Article

Climate Justice Movement Building: Values and Cultures of Creation in Santa Barbara, California

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Abstract: This article analyzes how young people in the climate justice movement cultivate a prefigurative culture centered on justice as a response to the threat of climate change. Employing grounded theory and drawing on data from in-depth interviews with 29 youth activists and participant observation in Santa Barbara County, California, the birthplace of both the environmental movement and offshore oil drilling, I argue that four key values—relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community—enable movement building, a stated goal of the climate justice movement. These values emerge from interviewees' words and practices. Drawing on John Foran's (2014) notion of political cultures of creation, I conceptualize these values and the practices that embody them as constituting a "climate justice culture of creation" that shapes and is shaped by ideas, experiences, social relations, and the reality of a changing atmosphere. These values, and movement building, are about creating alternative futures—cultures that are not dependent on inequality and fossil fuels.

Keywords: climate justice; social movements; youth; grassroots activism; political cultures; California

1. Introduction

> "I am optimistic about our generation specifically...we've been criticized a lot...but I think those of us that do care, take that, and want to do something with it. I think we realize that we were handed a very tough situation to work with...you know we're at a tipping point, of course there's been many tipping points throughout history, but this one specifically...we can either do something or not, and depending on how we treat it, is going to determine the fate of the human race, to put it lightly [author and Michael laugh]...I'm hopeful...there are so many people around the world working on every different issue. We have a very uphill battle, but I think an achievable one."—Michael Fanelli, youth climate justice activist.

Echoing environmental justice messages of the early nineties (Principles of Environmental Justice 1991), the climate justice movement and its youth activists contend that we cannot achieve social justice without a livable planet, and we cannot save the planet—our home—and ourselves, without support from a broad-based coalition of social movements. They are grappling with a crisis generated from unsustainable social-environmental interactions, and have come to the conclusion, communicated in the slogan for the 2014 People's Climate March, that "to change everything, we need everyone" (https://peoplesclimate.org/our-movement/).

Many sectors in the climate justice movement are guided by the belief that climate justice requires structural change, in particular, an end to capitalism (Bond 2014; della Porta and Parks 2014; Klein 2014). This viewpoint has led to actions challenging policy at local, state, and global levels, actions that are building in number and momentum. Outcomes considered successful by the movement include the 2015 defeat of the Keystone XL Pipeline (which the current President Trump has failed to overturn) and,

as of 2019, the divestment of nearly eight trillion dollars from fossil fuels (Fossil Free 2019). Yet, part of changing structure is changing culture—-the "webs of significance" in which people are suspended and which they spin (Geertz 1973), their "lived experience" (Williams 1960). Movement building is a core strategy for changing culture, an *outcome* of social movement actions (Juris et al. 2014) like the 400,000-person September 2014 People's Climate March.

Today's movements prioritize movement building as a core component of their work to change the world. A large network in the climate justice movement, 350.org[1] explains: "350.org is building a global climate movement that can hold our leaders accountable to science and justice" (https://350.org/about/). In 2016, The Black Lives Matter Network website read, "We are working to (re)build the Black liberation movement"; in February 2019, it reads "We must ensure we are building a movement that brings all of us to the front" (https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/). These movements are often sparked and led by youth organizers, people who will live with climate crisis our entire lives.[2] They advocate revolution in culture, revolution in values, and call for system change, a way of organizing society that does not destroy our home and kill its members. They are grounded in a long history of work for social justice, whose important lessons Martin Luther King Jr. summarized nearly fifty years ago in "Beyond Vietnam" (King 1967):

> We as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of *values*. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented society" to a "person-oriented society." When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights, are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered. (my emphasis)

Today, capitalism has created the wildcard of climate change to exacerbate the crises King identified (see Clark and York 2005; Foster et al. 2010; Klein 2014). To counteract the climate crisis and envision a different future, what values do climate justice activists espouse and how do they embody these? How, in other words, are they building movements?

Based on ethnographic participatory research and in-depth interviews and drawing on Foran (2014) notion of political cultures of creation (PCOC), I argue that four key values—relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community—enable movement building by shaping a particular PCOC—a climate justice culture of creation—that is not dependent on inequality and fossil fuels. These values are grounded in interviewee's words and practices. To situate my analysis within a broader context, I link Foran's (Foran 2014; Reed and Foran 2002) model for analyzing the emergence of movements for radical social change to social movement theory and the environment. My goal is twofold. I offer an in-depth empirical examination of the climate justice movement to highlight practices that can help activists and organizations build broad-based inclusive movements. Secondly, I advocate holistic conceptualizations of culture in social movements in the context of climate change, arguably the most urgent crisis social movements face. I aim to push scholars and activists to theorize further the configurations of values and practices that build powerful movements capable of stabilizing the climate, and to offer hopeful examples and useful tools for movement builders, what Bevington and Dixon (2005) call "movement-relevant theory" (see also Flacks 2004).

In the following section, I situate scholarship on social movements and culture within the broader framework of political cultures of creation.

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[1] While 350.org has not always been focused on justice, the organization has worked with coalitions that have made intentional efforts to center justice within the climate movement in recent years. The 2014 People's Climate March placed youth of color at the front of the march. National days of action since then have been titled events for "Climate, Jobs, and Justice." At the 2018 United Nations Climate Summit, which I attended, 350.org organized a variety of justice-oriented events focused on antifracking movements, divestment, youth, and the plight of small island nations. They are well known for coordinating global days of action in which people from literally all over the world participate.

[2] I consider myself part of this group.

2. Theoretical Framework

A number of scholars have illuminated much about how social movements engage with culture. Social movements employ frames, or "building blocks of a discourse" (Steger and Milicevic 2014, p. 11) that describe what it is that is going on (Goffman 1974, p. 25; Snow 2004; Snow et al. 1986). They construct collective identities, or the glue that connects individuals cognitively, emotionally, and morally to a community (Polletta and Jasper 2001; Taylor and Whittier 1992). They draw on emotion to mobilize and sustain supporters, strategize, and affect change (Gould 2009; Jasper 2011). Yet, as Polletta (2006) asserts, even scholars of social movements and culture have treated culture narrowly: "more as furthering people's interest than as constituting them; more as people's explicitly normative commitments than as their practical assumptions" (p. 6). In particular, scholars of culture in movements have overemphasized frames (Johnston 2009); an overemphasis on variables in general, with efforts to "pit them against one another," is something that has characterized social movement studies as a whole (Bevington and Dixon 2005). In contrast, political cultures of creation (PCOC) (Foran 2014) is a concept that recognizes how culture is formed from the complex interactions of many factors. It implicitly knits together many concepts and insights from social movement studies. I bring PCOC into conversation with social movement studies by highlighting these links and arguing for its utility as a framework for analyzing movement building.

Developed in the study of revolutions, PCOC[3] argues that social change emerges through the creation of revolutionary political cultures that tend to be egalitarian, horizontally organized, invested in deep democracy, and prefigurative—working in ways that reflect the world activists want to create (see Boggs 1977–78; Breines 1982; Polletta 2002).[4] Ideologies, idioms, lived experience, networks, and emotions form these cultures (Foran 2014); these factors are analogous to concepts used in social movement studies. Ideology, idioms, and lived experience are all components of collective identity. Idioms and frames have much in common. Social movement scholars recognized the importance of organizational and social networks for social movement mobilization decades ago (Snow et al. 1980) and offer multiple concepts that resonate with the values I highlight in this paper. For example, networks are key for movement building (Juris et al. 2014) and work through relationships (della Porta 2009) which build and transmit human capital among activists to create what Van Dyke and Dixon (2013) call "activist capital." The latter provides the skills or "developmental benefits" (Polletta 2002) necessary to empower individuals for lifelong activism (Van Dyke and Dixon 2013). The other core component of PCOC, emotions, are critical causal mechanisms in all aspects of culture related to social movements—frames, identities, narratives, and relationships—yet rarely included in analysis of these topics (Jasper 2011).

