millennial organizers fought for, politicized through social media, and who believe our country ready to demand those structural changes. Millennials see one of their roles in the movement being to bring an intersectionality lens to the work, but their focus on worldview is not by accident. This was brought by the generations before them who may have focused on winnability, but fought hard to change the public narrative while making those reforms that changed lives.

Organizers of all generations agreed that policy changes in a broken system are less than perfect, but again, the deeper data here is in the "buts." Non-Millennials who seek revolution were more likely to respond that yes we need structural change, but in the mean time we need to focus on reforms to get there, while Millennials were more likely to say that yes, we need reforms in the now, but they are the means to and end of revolution. It is clear that while the policy changes and reforms of the last fifty years and the hard work by organizers to include long-term work in their organizing got us here. But do they recognize that we are here? And where is here?

Here, to many Millennials, may be time to take the reigns and escalate towards the demands of that revolution, evidenced by their high collective efficacy to escalate and radicalize the left. This optimism is despite many of them agreeing that the centuries old political system has kept things as bad as they've ever been. This is despite an ageist narrative of their generation being entitled, lazy, apathetic, and frequently being told that they are too young to understand the world. This is despite working alongside allies who attribute their idealism to their lack of experience in the field. They feel the tension, welcome it into their work, and push past it, because despite all of that, they make the conscious decision to believe that more is possible.

This data, while only representative of the members of each generation that participated in this study, and not generations as a whole, alongside a recent study that says that current college freshmen are the most likely class to protest in a half-century, appear to support Craig and Maggiotto's theory that mobilization and political participation by means of protest is correlated with high internal efficacy and low external efficacy, in that Millennial participants showed a much higher collective efficacy, while also having a perception of low-responsiveness of the current political system to respond to their demands. Through protest, these organizers are also able to include the lofty demands of the movement, something that is difficult to achieve by working within the political system and focusing on winnability of legislation or ballot initiatives. Referring to Albert Bandura's theory on political efficacy, that it plays a role in personal behavior, and goal setting, a political revolution is only possible if the people believe that it is. In other words, when the masses, or perhaps an entire generation,

believe that more is possible, more will be possible, because their goals and behavior in their

work will reflect this.

While there were certainly a few non-Millennial organizers who saw the current political

momentum taking us in the direction of a revolution and agreed that only a revolution can

bring a more equitable society, there also appeared to be more doubt in it's possibility. There

appeared to be no doubt in by Millennial participants that a revolution was possible, though

one noted that they didn't think it was necessary. Instead, there is an urgency that a few

Millennials expressed can be felt when they are with their peers. It is important to note here,

however, that this research did not uncover a clear vision of what that revolution may look like.

As one organizer from Generation Y questioned after saying that highly effective organizing can

reform government systems, "is this revolution?"

Certainly structural reforms, whether one prefers to call them a revolution or not, are

most likely to come when the goals of the movement become the moment. Those non-

Millennial organizers who noted that in addition to their role in leadership development they

also had a duty to not get in the way may prove to be valuable in the upcoming political

climate. If Howe and Strauss's *The Fourth Turning: An American Prophecy* is a true forecast of

our country's political cycle, then the movement and the moment may very well be about to

collide. The first two steps of their framework of a fourth turning seem to already resonate with

organizers of all generations; first, a catalyst that shifts the mood (the recession), and then a

regeneracy of civic life (Occupy, Bernie, BLM). Decades of difficult yet brave organizing in a

hostile and defensive environment, in which a political revolution was not feasible, may have

cemented the idea that a political revolution is never feasible. This research cannot answer the

question of whether those momentous and rapid changes will take place, but while a revolution may be rare, that doesn't mean they don't and can't happen when the climate is right. Howe and Strauss's advice is to "be seasonal," meaning take advantage of the current unravelling. In the case that a Fourth Turning is as certain as Howe and Strauss assert, being "seasonal" here may involve opening oneself up to the possibility of a "moment" that's bigger than what was previously thought possible, and looks an awful lot like what might also be a long-term movement.

Regardless of escalation, reforms, revolution, or turnings, the combination of the new technological tools, political climate, and socialization suggests that Millennials will play a crucial role in continuing to blaze the trail in organizing for social change. The regeneracy of mass protests on college campuses, and the generation's focus on structural change indicate that in order for the left to effectively seize this moment for the movement, now is the time to invest in Millennials, train them, let them lead the way, and allow them to believe what they believe, on the off chance they're right.