By recognizing the complexity of culture in social movements, PCOC can bring concepts into relation with each other. Other scholars have alluded to this complexity. For example, following Wuthnow (1989) and Rochon (1998), Taylor (2013) advocates thinking "of social movements as discursive communities held together not only by common action and bonds of solidarity but also by identities, symbols, shared identity discourse, and practices of everyday life that attribute participants' experiences to particular forms of social injustice" (p. 43). Eyerman and Jamison (1991) have defined social movements as "moments of collective creation that provide societies with ideas, identities, and even ideals" (p. 4); they create meaning or cognitive space for new kinds of ideas and relationships to develop (p. 60). As Fantasia (1988) puts it, "cultures of solidarity," can emerge from "actions, organizational capabilities, institutional arrangements, and the values that arise within them" (p. 11). Armstrong and Bernstein (2008) propose the multi-institutional politics perspective,

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3   See Reed and Foran (2002, p. 338) note 2 for the lineage of the concept.
4   Breines (1982) notes that prefigurative politics can mean building community, something she saw in the case of the new left. Building community meant creating a "sense of wholeness and communication in social relations" and "the effort to create non-capitalist and communitarian institutions that embodied such relationships, for example counter-institutions" (p. 7).

which centers culture, rejects the binary of instrumental and expressive strategies, and situates power relations, targets, and outcomes in relation to many overlapping and nested institutions or "fields" (Crossley 2002), including the state and culture. This approach focuses on strategy, rather than opportunity, and underlines how social movements are important for what they reveal about the nature of domination in society. The value of PCOC is that it incorporates insights like these into a framework that makes explicit that each element complexly "configures" (Bhavnani and Bywater 2009) the others and the whole—the political cultures at the heart of a movement. Recognizing this complexity provides a more holistic understanding of movements and a sharper understanding of their components. Advocating for a return to Goffman (1974) original work on framing, Miethe (2009), for example, calls for more attention to why and how frames are formed. Attention to how frames are situated in particular PCOCs would facilitate answers to both questions.

The segment of the climate justice movement that I engage with in this research is creating a particular PCOC, what I call a "climate justice culture of creation" (CJCOC). CJCOC builds on PCOC in two ways. First, by grounding the analysis of a PCOC in the values and practices of activists themselves, CJCOC centers activists' own theories. This deepens the concept's capacity to foreground activists' agency and produce "movement-relevant theory"—theory that critically engages with the dialogues and questions that concern movements themselves (Bevington and Dixon 2005). Secondly, I employ CJOC to understand the process of movement building. In so doing, I stress the complex multi-way interactions of values, idioms, ideologies, networks, lived experience, and emotions. While Juris et al. (2014) examine and highlight the importance of movement building as an outcome, which they define as "the creation of movement infrastructures required for sustained organizing and mobilization" (p. 329), I examine the process of movement building—how activists strive to create these infrastructures. I also argue for thinking of movement building as important beyond movements. In this research, climate justice activists engage in movement building to not only enable future mobilization, but more importantly, to create the world they want to live in. Activists see movement building—creating a political culture capable of sustaining, nourishing, and growing the capacity of people to transform their experience, ideas, and relationships into action for social change, and new ways of living—as central in addressing the crisis of climate change and social injustice.

This article offers an example of how to analyze movement culture—movements' own theories embodied in their values and practices—in a holistic way. I suggest that youth activists of the climate justice movement in Santa Barbara are responding to climate change by cultivating values, embodied in practices, to build their movement. These values are integral to what I call a "climate justice culture of creation," a particular PCOC, that, like others, is infused by ideology, idioms, relationships, experience, and emotions. All of these components are profoundly shaped by climate change. The climate crisis objectively links all social movements and the goals they seek. Movements and activists are increasingly aware of this reality and changing what they do and how they work and relate to each other in response. The climate justice movement is most explicit in this regard (see also, however, explicit recognition of climate change in the BLM platform (The Movement for Black Lives 2016)) and therefore, its movement building strategies may prove useful to other movements.

3. Context and Methods

Studies of the climate justice movement, an emerging and needed area of environmental sociology (Harlan et al. 2015; Pellow and Brehm 2013), typically focus on how the movement comes together at the yearly United Nations climate summits (e.g., Dietz and Garrelts 2014; Foran and Widick 2013). Yet, action at the national, state, and community or grassroots level, especially in the US—the largest historical contributor to climate change (World Resources Institute 2014), number one producer of fossil fuels (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2016b, 2018), and a consistent obstacle to climate policy (e.g., Borger 2001)—is necessary for creating the political will for ambitious treaties at the global level. Therefore, my research focuses on grassroots elements of the climate justice movement in the US.

This article is based on in-depth interviews with 29 youth climate justice activists in Santa Barbara County, California (see Appendix A for interviewee characteristics) and participant observation with activist groups. These youth activists organize in a state that is simultaneously a leader in climate policy (e.g., Megerian 2015) and the third largest producer of crude oil in the country, historically and during my fieldwork (U.S. Energy Information Administration 2014, 2016a).[5] All interviewees were either attending college, or recent alumni. Some were affiliated with Santa Barbara City College and the majority were affiliated with the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), the greenest public university in the United States, according to Princeton Review in 2015 (Princeton Review 2015). UCSB bills itself as a leader in sustainability and a "center for environmental movements since the 1969 oil spill" (UCSB Sustainability 2019). Indeed, mirroring the strength of community environmental nonprofits founded in the 1970s, UCSB has one of the oldest and largest environmental studies programs in the country and a robust student environmental activist community. Since 1992, students have organized the Environmental Affairs Board (EAB), a group with an officer team of about twenty people, wielding an annual budget of approximately $30,000. The university has forty student groups related to sustainability, who come together as ECOalition. While most interviewees were part of student organizing, most had also engaged in activism off campus with community groups such as 350 Santa Barbara and a county-wide effort to ban fracking that was led by a coalition of community organizations. In fact, 350 Santa Barbara was co-founded by one of the interviewees. Two other interviewees were core leaders in the organization during my fieldwork.

With one exception, interviewees were in their teens or twenties, without children of their own, and, in the majority of cases, recently or currently involved in organizing. While all interviewees espoused climate justice perspectives, not all called themselves "climate justice activists." Many self-identified as environmentalists and social justice activists. All had organized against extreme energy extraction, which in this article includes hydraulic fracturing or fracking, tar sands, and transportation of oil by rail, and had engaged in a number of different tactics and campaigns, including protest, lobbying, awareness raising, and education. These occurred in the context of electoral politics, divestment at the local and statewide university level, community engagement, and environmental sustainability efforts related to water use, food, and the beyond-human environment. In particular, they had protested the Keystone XL pipeline, campaigned for fossil fuel divestment, participated in California anti-fracking and climate marches, and worked on Measure P, a 2014 ballot measure to ban extreme oil extraction in Santa Barbara County. In parallel to the corporate influence that climate justice activists fight at the United Nations climate summits (see Goodman 2013), Measure P activists worked against 7.6 million dollars that Chevron and Aera Energy injected into the county election. In addition to the environmental groups interviewees organized, a number also participated in an array of social/cultural focused groups, like the Black Student Union, Student Commission on Racial Equality, Students Against Sweatshops, Students for Justice in Palestine, LGBTQ organizing, white ally groups, and women's support groups. For many, their involvement sprung from learning about environmental and social problems in high school and college classes and activist groups.

As a local youth climate justice organizer and graduate student at UC Santa Barbara, I had organized alongside or exchanged emails with many climate justice activists in the Santa Barbara community prior to beginning this research project (see Figure 1). Thus, I recruited interviewees through personal connections. While close relationships with research participants can make critique of movements more challenging, I find that the depth of access and trust with activists provides a level of insight that is extremely valuable. I gain a level of understanding in interviews with fellow activists that is more difficult to reach with strangers. Furthermore, scholarship that strives to produce movement-relevant theory can do so effectively by highlighting best practices that can be scaled

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[5] The climate justice movement leverages this contradiction to target governor Jerry Brown in a video series called What the Frack, Jerry Brown?! (http://whatthefrackjerrybrown.com/).

and shared with other organizations. I employed snowball sampling in a couple of cases and in all, pursued maximum variation sampling (Lofland et al. 2006) to interview youth at all levels of activist involvement (from leaders and trained organizers, to people who had been members of a group for only a short time) and of varied racial and gender identities. To gain diverse insights on how to create a more inclusive climate justice movement, I oversampled activists of color, who are underrepresented in local and national movements for climate justice, and especially in adult organizations (Taylor 2014). Fifty-two percent of interviewees identified as women or female, 41% identified with multiple racial and ethnic identities, and 31% identified as persons of color.

Figure 1. Youth activist (left) and author collect signatures for Measure P at University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB), April 2014.[6].

I conducted interviews as "conversations with a purpose" (Burgess 1984). Ranging from fifty-two minutes to nearly two hours, and averaging just over one hour, these semi-structured interviews focused on six main agenda items for the "conversation." Agenda items included: work as an activist, pathways into activism, balancing life and activism, reflections on gender and women in activist groups, reflections on diversity and inclusivity in activist groups, and hopes for the future. After transcribing interviews,[7] I coded them using ATLAS.ti software. Using grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), I identified emergent themes in the data and used those to develop this analysis. Data from participant

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[6]   Unless otherwise noted, all photographs were taken by the author.

[7]   In this research, I wanted to learn how to do collaborative research and dissemination with research subjects—to move from research on, toward research with and for communities (Koster et al. 2012). Many of the youth interviewees in this research are budding scholars in a variety of disciplines. I offered them the opportunity to engage with this research in a variety of ways (interviewing, transcribing, coding, reviewing the literature, analyzing, writing, and disseminating). One interviewee, Amanda Lusk, chose to transcribe two interviews (not her own) as a way to gain research experience. A few provided feedback on the analysis in this article.

observation includes experiences as a core member of 350 Santa Barbara[8] from June 2013 through 2016, attendance at Students Against Fracking events and meetings during fall 2014, and observation of UCSB Fossil Free meetings in spring 2016. This type of engagement is critical to building movement-relevant theory (Bevington and Dixon 2005). The majority of interviewees chose to use their real names, a research procedure approved by the Human Subjects Committee at UCSB.[9] The use of the real names of movement participants in academic research supports movement building by enabling readers to learn more about and connect with interviewees and their work online. It also gives activists credit for their ideas.

4. A Climate Justice Culture of Creation

Youth climate justice activists in Santa Barbara County engage in movement building by expressing and enacting particular values. These come together to create a specific climate justice culture of creation (CJCOC) with potential for growing the intersectional movement climate justice organizers desire. This culture is just one within the climate justice movement community, with components particular to its local context and participants. Yet, based on the relevance of many of these values in other accounts of the movement (della Porta and Parks 2014; Foran et al. 2017) and evidence for shared values in the large network 350.org (350.org 2015; 350.org Staff 2016; Smith 2014),[10] the CJCOC I describe likely resonates among many parts of the movement.

In this section, I describe the core values of the specific CJCOC among youth in Santa Barbara as well as how activists put these into practice. I highlight these values as key components of an effective social movement culture. They enable frames and senses of collective identity that appeal to a broader base of people than have historically been part of the climate movement, which is critical to the movement's ability to effect social, cultural, legal, and political change. This is the paper's contribution to movements, particularly movements and organizations that have yet to center justice. The paper's contribution to scholarship is twofold. First, it offers an in-depth analysis of how particular individuals and organizations work in the climate justice movement. Second, it uplifts the political culture of creation (Foran 2014) idea as a useful theoretical framework for examining movement building. As evidenced by interviews and observations, social movement culture is complex and grounded in the lived experience of participants. I argue that political cultures of creation encourages a more dynamic examination of this complexity than traditional social movement concepts, which tend to be perceived as working separately and unequally to shape movements.

Based on themes from interviews as well as my observations, I organize the values that youth prioritize into four categories: relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community.

4.1. Relationships

Sitting across from me at a table under a brilliantly blooming red coral tree in May 2015, Madeline Stano, attorney for Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, said, "if we're really trying to build climate justice...that includes how we interact and are in our personal lives." Many interviewees stressed the value of relationships, not only because relationships of trust and friendship build strong and effective movements, but also, because they are key to the creation component of youths' climate

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[8]   Rallying around the goal of mobilizing people to reduce the concentration of carbon in earth's atmosphere to the safe level of 350 parts per million (ppm), 350 Santa Barbara is a local chapter of the global activist group 350.org.

[9]   With approval by the Human Subjects Committee at UC Santa Barbara, interviewees signed consent forms in which they decided whether to use their names or to choose a pseudonym. The majority are public with their activism and chose to use their real names. Those who chose pseudonyms chose to use just one name. I ensured that those who chose pseudonyms cannot be identified because of their affiliation with the research setting.

[10]   As a participant, I attended the 2015 350.org training for California group leaders and the 2018 Minnesota 350 "Making Organizing Intersectional and Inclusive" workshop. At both events, I saw many of the same values and practices that I document among youth activists in this paper.

justice culture. Relationships of respect and mutual support are foundational to the world they want to live in.

Fossil Free UCSB, and one of their core organizers, Theo Lequesne, learned the importance of relationships through experience. From the United Kingdom, Theo had organized in his first fossil fuel divestment campaign at the University of Warwick. There, his student group had succeeded in passing, with 75% of the student vote, a referendum on divestment motion. Since coming to UCSB for his master's degree, Theo had struggled to retain members in UCSB's Fossil Free campaign. To strengthen their group, UCSB Fossil Free sought guidance from Emily Williams, then California Student Sustainability Coalition (CSSC) campaign director for Fossil Free. She facilitated team and relationship-building workshops so group members could learn their strengths, capabilities, and knowledge level about the campaign. This strengthened their group (see Figure 2). Theo then recognized that at Warwick, he had organized with his group of friends and that their friendship base had facilitated their effectiveness at organizing. They had been engaged in relational organizing, which, Emily explained, is rooted

> in having these really intentional one-on-one conversations that are not about campaign strategies, it's not talking about the campaign at all...it's focusing on getting to know someone, what's driving them, where they are coming from, and using a whole series of them [conversations] to build up this trust between two people. And so, when they organize together, there's that relationship built.

Figure 2. Fossil Free UCSB protest of May 19, 2015 Santa Barbara oil spill. Mock UC representatives shake hands with oil companies as a pipeline spills fake oil on students. This protest was Fossil Free UCSB's biggest of the year, made more successful by the group's efforts to strengthen relationships among members.

Relational organizing was a thread throughout organizing at UCSB. Rob Holland, who was a member of multiple organizations and had led UCSB California Public Interest Research Group's (CALPIRG) anti-fracking campaign, felt that there had been much better cohesion and mutual support among environmental and social justice/cultural groups in 2014/15 than before. He explained that the Black Student Union had supported campaigns by CALPIRG (which often had environmental

campaigns) and United Students Against Sweatshops, and how many student groups were recognizing their connections as they mobilized around big issues like Ferguson and #BlackLivesMatter, an important campaign for a number of interviewees. Rob thought friendships were key to this solidarity: "I think the leaders of the big environmental groups on campus are good friends with the leaders of the cultural groups and so they just like know that it's stuff that they should support."