Recommendations for Future Research:

With only a small number of participants from each generation participating in this study seeking qualitative data, further quantitative research, with more participants, using collective and external efficacy scales for different generations of organizers may produce a deeper understanding of how much one's generation affects their efficacy, and a study of both organizers and non-organizers on the topic would offer more insights on how formative experiences have affected generations as a whole. Likewise, it is unclear from this research to what extent the efficacy levels of Millennials can be attributed to the formative experiences of

their generation, and how much can be attributed to their youth. To that end, a long-term

study on generations and youth efficacy would contribute to this understanding. Additionally,

with multiple generations calling for a revolution of the current system, research conducted

with the goal of extracting a common vision for that revolution, or the meaningful reforms that

resemble one, may yield useful results for next steps and demands in the movement.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Approaches to Organizing for Social Change

This survey is being administered to multiple student and community organizers to explore generational approaches and perceptions of organizing for social change. This information will be used in graduate level research through SIT Graduate Institute. Any participant taking the survey will have access to the capstone by contacting me, Carissa Tinker at carissa.tinker@mail.sit.edu or through the SIT library. Please answer the questions as thoughtfully and honestly as possible as this research is not meant to be critical, but rather acknowledge different approaches to organizing. You hold the right to refuse to answer any of the questions in this survey, as your participation is completely voluntary. Individual names will not be disclosed. Due to the anonymity of this data collection, by submitting this form you are consenting to participate in this project, and will not have an opportunity to withdraw consent. Thank you for your time; your response is greatly appreciated.

Thank You,
Carissa Tinker

Demographic Information:

What generation do you identify with?

• Baby Boomer
• Generation X
• Generation Y
• Millennial

Are you a student organizer?

• Yes
• No

In what state do you live?

Approaches to Organizing:

Why and how did you start organizing?

Where did you learn to organize?

Briefly, how would you describe the political climate when you began organizing?

Does that affect the way you organize? If so, how?

What do you get out of organizing?

How has your generation affected your self-interest in organizing?

How would you describe your organizing work in one phrase?

How do you define "the system"?

What is the relationship between your organizing work and "the system"? (Scale 1-10)

1. My job as an organizer is to push for change by working within the current political system
10. My job as an organizer is to build power to directly challenge and work against the system

Please explain your answer:

Which of the following would be most effective to achieve your ultimate goal as an organizer?

• Reforms
• Revolution

Please explain your answer:

In the next ten years, do you think that organizing can accomplish (Scale 1-10)

• 1: A lot less than it did in the last ten years
• 10: A lot more than it did in the last ten years

Please explain your answer:

Please rate your confidence in community organizing to carry out the following tasks within the next ten years: (Scale 0-10, 0=no confidence, 10=complete confidence)

• Gain progressive control of the US House and Senate
• Pass campaign finance reform
• Mobilize over one million participants in a national day of action
• Build enough power on the left to establish the progressive parallel to the Tea Party

What do you think is your generation's role in the current social movement?

If you are not a Millennial, what do you think is the Millennial generation's role in the current social movement?

Is there anything else you would like to share about your approach to organizing?

This research will require further insights through in-depth interviews and a focus group. Are you willing to be contacted to participate in further research?

• Yes
• No

If yes, please follow this link to leave me your contact information on a separate form to ensure that the answers you are submitting in this survey remain anonymous.

Contact information for focus group or in-depth interview:

This form is for those who have participated in the survey Approaches to Organizing for Social Change and are interested in providing further insights through a focus group or in-depth interview. By submitting this form, you agree to be contacted by me, Carissa Tinker, through the information you provide. You may contact me at any time at carissa.tinker@mail.sit.edu. You will be able to withdraw consent and discontinue future participation in this project at any time, as your participation is completely voluntary. Submitting this form does not guarantee that you will be contacted. Thank you, and your contribution to this research is greatly appreciated.

Name:

State:

Are you a student organizer?

Yes
No

Email address:

Phone number: (optional)

Appendix B: Interview and Focus Group Questions

Millennial Student Organizers:

What is your self-interest in student organizing, outside of being a student yourself?

What do you see as differences between generations of organizers?

    What do you think about those differences?

How do you balance your ideals with what is realistic?

What role will your generation play in creating social change?

Non-Millennial Community Organizers:

What is your self-interest in organizing?

What do you see as differences between generations of organizers?

    What do you think about those differences?

Would you prefer reforms or a revolution? Why?

How do you balance your ideals with what is realistic?