Interviewees recognized that, when lacking friendships, expanding social networks was a necessary first step to fostering the conditions for effective organizing. Colin Loustalot and Alex Favacho, who met in 350 Santa Barbara (a community organization unrelated to the universities), lamented "the limits of our white networks" (Alex Favacho). They identified the tendency to create social networks with people whom we perceive as similar to us, the principle of homophily, which creates particularly strong racial divides (McPherson et al. 2001), as a major barrier for their climate justice groups and the health of communities and social relations more generally. Friendship's "tendency to exclusivity and its aversion to difference" also challenged 1960s activists seeking to expand their groups (Polletta 2002, p. 4). Colin explained: "We have this way of compartmentalizing ourselves with others that then gets reflected in our work and it's really hard to work against that. It often times feels artificial and becomes this, like do you do it even though it feels artificial?" Colin was concerned about the possibility of tokenizing people as an outcome of trying to broaden social networks. For him, social relationships—emotional connections—were necessary for changing people's preformed ideas about the world. Culture, not facts, changes minds.

> You spew facts all day and you are unlikely to change anyone's mind about anything, the facts sort of help reinforce your beliefs...people have these preformed ideas and it's really hard to change those unless you have some kind of emotional, personal connection that...calls on their empathy and these more...unconscious parts of them that inform their world view (Colin Loustalot).

Though Colin, like others, was still "baffled" about how to expand his networks in an organic way, he was able to identify an example of when he could have done so, across political lines. In February 2014, he and other members of 350 Santa Barbara held a protest against the Keystone XL Pipeline. They held "NO KXL" signs at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, hoping their signs would make it into the media's photos of stars like Oprah (see Figure 3). A man came up to Colin and told him "you are all idiots, you're ignorant," and then started "grilling" him on facts. Neither Colin nor the man budged on their positions. Perhaps reflecting his observations of a fellow organizer, who was known for her relationship-building skills and having coffee with people to build relationships, Colin remarked:

> In retrospect, after it was too late, I was like, "I should have asked him to coffee," because...I think those are opportunities where, instead of fighting and destroying to argue your point to win, those types of moments, if you can somehow turn them into something more or you can find the common ground. I think that that's where a lot of the work can happen that's behind the scenes type work, and it happens on a social level, so when people just have empathy and give a shit about each other, then they start to listen to each other more.

Colin turned an aggressive and confrontational interaction into a learning experience in how building social relationships across disagreement, to develop empathy and to listen, would be an effective approach to organizing.

One way to demonstrate empathy was to "show up," a practice advocated by climate justice activist organizations (e.g., Curtis 2015). Kiyomi, who was dedicating her activism at the time of our interview to building community as President of the Board of Housing Cooperatives, stressed how reciprocal relationships between friends and showing up to each other's events can build community.

She suggested that activist groups develop more "inviting energy," and communicate a sentiment of "come participate with us on this" (Kiyomi). Through building community in this manner, she felt the diversity of the movement would grow as more people from different sectors of the community

learned about opportunities to be involved. Part of the power of showing up is that it puts people in face-to-face interaction, where they can "see your face and your passion" (Rob Holland), something missing in much social media interaction and online campaign actions. It also allows storytelling, an important part of social movement mobilization (Polletta 2006). As Kai Wilmsen, former leader of Environmental Affairs Board (EAB) explained: "I think there's so much power just around sharing stories and being able to sit down with people as people and being like hey, tell me about yourself, tell me about the work you are doing, like showing solidarity when you can."

(**a**)   (**b**)

Figure 3. (**a**) No Keystone XL Pipeline Protests in Santa Barbara, 2014; (**b**) Oprah at the Santa Barbara Film Festival. Photos courtesy of Rebecca Claassen.

Building relationships for the sake of relationships is something interviewees identify as critical to their movement building work. Relationships promote trust, empathy, awareness of how and when to show up in solidarity with other movements, and make organizing enjoyable. While it may seem self-evident that getting to know people is important for working together, not all organizations prioritize this. For example, under leadership of the Democratic Party of Santa Barbara County, the Measure P campaign to ban fracking did not consistently prioritize relationship-building with volunteers. Activists who began the campaign had cultivated distributed leadership through a team captain structure. The decision to try to get an anti-fracking measure on the ballot was made through consensus among people who had been organizing together for months. In contrast, during the lead-up to the 2014 mid-term election, this structure was disbanded and replaced with phone banking and precinct walking in which volunteers were instructed, through a hierarchical leadership structure, to follow scripts whose content was predetermined. While volunteers had previously focused on their own neighborhoods, in this model, they were distributed throughout the county, regardless of their residence. People who were leaders at the beginning were treated as first-time volunteers. This disillusioned some key volunteers, including me.

In sum, youth activists prioritized relationships to strengthen organizing work and create long-lasting friendship networks critical to building a just society within climate crisis. To cultivate relationships, especially beyond individual networks, interviewees prioritized accessibility.

4.2. Accessibility

Sitting in a circle in a sunny room of a small college in Berkeley, California in fall 2015 at the first 350.org organizing summit for California group leaders, my fellow 350 Santa Barbara member, and co-founder of our group, Max Golding, raised his hand. We were generating our group norms for the weekend workshop. Max added "calling in" to our list. This was the first time I heard the term, yet I quickly realized its salience for many of the values and practices of interviewees. Calling in is about the ability to talk across lines, whether based on identity, political affiliation, Facebook circles, or norms of interaction. It facilitates accessibility in groups through recognition that inclusive and intersectional organizing for justice is a learning process, and individuals with the best intentions can make mistakes

and learn from them. It is one tool to hold people accountable when they do something oppressive, and to get them to change that problematic behavior. Writer Loan Trần (2013) explains the practice in a blog post titled, "Calling IN: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable":

> I picture "calling in" as a practice of pulling folks back in who have strayed from us. It means extending to ourselves the reality that we will and do fuck up, we stray and there will always be a chance for us to return. Calling in as a practice of loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes; a practice of loving ourselves enough to know that what we're trying to do here is a radical unlearning of everything we have been configured to believe is normal.

Calling in facilitates relationship and friendship building across lines among people working for justice. Interviewees' efforts to call each other in were key to making organizing accessible, to "meeting people where they're at."

Kai explained "meeting people where they're at" as follows:

> I think the most important thing [for facilitating conversations about environmental justice] is to not like hit people over the head with it...you have to be patient...I mean like with any conversation, because I believe it so deeply, I just try to *meet people where they're at* first and...then have a conversation as individuals and be like "hey, I hear what you are saying, but what about this?" And just like, not being like, "you are wrong and this is the right way to do it," but kind of like, offering different perspectives and seeing what they think of those. (my emphasis)

Kai's explanation highlights a number of practices and perspectives that interviewees identified as key for effective organizing. As Kai communicated, the concept of "meeting people where they're at" requires patience, respect, and listening. Echoing Kai's sentiments, Kiyomi advised:

> Try to befriend as many perceived enemies as possible [laughs] and just actually become friends and hang out and just be like, "I feel this this and these are the facts, how do you feel about this?" You know?...So in a way you have to be, not passive, but gentle, and be patient with the conversation, instead of being like, "I'm this blah blah blah blah blah, this is what I believe, BOOM," they're going to be like, "who are you, what?" and not even process anything that you have to say. Connection, man, it's powerful [laughs].

By recommending activists ask people how they feel about the facts, and be patient and gentle, Kiyomi alludes to the importance of feelings and values for informing how people interpret information. Her hunch is widespread among interviewees and consistent with literature on climate change beliefs (McCright et al. 2016). In the 87 studies that McCright et al. (2016) review, scientific literacy is the second least important predictor of pro-climate views. Most of the time, the facts are not enough to convince people. Through experience, interviewees had learned that appealing to values, strategic framing, and friendship, or preexisting networks (McAdam 1988), were also vital.

Kyle Fischler, treasurer of CSSC and former EAB leader, stressed how educational events that were celebratory and inviting to all kinds of people could be employed to facilitate understanding across different worldviews:

> If [someone is] not already partially on your side, you're not going to get them on your side by writing a very strong case against their worldview or what they believe in...in order to get all those people that are on the fence, I think some of the most effective ways of organizing are just hosting celebrations, where you can also ingrain some education into it.

A good example of this, according to Kyle, is the annual Isla Vista (the town where many UCSB students live) Earth Day celebration. Hosted by EAB and funded by student fees, the event showcases local bands, food, and gives student groups opportunities to share their information with attendees.

Another way to engage in non-confrontational communication with people on the far side of what activists call "the spectrum of allies"—the spectrum of support or opposition where people on the far side of the spectrum are actively opposed to a cause and those on the near side are actively supportive (see Moore and Russell 2011, p. 49)—was strategic messaging.

Theo, who completed a master's degree focused on climate communication the year after our interview, was studying how to talk about climate change in ways that appeal to audiences beyond leftists and progressives. He thought building broad support for climate justice was critical and depended on appealing to values:

> I think that threat has to be communicated more successfully to appeal to values of people who you know, I don't like the phrase mainstream, but sort of who are influenced by dominant culture. And I think if that vast group of people can be brought to understand, or at least...to kind of see climate justice principles as legitimate and the sort of neoliberal solutions as illegitimate, that's when the climate movement starts winning. I think the only way to win is with a climate movement that is inclusive.

As Theo highlighted, communicating the threat of climate change, effectively framing climate change, is critical to inclusivity, and accessibility, both key to winning. He argued that this, however, could be accomplished without saying "climate change." Instead, one could talk about the drought in the Midwest, or extractive industries poisoning water and food. Communicating these messages and creating interactions that enabled effective communication, interviewees argued, was best accomplished through one on one face-to-face conversations—through relationships, as described above.

After communicating the threat, Theo stressed the importance of communicating alternatives to the present system, of imagining a different future. Kelley (2002) and Pellow (2014) eloquently argue for the importance of visioning. For many interviewees, a better world is an inclusive world that values difference and recognizes interconnections. To begin realizing this type of future, interviewees prioritized creating intersectional movements grounded in individual recognition of how the intersections of identities inform experiences of privilege and oppression.

4.3. Intersectionality

Youth climate justice activists are acknowledging and embracing difference, exploring intersectionality, in sophisticated ways. First introduced by Crenshaw (1989), intersectionality is the recognition that multiple identities intersect to inform individual's lived experience of oppression and privilege. Activists recognize intersectionality on the individual and movement level, working to recognize how all of their issues and movements intersect and are rooted in the same structures of inequality (see Figure 4). Take, for example, the California Student Sustainability California Student Sustainability Coalition (2014) statement in solidarity with Ferguson below. Interviewees Emily Williams and Unique Vance were among the co-authors.
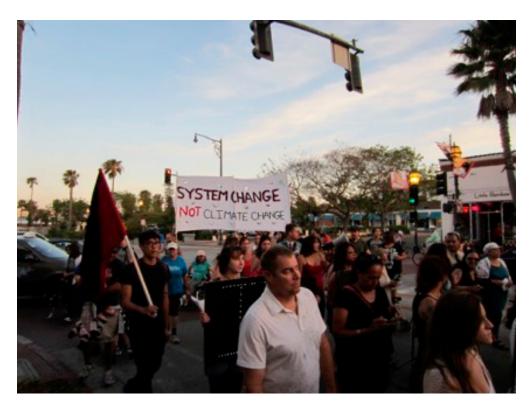
Figure 4. UCSB climate justice activists march in May Day Parade, Santa Barbara, May 1, 2014. Some hold a "system change not climate change" banner; others hold LED signs that say "stop SB gang injunction" an injunction targeting Latino youth. Immigration reform was another focus of the march.

[...] we recognize and affirm that our struggle and liberation is indelibly bound to the liberation of others. We cannot have climate justice or a sustainable planet without racial justice. [...] Our movements must be intersectional because our lives are, our very identities are. [...] The injustices that Ferguson faces today are rooted in the same injustices that we fight here in California. Though we all feel their impacts differently, we have a moral duty to highlight these impacts and those who are the most vulnerable if we are to find justice. Most importantly, we need to recognize that we are part of the same struggle. If we want freedom from the fossil fuel industry, if we want freedom from tuition hikes, then we must also have freedom from oppression and racial injustice.

CSSC must stand with Ferguson in order to—together—resist these injustices and to—together—build the future we want and need to see. We also recognize that we are part of a larger community that holds a LOT of privilege, and although our membership and leadership is by no means monolithic, the very point of entry (a university or college) is from a place of privilege. Our struggles may or may not be the same but we are bound nonetheless (California Student Sustainability Coalition 2014).

While interviewees' grasp of intersectionality varied, all recognized the importance of connecting social issues to environmental and climate issues and the shared roots of all types of injustice. Simultaneously recognizing how struggles are "bound", yet distinct, makes possible broad coalitions that bring together people who care about different issues, not to erase those differences, but to show how they can all be improved by working together toward common goals. CSSC's statement not only recognizes the need for solidarity among movements fighting all types of injustice, but also, importantly, the privileged position of college student organizers.

Activists' awareness of their own privilege emerged in the course of interviews. For Nia Mitchell and Unique Vance, both self-identified women of color and chair and former chair of EAB's Environmental Justice working group (among many other activist roles), their privilege as Americans

was important. Privilege informed Unique's analysis of the crisis and motivated Nia's activism. Nia's family came to the US from Cuba. With the privilege she enjoyed having been born in the US with US citizenship, as compared to some of her family who still resided in Cuba, Nia felt a strong sense of duty to "give [herself] to the movement." She explained:

> I have to feel like what I'm doing is helping someone, whether that's the advancement of the community that I come from, or just like, the global majority in general...I think that's why I do it...I learn way too much sad shit on a day-to-day basis not to act, and not to be proactive, and not to constantly dismantle...it's just in my blood, I really feel like it's...the whole reason I'm here, almost is to like help change something you know and commit my life to struggle in that way, because I'm lucky enough to, because I don't have to live how [the people affected by] what I'm learning about live, you know what I mean?

Interviewees who identified as white men were also self-aware of their privilege and recognized how it could be used strategically for organizing. Theo felt the divestment campaign was where he could use his privilege as a college student most successfully. As a student, he had a stake in and ability to influence where university endowments, a primary target of the divestment movement, are invested. Arlo, a member of 350 Santa Barbara who helped spearhead the Measure P campaign at UCSB, struggled with feelings of guilt about his privilege as an educated white man, and over how this could inform his actions. He saw potential to leverage his privilege to spread the movement's message. In his words:

> There is so much privilege and like history that I am benefitting from and it's really hard not to let the guilt from that like overwhelm me and cause this sense of shame...I feel that I really need to be talking to some folks who might not listen to others or who might...really be tuning out this climate change thing, but you know, seeing this unfortunately young white male who just graduated college, they might be more receptive to hearing that.

Another way awareness of privilege manifested among white men was in their commitment to feminist values. Two of these interviewees mentioned that they had taken on the responsibility to explain the significance of feminism to their non-activist male friends. When I asked Kai about whether he had friends involved in activism, he said many of his friends were not activists. He recounted the following conversation:

> We were discussing if feminism is necessary, if we need feminism, and I was like, "oh my God yes, like why, what!?!" and we had this whole long conversation and like we didn't really get anywhere, we were just going back and forth, but then a couple days later he [Kai's friend] texted me and he was like, "you know, I've been thinking about what we talked about and I think I understand now what you were saying about like the privilege of being a man and how women are oppressed," and I was like whoa!...I was a little bit shocked too because he is more on the conservative end.

Kai, an ecology major, had learned about feminism and intersectionality from student leaders of his environmental group. His social media feed, coming from his many "socially conscious Facebook friends," and online articles, also shaped his understanding of these concepts.