What role has your generation played in creating social change?

Focus Group:

How responsive has the system been to your demands?

What level of urgency do you feel in your work?

Appendix C: Letter of Informed Consent

Title: Generational Approaches to Organizing for Social Change

Principal Investigator:

Carissa Tinker
Masters Candidate in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management – SIT Graduate Institute
Brattleboro, VT
Carissa.tinker@mail.sit.edu

Purpose of the Research:
The purpose of this research is to explore generational approaches to organizing for social change. This research seeks to identify these approaches and examine how different generations of organizers perceive organizing to affect our society and the political system. Additionally, it will investigate the social and cultural factors that contribute to generational differences in attitudes, political analysis, and behaviors.

Procedures:
I am asking you to participate in an interview or focus group that will contribute to my work as an organizer, and the completion of my master's degree. You will be asked about your self-interest in organizing and your perceptions of what organizing accomplishes in the current political system. The interview will be part of the documentation turned in for evaluation of this capstone.

Usage Rights:
All information obtained in this study is for the purpose of academic research and to contribute to theory on approaches to community organizing. By participating in this study you are consenting to the disclosure of your organizational affiliation, but your name and identifying title will remain anonymous. Additionally, all audio files of testimonies and transcripts will be destroyed at the end of this study.

Note About Voluntary Nature of Participation:
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw consent from participating in this study at any time up until publication or presentation of this research.

Information About This Study:
At any time, you may ask, and have answered, any questions about this research by contacting the principal investigator listed above. All inquiries will remain confidential.

Participation in This Study:
If you agree to participate in this study, please sign, date, and return this form to me.

_____
Printed Name

_____
Signature   **Date**

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Carissa Tinker

Appendix D: In-Depth Interview Transcription and Coding Examples

Interview Transcription Example: (Taken from Millennial Interview)

I: So what do you say to the people who say that strategically the best way to get change is smaller incremental reforms?

C: (Groans) I say, "yes, and..." I, so I'm actually a believer that, like, we need the lawyers, we need the doctors, and the judges, and the people, we need them all to be like super progressive, like undoubtedly, but we actually need those people who are going to be working "in the system" if you will, or in the institutions, and like sure, let's make this criminal justice system as progressive as possible, and... dismantle it, and I don't know if that, you know, that's where I am right now with my ideology, and it's constantly developing. I don't know if that's possible, because if you had all progressives in the system, it'd be harder to dismantle it then, but like, we do, yes, we need reform, because like people's day to day lives matter, and we're not going to dismiss an entire generation of people living on this planet, because we're only thinking about the future, and like, we do need a minimum wage increase, and also to fight for, like, you know, the, crap, what is it called, when they get a guaranteed income, like we need these much more radical things simultaneously, so it's like how to deal with people's day to day needs, because when we don't do that, it leaves out... I think it's very classist actually in a lot of the ways it shows up, but like what, like how do we simultaneously do the political education so that we're all on the same page about a revolution, um, so that's really what it comes down to, is sometimes, like, lazy political education, I don't want to be talking about anti-corporation, I want to be talking about Capitalism, and bringing those people who want to reform stuff in, because that's where we all start. It's really really hard to wake up every day and be like, this entire, all the systems under which we live should not exist in their current forms. This country was founded on slavery, this country was founded on the exploitation of people and labor. It's really hard to wake up with that every day, it makes complete sense that everyone's like "I wanna change the system, but like also have the system," so like, how do we call those people in, and continue doing the work of building those relationships, and do the education of like, "aaaand overthrow capitalism," um, yeah, that's a journey for all of us. Like, I used to be a reformer, or reformist, whatever, and I think that I fight that battle myself sometimes, but like, yeah, we have to like hold both, like we need paid sick time to pass in Minneapolis like it did today, and we need to completely overthrow our healthcare system, because healthcare shouldn't just matter when you're sick and you go to a hospital, how do we actually care about people's well being. There's all of that?

Coding Example: (Taken from non-Millennial Interviews)

Change Happens Slowly:
You can't, you sort of can't have one without the other, so, and I think that's where real organizing happens, is recognizing, this is a moment in time, where, if we, if we organize, if we organize whoever, we can, we can move the ball down the field
whatever the messaging is, I think that tenants of organizing run through either way, your job is to engage and empower folks to, to build capacity, and political, so you can have the political power so you can do something down the road, and no matter what the message is that an organizer is delivering, the way that they organize people, and I think it's the same. It's just a different message.

some things you can't change quickly, regardless of technology in the new age of how we do things, and I think in Social Justice, I think, you know, that time moves a little slower, I don't, I don't think that Millennials like the word incremental, I think they think that just means we're stalling. They may not be fond of the word pragmatic, because that's just not the environment that they were raised in

They were raised in an environment where everything is almost instantaneous, so why can't it be that way with society too, why can't people change as quickly as I want them to, so it doesn't surprise me that they have no, you know, their view of the moment is like yeah whatever, it's the moment, who cares about the moment, we've gotta look long term down the road, but the moment's really important, because it, it allows you to take the temperature of where society is at, and it allows you to gauge how much work you have to do.

This would have saved me $20,000 worth of debt, I would have gone to the doctor a lot sooner, because I would have had access to health insurance, so in my mind, even though it's still operating under a super broken system, it's just something that like would have saved me, so therefore I think it's worth fighting for, um, because I can see how it's going to save other people, too. So I think it does, like, it makes me think more about, like, incremental change, it is, like, sometimes the best that we can get, and if it's going to make a huge difference, for a huge number of people, and while I think we should never give up the fight for the bigger, better, stuff, that like, we should get what we can get when we can get it?

So if we're using healthcare as an example, I think, obviously some sort of government run everybody in, nobody out system is um, the vision that I like, hold on to, and a lot of people call that single payer, I think single payer is one way of doing it, and I don't know that that's the right way, I also, it could be. There's so many different like variations of that out there, like every country has a different variation of it, so for me it's like, ok, so in the mean time, we've got the ACA, and I'm going to fight to make sure that that stays in place and doesn't get weakened, I'm also going to fight to make sure it is fully implemented, because we are nowhere near ready to get a full game changing system in place if we can't even get this mediocre thing that everybody on both sides hates, you know there's 19 states that still haven't covered people with Medicaid, so for me, when folks are like "single payer or nothing" I'm like "we can't even get this passed."

We need to get better people into government, we need to get hearts and minds changed about poor people in order to get this bigger thing done, so for me, it's like alright, we've got some incremental change that 90% of Americans now have health insurance, so let's keep fighting to to make that the best that we can get it for this thing that's already passed, and lets get better people elected, and let's keep the spotlight on

keeping the long-term like we want a better overall healthcare system in place just means that we have to push toward making a world that is going to be more ready for that to happen. And because we work in a multi issue organization we get to do that, 'cause we get to work on all the other things that are going to impact poor people in the mean time, and when another moment opens up, we can say like alright let's fix this whole system, now.

I think that the thing that does change is that once you're in the trenches for a while you get a better perspective of what is possible, and what it takes to make something possible.

I think the older generation might be like ok it's going to take these 17 steps, though, to actually make that happen. I think they just have a deeper understanding of how change actually happens, and how much work it actually takes.

I think that people in the older generation of organizing too, have also suffered more losses, so they have that little bit of like, some of that, hope has just been like, made a little more realistic, I think.

Appendix E: Survey Result and Coding Examples

Survey Result Example:

Which of the following generations do you most closely identify with?
Millennial
Are you a student organizer?
Yes
In what state do you live?
Illinois
Why and how did you start organizing?
I first discovered organizing when I came to college, looking for something to get involved in after I start to read books related to politics that made me angry in high school. A friend recommended I check out a student organization that I then ended up joining and eventually leading.
Where did you learn to organize?
In college. I was mentored by older leaders on campus and a few organizers.
Briefly, how would you describe the political climate when you began organizing?
There was some pretty widespread dissatisfaction but not a lot of root cause, strategic thinking. It was right around Occupy.
Does that affect the way you organize? If so, how?
I think seeing Occupy happen made me feel like people wanted change and something bigger might be possible. The financial collapse of a few years prior also hit while I was becoming more politically conscious, and there was a feeling that the inequality was out of control and there could be an opening for change. Basically I think it gave me hope for something big.
What do you get out of organizing?
On its best days, I get to feel deep interpersonal connection and a sense of accomplishment. And the exhilaration and challenge of doing things that scare me most days, and growing and succeeding through that process. And it's one of the only ways I can actually imagine my life having significant meaning -- working to transform a system that literally kills and hurts people everyday. As an atheist, improving the way people live their lives in the here and now feels extra salient.
How has your generation affected your self-interest in organizing?
I'm a little confused by what this question is trying to get at, but to take a stab at it: I think the historical factors/political climate that I described above is the main way my generation/age has impacted my self interest in organizing. I don't have student debt, which I think would be a common answer for millennials.
How would you describe your organizing work in one phrase?
Fucking hard
How would you describe your organizing work in one phrase?
Fucking hard
How do you define "the system"?
Capitalism. Establishment neoliberal politics. etc.