Exploring privilege and inequality allowed interviewees to begin to craft themselves and their organizations in ways that challenged stereotypes and empowered participation from all group members. Michael Fanelli, whose quote opens this article, reflected:

> The people that are educated enough and invested enough to become involved in this sort of thing [activism] are people that you know, are aware of these [inequalities and stereotypes]...I don't know how to describe it...people aren't close minded, people understand that...[stereotypes] aren't like legitimate things and that they're just based on, you know, old traditions.

As this excerpt hints, activists identified problems with traditions, practices, and perspectives of dominant culture. Making change begins with identifying problems and then moves to creating alternatives. Thus, understanding privilege and inequality had to do with activists' work to identify the barriers to the world they wanted to see. While intersectionality is almost a buzz word in some movement and academic circles, it is relatively absent from social movement theories (e.g., Snow et al. 2007).[11] It is crucial for developing an understanding of the climate justice movement because understanding, prioritizing, and putting resources toward articulating how the movement is intersectional is the first step to achieving a movement of "everyone." As scholars of collective identity and framing have noted, people have to see themselves as part of the movement or agree with movement messages to begin engaging or to remain engaged. The climate justice movement must, therefore, articulate how climate change is also about racial, gender, and economic justice if it hopes to gain support from these other movements.

Just as activists worked to prioritize intersectional understanding of themselves and movements, by recognizing privilege, so too they strove to prioritize community by recognizing the factors that discouraged it.

4.4. Community

Calling in to conversations and relationships across difference meant overcoming a culture of not talking to people with different perspectives, a culture of division and "anti-community." Youth desired an atmosphere in the community where people wanted to get to know each other, an atmosphere that was conducive to building relationships. In this sense, relationships are a goal of activists, but are also a tactic employed to create community. Rob saw lack of communication in US culture as a barrier to creating this type of community. When I asked him what he hoped for the future, he explained:

> I hope for a reversal of I feel like the current trend of anti-community and like anti-talking to one another...I feel like we used to be able to, I mean like before we had ways to communicate like so easily with people that were like-minded with us...we had our community and our neighbors and our mailman and stuff and they were there and you were forced to talk to them 'cause they were the only people around and if you disagreed with them...you respected them...you knew that they were there to talk to and hopefully you could still count on them even if you disagreed with them um, but...we now have [ways] to like not talk to people really, or to have our niche groups to where we don't have to talk to people that don't agree with us.

Rob went on to apply this observation to his own experience of organizing, where he noticed a lack of student receptivity to discussing campaigns with strangers.

> We think that people like coming up to us in the Arbor [popular tabling and lunch location at UCSB] and asking them if like they know anything about a campaign is weird...and we think somebody calling us to talk about a campaign is weird, and I think that's really detrimental to any organizing, if we can't talk to strangers and like feel that people are in a community trying to make things better and listen to one another.

Other interviewees had also experienced "anti-talking to one another" in their organizing and felt that social media and technology exacerbated the problem.

For two activists with 350 Santa Barbara (an off-campus group), this dearth of community communication manifested in divisions between Santa Barbara's environmental and Latino

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[11] Intersectionality is mentioned twice in this 700-page handbook of social movement theory, in a chapter on feminism and the women's movement. In this chapter, Ferree and Mueller (2007) treatment of intersectionality resonates with that of interviewees—that individuals and organizations are shaped by multiple "relations of power and injustice" (p. 578). They note that the intersectionality of social movements is "not always acknowledged theoretically" (p. 578).

communities. Arlo thought Measure P's failure to garner Latino support was "one symptom of this system that really divides us up as much as possible and makes sure we're not talking to each other,...that has set things up so that we are not supposed to be talking to our neighbors who may not look like us, that are dealing with the same things that we are." When phone banking for the Measure P campaign, Alex Favacho talked to people on both sides of the political community divide: "some phone calls could be actually really nice, someone's like oh yeah yeah of course I'm going to vote for that, and others are like, I own guns and stuff like that, stay off my property." This divide was informed by the longtime presence of the oil industry in North Santa Barbara County, a characteristic that created a sharp contrast in livelihoods and politics, with more oil jobs and conservative political representatives in North County, which was predominantly Latino, and more tourist sector jobs and liberal politics in the beach towns of South Santa Barbara County, which was predominantly white. Political sorting like this, where people tend to live in communities with similar political beliefs to their own, is increasingly common in the US (Bishop 2008). Such stark divisions and resulting lack of experience communicating with people with different views likely contributes to the "toxic" (Hoggan 2016) state of discourse in American politics. Alex and Arlo, as well as other organizers, came away from the Measure P experience convinced that climate groups on and off campus had to be much more committed to justice, specifically issues such as health and economic justice, to gain support from the Latino community in Santa Barbara County.

Talking across divides is no easy feat, however. It can be quite frustrating, interviewee Maria Castro explained, because again, facts alone often do not change deeply held beliefs that can be rooted in participation in certain occupations, like the oil industry. As Kori Lay, a former leader in EAB said, "people don't want to think they are wrong." Besides challenging viewpoints, just getting people to listen was also a challenge. Though Michael felt that facts do speak for themselves, "[when you] are able to rationally explain these things, there's not much convincing that needs to be done," he prefaced his belief with, "when someone is actually willing to listen to you." Interviewees, however, thought young people on college campuses were more receptive to learning than the general population. "Campus is a really great place...because I think people are more likely to change their opinions on campus, because they are students there and they're there to learn" (Kori Lay).

To address these problems, interviewees thought that the culture of communication and community involvement needed to change. Non-communication, lack of listening, and refusal to consider new information were all commonplace in the lived experience of their activism. There was a general desire for a lifestyle where people talk to people they disagree with. For Rob, this would be a lifestyle of:

> Not like de-friending somebody on Facebook immediately because they have a different view than you...to be more engaging with people...I guess what I hope for the future is a more community-oriented society that people will feel more empowered to work for what they believe in, which I think will create more environmental good.

Like Rob, Emily advocated for changing culture, but highlighted activist culture. She hoped activists could be more inclusive, especially of frontline communities—communities most affected by climate change and fossil fuel extraction—and could focus on campaigns that targeted cultural change. Changing culture, according to Emily, was, "a way more powerful intervention point in the system, rather than just changing a law." Making these cultural changes toward community within and beyond activist groups was a priority for all interviewees. While relational organizing is a way to build community, community as a value is broader. It integrates a belief that people should be willing to have explicitly political conversations and be open to beginning relationships with neighbors.

4.5. Putting Values into Practice

Activists' values translate directly into and are informed by movement building practices. Relational organizing and calling in are both values and concrete ways to build movements that

center relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community. They occur in the context of other practices and participatory democratic forms of organizational structure that are horizontal (see Figure 5). The majority of groups interviewees organized with have broad leadership structures. Environmental Affairs Board (EAB), for example, has twenty-one officers with two co-chairs. Students Against Fracking began with three co-chairs, but rotated facilitators during meetings, using consensus decision-making to organize campaigns. During this research, 350 Santa Barbara had no leadership structure or positions. These horizontal leadership forms are one-way groups tried to empower leadership from diverse members.

Figure 5. Student coalition meets to organize signature gathering for the ballot measure against extreme oil extraction, later named Measure P, in April 2014.

While groups are open to all, success in attracting diverse membership was mixed. Interviewees were aware that many of the small environmental groups tended to be made up primarily of white, heterosexual, gender-normative students. To them, this illustrated a lack of diversity. They were conscious that they had much work to do to realize the values at the heart of their organizing. However, they also highlighted the diversity of perspectives, majors, and backgrounds within these groups' membership and noted that certain groups were striving for progress on diversity and inclusivity through values highlighted above. In particular, interviewees gave EAB good marks on diversity. Over half of the officers of EAB during 2014–2015 and 2015–2016 were students of color. This matched the proportion of students of color at a forty-person general EAB meeting I attended in spring 2016.