What is the relationship between your organizing work and "the system"? (Scale 1-10)
8
Please explain your answer:
I think we have to work within the systems sometimes to win and effectively build power in the world as it is. But if we're not transforming the system itself, our work is ultimately of little value.
Which of the following would be most effective to achieve your ultimate goal as an organizer?
Revolution
Please explain your answer:
You need both, especially if the reforms are stepping stone reforms that open up new policies for change. Depending on the context, revolution might be a strong word, but I think we need it to create an actually just society. Which I believe is really what the goal should be.
In the next ten years, do you think that organizing can accomplish, (scale 1-10)
9
Please explain your answer:
People have woken up in a lot of ways. There's clearly some kind of politically opening right now, and a lot of people are getting organized in new ways (BLM, post-Occupy, Bernie, etc.). People are thinking about what it really means to contest for power. This is the stuff that leads to change.
Please rate your confidence in community organizing to carry out the following tasks within the next ten years, (Scale 0-10, 0=no confidence, 10=complete confidence) [Gain progressive control of the US House and Senate]
2
Please rate your confidence in community organizing to carry out the following tasks within the next ten years, (Scale 0-10, 0=no confidence, 10=complete confidence) [Pass campaign finance reform]
2
Please rate your confidence in community organizing to carry out the following tasks within the next ten years, (Scale 0-10, 0=no confidence, 10=complete confidence) [Mobilize over one million participants in a national day of action]
3
Please rate your confidence in community organizing to carry out the following tasks within the next ten years, (Scale 0-10, 0=no confidence, 10=complete confidence) [Build enough power on the left to establish the progressive parallel to the Tea Party]
4
What do you think is your generation's role in the current social movement?
Learn, develop new shit, lead
If you are not a Millennial, what do you think is the Millennial generation's role in the current social movement?
Is there anything else you would like to share about your approach to organizing?

This research will require further insights through in-depth interviews and a focus group. Are you willing to be contacted to participate in further research?
Yes

Survey Coding Example by Question: (Taken from non-Millennial responses)

Please explain your answer [to "Which of the following would be most effective to achieve your ultimate goal as an organizer?"]:
Not in Opposition:
It's a false choice as I don't believe these are mutually exclusive and both are necessary to move the ball
Also, not in opposition. You start with stepping stone reforms in order to win a structural transformation. I still believe in the revolution, but I think it may take a few more decades.
Both:
True revolutions happen very infrequently. Most change does come in the shape of reforms, election victories, or favorable court decisions. An organizer or community organization betrays itself if it ever confuses its ultimate goals with political expediency. But measures that bring a society closer to true environmental sustainability, inclusiveness of all people, elimination of poverty, etc. are to be celebrated, not scorned.
And, until we get to the revolution, it's all about reforms. I strongly believe in victories along the way. I think you can always have combination of both- movement building and policy change/reforms- as part of your organizing strategy.
Maybe it's because the scope of issues I work on and care about is so broad, but I don't actually think I can choose between the two. There are some campaigns and systems that need reform, and there are some that require starting from scratch.
Reform:
True revolutions happen very infrequently. Most change does come in the shape of reforms, election victories, or favorable court decisions. An organizer or community organization betrays itself if it ever confuses its ultimate goals with political expediency. But measures that bring a society closer to true environmental sustainability, inclusiveness of all people, elimination of poverty, etc. are to be celebrated, not scorned.
I lack confidence in a common vision of the revolution
I believe that highly effective organizing can reform governmental systems.
Most great developments in human history (democracy, single payer healthcare, social safety nets) have come as the result of reforms, not revolutions.
Revolution:
We need to start over
The middle class in the US is destroyed. The global race to the bottom is devastating working people. Inequality is unsustainable (67 families own wealth equal to 3.5 billion) The planet is melting. Democracy has been replaced with oligarchy because of that economic inequality and money in politics. That is not a reformable situation. Meaningful solutions would be more of a revolution than a set of reforms. And to truly free human beings and create equality will eventually require an actual revolution -one that ends capitalism altogether, creates a classless society and puts human needs and freedom over profit and property.
It will ultimately take a revolution to get to a more equitable society.

the political revolution that Bernie talks about - that's what we do at Iowa CCI and have been doing for years!