At the interactional level, activists developed organizing structures to support inclusivity and learning about inequality and privilege. Interviewee Elie Katzenson, who had organized with multiple groups, recounted how, to be inclusive of gender diversity, organizations like EAB and 350 Santa Barbara sometimes asked each participant to tell the group their preferred gender pronoun, typically they/them, she/her, or he/him, during introductions. Emily Williams really liked "the culture of just naming things as they come up, so saying when something is sexist, saying when something is racist, just calling it right out especially in organizing space, having more workshops on anti-oppression or actually discussing what diversity means." A different approach to this practice, as introduced earlier in the analysis, is "calling in," which is also expressed with the phrase "ouch, oops." "Ouch, oops" was, like calling in, a norm Max Golding first introduced me to where, if someone says something

offensive, people feeling the offense should say "ouch" to signal the hurt it caused them. The person who said the offensive thing would then recognize their mistake, "oops," and change their behavior in the future. It was a less confrontational—more relational—way to teach each other about inclusive language than "calling out." In Unique Vance's view, calling out was not only more abrasive, but also less effective than explaining why people's positions are problematic. Along these lines, Unique cautioned against "playing the oppression olympics." She thought it was important to take into account all of the different sectors of people's lives to recognize different forms of privilege and oppression, and most importantly, how they all connect with capitalism, how different groups of people share many of the same experiences. Insights like these helped student organizers develop their own diversity trainings and organize statewide convergences to spread good organizing practices within the movement. These practices were bolstered by their commitment to relational organizing, which, in Emily Williams' words,

> goes back to...actually spending a lot of time talking to people who might be perpetuating some of the oppression that we see in organizing circles and finding out why they are doing it, what experiences have they come through that's told them that that's okay, and recognizing that that's not them as a person, that's how society has molded them. And working with them that way to show that you still trust them, you still respect to them, you still care for them, but yeah it's, we all need to work on getting better.

Interviewees also felt groups could improve their outreach to diverse students by clarifying the connections between social and environmental issues. For some, like Unique, capitalism was a clear way to do this: "Climate justice is when you tackle the root causes of climate change, which is capitalism, you know bases of exploitation...so you attack the root of the issue." However, not all interviewees or groups were attuned to anti-capitalist critique. According to interviewees, Fossil Free and CSSC were doing good work to connect environmental/climate and social justice. They were not challenging capitalism, but were challenging its most damaging qualities, for example, profit without conscience and externalities, in the case of the divestment movement.

In contrast, Kori Lay felt that EAB, despite the diversity of its participants, still had a long way to go to clarify these social and environmental justice connections, explaining:

> Outside of that [diversity training for EAB officers]...I don't think it's [social justice] addressed as much...multicultural groups on campus still kind of look at us [EAB] and think of us as like a white person club, because of the environmental movement, the way it is still, and also just because I think we are still kind of portrayed as like, we're just trying to save the trees, like we don't have the right face on yet. So I think we're still not as inviting as we should be and I think that's partially because we don't talk about social issues enough in the club, we do have an environmental justice chair, which I think is a good position to have because it does show that we do care about those things and that's something that we have campaigns on and things like that, but I think it's still not loud enough in the club.

Kori had worked to facilitate CSSC's transition to focus more on social justice when she was lead organizer of the yearly state-wide CSSC convergence. She told convergence panel organizers that at the most, only a third of the panels could be purely environmental focused. She invited a keynote speaker who told attendees "hey, you know what, right now we are on Native American lands that we took away from them" (Kori Lay). Kori recounted, "like straight out of the door, that's what she said and [you] saw the room was just kind of in shock, kind of taken aback, which is what I wanted, I wanted people to hear and then talk and be uncomfortable about it...I really wanted people to have hard conversations."

Fossil Free had taken up social justice explicitly by linking their campaign for fossil fuel divestment with frontline communities—communities directly experiencing the effects of fossil fuel extraction. Theo explained that figuring out how to communicate the social justice aspects of their campaign, and

how Fossil Free is a solidarity campaign, could strengthen their message. He went on to lament the general separation of environmental and social issues, arguing for the need to clarify intersectionalities: "on UCSB's campus...it is so ingrained...the idea that the environment is separate from other justice organizations, and that's something that different organizations need to work on and sort of see the intersectionalities of them" (Theo Lequesne).

Horizontal structures, efforts to be inclusive and attract diverse membership through meeting practices and campaigns focused on social-environmental intersections, and relationship-based organizing characterized interviewee's activist groups. Activists' values both facilitate and are embodied in these practices. Both undergird the climate justice culture of creation at the heart of movement building.

5. Discussion

In contemporary America, there are at least two significant barriers to climate justice policy. In many levels of government, policy makers are unable to work with those who are different from them along lines of policy, priorities, or accountability to constituents. At the movement level, there is a consistent lack of representation and meaningful inclusion of the most marginalized communities in powerful climate organizations (Taylor 2014) and a lack of resources going toward organizations that are led by marginalized communities (First Nations Development Institute 2018). In this context, building broad-based movements is critical for realizing equitable power within social movements and for convincing policymakers that climate change is a priority for the majority of voters. This paper explores how activists are working to achieve these goals.

I find that the primary way activists work to achieve climate justice through movement building is through developing and practicing justice-oriented values, values that shape and are shaped by the broader political culture of activists' organizing. These values and actions are not new or invented by these activists but have been built overtime by many movements (Polletta 2002). Horizontal, or participatory democratic forms of organizing have been practiced by student movements, labor movements, women's movements, the global justice movement, and community and direct action campaigns (Doerr 2007; Polletta 2002).[12] They are strategic because they help activists develop skills, solidarity, and innovation (Polletta 2002). Relationships have been an important building block of participatory democracy in these movements; the feminist movement of the 1960s and 70s was particularly committed to friendship and egalitarianism as foundations of organizing (Polletta 2002). Similarly, all four values that I analyze resonate with Juris et al.'s account of activists at the US Social Forum, who highlighted the importance of fun and energizing events; building "deep" and "genuine" relationships; and constructing multi-issue and multi-generation coalitions for movement building (2014, pp. 335, 337, 338). The very emergence of the World Social Forum, a "movement of movements" that prioritizes values and goals of diversity, inclusion, participation, and intentional relationship building, depended on similarities in "norms, practices, and values" among movements in different parts of the world (Smith and Doerr 2011, pp. 342–43). My research echoes findings of these scholars, suggesting the translation of values among different movement contexts. In my research, activists encounter these values, part of what Tsing (2004) calls "activist packages," in organizing, academic, and social media spaces. They then adapt and apply them to their specific organizing contexts.

So, while these values are not new, it is significant that young people in the climate movement are practicing them. The larger environmental movement that the climate movement is part of has not historically prioritized social justice (Taylor 2016). My research demonstrates that members

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12 Participatory democratic forms of organizing do have limitations for achieving inclusivity. Doerr (2007) demonstrates that various structures (e.g., for accessing funding and deciding what topics are discussed) within the European Social Forum process exclude materially less privileged participants, particularly women from the Global South. Lack of translation excludes participants with fewer or no English skills (Doerr 2008). Polletta outlines how forms of organizing grounded in friendships can lead to exclusivity and resistance to formal mechanisms for equalizing power (2002, p. 4).

of the climate movement are taking social justice organizing principles (see Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice 1996) to heart, providing individual-level evidence that change toward justice is occurring in segments of the climate movement. In addition, part of what informs people's choices about which organizing methods to use is not only how effective they think something is, or how it resonates with their ideology, identity, or things they like, but what is familiar (Polletta 2002). The fact that youth climate activists are getting their first taste of organizing within a justice-oriented participatory democratic style, that they are simultaneously crafting based on little previous experience in hierarchical or status quo groups, bodes well for achieving climate justice goals. By describing the contours of interviewee's values, how activists themselves articulate and put values into action, this paper hopes to offer frameworks for organizing that resonate with activists already advancing social and climate justice and identify paths forward for activists and organizations who wish to change.