But doubt:

True revolutions happen very infrequently. Most change does come in the shape of reforms, election victories, or favorable court decisions. An organizer or community organization betrays itself if it ever confuses its ultimate goals with political expediency. But measures that bring a society closer to true environmental sustainability, inclusiveness of all people, elimination of poverty, etc. are to be celebrated, not scorned.
I lack confidence in a common vision of the revolution

Survey Coding Example by Theme: (Taken from Millennial Responses)

Anger
I first discovered organizing when I came to college, looking for something to get involved in after I start to read books related to politics that made me angry in high school
Organizing makes me feel like I'm doing something to combat the things that make me angry
Apathy
I think I and others are and will be able to use the vast political unrest in this country to swing "apathetic" people into activism.
I want to rid the world of the "apathetic" and "lazy" connotation my generation has been dealt.
I believe that the young people today are not apathetic, they just need a rallying cry and something to believe in.
Continued platitudes and apathy in the face of intense crisis. On my campus, a stupid intellectualism that saw itself as above political struggle.
Apathetic. Many people don't even want to talk politics let alone work against the issues in our community. The climate seems to be changing and I want to catalyze that change
Urgency
working to transform a system that literally kills and hurts people everyday. As an atheist, improving the way people live their lives in the here and now feels extra salient.
We don't have time to negotiate. We have to act up and be disruptive to corporations and the top 1%.
We are growing up in vastly different environment than our parents, and our world is changing for the worse, and if we don't do something, we're going to have to continue to live in this world.
We are the future, if we don't seize our future and make sure it works for us, there is no future.
The potential for great things to be done is absolutely there. It depends on the political momentum that can be built up in the coming months. This is a pivotal epoch in the American political arena.
Possibilities
High:
I think seeing Occupy happen made me feel like people wanted change and something bigger might be possible. The financial collapse of a few years prior also hit while I was becoming more politically conscious, and there was a feeling that the inequality was out of control and there could be an opening for change. Basically I think it gave me hope for something big.

People have woken up in a lot of ways. There's clearly some kind of politically opening right now, and a lot of people are getting organized in new ways (BLM, post-Occupy, Bernie, etc.). People are thinking about what it really means to contest for power. This is the stuff that leads to change.

Once people realize their power, they will be unstoppable.

For a long time, people thought that we don't have the power to make political change, and we sometimes still think that, but as a collective, I've seen the power that we bring together and I truly think that organizing people works. We can look to Bernie and his grassroots campaign as an example.

The crisis is accelerating. The last economic collapse was not effectively seized by an organized left, but we're moving and working so that we'll use the impending economic crisis to establish widespread change.

We are a massive base--an already existing base thanks to recent politicization by things like the Bernie campaign, but also a much larger potential base.

we're already seeing the next generation coming up with greater willingness to demand more. I think our role and the role of the generation younger than I am is not to compromise, is to demand what we need, to build our organizing until we're strong enough to make a revolution reality. No more breadcrumbs.

We have begun to change the political landscape, we have changed the conversation to include our Narrative... the more we build the stronger our ability to accomplish change.

New tools, technology, and a new anger and discontent are all out there. Organizing is working and I believe it will only get stronger.

The climate seems to be changing and I want to catalyze that change.

The potential for great things to be done is absolutely there. It depends on the political momentum that can be built up in the coming months. This is a pivotal epoch in the American political arena.

Kind of in that a lot of people are really pissed off about the economy, but I think the movement moment that came up around Black Lives Matter affected how I organize a lot more...I think it's making me realize just how many students are looking for a way to get involved, and feel confident that I can provide that way

Occupy, BLM, Bernie Sanders have built us so much momentum, I think exponentially more people want to be involved with every new movement-moment possibility, and so I think we can keep winning even more and more

Medium:

Ppl are fed up with the establishment ... Young ppl are stepping up in exciting ways... There is still a great deal of fear, apathy and sense of hopelessness

Many issues are not as cut and dry as they were in the past. Microagressions, long term systemic oppression, etc is harder to identify even though it is as just as important as 8 hour work days and other organizing victories.

I think I and others are and will be able to use the vast political unrest in this country to swing "apathetic" people into activism.

When the sleeping giant awakes, things will move fast, but it's hard to tell when that moment will come.

It makes me hungry to seize movement moments and try to turn them into lasting political infrastructure. It makes me believe in huge changes. It gives me hope that our country is changing, even if it's slow.