By engaging the concept of political culture of creation this research provides an analytical approach for scholars who wish to understand how movements work. Foran (2014) posits that idioms, ideology, networks, lived experiences, and emotions can sometimes come together to form political cultures of creation capable of mobilizing revolution. The approach is useful because it argues that social movement culture is a fluid configuration of components that play varied roles depending on context. Working to identify the character of each can give a fuller picture of a social movement culture. The data I present evidence each of these components in my research setting. Youth activists were drawing on idioms like climate justice, ideologies such as feminism, and their lived experience as college students coming of age during climate crisis. They were constructing networks grounded in friendship and recognizing the importance of emotions of passion and joy for building movements. I argue that all of these elements of Santa Barbara youth's climate justice culture of creation (CJCOC) are expressed in particular and localized ways in the values they share. Therefore, I take PCOC as inspiration and extend the concept by demonstrating that centering activists' own theories and practices—values in this case—can illuminate threads connecting different elements of a movement culture.

Focusing on interviewees' values also deepens understanding of the variables that typically attract the attention of social movement scholarship. The values of community and relationships, for example, motivated youth to table on and off campus and approach strangers to talk about politics. These inspired them to communicate the passion they felt for their work and to "show up" at each other's events. Values of intersectionality and accessibility informed activists' methods for structuring their organizations horizontally and hosting events and interactions on different topics and at different levels—sometimes mostly for fun. In other words, all four of these values informed how interviewees built collective identity. Understanding this process is not enough, however, to gain a full picture of the youth movement in Santa Barbara. Strategies and tactics are also important and also informed by values. Valuing intersectionality and privilege led students to recognize their leverage in the divestment movement and informed why they prioritized not only divesting, but also reinvesting in the communities most affected by energy extraction. Finally, all of these values inform the messages or frames that activists employ to mobilize support for their work.

As the preceding paragraph shows, individual values are not neatly aligned with discrete analytic concepts. Culture is more complicated than that. By focusing on values, I do not wish to repeat the mistake of narrow attention to one variable, but rather to illustrate the utility of centering research participant's own words—of grounding analytical focus in the priorities of activists themselves. In the context of this research, translating activists' perceptions of their movement into scholarly language is best achieved through frameworks like political cultures of creation, rather than unitary categories like a frame or collective identity.

Finally, understanding values can also help scholars and activists understand what activists define as "successes." In this research, successes came in the form of Kai's friend understanding the importance of feminism, or the people on Rob's dormitory hall supporting Rob on the night of the

election when the ballot measure he had worked so hard on failed: "Even the ones that disagreed with me were very [nice and sorry for me], [laughs][...] they knew how much I hadn't been on the floor [of the dorm] because I had been working on Measure P" (Rob Holland). Rob, in other words, had built community among people who did not agree with his politics, creating connections that could pave the way for future expansion of the movement. Fossil Free UCSB went from struggling to retain members to having ten core organizers. It also, along with the statewide Fossil Free coalition, experienced a major success when the University of California divested from coal and tar sands in 2015. Through the involvement and leadership of interviewees, community group 350 Santa Barbara changed its mission from one centered on climate action to one that is explicitly focused on climate justice. Their "about us" page reads, "We are dedicated to building an inclusive, diverse, and empowered climate justice movement in Santa Barbara County" (https://350sb.org/about/). This change occurred after many conversations in which members educated fellow members about climate justice and what it may look like in the context of Santa Barbara. While this does not mean all actions of the group are centered on justice, it is a step in the right direction. These were successes because they are instances where activists saw positive effects of centering certain values in their movement building work.

As potential future leaders and organizers, interviewees' dedication to justice-oriented values and practices bodes well for the ability of the broader climate movement to better engage with justice. Doing so will be critical to building the broad-based power necessary for political frameworks capable of mitigating climate change. The analytical framework I engage with supports an in-depth and nuanced view of interviewees' organizing that is not confined to focusing on or assigning primacy to one variable. It leaves space to center activists' own theory and unpack how that theory informs many scholarly concepts.

6. Conclusions

"Knowing the colour of the sky is far more important than counting clouds" (Kelley 2002, p. 11).

In this article, I've argued for understanding movement building as a process of expressing and practicing values which compose a "political culture of creation" (PCOC) (Foran 2014), a culture focused on vision, rather than only obstacles—the sky, rather than the clouds. PCOCs are the webs of meaning that members of a social movement shape and live within. Foran (2014) argues that they are constituted by the interactions of ideologies, idioms, networks, emotions, and lived experience. I demonstrate that values and practices, activist's own theories, are also important—that each element of a political culture of creation is expressed on the ground through values and practices. I propose "climate justice culture of creation" to characterize the PCOC growing in the climate justice movement among youth in Santa Barbara and show that activists employ this culture to build a broad-based movement—a movement seeking revolution in capitalism's emphasis on individual material gain without concern for other humans, living things, and the planet.

The youth activists in this movement in Santa Barbara are cooperating to form activist groups that have horizontal leadership structures and are intentionally anti-oppressive. They recognize the interconnections of social and environmental problems and how, no matter where they come from, who they identify as, and what issues they care most about, they must engage in shared struggle for their futures. They have discovered the power of relationships, accessibility, intersectionality, and community for learning, organizing, and effective campaigns. Taking this knowledge, they are calling each other to the table to embrace their difference, simultaneously check and lever their privilege, and learn from each other through listening, care, and patience. The resulting relationships allow them to mobilize resources, passions, and energy to imagine and model the justice they want to see in the world. Step by step, they take action to change the political and cultural status quo for climate justice. From the perspective of movements and scholars interested in achieving social justice and a healthy environment, this is a positive sign of change occurring in sectors of a movement that has historically failed to appropriately engage with social justice.

Studying twenty-first century social movements in the framework of PCOC challenges scholars to theorize how elements of social movement culture work together and co-constitute each other to create movements capable of garnering broad-based support. By refining PCOC to place activists' own theories—embodied in values and practices—at the center of academic concepts, I strive to clarify what social movement culture looks like on the ground. By evaluating how activists' values and practices facilitate movement building—a stated goal of many movements—I strive to produce theory with relevance for social movements. In line with Bevington and Dixon (2005), I hope this analysis will encourage scholars to reassess why we study movements. Movements are not important for what they teach us about social movement studies concepts, but because they are "essential for the creation of alternative visions of democracy, economy, and society" (Escobar 1992, p. 22). Many scholars, after all, study movements not only to better understand the world, but to change it (Marx 1978). Helping movements change the world is the goal of movement-relevant theory (Bevington and Dixon 2005) and highlighting the hopeful ways in which activists work to build powerful imaginative movements moves in this direction.

Appendix A

Table A1. Demographic characteristics of interviewees.

	Average	Range
Interview Length	69.6 min	52–108 min
Age	23	19–34
	% (N)	
Women [1]	52% (15)	
Men [1]	48% (14)	
Mixed Race/Ethnicity[1]	41% (12)	
White Race/Ethnicity[1]	46% (13)	
Identifies as Person of Color	31% (9)	
Recent Alumni of UCSB	54% (15)	
Current UCSB Student	34% (10)	
Majors	Sociology, Global Studies, Environmental Studies, Ecology, Economics, and Communications.	
Group Affiliations	Black Student Union, Environmental Affairs Board, Fossil Free UC, Students Against Sweatshops, Students for Justice in Palestine, 350 Santa Barbara, Students Against Fracking, Student Commission on Racial Equality, California Student Sustainability Commission, and Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, among others.	

[1] N = 29. Interviewees self-described their gender and race/ethnicity. Mixed race describes those who identified with multiple racial and ethnic identities.

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